

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

1. OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a major arena in which two thirds of the City Council's membership play a part in the governance of Birmingham, influencing improvements in services and the plans to enhance conditions for our citizens. In October 2012, the Governance, Resources and Member Development O&S Committee presented a report to City Council setting out a new approach to Scrutiny that would seek to maximise these outcomes. In particular the objective was to increase the focus on policy development and cross cutting inquiries.
- 1.2 The resulting work programme demonstrates scrutiny's value in providing members with the means to make a difference and drive improvement in council services. The O&S Committees have shown how they can represent the views and needs of Birmingham's people, businesses and community organisations, and help the city through economic and financial difficulties. The year's work, although sometimes critical, has assisted the Executive and demonstrated the key role O&S plays in drawing together service silos and making connections across organisations.

2. WHAT WE DID

- 2.1 The key pieces of work undertaken over the last 12 months broadly divided into either major Reviews (significant pieces of detailed project work undertaken over a longer timescale) or Inquiries (short, sharp pieces of focussed work looking into current issues or taking a policy overview).
- 2.2 The approach in both cases focused on maximising public and partner involvement. Both involved an initial call for evidence, whereby witnesses, all Members of the Council and the general public were invited to send in written evidence to enable Members to prepare more fully for the session(s). The focus on inquiry-style meetings has enabled more external experts and local people to feed into Scrutiny work. This was complemented by increased visibility with a Twitter account (@bhamscrutiny).
- 2.3 Feedback from Members, officers and external witnesses about the new ways of working was very positive. In addition there was a noticeable increase in the public presence at the meetings, demonstrating the impact of holding the call for evidence and publicising the meetings more widely.
- 2.4 This showed in the data collected after each meeting, with the percentage of scrutiny reviews/inquiries reports including the direct input of customers/ public increasing from 53% in 2011/12 to 77% in 2012/13. The percentage of meetings where there was a member of the public present for any part of the meeting increased from 49% to 69%.

- 2.5 The inquiry style of working enabled the executive to utilise scrutiny to examine issues where major policy changes and reforms are known about in advance. This form of working entailed short (usually single) evidence gathering sessions, which resulted in feedback to the relevant Cabinet Member or other external partner agencies. Scrutiny members particularly appreciated the ability to influence debate or decision making in a timely manner, and this was reflected in the level of engagement. This approach also benefitted the executive by providing a means of obtaining wider Member engagement in on-going policy issues and facilitating the airing of these in a public forum.
- 2.6 A number of topics were raised as requiring investigation in this way. The work on Welfare Reform and Council Tax localisation were showcased in the last O&S report to City Council. Since then, inquiry topics have included an examination of:
- **Wholesale Markets** (Governance, Resources and Customer Services): following the submission of a petition to the City Council on the future of the Wholesale Market. The Committee recommended that the traders were given more time to work with the City Council officers to explore the financial viability of their proposal with the private sector developer and that any future joint venture model should incorporate a commitment from traders to invest in and share the risk in the proposed scheme; and
 - The Social Cohesion & Community Safety O&S Committee did a short piece of work examining the proposals about **community contribution contained in the draft Housing Allocations Scheme** and sought to come to a view as to whether, where someone has a reasonable housing preference, there was merit in also looking at community contribution criteria. Members concluded that the proposals to ask citizens to make a contribution were well intended but there were many concerns around their introduction in a city with such a housing shortage and where there are such inequalities and levels of deprivation. The Committee was divided but, on balance, considered that they could not support the inclusion of the proposals at the current time.
- 2.7 These two cases exemplify the benefits of this way of working. We confidently anticipate that the coming year will see more opportunities to open matters up for debate in O&S, resulting in considered responses to the Executive.
- 2.8 Other inquiry topics were chosen in response to Council priorities by the Committees, including:
- **Closing the Skills Gap** (Birmingham Economy & Jobs): the Committee focused on the key economic issue of raising the skills level of our resident population. The report concluded that there was a skills gap, and that this is having a serious impact on the local economy and people living in the city. However, there is significant variance by sector and Birmingham has many strengths. The recommendations emphasised the Council's significant influence and need to improve co-ordination and focus, particularly with regard to adult skills.
 - **Reducing Reoffending** (Social Cohesion & Community Safety): This inquiry aimed to understand the role of the various agencies involved in working with offenders to reduce reoffending rates. The resulting report to the Cabinet Member recognised and commended numerous examples of good practice, innovative initiatives and impressive partnership working already being demonstrated and implemented across the city. It highlighted the crucial role performed by the Youth Offending Service in diverting young people from a life of crime and the potential risks posed by any reduction in the ability of the service to effectively work with young offenders in the community.

