

Notice of Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: Monday, 17 November 2025 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY



Membership:

Chairman:

Cllr K Salmon

Vice Chairman:

Cllr S Aitkenhead

Cllr J Beesley
Cllr P Canavan
Cllr L Dedman
Cllr C Goodall

Cllr S Mackrow
Cllr L Northover
Cllr Dr F Rice
Cllr T Trent

Cllr O Walters
Cllr C Weight
Cllr G Wright

All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=5961>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Claire Johnston 01202 123663 or email democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 454668 or email press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

7 November 2025

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app

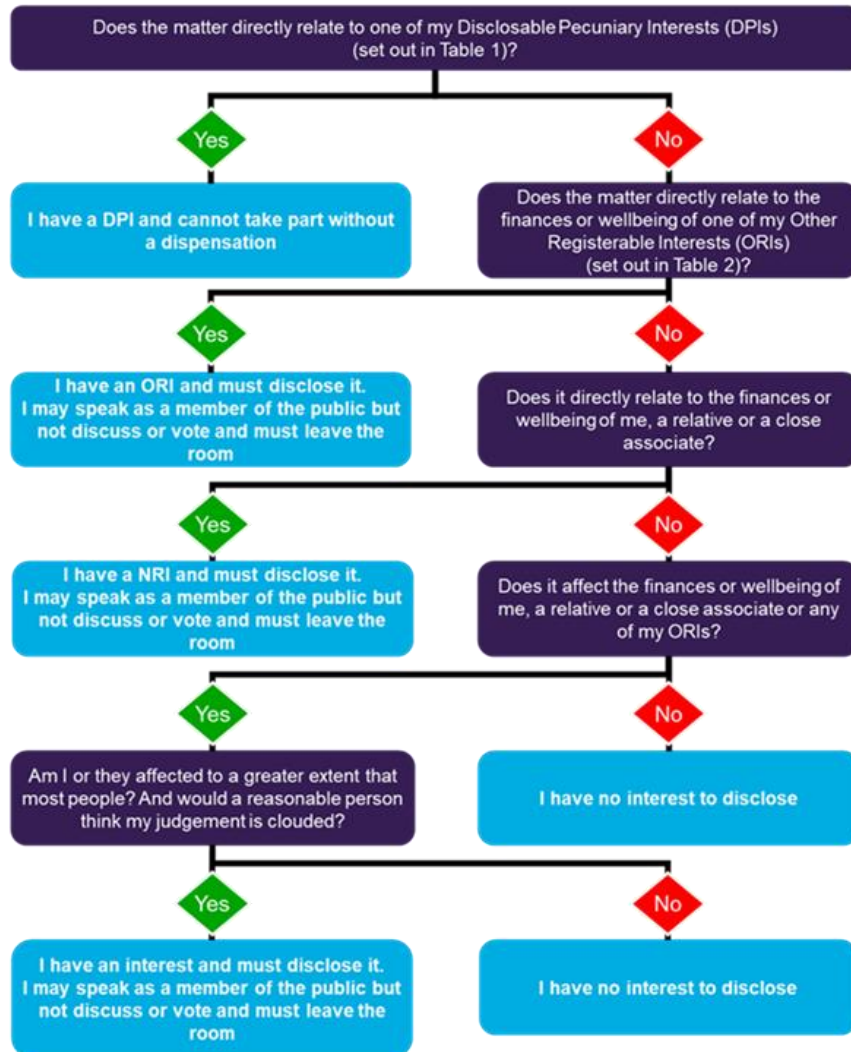


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

7 - 12

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2025.

5. Information Considered Between Meetings

The following items were considered by the Board since the last meeting:

- [Corporate Performance Report – Quarter 1](#)

6. Recommendation Tracker

13 - 26

The Recommendation Tracker is included with the agenda for the Board to note.

7. Recommendations from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet or Council

27 - 42

The Council's constitution provides that Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees may consider requests for work from a range of sources, including requests from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Council.

The O&S Board is asked to consider two requests for scrutiny recently made by Council and one additional request which has already been partially addressed by the Board, and to determine these requests in line with the associated constitution procedure rules.

8. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeID=151&Info=1&bcr=1>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is midday 3 clear working days before the meeting – Tuesday 11 November 2025.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting – Friday 14 November 2025.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

9. Blue Badge Update

43 - 46

This report provides an update on the performance of the Blue Badge service following its previous report to Overview & Scrutiny Board on 12 May 2025.

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

In relation to the item of business appearing below, the Committee is asked to consider the following resolution: -

‘That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.’

11. Vitality Stadium Land - draft heads of terms

There is no report currently provided with this item as negotiations on the heads of terms are still underway. If negotiations are concluded and it is possible to provide a report and associated details, these will need to be circulated separately as a supplement. If negotiations have not been concluded by the time of the O&S Board meeting the Board will receive a verbal update on the matter.

Please note that the Board will be asked to consider to exclude the Press and Public for consideration of this item and if the report should become available this will be published as exempt material.

12. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

47 - 138

This is the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council. There is a requirement to report on the work of O&S to the O&S Board and Committees and then to

Council. This promotes visibility of the O&S function and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required.

The annual report contains a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2024-25, reflections on working practices and identified improvements to strengthen the O&S function.

This report version is for consideration by the O&S Board and O&S committees, providing opportunity for comment prior to the supply of the final report to Council. The Council will be the decision maker on any recommendations for change within the report. The final report to Council will be updated to incorporate the views of the O&S Board and Committees on these recommendations.

13. Work Plan

139 - 148

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Board is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

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BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr K Salmon – Chairman

– Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C Goodall,
Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr L Northover, Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters and
Cllr C Weight
Present virtually: Cllr F Rice and Cllr G Wright
Also in attendance: Cllr A Martin and Cllr M Cox

49. Apologies

Apologies were received from Vice-Chair Cllr S Aitkenhead.

50. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

51. Declarations of Interests

Cllr J Beesley declared an other registerable interest in the Draft Library Strategy item as he was a member of the Board of the Arts Council South West.

52. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 and 30 September 2025 were approved as a correct record.

53. Recommendation Tracker

The current recommendation tracker was noted.

54. Work Plan

The Chair presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that an updated work plan had been circulated with the agenda and the following updates were noted:

Carter's Quay - Due to delays in housing-related Cabinet this item would need to be rescheduled from the November meeting. A new date would be confirmed once further information was available.

Parking Enforcement Outside Schools – It was hoped to add this as a verbal update to the next meeting dependent upon rapporteur availability, with the full report to January.

Consultation Working Group - Two further meetings were scheduled to complete the group's work. It was hoped to bring the final report to the Board in January.

Domestic Abuse Strategies – These were listed on the Cabinet Forward Plan but without a confirmed date. These would be added to the Work Plan.

Community Governance Review – The Chair of the Task and Finish Group suggested that the next report from the Group be brought to the Board prior to Council. It was agreed that the Board would be interested in this and the timings would be considered.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board confirm the work plan with the above updates.

Voting: Nem. Con.

55. Public Issues

There were no public issues on this occasion.

56. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the report was being taken to Cabinet to comply with accounting codes of practice and best practice which requires councils to have a rolling multi-year medium term financial plan. The report provided the latest high-level overview of the 2026/27 Budget and 3-year medium-term financial plan. The report also provided an update on the Leader of the Council and Director of Finance's letters submitted to MHCLG in July 2025 to seek assurance around the council's ability to continue to cashflow the significant and growing Dedicated Schools Grants deficit within the statutory framework. Details of the council's responses to two government consultation documents namely the Local Government Fair Funding Review and Modernising and Improving the administration of council tax were also included. The Board raised a number of issues in discussion on this item including:

- **National Living Wage** – It was reported that the increase in this would need to be taken into account for contracted services for social care.
- **Escalation of DSG Deficit** - The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit was highlighted as a major financial risk. It was noted that the deficit was projected to reach an accumulated total of over £180 million by March 2026. Members expressed concern about the scale of this increase and the lack of clarity on how the deficit would be resolved.

- **Interest Costs on DSG Deficit** - The cost of servicing the debt associated with the DSG deficit was confirmed as £9.9 million for the next financial year. Members requested that future reports include graphical representations of these projections, alongside tabular data, to make the financial implications clearer for all members. It was explained that the Council could face a critical point during 2025/26 when cash resources may become insufficient to service debt obligations. Members expressed frustration at the delay in government announcements, which were now expected close to Christmas.
- **Council Tax** - Questions were raised about the assumptions underpinning council tax increases. Members sought clarification on whether the projected rises were sustainable and what impact they would have on residents, particularly given ongoing cost-of-living pressures.
- **Unearmarked Reserves** - The level of this was discussed, currently standing at £27.3 million, concerns were expressed that holding reserves above this level could potentially lead to risks of clawback.
- **Use of Capital Receipts** - Clarification was sought on this to fund transformation projects and whether this would remain viable beyond the current financial year. It was confirmed that the flexible use of capital receipts had been extended nationally until 2030, providing scope for future investment in transformation and service improvement.

During consideration of this item the Board also considered any comments and recommendations arising from Budget conversations. The key issues which were discussed included:

- The need to prioritise repairs and maintenance for public-facing assets, particularly libraries, was considered
- Concerns were expressed about reputational risk if essential services such as libraries were not maintained.
- The potential use of capital receipts from asset disposals to address maintenance backlogs.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Budget setting process, consideration be given to utilising receipts from the existing surplus asset disposal programme for 2026/27 to address some of the repairs and maintenance of publicly facing assets.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions

The meeting was adjourned at 7.19pm and reconvened at 7:27pm

57. BCP Council Libraries – Draft Library Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications and Culture presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The

report provided an update on the progress which had been made with the future library strategy following two previous reports in February and December 2024. It set out the key drivers for the library strategy, detailing the suggested future focus of the library service, the priorities for investment, and the action plan required to ensure the Council could continue to deliver an efficient and comprehensive service for the future. The work to underpin the strategy has given a clearer understanding of where to target investment to bring improvements for communities, increasing access, and modelling provision within clusters. The vision is an ambitious one, focussed on delivering improvements and cementing the value of libraries within communities. The Board was informed that whilst there is undoubtedly a resource challenge, as there is in delivering all council services, the strategy remains an ambitious statement of intent. Working with partners, the community, and internal teams, the Council will develop preparedness for funding opportunities and focus on greater collaboration to ensure libraries deliver in a time of financial stress and even greater societal challenge. The Board raised a number of points during discussion of this item including:

- **Commitment to retain Libraries** – The Board welcomed the clear commitment to maintain all 24 libraries across the area. It was noted that this was a significant achievement given financial pressures and the condition of some buildings.
- **Open Access Technology** - The introduction of this was supported as a means to extend opening hours without increasing staffing costs. Members sought clarification on how security and safeguarding would be managed during unstaffed hours. It was explained that access would be controlled through library cards, induction processes and CCTV monitoring. Concerns were raised about ensuring that vulnerable groups, including young people, could still access staffed support when needed.
- **Community Hubs** - The strategy proposed creating four community hubs in Hamworthy, Rossmore, Southbourne, and Charminster, each serving a cluster of libraries. These hubs would offer extended services and space for community activities. Members suggested that more hubs should be considered in future phases if funding allowed.
- **Funding** – Concern was expressed that the strategy was ambitious but lacked dedicated funding. The initial phase relied on an Arts Council funding. It was noted that if the bid was unsuccessful, alternative funding sources would need to be identified. Members highlighted the importance of exploring neighbourhood CIL funding and other grants to support improvements.
- **Friends Groups** - The strategy included plans to encourage Friends Groups and expand volunteering opportunities. Members supported this approach but noted that the framework for establishing Friends Groups appeared complex and could deter participation. It was suggested that processes be simplified to enable community involvement more easily.

- **Income Generation** – The Board discussed the need for libraries to develop sustainable revenue streams and explore partnerships with commercial operators for café facilities. While some supported commercialisation, others stressed that libraries should remain primarily a public service.

The Board also made several creative suggestions for further enhancements to library services including:

- Establishing a “Library of Things” to allow residents to borrow household items.
- Creating repair workshops and skills-sharing sessions.
- Introducing quiet hours for study alongside more vibrant community activities.
- Using libraries as warm spaces and hubs for social connection.
- Out of hours access to services, similar to parcel drops.

RESOLVED that:

1. **The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Library Strategy it looks to maintain staffed hours in libraries, especially in the afternoon period, as open access is rolled out further in the future.**

Voting: 8 in favour, 1 abstention (Majority Decision)

2. **The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the Library Service put together a list of smaller neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bids to put to Councillors and Neighbourhood Forums immediately upon the opening of future CIL rounds.**

Voting: Unanimous

3. **That the O&S Board support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report.**

Voting: Nem. Con.

4. **A potential item be included on its work programme a review of income generation opportunities within the library service, including commercialisation options and partnership models.**

Voting Nem. Con.

