

Communities Scrutiny Commission

14 September 2023



Report of: Tim O’Gara, Service Director - Legal & Democratic Services

Title: Communities Scrutiny Commission Annual Business Report 2023/24

Officer Presenting Report: Ian Hird, Scrutiny Advisor

Recommendations:

1. To note the Scrutiny Commission’s Terms of Reference.
2. To note the Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.
3. To note the membership of the Commission for the 2023/24 municipal year.
4. To note the Scrutiny Commission’s 2023/24 meeting dates.
5. To establish a Housing and Landlord Services working group.



1. Context and Proposal

1.1 Terms of Reference of the Commission

At its Annual Council meeting on 9 May 2023, Full Council established this Scrutiny Commission with the following terms of reference:

Terms of reference - Overview

The role of the Commission is the overview and scrutiny of matters relating to the previous Communities Directorate including: Customer Services, Housing & Landlord Services (including housing options, private sector housing, and estate management) Crime and Disorder (including the Statutory Scrutiny Function), recycling, waste and environmental issues, neighbourhoods, sport, leisure and physical activity and Area Committees.

Functions

- 1.** To ensure that overview and scrutiny directly responds to corporate and public priorities, is used to drive service improvement, provides a focus for policy development and engages members of the public, key stakeholders and partner agencies.
- 2.** To action the Annual Work Programme set by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board using the following framework:
 - (a)** Scrutiny of corporate plans and other major plan priorities within its remit, with particular reference to those areas where targets are not being met or progress is slow;
 - (b)** Input to significant policy developments or service reviews;
 - (c)** Review and scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Mayor/Executive, functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive, and functions which are the responsibility of any other bodies the Council is authorised to scrutinise.
- 3.** To make reports and recommendations to Full Council, the Mayor/Executive and/or any other body on matters within their remit and on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area and to monitor the response, implementation and impact of recommendations.
- 4.** To work in collaboration with the Mayor/relevant Executive Member and receive updates from that Member on key policy developments, decisions taken or to be taken and progress against corporate priorities.
- 5.** To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on progress against the work programme and on any recommendations it makes.

1.2 Membership of the Commission:

- Councillor Martin Fodor - Chair
- Councillor Amal Ali
- Councillor Amirah Cole – Lead (Labour)
- Councillor Tessa Fitzjohn
- Councillor Gary Hopkins – Lead (Knowle Community Party)
- Councillor Henry Michallat
- Councillor James Scott – Vice-Chair (Conservative)
- Councillor Kerry Bailes
- Councillor Barry Parsons

1.3 Commission Meeting Dates

- 14 September 2023, 5.00 pm
- 13 November 2023, 5.00 pm
- 27 February 2024, 5.00 pm

1.4 Housing and Landlord Services working group

Further to the discussion at the scrutiny agenda planning workshop held in June 2023, the Commission is asked to establish a Housing and Landlord Services working group (it is proposed that 6 members are appointed, noting also that political proportionality will need to be applied).

The role/scope of the working group will be based around examining/reviewing a number of current BCC Housing and Landlord Services key priorities, including:

- Ensuring fire safety in tower blocks
- Providing Decent Homes
- Increasing the number of council homes
- Decarbonising council homes

2. Public Sector Equality Duties

Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

3. Legal and Resource Implications

N/A

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

- Full Council agenda papers, 9 May 2023