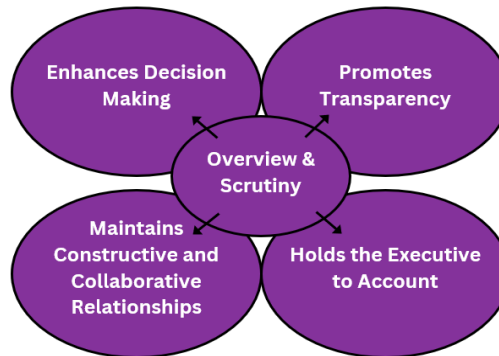


What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees examine, challenge and influence the work of the Council and its partners to improve decision making, services and outcomes for the people of Birmingham.



The Leader of Birmingham City Council appoints their Cabinet Members and together they form the Council's Executive that makes decisions about Council policy¹. The law sets out that Council's operating a Leader and Cabinet model must also have Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

Birmingham City Council has seven O&S Committees, and each committee is made up of Councillors from different political parties. Cabinet Members cannot be a member of an O&S Committee. Every O&S Committee has a chair who takes a lead in organising the Committee's work. More information about O&S Committees is available on the Council's [Committee Management and Information System \(CMIS\)](#) and [Overview and Scrutiny | Birmingham City Council](#).

How Can O&S Committees Make a Difference?

The O&S Committees can:

- **Make recommendations** to the Council's Executive to improve policy and services. Some O&S committees can make recommendations to other organisations e.g. the NHS.
- **Influence policy** by scrutinising early proposals while they are still being developed or commenting on draft policy before it is agreed by Cabinet.
- **Call-In Executive decisions** for further examination before they are implemented. The O&S Committee can decide to refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration.
- **Reviewing performance**, outcomes and implementation of decisions of the Council and some partner organisations e.g. the NHS.

¹ City Council sets the Council's budget and policy framework; Regulatory Committees make planning and licencing decisions.

What O&S Committee Cannot Do

Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Do not make decisions or set policy.
- Cannot overturn decisions made by the Executive (but can refer them back to be re-considered).
- Cannot consider individual complaints or case work.

How do O&S Committee's Carry Out their Work?

Each O&S Committee agrees a work programme focusing on issues where scrutiny can add the most value.

Committees use a range of approaches to carry out their work, including public committee meetings, task and finish groups, briefings, workshops and site visits. O&S Committees can request reports and information and invite Cabinet Members and senior council officers to attend meetings.

O&S Committee meetings are held in public, and members of the press and public can attend to watch the meetings. The committee meetings are also livestreamed and recorded on [Public I](#).

City Council has agreed a protocol that sets out how the Council's Executive and O&S Committees will work together. The principles are:

- **Collaboration:** Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive work together to generate substantive added value through collaboration, improve outcomes for residents, balancing accountability with mutual respect.
- **Independence:** Overview and Scrutiny operates independently to provide objective oversight, free from party-political influence and the group whip.
- **Evidence-Based:** Overview and Scrutiny relies on robust evidence, stakeholder input, and data to inform recommendations.
- **Transparency:** Overview and Scrutiny processes and Executive responses are open and accessible to the public, except where confidentiality is justified under the legal framework and not in the public interest.
- **Proportionality:** Overview and Scrutiny focuses on high-impact issues and priorities for improvement, while avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- **Outcome-Focused:** Overview and Scrutiny aims to improve policy, service delivery, and decision-making, thereby contributing to better governance of the Council and achieving a wider benefit for the community.

Scrutiny beyond the Council

Councillors from Birmingham City Council are also members of other regional scrutiny arrangements:

- The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel that examines the actions, decisions and performance of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee that hold the Mayor of the West Midlands to account.