(Cllr Beesley left the meeting during consideration of this item)

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm

CHAIRMAN

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

UPDATED: [10.10. 2025]

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made *items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.	Recommended to *name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received	Outcome *accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 May 2024					
9	A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28 Strategy and Delivery Plan	RESOLVED that the Board support the recommendations to Cabinet, subject to the suggested amendments from the Board: (a) The delivery plan be approved (b) The measures for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability for delivery be agreed. Note – minor amendments to the measures contained in the report were suggested by the O&S Board and captured in the full minutes of the meeting.	Cabinet - 22 May 2024	Recommendations accepted.	The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the amendments suggested at O&S Board had been incorporated into the revised version of the Strategy and Delivery Plan supplied for decision by Cabinet. (Update by O&S Specialist, 28/4/25)
Recommendations from Board meeting – 16 July 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 27 August 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 23 September 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 1 October 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 21 October 2024					

60	Blue Badge Service Update Report	The Board resolved that: The Portfolio Holder/Leader and the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Department for Transport to raise the concerns outlined by the O&S Board and that the Portfolio Holder take the issue forward with local MPs and the Local Government Association to encourage local authorities to raise these issues with the Department for Transport and request that central government gives local authorities the freedom to set fees which cover the cost of administering the system and that the system should be simplified in terms of renewal processes.	Portfolio Holder/Leader/ Chief Executive	Recommendations partially accepted by the Portfolio Holder	The Portfolio Holder confirmed that they had written to the Department for Transport and provided the response received to the O&S Board at its meeting on 12 May. It was unknown if this had been raised directly with the LGA and at the O&S Board meeting on 12 May the Portfolio Holder undertook to follow up on this.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 18 November 2024					
69	O&S Budget Working Groups – findings and recommendations	Recommended to Cabinet 1. That the principle of an inflationary increase across all parking charges be endorsed for the 2025/26 budget. 2. That it requests Officers to take into account the suggestion that an assessment be made on using a proportion of surplus income to accelerate the parking charging machine replacement programme prioritising the best value machines in order to reduce future costs (subject to the necessary procurement processes). 3. That Officers be requested to explore options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance/on Council website.	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Partially accepted	Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February ://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%20a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf

		1. That it requests that Officers evaluate the retention and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers to ensure a robust and resilient workforce to provide an appropriate level of resource and promote safe and appropriate parking. 2. That Officers be requested to ensure adequate resourcing of parking enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking around schools.	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Accepted	Response from Portfolio Hodler received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 : http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf
		The O&S Board recommend to Cabinet: 1. That any Resident Card offering is made fully accessible to all those who are not digitally enabled. 2. That there should be an application process for the card with a small financial contribution for the cost of processing and that the card should be a valuable offer that residents are willing to pay a small cost for, so that it can be sustainable in terms of administrative costs. 3. That any charge levied for the card should be the same regardless of the format and that consideration should be given to concessions for disadvantaged groups.	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Recommendations partially accepted	Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February ://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%20a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf Response from Portfolio Hodler received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 : http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf Note: the residents card offer did not progress as part of the budget
Recommendations from Board meeting – 9 December 2024					
78	Pay and Reward Progress Update	RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve option 2 of the proposed process flowchart (Appendix 1 of the report) and the commencement of collective consultation under s188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ('TULRCA'), which is a statutory obligation where an employer is proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees.	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Recommendation accepted	Negotiations with the pay and reward progress have continued and a new offer had been made to the unions. A ballot was now taking place with the recognised trade unions and an outcome was expected by the end of June 2025. This report was brought to O&S Board and Cabinet

79	Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy (CNHAS) update and Harbour Sail acquisition	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy CNHAS update and Harbour Sail a.pdf	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Recommendation accepted	The recommendation from Cabinet has not been put before Council because the purchase of Harbour Sail has not proceeded. This was due to timing of the purchase which affected the ability to use the grant for the purchase (which without this grant the scheme was no longer financially viable) and that title restrictions could not be altered to allow flexibility of tenure that was required. The grant has been reallocated to other property acquisitions.
81	BCP Council Libraries – Update on Library Strategy Development	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: BCP Council Libraries Update on Library Strategy Development.pdf	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Recommendation accepted	The Library strategy is expected to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet in August and September 2025
Recommendations from Board meeting – 6 January 2025					

90	Devolution	Recommended to the Leader that: a: The Leader arranges an emergency Full Council Meeting at the earliest opportunity to enable a vote of ALL of the available options b: An evidence-based piece of work be undertaken on the pros and cons of a devolution arrangement with both the Solent deal AND Wessex deal, including exploring a public referendum for BCP residents.	Leader of the Council	Partially accepted	Full Council meeting was arranged for 15 January 2025. The Council meeting considered the options of both the Solent deal and the Wessex deal, further information was brought to the Council meeting and Council voted to participate in the priority programme and to move forward with the Wessex proposal.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 January 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 3 February 2025					
106	Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 at Quarter 3	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to the Audit and Governance Committee that it instigate an investigation on the Carters Quay development.	Audit and Governance Committee 27 February 2025	Recommendation Accepted	Update provided to the A&G Committee at its meeting on 29 May. Chief Executive agreed that a report of the governance and process could be produced for the 24 July. It was also agreed to circulate by email the updated provided by the Director, Investment and Development together with the advice previously provided by the Monitoring Officer. Carters Quay - Update.pdf A further report will be taken to Cabinet
Recommendations from Board meeting – 4 March 2025					
115	Community Governance Review – Draft Recommendations	RESOLVED: that the O&S Board Recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to proposals for Burton and Winkton (A), Hurn (B), Highcliffe & Walkford (C) and Christchurch Town (D) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.	Cabinet date – 5 March 2025	Recommendations Accepted	Consultation progressed with these proposals. The Consultation closed 22 June 2025. The Working group are processing the outcome of the consultation and a report will be brought back to the October Cabinet meeting.

		RESOLVED: That the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Broadstone (F) and Poole Town (J) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Recommendations Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that that the recommendation for Bournemouth (K) not be forwarded to Council.		Recommendation Rejected	Cabinet felt that it was important to consult on all areas including (k) Bournemouth Town and therefore supported the recommendations as set out by the task and finish group and did not support recommendation 3 as submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Southbourne (I)) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Recommendations Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Boscombe and Pokesdown (H) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Recommendations Accepted	
		RESOVLED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Throop and Holdenhurst (E) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Recommendations Accepted	

		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Redhill and Northbourne (G) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment		Recommendations Accepted	
116	Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that a decision to extend the Winter Gardens site 'Option Execution Date' is deferred by Cabinet until the new BDC Partnerships Business Plan has been approved by Cabinet.	Cabinet – 5 March 2025	Recommendation rejected	The Cabinet did amend a recommendation as follows: Agrees the principle of an extension of the Winter Gardens site "Option Execution Date", with details to be agreed to be delegated to the Chief Operations Officer acting in consultation with the Leader of the Council, or until Cabinet have had the opportunity to review a revised partnership business plan including the site development plan for the revised Winter Gardens scheme." It was not able to agree a deferment of this decision as this would stop progress on the Winter Gardens development.
117	Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	RESOLVED That the Board recommended to Cabinet: 1. That the spending priorities for Strategic CIL as set out in Option 2 of the paper over the period 2024/25 to 2029/30 be agreed provided CIL income is as forecast; and 2. That the report be updated annually for Cabinet and Council.	Cabinet – 5 March 2025	Recommendations accepted	Accepted by Cabinet and spending priorities agreed for 2024/25 to 2029/30 for CIL.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 12 May 2025					
11.	Blue Badge Update	The Chair requested that the matter also be raised with the Local Government Association particularly regarding the cost of administering the Blue Badge scheme and the limitations of the current data system	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communication and Culture		Update on this issue awaited – no deadline date

12.	Arts and Culture Funding	Recommended to Cabinet: 1. That the O&S Board recognise the value of the NPOs funded by BCP to Health and well-being youth and the local economy and urge Cabinet to protect the funding BCP currently provides. 2. That Cabinet endorse the work that's been done with schools by the NPOs and recommends that Cabinet take action to encourage all schools to take part. 3. To explore whether it would be a benefit for a Councillor to be appointed as a member of the Board on any or all of the NPO organisations, and 4. That it ensures that the arts by sea festival goes ahead next year.	Cabinet – 13 May 2025	Recommendations Accepted	1: The cultural funding remains in the MTFP so there is no change in that position as of the moment. 2: The Portfolio Holder is working with the Cultural Hub to encourage this. 3: The Portfolio Holder has spoken to the NPO and they respectfully suggested that this would not be helpful. The Portfolio Holder agreed with this especially as they would likely be a PH and the Portfolio Holder already had very close links with all of them. 4: We are planning for ABTS next year and awaiting funding news from ACE.
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [9 June 2025](#)

22.	Bournemouth Air Festival	The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed with the recommendation that Cabinet agrees to Option 4 as set out in the report, which acknowledges the ongoing process for new events to come forward and stops any further work on an Air Festival for 2026 onwards.	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Recommendation Accepted	Recommendation accepted and confirmed that further work on the Air Festival for 2026 had been discontinued.
23.	Bournemouth Developemnt Company - Winter	1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Cabinet: (c) Cabinet approves the BDC Partnership Business Plan for 2025 – 2030.	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Recommendation Accepted	The development plans are due to come forward for consideration in December 2025 and it was proposed by the Leader that these would go to full Council.

	Gardens Project	(c) Cabinet confirms the extension of the Site Option Execution Date to September 2028, allowing Muse as the Private Sector Partner in the BDC to fund the first stage of work on the new Winter Gardens scheme, resulting in a new Site Development Plan. (c) Cabinet approves proceeding on the understanding that public parking will not be included in a new scheme design. 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped.			
		3. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped.		Recommendation Accepted – update provided	We are developing the narrative across the three towns identifying key strengths and uniqueness to build upon the vision set out in the Corporate Strategy : vibrant places, where healthy people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy natural environment. To support this we've made good progress by the establishment of a Citizen's Panel and the Growth Board. The Citizen's Panel comprises of residents with a focus on the town centre which is helping to provide insight into how residents feel and engage within the space. The Growth Board is a newly established steering group which is comprised of representatives from key sectors within the BCP conurbation including Business Improvement District, education, manufacturing, Starts up and the volunteering sector. These perspectives are helping to shape our vision for BCP as a place which can thrive, for residents to feel civic pride and a destination for visitors to enjoy. The conversation at the O&S focussed on how Winter Gardens fits into the wider context of the Town

					Centre and committee members asked for that to form part of any proposals from BDC. There is an existing Town Centre Vision which forms part of the Local Plan, and the intention is for BDC to review this to support a future planning application, ensuring it reflects the nature of the development proposals in the absence of a formal planning policy framework.
24.	Leisure Services Presentation and Discussion	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommended that Cabinet be urged to put in place an "Access to Leisure" scheme across the whole BCP area as soon as possible, recognising that people in Poole have lost this facility and with particular emphasis on ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Recommendation Accepted – update from Portfolio Holder Provider	The Portfolio holder has asked that officers explore options around a renewed access to leisure facility and bring forward options, including but not limited to; how that would be managed, financial implications, and meeting the recommendation as requested by the Overview and scrutiny board.

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Recommendations from Board meeting – [15 July 2025](#)

31.	Enhancement to Pay and Reward Offer	The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Council within the Cabinet report: a) Agree the additional costs associated with enhancing the proposed Pay and Reward offer. b) Agree the additional savings proposals outlined in Appendix 1 to ensure the cost implications of the proposal remain consistent with the February 2025 endorsed Medium Term Financial Plan. c) Agrees the details of the enhanced offer shown in Appendix 4 and 5 that will form the basis of the signed collective agreement with our recognised trade unions. d) Approves the recommended implementation date of 1 December 2025.	Cabinet – 16 July	Recommendations Accepted	Agreed by Council on 22 July 2025. Work underway to achieve implementation for December 2025.
32.	Scrutiny of Budget Related Cabinet	The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the work of Members and Officers around SEND as set out in recommendation C of the report as follows:	Cabinet - 16 July	Recommendations Accepted	

	reports – MTFP update report	In respect of the SEND deficit, note the update and acknowledges the action taken by the Leader and the Director of Finance			
Recommendations from Board meeting - 22 September 2025					
39.	Residents Card	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board do not support the recommendation as outlined in the report as the Board did not feel that the Cabinet report included sufficient financial details and details of the scheme offers to enable it to make an informed decision. The Board recommend to Cabinet that the report is deferred to allow details of the financial modelling that has been done to be added, including a cost/benefit analysis and a sensitivity analysis. Once this additional information is included in the report, it should then be brought back to the O&S Board before being taken to Cabinet for decision.	Cabinet – 1 October	Recommendation no accepted	Updates were made to the report and the recommendation prior to consideration by Cabinet
Recommendations from Board meeting – 30 September 2025					
47.	Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations	All Recommendations as set out within the Cabinet report were supported by the Board: (a) the Task and Finish Group community governance review final recommendations, as set out in paragraphs 49, 62, 74, 92, 104, 117, 128, 140, 152, 166 and 181 of this report be approved; (b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make all necessary reorganisation of community governance orders to implement the changes agreed by Council; (c) the Task and Finish Group continue to consider the transfer of civic and ceremonial assets, statutory services and precept requirements for year 1, for each new parish, on the basis of minimal transfer and precept, and a report be presented to full Council in due course.	Cabinet – 1 October		The recommendations of Cabinet were referred to Council on 14 October. The Recommendations of Cabinet were agreed by full Council
Recommendations from Board meeting - 20 October 2025					
56.	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Budget setting process. consideration be given to utilising receipts from the existing surplus asset disposal programme for 2026/27 to address some of the repairs and maintenance of publicly facing assets.	Cabinet – 29 October		Recommendations reported – response awaited from Cabinet Deadline for response 29 December 2025

57.	BCP Council Libraries Draft Library Strategy	1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Library Strategy it looks to maintain staffed hours in libraries, especially in the afternoon period, as open access is rolled out further in the future. 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the Library Service put together a list of smaller neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bids to put to Councillors and Neighbourhood Forums immediately upon the opening of future CIL rounds. 3. That the O&S Board support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report.	Cabinet - 29 October		Recommendations reported – response awaited from Cabinet Deadline for response 29 December 2025
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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Outcome (where recommendations are made to other bodies)
Actions from Board meeting – 12 May 2025				
10.	BCP Complaints Policy	RESOLVED that the Board further examine the role of councillors in the complaints process, particularly in relation to ward issues and casework.	To ensure the effectiveness of both the Councils complaints process and work of Ward Councillors	Work underway - Cllr S Aitkenhead as rapporteur
Actions from Board meeting – 15 July 2025				
29.	Work Plan	Consultation Framework Working Group to be reopened to consider recent consultations (e.g., Community Governance Review and car parking consultation) as case studies.	This would help strengthen the recommendations and the framework under development.	Additional meetings to be set up as soon as possible – meetings underway.
Actions from Board meeting – 22 September 2025				
38.	Commercial Operations	Portfolio Holder to provide an update on the current situation in 6 months-time with a view to scheduling further scrutiny when appropriate.	To monitor and receive updates on this area of the Council	
Actions from Board meeting – 20 October 2025				
57.	BCP Council Library – Draft Library Strategy	A potential item be included on the O&S work programme on a review of income generation opportunities within the library service, including commercialisation options and partnership models.	TBC	

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	Recommendations from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet or Council
Meeting date	17 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Council's constitution provides that Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees may consider requests for work from a range of sources, including requests from Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Council. The O&S Board is asked to consider two requests for scrutiny recently made by Council and one additional request which has already been partially addressed by the Board, and to determine these requests in line with the associated constitution procedure rules.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that the O&S Board considers and approves or rejects the two requests for scrutiny as set out in this report and notes the work of the Board in relation to the request which has been partially addressed.
Reason for recommendations	To comply with the decision of Council and the requirements of the council's constitution.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable for this decision
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Process for consideration of scrutiny requests

1. This report relates to requests for scrutiny made to the O&S Board by a Portfolio Holder, Cabinet or Council. The process for determining requests to O&S Committees from these bodies is set out by the council's constitution procedure rules as follows:

- *Where Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet or Council request that O&S Committees undertake a specified piece of work, the relevant O&S Committee shall respond to the request as soon as it is possible to do so.*
 - *The Committee will assess the value to be added by the work suggested when determining whether to exercise its powers in this respect. Where it chooses to exercise its powers in relation to the request, it will report back its findings and any recommendations to Cabinet and/or Full Council.*
 - *Where the Committee chooses not to exercise its powers in relation to the request, it will provide reasons for this to the body that made the original request.*
2. In addition, the constitution requires that *no item of work shall join the work plan of any O&S Committee without an assessment of:*
 - *detail outlining the background to the issue suggested;*
 - *the proposed method of undertaking the work;*
 - *likely timescale associated with undertaking the work; and*
 - *the anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed.'*
 3. The O&S Committee should follow these processes when determining requests for scrutiny.