- 2.9 The major review approach facilitated exploration of topics requiring a more detailed or wider consideration. These generally resulted in a major evidence based report containing deliberation and a series of longer term recommendations to the Executive. This work supported on-going Council policy development in a number of ways including:
- ***Devolution – Making it Real*** (Districts & Public Engagement): following the renewed focus on devolution and localisation, this inquiry set out to support the transition to a new set of structures, outcomes and relationships. The report recognised and sought to facilitate opportunities to make a difference, shaping places, recognising the powers that districts have, focusing on the outcomes for citizens and ensuring there is clarity about accountability for services and decision-making.
 - ***Autism and Criminal Justice*** (Health & Social Care): Autistic people are very vulnerable and difficulties in working out other peoples' motives can lead to them becoming involved in crime by 'false friends' without them realising. Autistic people are seven times more likely to encounter the police and at least three times more likely to be imprisoned than the average non-autistic person. The report identified a need to raise autism awareness and for better data as a basis for better commissioning and better safeguarding as a means of improving the quality of life for many autistic people and those who care for them.
 - ***Health of Birmingham's Third Sector*** (Partnership, Contract Performance and Third Sector): recognising that this is the first time an O&S committee has had a specific remit to look at issues relating to the the third sector, this review sought to probe how far both the City Council and third sector organisations are able to work more effectively to mitigate the impact of significant cuts in funding. The report highlighted the need for clearer priorities for City Council working with third sector organisations and a clearer emphasis on results in commissioning, contracting and grant-making.
 - ***Strengthening the Birmingham Family of Schools – the role of the City Council*** (Education & Vulnerable Children): In the light of the increased number of schools in Birmingham becoming academies, this review explored the new strategic role for local authorities in local education provision. During the review several challenges were identified, but the one overwhelming message members heard was the need for a new debate on education in the city with a shared vision at its heart to ensure that the needs of all Birmingham's children are met, whichever type of school they attend.
 - ***Changing Gear*** (Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability): this work sought to support the Council's urban mobility planning set out in the Leader's Policy Statement last year, by focusing on those areas less likely to receive attention through such a process – cycling, walking and canals. The resulting report set out ambitious recommendations to improve sustainable transport in the city, particularly via seeking a step change in our approach to cycling.
- 2.10 A number of these reviews and inquiries resulted in a report to City Council and these are set out in Appendix 1. In addition, because tight timescales were often necessary, some reports were submitted directly to the relevant Cabinet Member, and a list of these reports is set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.11 Birmingham worked with the Centre for Public Scrutiny as one of 14 Health Scrutiny Development Areas as part of a programme on the health reforms. The aim was to assist Members and officers in working out how to add value through health scrutiny activities in the new health environment, to facilitate broad input from stakeholders in informing

priorities for Health scrutiny work and to build positive relationships with public health, local Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other stakeholders involved in the new structures to create an accountable system. The work resulted in the production of the CfPS publication 'Spanning the System'.

- 2.12 In November, the Social Cohesion & Community Safety O&S Committee reported on the set up of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP). That month, a Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands was elected. A Police and Crime Panel (PCP), supported by the Scrutiny Office and Committee Services, was introduced to undertake important monitoring functions. During 2012/13 work included: scrutinising the precept and budget and the Police and Crime Plan; undertaking the first confirmation hearing in the country prior to the formal appointment of the Deputy PCC; and setting up a process for dealing with complaints against the PCC and Deputy Commissioner.
- 2.13 Members also welcomed the attendance of Cabinet Members at many meetings, reinforcing the important role of O&S in holding the Executive to account. In addition, the call-in procedure was used nine times in the last municipal year, and on one occasion the Executive was asked to re-consider a decision.