Requests for consideration

Managing Seasonal Parking Pressures

4. **Background** – A Motion was submitted to the Council meeting scheduled for 22 July on this issue. The meeting was adjourned and reconvened on 16 September 2025 when the motion was considered. There were two issues within the substantive motion which require referral to the Board.
5. The first issue referred to scrutiny was point a of the resolution as follows “Ask the Overview & Scrutiny Board to undertake a review of the recent parking consultation, with the aim of improving future engagement processes. This review to include feedback from residents, business owners, tourism representatives and other stakeholders”
6. The second part of the motion which was added as an amendment was as follows, “That this is brought to Environment and Place for further scrutiny”. Further information from the proposer of the motion has been sought as to what this request refers to, whether particular parts or the entirety of the motion. Parking and Traffic matters are divided between the remit of the O&S Board and the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny. However, as the previous issues raised within the motion appear to pertain more to parking enforcement matters it is appropriate that this request is also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, subject to any further information being received.
7. **Scrutiny process and timescale** - Timescales for either piece of work were not proposed by Council. Prior to consideration of the first issue at Council the O&S

Board had already agreed to continue the consultation Working Group to review this consultation among others which had taken place. The Chair of the O&S Board advised Council of this during the debate on this motion. The Working Group has since met to discuss this and it has helped to inform work into the Council's process for implementing consultations. The review has not sought feedback from third parties on this issue.

8. An extract of the minutes including the full decision is provided with this report at Appendix 1.
9. **Anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed** - The aim of the first proposal was to improve future engagement processes. The Working Group has already undertaken and is continuing to undertake work on this issue. In relation to the second proposal the value to be brought by this enquiry was not outlined by Council and further information as to what the request refers to would be required in order to make a determination regarding this.
10. As required by constitution rules, the proposer of the motion is invited to attend the meeting and provide the Board with further information on the proposed work. This will enable the Board to further question the purpose and assess the likely added value of the work and so make an informed decision on whether to agree to these work programme additions.

Vacant Sites for Affordable Housing

11. **Background** - – A Motion was submitted to the Council meeting scheduled for 22 July on this issue. The meeting was adjourned and reconvened on 16 September 2025 when the motion was considered. Among other resolutions on this motion Council agreed t, ' "Ask the appropriate scrutiny committee to consider options and obstacles to housing delivery and to decide areas of focus that are realistic and will lead to housing delivery rather than wasting resource writing 7500 reports and, for each Council owned site and agree what is needed for effective scrutiny through the scrutiny process".
12. **Scrutiny process and timescale** – Whilst housing is substantially a matter for the Environment and Place O&S Committee, the Board has responsibility for regeneration which would include and high volume housing schemes and it has been agreed that the Local Plan should fall within the remit of the Board. Therefore whilst this matter is somewhat cross cutting it is proposed that the Board is the appropriate scrutiny body to give this recommendation initial consideration. The process and timescale were not set out by Council and requires further consideration by the Board.
13. An extract of the minutes including the full decision is provided with this report at Appendix 1.
14. **Anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed** – Information on this included the need to decide realistic areas of focus and identify what is needed for effective scrutiny. However this requires further consideration by the Board.
15. As required by constitution rules, the proposer of the motion is invited to attend the meeting and provide the Board with further information on the proposed work. This will enable the Board to further question the purpose and assess the likely added

value of the work and so make an informed decision on whether to agree to these work programme additions.

Options Appraisal

16. The O&S Board may choose to agree or reject the requests made. This decision should be made in line with the requirements of the constitution as set out above, particularly in relation to the anticipated value and outcome of proposed work and the resources available to undertake work.
17. If requests are agreed, the Board should determine methods and timescales for scrutiny, taking account of other priorities already established within the Board's work programme. This may be delegated to the Chair to consider with officers and report back.
18. If requests are rejected, the Board should provide reasons for this to the body making the request.

Summary of financial implications

19. There are no financial implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Summary of legal implications

20. There are no legal implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Summary of human resources implications

21. There are no human resources implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests

Summary of sustainability impact

22. There are no sustainability impacts associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Summary of public health implications

23. There are no public health implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Summary of equality implications

24. There are no equality implications associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Summary of risk assessment

25. There are no risks associated with this decision to determine scrutiny requests.

Background papers

Current O&S Board Work Programme

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Extract Minute, Council 22 July 2025.

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BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 July 2025 at 7.00 pm and resumed on 16
September 2025 at 7:00 pm

34. Notices of Motions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

Resumption of meeting: 16 September 2025.

VACANT SITES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Original Motion:

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules:

This Council notes:

- The escalating need for affordable and social housing across the BCP area, with many residents in housing stress or on long waiting lists;
- The growing number of vacant and underused sites including:
 - The long-neglected Sydenham's timber site,
 - The derelict Old James Brothers scrapyard, and
 - The stalled former Power Station development land.

These sites have remained undeveloped for years, blighting the area, attracting anti-social behaviour, and contributing nothing to local housing need or community wellbeing.

This Council believes:

That speculative land banking is unacceptable in the face of a housing crisis. That there is a duty to local residents to use all available means to bring these sites forward for affordable housing development, in line with Labour's policy of delivering social and council homes.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Undertake an urgent audit of all vacant or stalled development sites across BCP;
2. Assess each site's potential to deliver affordable housing, with a published report outlining options and obstacles;
3. Use all available legal, planning and enforcement tools –including compulsory purchase powers where justified – to persuade developers and landowners to act; and
4. Press central government for stronger powers to deter land banking and support councils to deliver genuinely affordable homes for local people.

Altered Motion:

Councillor P Cooper moved an amendment to the motion so that it read as follows:

This Council notes:

- The escalating need for affordable and social housing across the BCP area, with many residents in housing stress or on long waiting lists;
- The growing number of vacant and underused sites including:
 - The long-neglected Sydenham's timber site;
 - The derelict Old James Brothers scrapyard, and
 - The stalled former Power Station development land.

These sites have remained undeveloped for years, blighting the area, attracting anti-social behaviour, and contributing nothing to local housing need or community wellbeing.

This Council believes:

- That speculative land banking is unacceptable in the face of a housing crisis;
- That there is a duty to local residents to use all available means to bring these sites forward for affordable housing development, in line with Labour's policy of delivering social and council homes.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Undertake an urgent audit of all vacant or stalled development sites across BCP;
2. Assess each site's potential to deliver affordable housing, with a published report outlining options and obstacles and, for each Council owned site detail:
 - a. The amount of capital currently authorised;
 - b. The amount of capital expended to date;
 - c. The loans taken out;
 - d. The loan interest paid to date.
3. Use all available legal, planning and enforcement tools –including compulsory purchase powers where justified – to compel developers and landowners to act; and
4. Press central government for stronger powers to deter land banking and support councils to deliver genuinely affordable homes for local people.

In moving this amendment, Councillor P Cooper agreed and moved, and Councillor E Connolly seconded, a further amendment as circulated to Councillors by the Leader of the Council, which amended the motion to read as follows:

This Council notes:

- The escalating need for affordable and social housing across the BCP area, with many residents in housing stress or on long waiting lists;
- The growing number of vacant and underused sites including:

- The long-neglected Sydenham's timber site;
- The derelict Old James Brothers scrapyard, and
- The stalled former Power Station development land.

These sites have remained undeveloped for years, blighting the area, attracting anti-social behaviour, and contributing nothing to local housing need or community wellbeing.

This Council believes:

- That speculative land banking is unacceptable in the face of a housing crisis;
- That there is a duty to local residents to use all available means to bring these sites forward for affordable housing development, in line with Labour's policy of delivering social and council homes.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Ask the Housing Strategy Steering Group to review the Council's Housing Strategy and ensure targets are being met to meet present and future need and deliver on the priority actions identified over the next 18 months including:
 - Reviewing the Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy to deliver new social and affordable rented homes
 - Regeneration of key sites; Winter Gardens, Holes Bay
 - Increasing joint working with registered providers to deliver new social and affordable homes
2. Ask the appropriate scrutiny committee to consider options and obstacles to housing delivery and to decide areas of focus that are realistic and will lead to housing delivery rather than wasting resource writing 7500 reports and, for each Council owned site and agree what is needed for effective scrutiny through the scrutiny process.
3. Note that the council uses all available legal, planning and enforcement tools – including compulsory purchase powers where justified – to persuade developers and landowners to act.
4. Ask the Leader to write to central government asking for stronger powers to deter land banking and support councils to deliver genuinely affordable homes for local people.

Council agreed to accept the proposed amendment and moved to debate the substantive motion.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Following debate, Council moved to the vote where it was:

RESOLVED: That:

This Council notes:

- **The escalating need for affordable and social housing across the BCP area, with many residents in housing stress or on long waiting lists;**
- **The growing number of vacant and underused sites including:**
 - **The long-neglected Sydenham’s timber site;**
 - **The derelict Old James Brothers scrapyard, and**
 - **The stalled former Power Station development land.**

These sites have remained undeveloped for years, blighting the area, attracting anti-social behaviour, and contributing nothing to local housing need or community wellbeing.

This Council believes:

- **That speculative land banking is unacceptable in the face of a housing crisis;**
- **That there is a duty to local residents to use all available means to bring these sites forward for affordable housing development, in line with Labour’s policy of delivering social and council homes.**

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 1. Ask the Housing Strategy Steering Group to review the Council's Housing Strategy and ensure targets are being met to meet present and future need and deliver on the priority actions identified over the next 18 months including:**
 - I. Reviewing the Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy to deliver new social and affordable rented homes;**
 - II. Regeneration of key sites; Winter Gardens, Holes Bay;**
 - III. Increasing joint working with registered providers to deliver new social and affordable homes**

- 2. Ask the appropriate scrutiny committee to consider options and obstacles to housing delivery and to decide areas of focus that are realistic and will lead to housing delivery rather than wasting resource writing 7500 reports and, for each Council owned site, and agree what is needed for effective scrutiny through the scrutiny process.**
- 3. Note that the council uses use all available legal, planning and enforcement tools – including compulsory purchase powers where justified – to persuade developers and landowners to act.**
- 4. Ask the Leader to write to central government asking for stronger powers to deter land banking and support councils to deliver genuinely affordable homes for local people.**

Voting: Nem. Con.

MANAGING SEASONAL PARKING PRESSURES

Original Motion:

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 9 of the Meeting Procedure Rules:

This Council notes:

- The concerns raised by residents and stakeholders regarding the recent BCP Council parking consultation, which proposed parking restrictions for large numbers of residents without prior engagement, notice or with input from Ward Councillors and other key stakeholders;
- The recurring seasonal pressures on local parking infrastructure, ongoing issues of illegal, dangerous and inconsiderate parking experienced on busy days, particularly near the beach and other public open spaces;
- The importance of tourism to the area and regional economy alongside the need to protect residents from the impact of that tourism;
- That available car parking space does not meet demand at peak times in the year;
- The challenges in enforcing poor parking, due to both the Council's limited resources and national limitations such as on parking fines;
- The growing number of people living in vehicles, including van dwellers, near public open spaces, which can exacerbate seasonal pressures on parking, on top of year-round pressures on parking experienced in some residential areas.

This Council recognises:

- The need to explore alternative methods to tackle illegal and inconsiderate parking at peak times of year;
- The financial and operational challenges BCP Council faces, including limited resources, and that parking enforcement alone is insufficient to manage complex, evolving parking pressures;
- That visitors arriving in BCP after driving long journeys can find limited opportunities on arrival to park conveniently and appropriately in a way that benefits residents;
- That a more joined-up, forward-looking strategy is needed, with solutions developed collaboratively, reflecting the views of all communities and maintaining fairness;
- That the motion on developing a Community Pact with van dwellers, previously supported by this Council, will be discussed at the Environment and Place Overview Scrutiny Committee in September, including identifying designated stopping points for van dwellers, which should help alleviate the additional pressures from people living in vehicles.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Ask the Overview & Scrutiny Board to undertake a review of the recent parking consultation, with the aim of improving future engagement processes. This review to include feedback from residents, business owners, tourism representatives and other stakeholders;
- b) Undertake a feasibility study for a Park & Ride scheme, either during peak months or as a permanent arrangement, working in partnership with local transport providers.
- c) Develop a Seasonal Parking Strategy that assesses both parking provision and seasonal demand and explores;
 - I. Temporary use of suitable vacant or underused council-owned land to meet short-term seasonal demand;
 - II. Liaison with the Police around greater enforcement against illegal and antisocial parking and explore other enforcement options;
 - III. Improved signage directing visitors away from congested roads and warning of the risk of fines, clamping and being towed;
 - IV. Greater use of preventative measures such as temporary physical barriers to areas with recurrent dangerous parking e.g. that restricts emergency vehicles access;
 - V. Updating parking restrictions in popular areas such as Boscombe Overcliff Drive, such as removing overnight parking;
- d) To lobby Government again on increasing parking fines to levels that will deter illegal and inconsiderate parking, or to provide alternative support to tackle the challenges of seasonal tourism.

Altered Motion:

Cllr E Connolly proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor A-M Moriarty, so that it read as follows:

This Council notes:

- The concerns raised by residents and stakeholders regarding the recent BCP Council parking consultation, which proposed parking restrictions for large numbers of residents without prior engagement, notice or with input from Ward Councillors and other key stakeholders;
- The recurring seasonal pressures on local parking infrastructure, ongoing issues of illegal, dangerous and inconsiderate parking experienced on busy days, particularly near the beach and other public open spaces;
- The importance of tourism to the area and regional economy alongside the need to protect residents from the impact of that tourism;
- The challenges in enforcing poor parking, due to both the Council's limited resources and national limitations such as on parking fines;
- The growing number of people living in vehicles, including van dwellers, near public open spaces, which can exacerbate seasonal pressures on parking, on top of year-round pressures on parking experienced in some residential areas.

This Council recognises:

- The need to explore alternative methods to tackle illegal and inconsiderate parking at peak times of year;
- The financial and operational challenges BCP Council faces, including limited resources, and that parking enforcement alone is insufficient to manage complex, evolving parking pressures;
- That a more joined-up, forward-looking strategy is needed, with solutions developed collaboratively, reflecting the views of all communities and maintaining fairness;
- That the motion on developing a Community Pact with van dwellers, previously supported by this Council, will be discussed at the Environment and Place Overview Scrutiny Committee in September, including identifying designated stopping points for van dwellers, which should help alleviate the additional pressures from people living in vehicles.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Ask the Overview & Scrutiny Board to undertake a review of the recent parking consultation, with the aim of improving future engagement processes. This review to include feedback from residents, business owners, tourism representatives and other stakeholders;
- b) Undertake a feasibility study for a Park & Ride scheme, either during peak months or as a permanent arrangement, working in partnership with local transport providers;
- c) Develop a year round Parking Strategy that assesses provision, fairness, use, need and seasonality, including all available

measures, with due awareness for the financial implications. To include but not be limited to:

- I. Temporary use of suitable vacant or underused council-owned land to meet short-term seasonal demand;
 - II. Liaison with the Police around greater enforcement against illegal and antisocial parking and explore other enforcement options;
 - III. Improved signage directing visitors away from congested roads and warning of the risk of fines, clamping and being towed;
 - IV. Greater use of preventative measures such as temporary physical barriers to areas with recurrent dangerous parking e.g. that restricts emergency vehicles access;
 - V. Updating parking restrictions in popular areas such as Boscombe Overcliff Drive, such as removing overnight parking.
- d) To work with the government, on the trial for higher parking fines, assessing the impact. To further assess strategy in conjunction with data collected in the parking consultation. To continue lobbying government and MP's for permanence if appropriate;
 - e) Encourage all Councillors to complete the current government consultation on fairer funding highlighting the challenges seasonal pressures places on all local agencies.
 - f) Write to all of the BCP area MP's, asking that they support the early day motion on releasing the report into pavement parking, the consultation for which closed in November 2020.
 - g) Ask TAG to support this work;
 - h) That this is brought to Environment and Place for further scrutiny.

Council agreed to the proposed amendment without debate.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Council moved to debate on the substantive motion, where it was:

RESOLVED: That:

This Council notes:

- **The concerns raised by residents and stakeholders regarding the recent BCP Council parking consultation, which proposed parking restrictions for large numbers of residents without prior engagement, notice or with input from Ward Councillors and other key stakeholders;**
- **The recurring seasonal pressures on local parking infrastructure, ongoing issues of illegal, dangerous and inconsiderate parking experienced on busy days, particularly near the beach and other public open spaces;**
- **The importance of tourism to the area and regional economy alongside the need to protect residents from the impact of that tourism;**

- The challenges in enforcing poor parking, due to both the Council's limited resources and national limitations such as on parking fines;
- The growing number of people living in vehicles, including van dwellers, near public open spaces, which can exacerbate seasonal pressures on parking, on top of year-round pressures on parking experienced in some residential areas.

This Council recognises:

- The need to explore alternative methods to tackle illegal and inconsiderate parking at peak times of year;
- The financial and operational challenges BCP Council faces, including limited resources, and that parking enforcement alone is insufficient to manage complex, evolving parking pressures;
- That a more joined-up, forward-looking strategy is needed, with solutions developed collaboratively, reflecting the views of all communities and maintaining fairness;
- That the motion on developing a Community Pact with van dwellers, previously supported by this Council, will be discussed at the Environment and Place Overview Scrutiny Committee in September, including identifying designated stopping points for van dwellers, which should help alleviate the additional pressures from people living in vehicles.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Ask the Overview & Scrutiny Board to undertake a review of the recent parking consultation, with the aim of improving future engagement processes. This review to include feedback from residents, business owners, tourism representatives and other stakeholders;
- b) Undertake a feasibility study for a Park & Ride scheme, either during peak months or as a permanent arrangement, working in partnership with local transport providers;
- c) Develop a year round Parking Strategy that assesses provision, fairness, use, need and seasonality, including all available measures, with due awareness for the financial implications. To include but not be limited to:
 - I. Temporary use of suitable vacant or underused council-owned land to meet short-term seasonal demand;
 - II. Liaison with the Police around greater enforcement against illegal and antisocial parking and explore other enforcement options;

- III. Improved signage directing visitors away from congested roads and warning of the risk of fines, clamping and being towed;
 - IV. Greater use of preventative measures such as temporary physical barriers to areas with recurrent dangerous parking e.g. that restricts emergency vehicles access;
 - V. Updating parking restrictions in popular areas such as Boscombe Overcliff Drive, such as removing overnight parking.
- d) To work with the government, on the trial for higher parking fines, assessing the impact. To further assess strategy in conjunction with data collected in the parking consultation. To continue lobbying government and MP's for permanence if appropriate;
 - e) Encourage all Councillors to complete the current government consultation on fairer funding highlighting the challenges seasonal pressures places on all local agencies.
 - f) Write to all of the BCP area MP's, asking that they support the early day motion on releasing the report into pavement parking, the consultation for which closed in November 2020.
 - g) Ask TAG to support this work;
 - h) That this is brought to Environment and Place for further scrutiny.

Voting: Nem. Con.

The 22 July meeting ended at 11.57 pm
The 16 September meeting ended at 9.42 pm

CHAIRMAN

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	Blue Badge Update
Meeting date	17 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report provides an update on the performance of the Blue Badge service following its previous report to Overview & Scrutiny Board on 12 May 2025.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: (a) The updates in this report are noted. (b) The Overview and Scrutiny Board provide any further comment.
Reason for recommendations	To ensure O&S are aware of the improvement work in place and actions being taken to improve performance.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Martin
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Lynda Anderson
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Update

Background

1. At its meeting on 12 May 2025, Overview and Scrutiny Board asked for the service to return to its meeting in 12 months to report further on improving Blue Badge processing times.
2. Several improvements had already been adopted which saw processing time reduce to an average of between 6-7 weeks, and further improvements were suggested as follows:
 - Introduction of an eligibility scoring matrix to enable faster assessments, whilst documenting decisions made during the assessment process and ensuring applications are assessed consistently.
 - The enabling of a 'not for reassessment' flag within the blue badge system to reduce the evidence required for those applicants reapplying with a progressive condition.
3. There was also an action for the Portfolio Holder to follow up on whether the issues raised with the Department of Transport has also been raised with the Local Government Association.

Update

4. This update has been brought forward from May 2026, at the request of Overview & Scrutiny Board, following a concern raised by a Councillor to the Board about increasing processing times.
5. In the last report, it was confirmed that as of 23 April 2025, there were 22,410 Blue Badges on issue within the BCP Council area, an increase of 7% since October 2024. This figure has remained stable at this level.
6. BCP Council receive on average 10,500 applications a year or 880 per month. These join existing applications already in the process of being assessed.
7. Throughput is dependent on verification of information and the provision of evidence to ensure the applicant meets the required threshold for the issuing of a Blue Badge. Currently, 65% of applications do not come with adequate evidence, which causes delays and a sizable caseload.
8. The assessing team is made up of 5 people although many work part-time. The total hours across the team are equivalent to 3.6 FTE.
9. At the time of the previous report in May of this year, new and 'renewal' applications were taking an average of between 6 to 7 weeks which was an improvement on the previous processing times of 14 weeks when reported to the Board in October 2024.
10. However, the processing time has since increased again, and in September 2025 there were approximately 600 applications waiting to be assessed which had been in

the process for longer than 12 weeks, and 2000 applications which were still within 12 weeks.

11. 12 weeks is the suggested guideline given by the Department of Transport for processing applications.
12. The decline in processing times since May 2025, occurred for several reasons:
 - Although we gained an Apprentice role to support admin functions within the team, we subsequently lost an experienced staff members and a further member or staff was absent for a period. This significantly affected the capacity of the team.
 - Temporary staff assigned to support the team reverted to their substantive roles.
 - We removed the temporary 'lighter checks' in place for renewals.
 - The introduction of the eligibility scoring matrix meant staff needed to amend their practice, which coupled with loss of staff, impacted the number of applications being processed as they learned the new approach.
13. The action to introduce a flag to highlight cases which will not need reassessment has been implemented but given the period for reapplication for most will be 3 years, we are not likely to see the impact of this for some time.
14. 127 cases currently have this flag in place.

Current Performance

15. Since Cllr Martin proactively advised Councillors Blue Badge processing times were increasing we have been working to reduce the backlog and tracking progress.
16. As of 2 November 2025, the number of applications awaiting assessment for over 12 weeks has decreased from 600 to 296 and the number waiting up to 12 weeks has reduced from 2000 to 1619. Work continues to bring these waiting times down.
17. Processing times by type of application are averaging at:
 - PIP/DLA – 1 week and 4 days
 - New – 14 weeks and 2 days
 - Renew – 12 weeks and 3 days
18. The team have borrowed some resource from Business Support and other parts of the Customer team to help support processing. They have also filled the vacant post within the team. These are not permanent additions to the team and will not resolve the issue long term.

Process Review

19. The processing of Blue Badge applications has been problematic for the Council within the suggested 12-week timeframe for some time. Whilst efforts have been made to improve parts of the process, it is evident that there are continued ups and downs in performance.
20. The cycle of borrowing staff to achieve more timely outputs is not a sustainable way to continue and the fragile resilience of the team to cope when staff are on leave, sick or move on from the organisation brings with it continued risk to processing times.
21. Over the last 4 weeks a project has started to look at the process end-to-end utilising the skills of a Business Analyst to understand where improvements and efficiencies can be gained.

22. A list of 'pain points' have been recorded, integration between systems and customer interfaces mapped, and a suite of suggestions compiled for a new 'to be' process to be designed.

Customer Improvement

23. Members of the O&S Board will be aware that when the Council Wide Transformation Program was closed in March 2025, a commitment was given to move remaining work into business-as-usual delivery or into dedicated programmes.
24. The [Operating Model](#) is at the heart of the Council's Corporate Strategy in expanding digital services, developing centres of expertise, and driving through change using data and insight, to improve the quality of services to our residents.
25. The Transformation Programme delivered a single BCP Council Customer Relationship Management System (CRM), and the next step, through a dedicated programme, is to systematically and progressively undertake process reviews to improve the experience for our customers whilst realising increased efficiency and digital proficiency.
26. As part of the scoping work, the Blue Badge process is being used to form a framework to enable a stream of end-to-end process reviews within the contact centre, and a core group of colleagues are working towards a potential process rebuild within the CRM for April 2026.
27. The work will report through the Customer Programme Board and ultimately will underpin future end to end service redesigns.
28. Whilst the work on the Blue Badge process is still in its early stages, we hope to reduce the number of systems in use, implement a process which comes direct into the Council rather than via the generic Government service, recognises the different steps required in approving different types of applications, and provides integrated guidance to improve understanding amongst applicants about eligibility and requirement for evidence.

Summary of financial implications

29. There are no financial implications associated with this report. Any improvements need to be delivered within existing budget arrangements.

Summary of legal implications

30. There are no legal implications connected with this update.

Summary of human resources implications

31. There are no human resources implications connected with this update.

Summary of sustainability impact

32. There is no sustainability implications connected with this update.

Summary of public health implications

33. There is no public health implication connected with this update

Summary of equality implications

34. There are no changes connected with this update which require an equalities impact assessment.

Appendices

35. There are no appendices to this report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AND COMMITTEES



Report subject	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report
Meeting date	To be provided to the following Overview and Scrutiny meetings: Overview and Scrutiny Board – 17 November 2025 Environment & Place O&S Committee – 19 November 2025 Children's Services O&S Committee – 25 November 2025 Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee – 1 December 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This is the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council. There is a requirement to report on the work of O&S to the O&S Board and Committees and then to Council. This promotes visibility of the O&S function and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required. The annual report contains a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2024-25, reflections on working practices and identified improvements to strengthen the O&S function. This report version is for consideration by the O&S Board and O&S committees, providing opportunity for comment prior to the supply of the final report to Council. The Council will be the decision maker on any recommendations for change within the report. The final report to Council will be updated to incorporate the views of the O&S Board and Committees on these recommendations.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: 1. The Board/ Committee consider and comment on the annual report. 2. The Board/ Committee comment on the proposed recommendation to Council that the Overview and Scrutiny committee structure as outlined in figure one be agreed. 3. The Board/ Committee comment on the proposed recommendations to Council aimed at maximising the resource available for O&S work: i) for pieces of in-depth work, the constitution be

	updated to allow one scrutiny topic to be undertaken at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period. ii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure. iii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis to provide peer test and challenge. iv) the Monitoring Officer be delegated to make the associated updates to the Constitution.
Reason for recommendations	The Constitution requires the Statutory Scrutiny Officer to report to Council on an annual basis on the work of Overview and Scrutiny, including recommendations for any changes that may be required to ensure the function remains fit for purpose. The report must be informed by consultation with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the O&S Committees and referred to the four O&S Committees for comment. Consideration and comment on the annual report by the O&S Committees and Council upholds principle b) of good scrutiny, as outlined in the Constitution, that O&S shall 'be a Councillor led and owned function that seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development'.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function.
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn - Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall – Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

1. [‘Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities’](#) by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), recommends that councils report annually on their Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) function and activity. The purpose of the report is to outline the activity and output of the O&S function

over the previous year and to identify improvements for the function to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This report is based on the municipal year of May 2024 - April 2025.

2. The report will be received by all O&S Committees and at a meeting of Council but is aimed at all stakeholders of O&S – this includes those within the Council, external partners, and the public and communities served by the council.
3. This is the report of the council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer, who is responsible for supporting and promoting O&S activity. Contribution has been made by other officers who provide support to O&S, and Chairs and Vice Chairs of O&S committees. Comments made by Chairs and Vice Chairs through consultation are reflected within the body of this report.

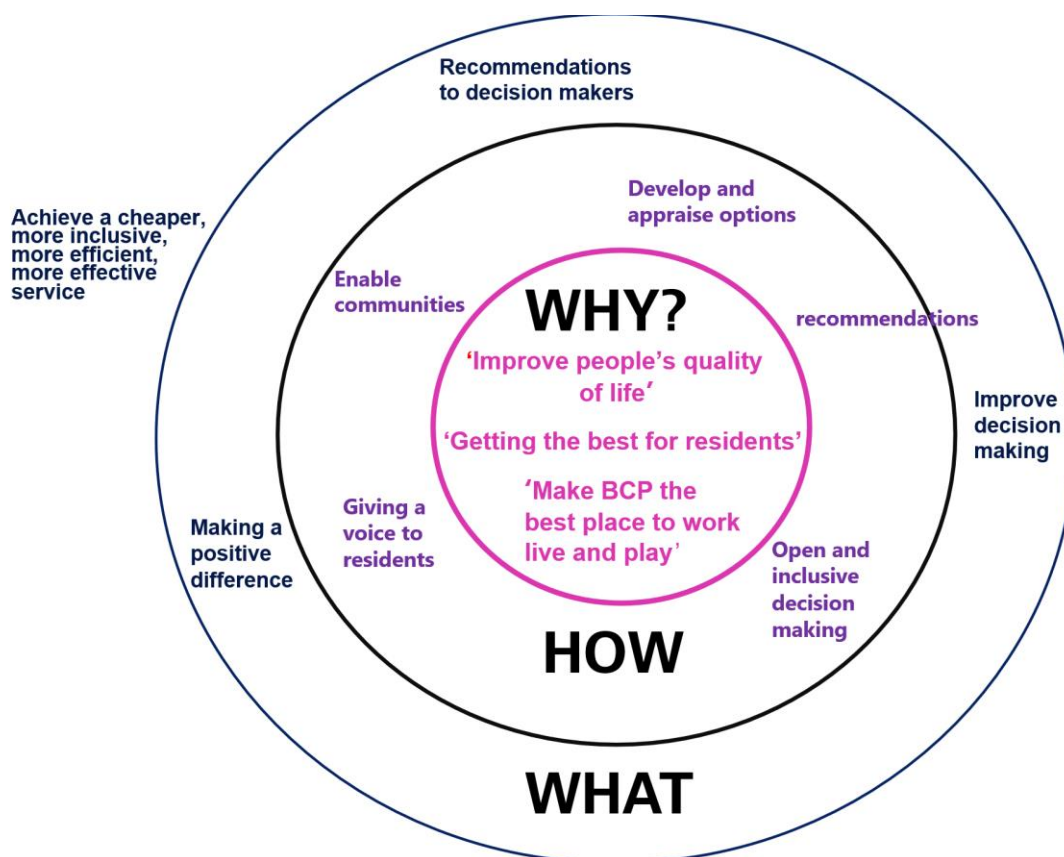
What is Overview and Scrutiny?