3. WHAT WE WILL DO: PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

- 3.1 As this report is being written, Committees are engaged in discussions to determine the priorities for the year. Each has recognised the importance of leaving room within work programmes for policy development work as it arises. Early examples of this could be to examine issues arising from the current public engagement with the Executive's Green Papers. It remains within the remit of the Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee to consider the overall work programme to ensure that inquiries and reviews can be adequately staffed and resourced, also taking into account available "slots" at City Council meetings if that is the intended destination for the final report.
- 3.2 As reported in October 2012, the move to a schedule of meetings planned around selected inquiry topics, rather than a monthly committee cycle, caused some problems with meeting clashes. This municipal year Committees have reverted to a schedule of monthly meetings. This will not only support Members in their work by avoiding clashes, but ensure that when inquiry sessions are held, they will facilitate potential witnesses finding availability in their diaries.
- 3.3 It is also the intention to reinvigorate the "tracking process" which monitors the implementation of recommendations made by O&S Committees and approved by City Council. O&S and the Executive will therefore work together to bring forward a refreshed system to ensure that scrutiny recommendations are followed through and to engender a culture within which recommendations prompt action or review, not a bureaucratic response. We will play our part in this by reviewing the quality and number of recommendations. They should be clear about the desired outcome but not overly prescriptive about detailed actions. There should be sufficient recommendations to cover the key aspects of the desired improvements, but no more than that.
- 3.4 Regular meetings of all the O&S Chairs will continue to take place to discuss the overall work programme with an emphasis on potential or actual areas of overlap. It also provides an opportunity to discuss joint working across committee portfolios.

- 3.5 In addition the Chair of the Governance, Resources & Customer Services O&S Committee meets with each O&S Chair individually which gives a chance to discuss any issues or problems and enables the Chair to take an overview of the work in order to facilitate the smooth running of the function.
- 3.6 The emerging priorities for each Committee are set out below and summarised in Appendix 3. In addition, O&S Chairs are exploring taking the theme of child poverty as a strand through a number of committees.

Governance, Resources and Customer Services

- 3.7 The Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee will be renewing its focus on Customer Services, in particular focusing on monitoring all elements of customer service from first contact through to delivery of the service or resolution of the problem with the aim of ensuring maximum improvement in customer services and end-to end service delivery. A series of quarterly reports will be brought to committee to include:
- How ongoing problems/concerns are raised and being dealt with;
 - Performance information: how it's used and the impact it has; and
 - Progress towards channel shift.
- 3.8 In addition, Members have indicated a wish to look at how complaints are managed and whether there is consistency across Directorates.
- 3.9 The Leader will be attending the Committee later in the year to explain the new "zero Budgeting" process and how Members will be involved; and to discuss the "Green Paper: The Future City Council". Members will also examine particular areas of budget pressures in depth including Children Young People and Families and Adults and Communities.

Districts & Public Engagement

- 3.10 The work of the Districts and Public Engagement O&S Committee will relate to the following issues
- Engagement – The first focus for the committee will be undertaking an inquiry into citizen engagement;
 - Devolution – following the 2013 report to Council on Devolution: Making it Real the Committee will continue to support the ongoing transition to create a devolved organisation by tracking this scrutinising the role of the Executive and Directorates in developing this;
 - The Committee will examine some of the services Districts are providing directly; the partnership and engagement structures being put in place; and the approach to prioritising and planning. There will be discussion about the role that the Committee should play in scrutinising performance of individual committees;
 - Districts' role in place shaping – how are districts developing distinctive identities and what role can they / should they play for growth and economy and health and well-being?
 - Housing – the responsibilities which ensure that all households in Birmingham have access to adequate housing in the city are now with a number of Cabinet Members and

the ten District Committees. This year the Committee will work closely with other relevant O&S Committees to ensure decisions are not being made in isolation, but meet the overall housing needs of the city.

Education & Vulnerable Children

- 3.11 This Committee will continue to examine the progress of improvements to Children's Social Care following the September 2012 Ofsted visit and short Committee inquiry. The Committee will continue to scrutinise the changes being put in place and to examine monthly performance data.
- 3.12 Given concerns nationally about child sex exploitation, we intend to test Birmingham's approach and mechanisms to detect and, if necessary, deal with this. We are considering how best to carry out this inquiry, and are identifying the key issues that need to be examined in the light of the additional resources put into this area recently.
- 3.13 The Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy is an issue already considered by the Committee twice in 2012/13 and is now out to public consultation. The Committee will look at the consultation document and respond formally to this.
- 3.14 Commissioning of children's' services is likely to be a more important issue over the coming years and it would be timely for the Committee to consider this. Other issues the Committee wishes to consider are school improvement and adoption and fostering.