4. The purpose and principles of overview and scrutiny and its role in supporting the ambitions and values of the council is set out in Appendix 1.

What does good scrutiny look like?

5. There is not one definition of good scrutiny. In development workshops in 2025, stakeholders of O&S worked together to articulate their view on what good scrutiny looks like in BCP council. This is illustrated below as a 'What/How/ Why' of good scrutiny, and an outline of good scrutiny ways of working:

Good scrutiny – what/ how / why – defined by BCP O&S members, Cabinet and senior officers:



Good scrutiny – ways of working – defined by BCP O&S members, Cabinet and senior officers:

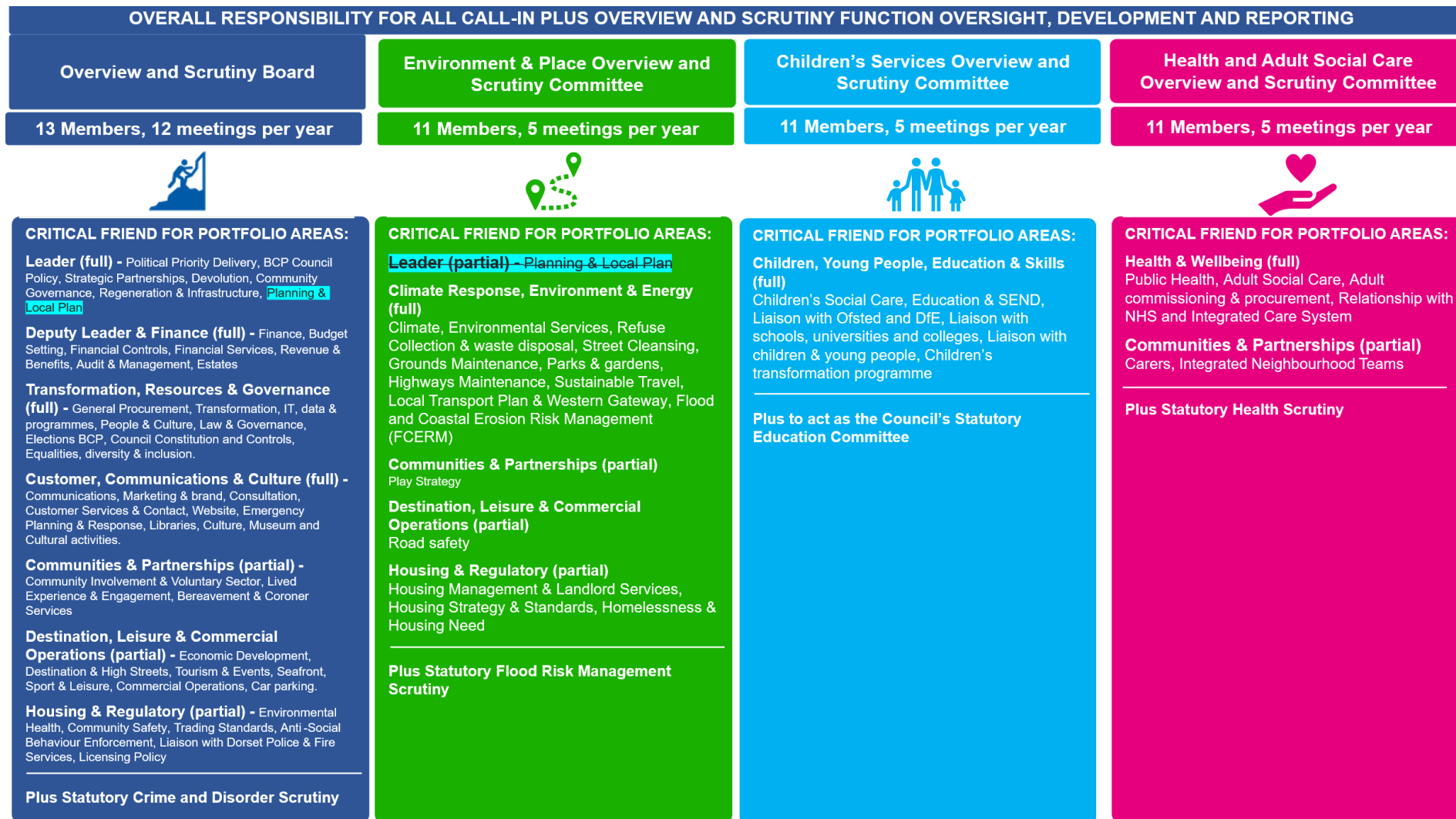
Approaches	Ask sensible questions
	Critical friend
	Sharing information
	Exploring information and data
	Wider input from members and community
Accountability	Accountability, defending decisions
	Holding systems, officers and outside bodies to account
	Asking questions of officials and portfolio holders
Policy development	A check on policy
	Adding value to the position, policy on output
	Opportunity to refine decisions and ensure views are considered
Overview and direction setting	More overview – forward looking
	Venue for fresh ideas

6. Understanding what good scrutiny looks like in BCP is important as this helps stakeholders of O&S work towards a common aim and to reflect on how well the organisation is meeting this aim. This annual report forms a key part of the reflection process and allows councillors the opportunity to refresh their understanding of the aims and purpose of scrutiny.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee structure

7. The current Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure is illustrated in figure one below. The Council's Constitution makes provision for any changes required to the structure to be reported to Council as part of this annual report, to ensure committees remain fit for purpose. Councillors will note that 'Planning and the Local Plan' is highlighted and listed under the responsibilities of the O&S Board and removed from the responsibilities of the Environment & Place O&S Committee. This change was agreed by the Monitoring Officer in 2025 in consultation with O&S Chairs under constitution rules relating to joint working, to allow for more flexible interaction with the developing local plan through the higher frequency of O&S Board meetings. It is suggested that this now be agreed by Council as a permanent change to ensure clear lines of reporting.

Figure One – Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure



Overview & Scrutiny Activity 2024/25

8. A full outline of Overview and Scrutiny activity during this reporting year is attached at Appendix 2. This includes a summary of scrutiny topics and outcomes by committee, improvements and successes, and future aims.

Overview & Scrutiny Action Plan

9. An O&S Action Plan was agreed by Council in September 2023, to identify strategic actions to improve O&S activity in BCP Council and bring working practices in line with statutory guidance. Actions were originally planned for completion within one year but have slowed as a result of resource pressures with core service activity prioritised over action plan progression. The plan now is now at over 75% completion. More detail is set out in Appendix 2 and the full O&S Action Plan is appended to this report.

Recommendations from Council to Overview & Scrutiny

10. During 2024/25 there was a marked increase in recommendations from Council to Overview and Scrutiny committees to undertake work (detailed further in Appendix 2). This increase shows a greater council-wide understanding of the role that O&S can play in developing policy and providing critical friend test and challenge to issues of importance to councillors and residents.
11. When receiving a request for work, including requests from Council, O&S committees are required to weigh up the likely added value of any work suggestion and the resources available to it to proceed with the request. Many suggestions from Council to scrutiny have been agreed by O&S committees but not yet progressed owing to lack of work programme capacity. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs have asked that, through this report, councillors be reminded that whilst Council can ask Overview and Scrutiny to undertake work, it is in the gift of the relevant O&S committee to determine whether to agree to this request and when to timetable work, taking account of other work programme priorities.
12. Many recommendations from Council to O&S result from motions raised by councillors. To make this process more effective, it is recommended that Councillors wishing to raise a Council motion for O&S work seek prior consultation with the relevant O&S Chair. This will enable them to gain an understanding of available O&S resources, the alignment of their motion with existing work programme priorities and so the likelihood of their work suggestion being agreed / progressing in a timely way through O&S.

Resourcing Overview & Scrutiny

Background and Challenges

13. Resources available to support Overview and Scrutiny are stretched and have been well documented in previous annual reports which are available to view as background papers. The most significant pressures relate to previous cumulative Council decisions to increase the number of O&S committees and meeting numbers over time, not matched by officer resource to support these. Accompanied by an increase in other committees also resourced by the same team (Democratic Services) the overall resource available to support Overview and Scrutiny work has reduced whilst the level of O&S and other committee activity has increased. This is illustrated in figure two below which shows the total meeting numbers resourced by the Democratic Services team.

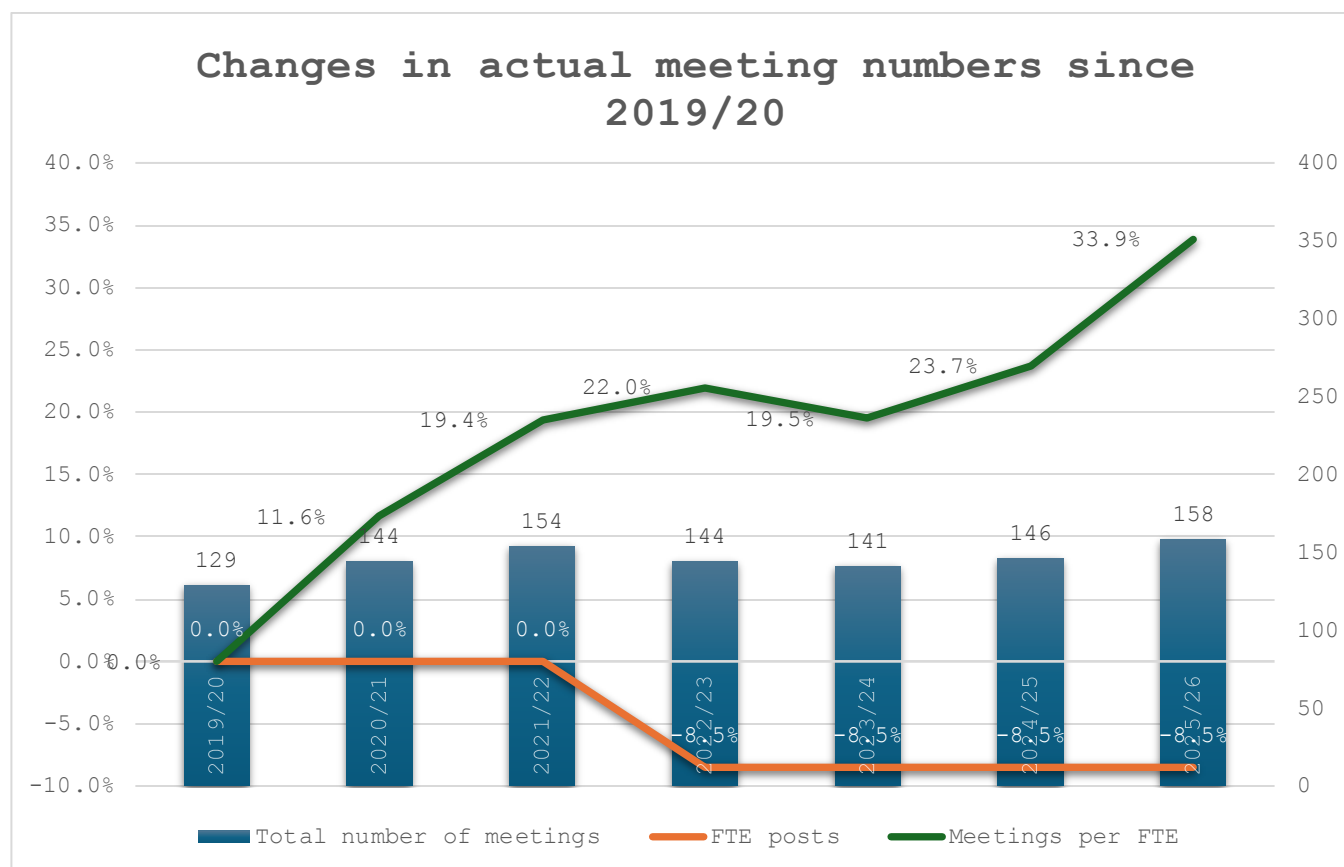


Figure Two – BCP meeting numbers in relation to Democratic Services Team resource.

14. More recently resource has been further strained by a high number of working groups and other in-depth scrutiny work (such as committee based proactive inquiries) scheduled to take place concurrently, as permitted under the constitution. An increase in work programme suggestions being received from councillors and other council bodies has also been seen, and day to day advice and guidance to councillors and officers on O&S has also increased in line with this. Whilst this reflects a healthy engagement with the O&S function and a wider understanding of the ability of O&S to undertake work which contributes to the priorities of the Council, this has added additional pressure to resources.
15. The impact of highly stretched resource has been a slow rate of progression for planned work, delays to strategic O&S work (such as annual work programme activity), limited resource available to respond to arising issues throughout the year and the likelihood that O&S outcomes have been limited in value as planned work has not benefitted from effective levels of officer support.
16. Scoping support: analysis of scrutiny outcomes in 2024/25 indicates that the current level of activity in O&S could benefit from strengthened scoping to plan for valuable outcomes. In 2024/25 an average of 25% agenda items across all O&S committee meetings led to recommendations. Whilst not all scrutiny work will lead to recommendations, this figure indicates that there is room for more targeted selection

of scrutiny topics and stronger scoping of the topics selected to ensure that O&S activity has impact.

Addressing resource challenges

Levels of concurrent work

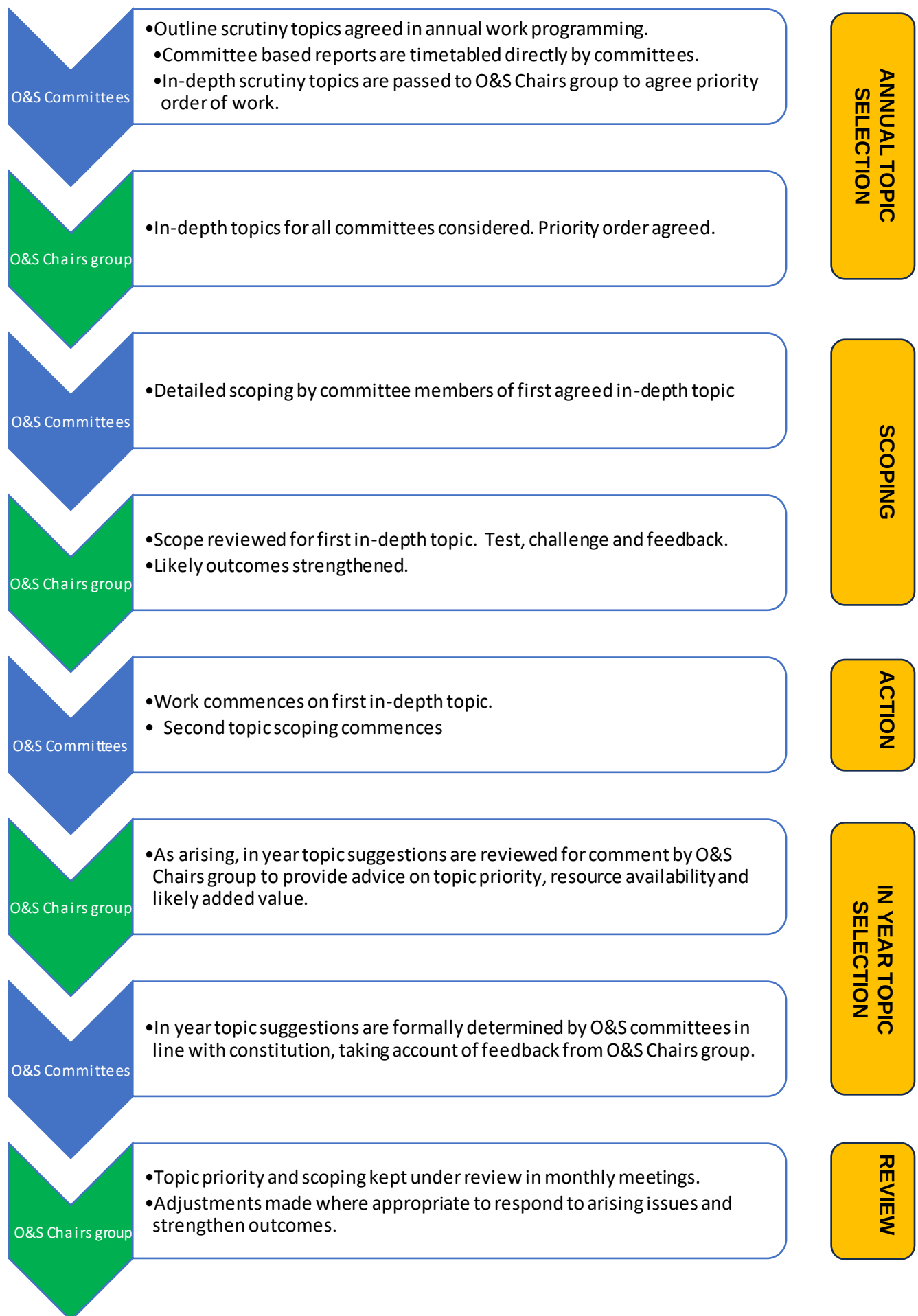
17. Under current Constitution rules, up to four committees are able to undertake one piece of in-depth work concurrently with no limit on scoping activity. This high level of concurrent activity across all O&S committees dilutes the level of officer support that is available for this purpose and risks a quantity over quality approach. To make better use of existing resources it is recommended that greater controls be placed around the use of resource for work that requires significant planning and resource to undertake (eg. working groups/ in-depth committee inquiries). **For pieces of in-depth work, it is recommended that the constitution be updated to allow one topic to be scrutinised at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period (Option A).** This will enable greater and more timely focus and support to selected topics in train.

Topic prioritisation

18. To agree the priority of in-depth topics, **it is recommended that the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure.** Currently, all O&S committees are able to decide their own work priorities. It is not proposed that this be changed but adding a level of O&S leadership sign off to the implementation of in-depth work will provide tighter grip to the use of resource and test and challenge to the selection of topics before work commences.

Topic scoping

19. To plan for valuable O&S outcomes, **it is recommended that the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis.** This group of O&S lead members have received a higher level of training in achieving effective O&S outcomes and are well placed to provide peer challenge.
20. Figure three below illustrates the proposed oversight to be provided by the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group. It is intended that this will provide opportunity for an ongoing dialogue with committees to give views on topic suggestions, resource availability and likely added value of the topics suggested. It is suggested that this be kept under continuous review to ensure that arrangements are fit for purpose.



Maximising Resource – Rapporteurs

21. Along with effective topic prioritisation, O&S resource can be maximised by a member-led approach to scrutiny that capitalises on the strengths and interests of individual committee members. An effective way to do this is through the use of rapporteurs. O&S committees have appointed more rapporteurs in 2024/25, and O&S Chairs intend to embed the use of these further in future. Rapporteurs are councillor champions appointed by an O&S committee to work independently towards an agreed remit and report back to committee. The model is suited to the progression of light touch scrutiny topics and research, such as gathering background information on a topic through conversations with officers and portfolio holders. By establishing rapporteurs O&S committees can spread workload across members with relevant skills and interests and progress issues in a timely way.
22. As a working method, rapporteurs rely on officers and portfolio holders working with them in a flexible and transparent way to share information, as they would if a committee report were requested by an O&S committee. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs have asked that awareness of rapporteurs be raised through this annual report. Further information on rapporteurs and other working methods that will maximise resource is contained within Appendix 2.

Options Appraisal

23. Option A (Recommended option) -

- i) for pieces of in-depth work, the constitution be updated to allow one topic to be undertaken at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period.
- ii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure.
- iii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis to provide peer test and challenge.
- iv) the Monitoring Officer be delegated to make the associated updates to the Constitution.

More detail on this option is outlined in the paragraphs above. This option is preferred because it will allow work to progress in a more focussed and timely way and will release capacity for greater scoping support for agreed priorities. The option does not require any significant change to the current O&S committee structure or committee numbers and has no financial implications.

24. **Option B** – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource is released to support this work through a review of the O&S committee structure to reduce committee numbers and thereby reduce meeting numbers.

A review of the O&S committee structure will be required if this is the preferred option, including stakeholder consultation. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report.

If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

- 25. Option C** – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource is released to support this work through a reduction in the overall number of meetings across all O&S committees.

A review of O&S committee numbers will be required if this is the preferred option, including stakeholder consultation. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report. If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

- 26. Option D** – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource to the Democratic Services team is increased to provide greater support to O&S work.

To advance this option, a bid will need to be prepared to set out the required resource. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report. If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

- 27. Option E** – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but in-depth work is outsourced to an external body such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, to undertake work on behalf of the council.

(Note – this option was considered unfavourable by the O&S Chairs' group in early consultation due to likely prohibitive costs and reduction in council ownership of work. If this option is preferred it will require further consideration and reporting to identify financial implications).

- 28. Option F** – No change.

If no change is made resources will be used to support statutory work as a priority (eg. scheduled meetings and associated activity). Non-statutory O&S activity may be delayed or not delivered. This includes a delay to the progression of working groups and in-depth O&S work and limitations on scoping support which will affect the outcomes of work. Additional O&S activity such as annual work programming may not be supported and committees will instead plan work on a rolling basis. Proactive budget scrutiny, over and above committee meeting-based scrutiny, may not be fulfilled.

Summary of financial implications

29. There are no direct financial implications related with the production of this annual report. The report explores the implications of resourcing O&S in paragraphs 13 to 22 above. Should options D-E above be supported it is recommended that a further report be brought forward to set out the detail of financial implications associated with pursuing these options.

Summary of legal implications

30. Overview and Scrutiny is a statutory function of all councils operating an executive model of decision making. Improvements to the function, outlined in the report, will ensure that the work of O&S Committees in BCP Council complies with relevant legislation and upholds statutory guidance.

Summary of human resources implications

31. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

32. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

33. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

34. Equality impact screening has been undertaken in relation to the preferred option in the report and the EIA is attached at Appendix 4. This has indicated that there are no equality implications relating to the proposals within this report and so no mitigations are required. Should other options within the report be preferred these will be the subject of a further report and associated EIA as appropriate.

Summary of risk assessment

35. The improvements identified for O&S, as set out in Appendix 2 and recommended above, will promote the upholding of statutory guidance and valuable O&S outcomes. There is a risk that the guidance will not be properly upheld by the Council if actions identified within this report, particularly those to address resources, are not taken; although this risk is low as it is for each local authority to implement their own scrutiny arrangements in response to the statutory guidance.

Background papers

Published works:

- [‘Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities’](#) the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)
- [Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-23](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1– Overview and Scrutiny statutory powers and BCP context

Appendix 2 – Overview & Scrutiny 2024/25 Activity

Appendix 3 – Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STATUTORY POWERS AND BCP CONTEXT

WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

1. Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is an integral part of the Council's governance structure and is a statutory requirement for BCP Council. All councils operating executive arrangements must have at least one O&S committee. In BCP Council, O&S activity is carried out by four O&S committees formed of councillors and co-opted members. These are:
 - The Overview and Scrutiny Board
 - Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of Council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account.
3. O&S committees are not decision-making bodies but can influence decisions through powers to obtain information, require attendance from council officers and members and to make recommendations. Under the [Local Government Act 2000](#), O&S committees have the right to scrutinise '*any matter affecting the local authority area or the inhabitants of the area.*'
4. Additional powers to scrutinise NHS services and review the work of the local community safety partnership mean that O&S committees have an important role in acting as a 'check and balance' to decisions made both within the council and in external organisations.
5. The overall aim of O&S activity is to impact in a tangible way on the council and the residents it serves. The Ministerial foreword of '[Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities](#)' by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) states:

"The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.

Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership, and service failure."

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SCRUTINY

6. The majority of councils base their O&S arrangements on commonly held principles of good scrutiny. These are set out in the [BCP Constitution](#), which states that the O&S committees shall:
- a) contribute to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend';
 - b) be a Councillor led and owned function that seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development;
 - c) enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process;
 - d) engage in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence;
 - e) contribute to and reflect the vision and priorities of the Council; and
 - f) be agile and be able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

Through their work, O&S councillors should seek to uphold these principles.

SUPPORTING THE AMBITIONS AND VALUES OF THE COUNCIL

7. O&S can support the high level aims of the council by aligning its work to the priorities identified within the council's corporate plan entitled '[A Shared Vision for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, 2024-28](#)'. The plan was refreshed in May 2024. With the remit of O&S committees spanning all service areas of the council, O&S activity has the potential to support the following vision and priorities identified within the corporate plan:

Our vision:

- Where people, nature, coast and towns come together in sustainable, safe and healthy communities.

Our priorities:

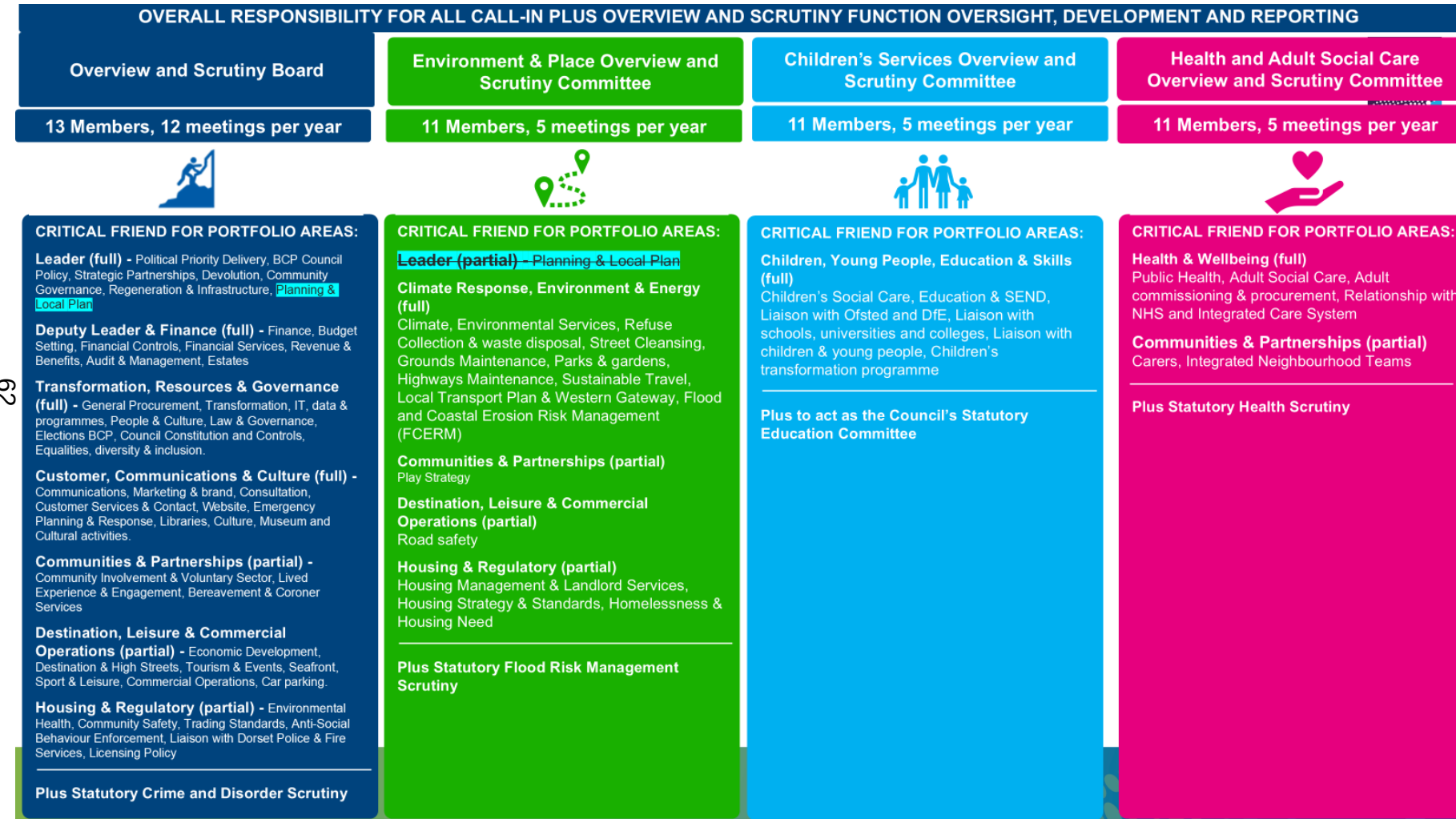
- Our place and environment: Vibrant places, where people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy, natural environment.
- Our people and communities: Everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all.

This could be achieved through alignment of O&S work plans to policy areas earmarked for development within the corporate plan. O&S can also provide benefit by monitoring the progress of the council against the ambitions set out in the corporate plan, through engagement with the relevant aspects of performance dashboards.

Overview & Scrutiny

2024/25 Activity

BCP Overview & Scrutiny Committee structure



The structure consists of one Board and three committees, with remits aligned to Portfolio Holder responsibilities.

The Board has additional responsibilities, but each O&S body is distinctly separate and has powers to set its own programme of work.

Recent changes to the structure are identified in highlighted text.