Health & Social Care

- 3.15 There have been numerous recent changes in the health landscape including local government's new role following the transfer of public health to the local authority and the duty on each local authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of people in its area. Health & Social Care O&S Committee will look at the wider health economy as well as services provided, commissioned or managed by the NHS. The Committee will work with our partners in the new health landscape including:
- Public Health England;
 - Local Healthwatch (which has taken over from the former LINKs);
 - The new Clinical Commissioning Groups (which have replaced the PCTs and now commission the majority of NHS services for their patients including urgent care and emergency care);
 - The Health & Wellbeing Board (who are responsible for delivering strong leadership, encouraging integrated working and developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy); and
 - The Care Quality Commission (which is the statutory regulator of health and social care, to voice the views of their constituents and to hold local NHS bodies and providers of NHS and public health services to account).
- 3.16 In particular the committee will be contributing to policy development by doing some in-depth work on aspects of the City Council's Green Paper on adult social care services and will also be carrying out an Inquiry examining progress with reducing childhood obesity.

Partnership, Contract Performance and Third Sector

- 3.17 At its heart, this year's work programme will reinforce the Council's and the Executive's priorities for improved contracting and commissioning. Alongside Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee, Members will continue to consider major city council contracts, in terms of spend, strategic importance, interest and potential risk linked to new contract management priorities.
- 3.18 We will be looking at key initiatives including important leisure contracts; proposed new contracting for example the renewal of the Housing and Gas Repairs which are some of the most significant areas of City Council spend; and the City Council's new services company Acivico. The Committee is currently planning a comprehensive inquiry into future major events and sponsorships including the roles played by Marketing Birmingham.
- 3.19 Given the wide remit of the Committee, the work programme will identify areas of responsibility of Cabinet Members who will be asked to give evidence. A number of services within the City Council, e.g. Birmingham Property Services, will be scrutinised to make certain that they are providing a first class value for money service.
- 3.20 Most importantly, we will continue to support and develop the Council's relationship with the Third Sector. The Committee will track the recommendations of our "Health of Third Sector" report to make sure that they are implemented as intended. We will look in more detail at contracting for third sector support in the current harsh financial climate, and more generally will continue to seek to develop partnerships with the Third Sector and Private Companies to see how we can work better in order to benefit the citizens of Birmingham.

Social Cohesion & Community Safety

- 3.21 The Social Cohesion & Community Safety O&S Committee will continue to exercise its powers as the "crime and disorder scrutiny committee" under the Police and Justice Act 2006, including examining the annual report from the Community Safety Partnership.
- 3.22 The community safety remit of the Committee will be further explored with one major inquiry, looking at Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System; and two shorter inquiries, focusing on whether Neighbourhood Tasking is addressing Anti-Social Behaviour and on Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- 3.23 The Committee will continue to take an interest in the work of the Police and Crime Panel, with an annual update, alongside that of the relevant Cabinet Members.

The Birmingham Economy & Jobs

- 3.24 The Birmingham Economy & Jobs O&S Committee will first seek to complete the on-going review into support to micro and small businesses. Further to this, the Committee will consider the key issue of worklessness, and in particular the persistent problem of long-term worklessness in the city, through a series of progress reports on the many aspects of this issue. Members are keen to consider the forthcoming Apprenticeship Strategy, as well as the role the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership plays in tackling our skills deficit. To supplement this, the Committee is considering an inquiry into the long term trends in Birmingham's employment and unemployment rates, and the underlying factors.

- 3.25 In addition, the Committee will undertake a joint review with the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee into how the city ensures that maximum benefit is obtained from the forthcoming High Speed 2 line. The Committee's focus will be on taking full advantage of the economic benefits, particularly with regard to jobs and skills.

Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability

- 3.26 The first objective of the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee is to complete the major review into our waste disposal arrangements: "From Waste to Resource". As the Council's current contract with Veolia ends in 2019, the key question is: what do we need to do to ensure Birmingham has the most sustainable and efficient waste/recycling strategy post-2018? The emphasis is on what could and should be included in a 30 year vision, and how we shift perceptions from "waste" to using our rubbish as a resource. The Committee will also keep a close eye on the development of Birmingham Energy Savers (BES) and the city's energy strategy as part of wider work on waste to resource.
- 3.27 Related to that will be on-going monitoring of the Weekly Waste Collection Scheme, examining the implementation of the scheme and its impact. Members are also keen to look at our Household Recycling Centres and ways in which the effectiveness of these can be maximised.
- 3.28 Members will continue to examine the challenge the City Council faces in order to ensure a safe, welcoming and sustainable transport system with a choice of safe, affordable, quality transport options that would also support our visitor economy. The biggest opportunity for the city lies with the introduction of High Speed 2 (HS2), and it is a good time for O&S to examine this in terms of what needs to be done to maximise the benefits for Birmingham.
- 3.29 This would be a joint review with the Birmingham Economy & Jobs O&S Committee. The committee's focus will be on how connectivity and sustainability agendas need to be at the heart of HS2 proposals.
- 3.30 Taking a more local focus, Members will continue the work on road safety, started as part of last year's "Changing Gear" report. In particular, the committee will follow up on the City Council motion calling for the introduction of 20 mile per hour limits across the city.
- 3.31 The third strand of the Committee's work concerns digital connectivity and the Council's plans for high speed wireless.

MOTION

That the City Council agrees the approach adopted by Overview and Scrutiny and the scrutiny work programme for the year 2013/14.

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Reports to City Council 2012 -13

O&S Committee	Report	Date to Council
Former Co-ordinating O&S	Future of the Civic Function	June 2012
Governance, Resources and Member Development	Customer Services	June 2012
Former Transport, Environment and Regeneration	Worklessness	July 2012
Former Equalities and Human Resources	Retention and Development of Staff	July 2012
Former Housing and Urban Renewal	Older People and Choice Based Lettings	July 2012
Governance, Resources and Member Development	New Ways in Scrutiny, including Council Tax Benefit Localisation and Welfare Reform	October 2012
Social Cohesion and Community Safety	Police and Crime Panel arrangements	November 2012
Birmingham Economy & Jobs	Closing the Skills Gap	December 2012
Health and Social Care	Adults with Autism and the Criminal Justice System	December 2012
Districts and Public Engagement	Devolution – Making It Real	January 2013
Education and Vulnerable Children	Strengthening the Birmingham Family of Schools-the role of the City Council	January 2013
Birmingham Economy & Jobs	Birmingham's Local Centres	February 2013
Social Cohesion and Community Safety	Birmingham: Where the World Meets	February 2013
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	Changing Gear: Transforming Urban Mobility through cycling and walking in Birmingham	April 2013
Partnership, Contract Performance and Third Sector	Health of Birmingham's Third Sector	April 2013

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Reports to Cabinet Members 2012 -13

O&S Committee	Report	Date
Governance, Resources and Member Development	Council Tax Localisation	July 2012
Education & Vulnerable Children	Improvements in Children's Social Care	September 2012
Governance, Resources and Member Development	Wholesale markets	November 2012
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	Response to draft policy on Biomass	March 2013
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	Community Contribution in Housing Allocation Scheme	April 2013
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	Reducing Reoffending	April 2013

Appendix 3: Emerging Priorities (and proposed Council date) for 2013/14

O&S Committee	Topic	Proposed date to Council (if applicable)
Governance Resources & Customer Services	- Customer Services - The Future City Council	
Health & Social Care	- Falls Prevention - Childhood Obesity	- Jul 2013 - Jan 2014
Social Cohesion & Community Safety	- Mental Health & Criminal Justice - Neighbourhood Tasking	Feb 2014
Education & Vulnerable Children	- Child Sex Exploitation - Children's commissioning - Adoption and fostering	Apr 2014
Partnership, Contract Performance & Third Sector	- Major Contracts including new contracting (housing/gas repairs) - Major Events	Apr 2014
Districts & Public Engagement	- Citizen Engagement - Devolution - Housing	Apr 2014
Birmingham Economy & Jobs	- Support to Micro and Small Businesses - HS2 (joint report)	Oct 2013
Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability	- From Waste to Resource - HS2 (joint report)	- Dec 2013/ Jan 2014 - Feb 2014