Overview & Scrutiny Board



63



**CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
STEPHEN
BARTLETT**



**VICE CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
SUE
AITKENHEAD**



**MEETINGS: 10
ORDINARY, 2
SPECIAL
MEETINGS**



**MEMBERSHIP: 13
COUNCILLORS**

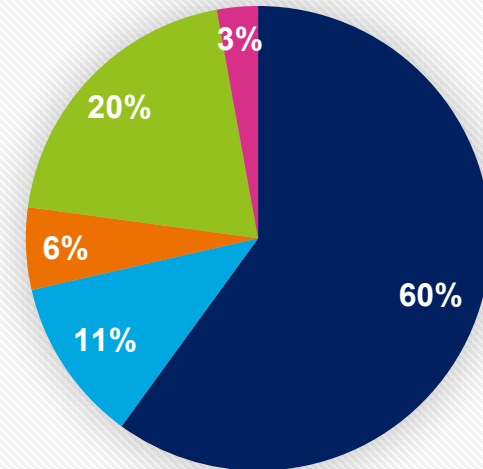


**AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
AGENDA ITEMS –
2.9**



**WORKING
GROUPS - 2**

O&S Board Agenda Item Categories

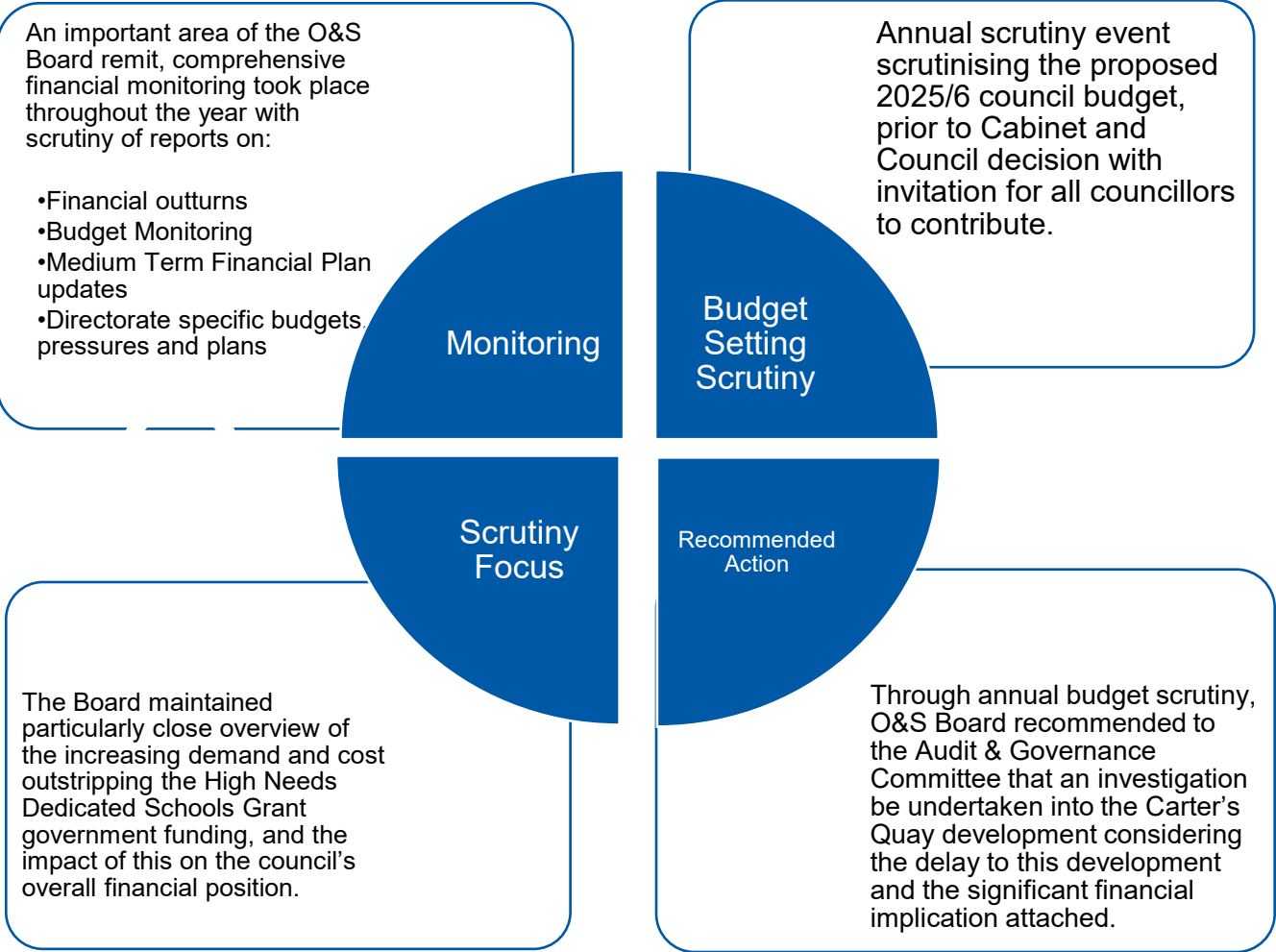


- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Reactive scrutiny
- Call-In
- Proactive scrutiny
- Update/ monitoring reports

Overview & Scrutiny Board - Scrutinising the Council's Finances



Ongoing in year monitoring of finance related Cabinet reports:



Scrutiny of the developing 2025/26 budget:

Budget Working Group

Deep dive scrutiny into budgets associated with **car parking** and the proposed **Resident's Card**.

Working group provided test, challenge and ideas to strengthen the areas selected. Working group recommendations to Cabinet included:

Car Parking

- Inflationary increases across all car parks endorsed;
- Proposal for use of surplus car parking income to accelerate the car park charging machine replacement programme;
- Exploration of options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance on Council website.

Resident's Card

- Proposed small financial contribution for the Resident's Card, to make it a financially sustainable offer to residents; concessions to the charge to be considered for disadvantaged groups.

Overview & Scrutiny Board



Scrutinising Corporate Activity

The Board scrutinised key areas of council activity:

- The Council's **Transformation Programme**
- **Regeneration updates**, including scrutiny of activity of the **Bournemouth Development Company**
- **Seafront Strategy**
- Strategic use of the **Community Infrastructure Levy**
- **Pay & Reward**
included multiple update reports and one call-in meeting.
The Board determined that no scrutiny advice was required to be given to Cabinet following the call-in.
- Monitoring the impact and effectiveness of the whole O&S function through scrutiny of the **O&S Annual Report**.

Developing Policy

- Open discussion items to test, challenge & contribute views to emerging policies including:
 - **The Library Strategy**
 - **Centralised complaints policy**
 - **Community Governance Review**
 - **Devolution**
 - Discussion items in committee to consider the council's position on joining with other local authorities to form a strategic authority across a wider area.
 - O&S recommended, and Cabinet agreed, that an emergency Council meeting was required to include all councillors in this important decision.

Performance Monitoring

- Contribution to the refreshed **Corporate Plan**
- **Corporate Performance Dashboard** demo and scrutiny
- **Best Value Notice**- monitoring this improvement activity until conclusion with the lifting of the Best Value Notice.
- **Quarterly performance 'for information' reports** – regular monitoring of these reports allows scrutiny members to identify red flags and issues which may benefit from scrutiny.
- Reports circulated outside of meetings to reserve committee time for impactful scrutiny.

Overview & Scrutiny Board

Monitoring Impact



Blue Badge Service

- Monitoring reports of improvement actions following scrutiny of the service in 2023.
- Original scrutiny requested triggered by councillor and community concerns about lengthy waiting times for badge renewals and the negative impact on residents who may be left without a badge whilst waiting for a renewal.
- Update reports showed that changes in operational activities were being implemented with streamlined assessments, renewals being prioritised and good practice from other authorities being adopted in BCP.
- A final report in May 2025 highlighted that waiting times had significantly reduced.

Working Groups



Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:

BCP Consultation approaches

- Working group commissioned to provide test and challenge to a refreshed Consultation Framework, as it develops.

Budget working group

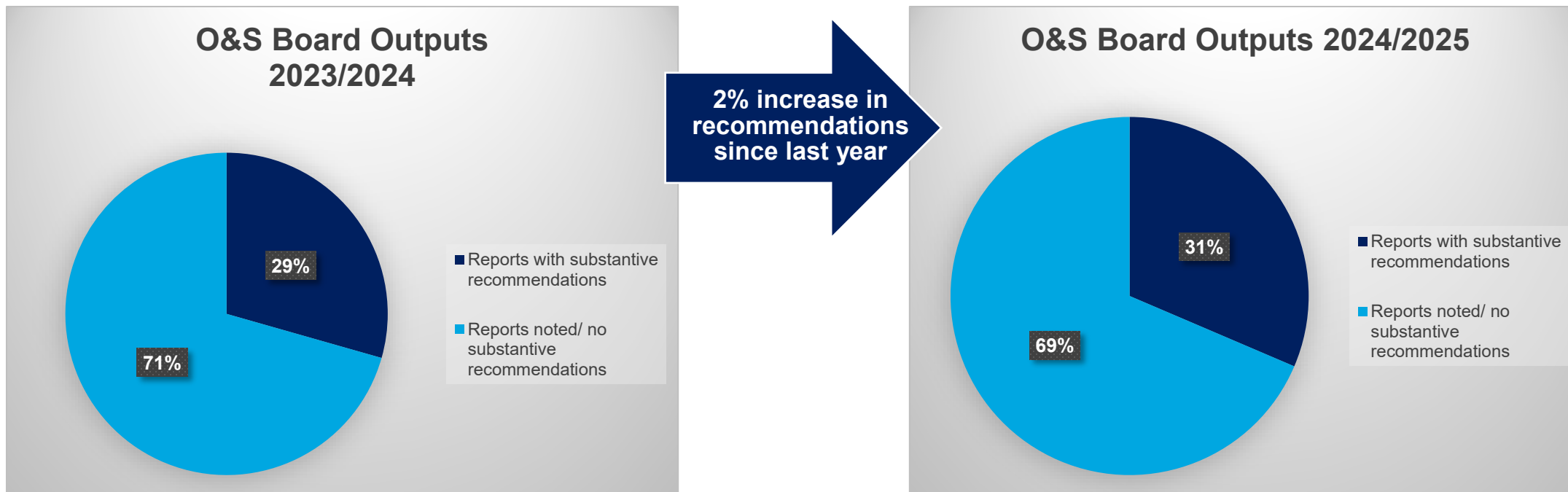
- Deep dive into the budgets associated with car parking and residents card, providing opportunity to test and challenge and influence the related 2025/26 budget as it develops.

Statutory Scrutiny



Scrutiny of the **Community Safety Partnership** – fulfilling the requirement for councils to undertake crime and disorder scrutiny annually.

Overview & Scrutiny Board



Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee



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**CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
CHRIS RIGBY**



**VICE CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
DAVID D'ORTON-
GIBSON**



**MEETINGS: 5
ORDINARY, 0
SPECIAL
MEETINGS**



**MEMBERSHIP: 11
COUNCILLORS**



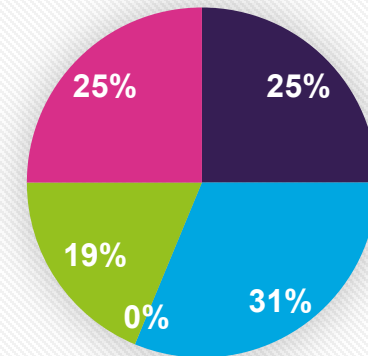
**AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
AGENDA ITEMS –
3.2**



**WORKING
GROUPS - 2**



Environment & Place O&S Agenda Item Categories



- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Proactive scrutiny
- Reactive scrutiny
- Update/ monitoring reports
- Referrals from Cabinet/ Council

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Listening to Residents

Prompted by high levels of public interest, the committee held a scrutiny session dedicated to hearing views on the **trial closure to vehicles of an entrance to Poole Park**. The committee assessed a range of **views and evidence, including:**

- Over 30 public questions and statements, for and against the closure.
- The outcome of a four- week public consultation
- The impact of the trial closure on the elderly and disabled through a report by DOTS disability.
- Portfolio Holder and ward councillor views.
- An officer report outlining the purpose of the trial closure and anticipated benefits to the environment of Poole Park.

The committee recommended to Cabinet that a full Council debate and decision should be held on the topic in light of the significant public interest. This was not upheld by Cabinet and the closure was confirmed as permanent.

Climate & Nature Scrutiny

A central part of the committee's remit, the committee scrutinised a range of areas relating to climate & nature:

- Monitoring work relating to **Nutrient Neutrality** in respect of Phosphates in the River Avon.
- **Heathland Mitigation** - monitoring work that mitigates the impact of housing on Dorset's lowland heaths.
- Scrutiny of progress across the council towards reaching climate action goals through the **Climate Action Annual Report**.
- Review of the Council's new **BCP Greenhouse Gas Emissions Dashboard**, with scrutiny recommendations to strengthen targets for carbon emission reduction.
- Through the budget working group, the committee recommended that Cabinet **strengthen the corporate approach to financing the council's climate action goals**, to enable the council to meet its net zero targets by 2030.

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Monitoring Improvements



- Scrutinising the performance of the **Planning Service** to monitor improvements including the reduction of the planning application backlog and stabilisation of the workforce.

Adding value through rapporteurs



The committee increased its capacity to undertake work through member-led rapporteur scrutiny.

Rapporteurs work towards an agreed remit on behalf of the committee, liaising with officers to progress issues outside of meeting and reporting activity back to the full committee

This year, Councillor Felicity Rice worked with officers to progress a Play Streets policy, which sets out how residents can close streets to make them safe for children to play and socialise. The work led to the drafting of a policy in readiness for launch.

Further rapporteurs were established in 2025 and their work will be reported in the 2025/26 annual report.

Housing Scrutiny



- **Housing Strategy review** – scrutiny of the refreshed housing strategy with recommendations made regarding the governance and monitoring of the strategy.
- **Safe Accommodation Strategy** – the committee established a working group to test, challenge and contribute to the developing strategy which outlines how the council will support residents in need of housing due to domestic abuse.

Working Groups

- Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:
- **Budget Working Group** – topics covered: climate & ecological emergency budget; housing temporary accommodation budget.
- Recommendations included requesting a gap analysis of the estimated total amount of spend required to reach net zero targets and including the costs within the MTFP
- **Safe Accommodation Strategy Working Group**
- Recommendations included an awareness campaign to inform residents escaping domestic abuse about the financial and housing support available to them; suggestions to strengthen the strategy itself and councillor awareness of it; suggestions for KPIs to be introduced to monitor the effectiveness of the new safe accommodation model.

Council Driven Scrutiny

The Committee saw an uplift in suggested topics for scrutiny, generated by debate at full Council meetings or portfolio holder suggestions. Topics submitted included:

Safe Accommodation Strategy

Van Life

Climate & Nature scrutiny

Cliff and Coastal erosion

Redhill paddling pool

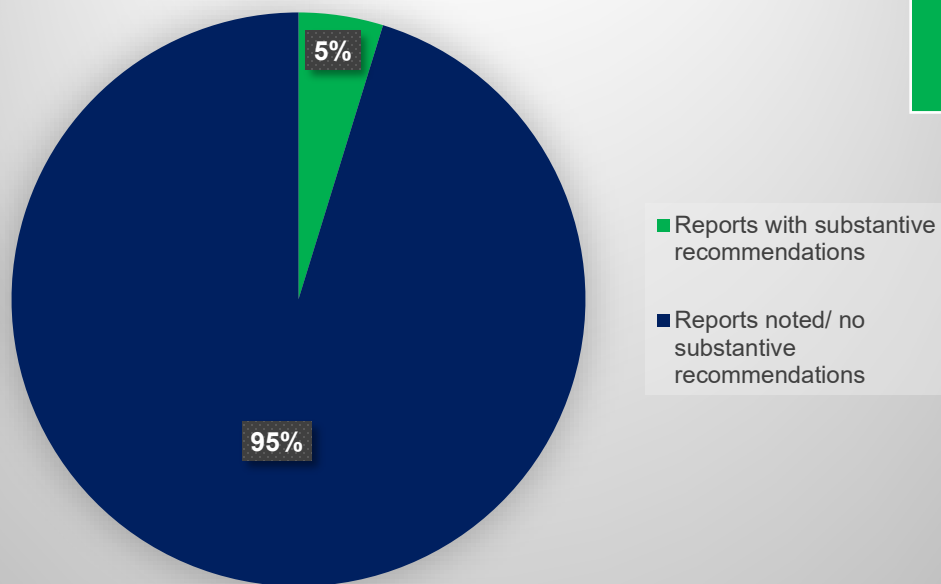
Strengthening building standards through local authority control.

A Safe Accommodation working group was established in response (see above), and other topics were added to the committee's work programme for later work.

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

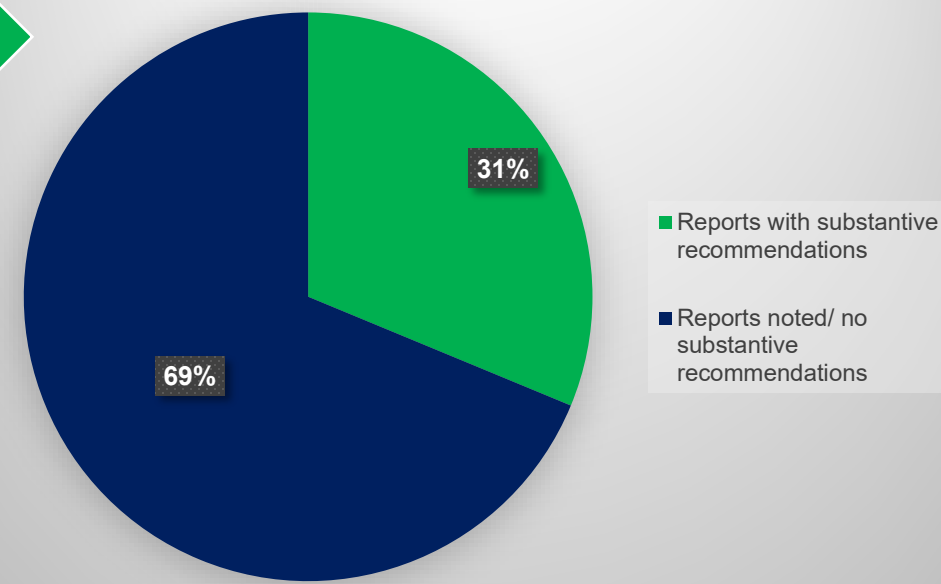


Environment & Place O&S Outputs
2023/2024



26% increase in
recommendations
since last year

Environment & Place O&S Outputs
2024/2025



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
SHARON CARR-
BROWN**



**VICE CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
SIMON BULL**



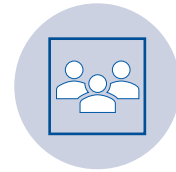
MEETINGS: 5
ORDINARY, 0
SPECIAL
MEETINGS



MEMBERSHIP: 11
COUNCILLORS



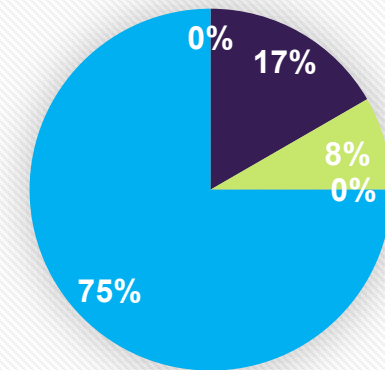
AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
AGENDA ITEMS –
4.8



WORKING
GROUPS - 2



Children's Services O&S Agenda Item Categories



- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Proactive scrutiny
- Reactive scrutiny
- Update/ monitoring reports
- Referrals from Cabinet/ Council

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Scrutinising new activity

The committee scrutinised new decisions and strategies prior to adoption, applying test and challenge to strengthen outcomes:

- **Linwood Special School** – the committee scrutinised the Cabinet paper prior to decision and recommended that expansion of the school go ahead.
- **Children in care and care experienced young people sufficiency strategy** – setting out how BCP will provide sufficient, safe, secure and sustainable homes for children in care and care experienced young people between 2024-2028.
- **Children & Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-2030**- a high-level strategic plan that outlines how to support children and young people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole with the aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people.
- **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-2025** – an evaluation of childcare places to ensure that there are enough to meet the needs of the BCP area.

Monitoring progress

In its role as a critical friend, the Committee monitored key areas of activity within children's services:

- **SEND progress updates** including discussions and continued public interest in the Safety Valve Programme.
- **Children's social care improvement journey**- in keeping with previous years' work, the committee supported this critical area of improvement in the council and closely monitored activity along the way. In 2025 the council moved from an 'inadequate' to a 'good' Ofsted rating.
- **Independent Reviewing Officer annual report.**
- **Speech and language therapy update**

Holding decision makers to account

- The committee received updates on activity from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education & Skills at every meeting, providing opportunity for questions and idea sharing.

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Scrutinising the Council's Finances

The committee considered a range of financial reports to monitor budget and pressures within children's services, and the impact on children and families. This included:

- **An update on the full children's services budget**
- **Alternative Provision** – an update on the services provided to support mainstream inclusion and action being taken to positively impact the trajectory of high needs expenditure.
- **The High Needs Schools Grant Expenditure Forecast**
- **Children's Services Capital Strategy** – setting out the capital funding available to the service and improvement priorities aligned.
- The committee also recommended that Cabinet **assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget**, which Cabinet agreed to through a dedicated report.

Gaining insight

In addition to councillors bringing insight from their own work with residents and schools, the committee heard from:

- **Youth Parliament representatives** – a regular meeting slot to provide updates on Youth Parliament priorities and gain the views of young people on scrutiny topics.
- **NHS Dorset representative** – the introduction of a standing invitation to the Chief Nursing Officer to provide a link between children's services and health related matters and gain the insight of health professionals on topics scrutinised.

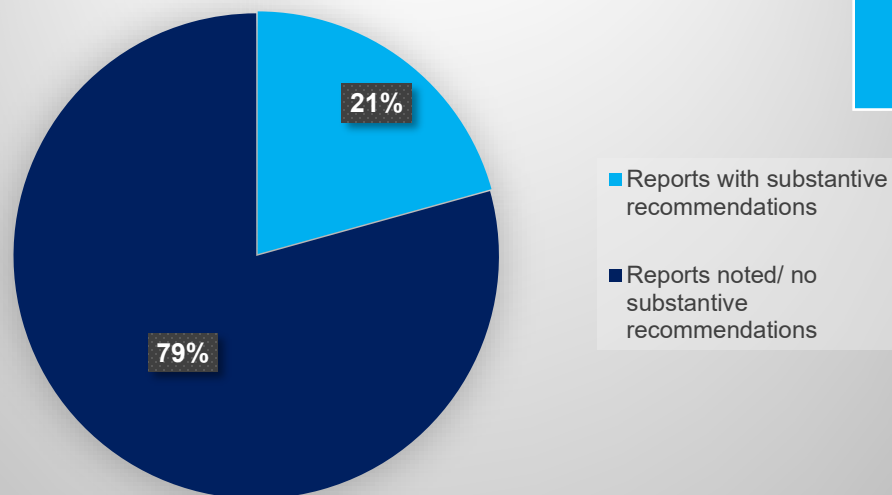
Working Groups

Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:

- Final report of the **Child Exploitation Working Group** (activity took place in previous municipal years). Recommendations included earlier age-appropriate education in schools regarding the risks associated with exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons.
- **Family Hubs Working Group** – included a visit to see Family Hubs in action. Further work in progress.
- **Budget Working Group** - priority topics selected by councillors for deep dive scrutiny - **School Transport Costs** and **Care Growth Forecast**.
 - Recommendations included advocacy for:
 - the protection of non-statutory services (such as Early Help) – councillors highlighted that it is vitally important to support these services to avoid additional financial impact on statutory services.
 - the inclusion of pupils with SEND in mainstream, local schools, to reduce the need for school transport provision and associated costs.

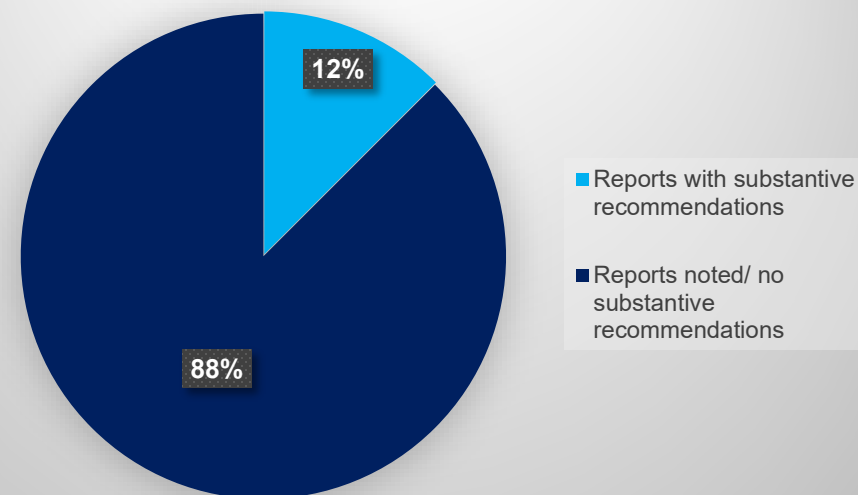
Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Children's Services O&S Outputs
2023/2024



9% decrease in
recommendations
since last year

Children's Services O&S Outputs
2024/2025



Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee



76



**CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
PATRICK CANAVAN**



**VICE CHAIR –
COUNCILLOR
LESLEY DEDMAN**



**MEETINGS: 5
ORDINARY, 0
SPECIAL MEETINGS**



**MEMBERSHIP: 11
COUNCILLORS**

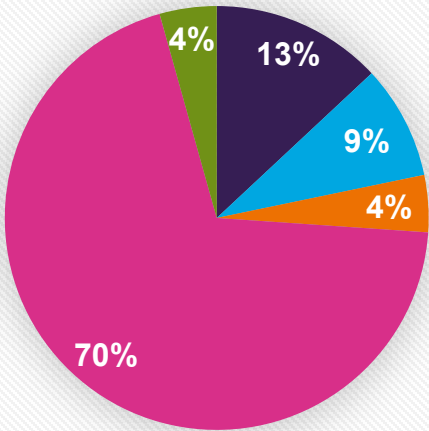


**AVERAGE NUMBER
OF AGENDA ITEMS –
4.6**



**WORKING GROUPS
- 2**

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Agenda Item Categories



- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Proactive scrutiny
- Reactive scrutiny
- Update/ monitoring reports
- Referrals from Cabinet/ Council

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee



Holding decision makers to account

The committee received updates on activity from the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing at every meeting, providing opportunity for questions and idea sharing.

Scrutinising new activity

The committee scrutinised new decisions and strategies prior to adoption, applying test and challenge to strengthen outcomes:

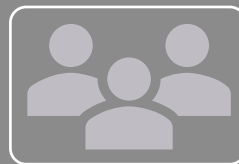
- **Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28**– the committee made recommendations that the strategy be strengthened by the inclusion of clear targets.
- **Reconfiguration of the Public Health function for BCP**– the committee contributed views on new arrangements and received updates on progress throughout the year.
- **Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care Services** – the committee scrutinised plans for a system-wide programme to transform and improve urgent and emergency care services for Dorset residents.
- **‘Fulfilled Lives’** – the committee scrutinised the establishment of a new transformation programme for adult social care services and supported activity throughout the year through a series of briefings and update reports on specific themes within the programme.

Monitoring Progress

In its role as a critical friend, the Committee monitored key areas of activity by health providers and within adult social care:

- **Home First Development across Dorset** update report.
- **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams** update report.
- **NHS Dentistry** – update report from Healthwatch.
- **Tricuro Business Plan**
- **Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report**
- **Adult Social Care Compliments, Complaints & Learning Annual Report**
- **Adult Social Care Waiting Times** update report

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee



Working with Health Partners

- The committee maintained overview of key issues relating to health service provision, including:
- **Transformation of UHD hospitals**
- **UHD Maternity Services**
- **Gender Identity Disorder Services**

Gaining Insight

- In addition to councillors bringing insight from their own work with residents the committee heard from a representative of **Healthwatch Dorset** at every meeting. Healthwatch champions residents' voices in relation to their experience of health and social care services and brings this service user insight to scrutiny debates.

Working Groups

- Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:
- **Data Working Group** - this working group developed a Data Toolkit to enable members to more easily access data and information sources, with a view to achieving more evidence driven scrutiny. The group recommended roll-out of a similar toolkit to all O&S committees.
- **Budget Working Group**

Proactive Scrutiny

- Prompted by a publication of Healthwatch Dorset, looking at **health inequality for people experiencing homelessness**, the committee asked NHS Dorset and council officers to outline how existing services address inequalities.
- Through recommendations, the committee highlighted the issues to Cabinet and asked them to discuss the matter further, in particular funding and partnership collaboration, to ensure a robust system is in place to support the most vulnerable.

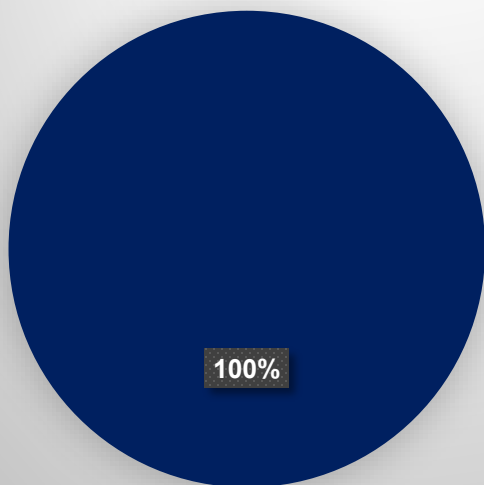
Scrutinising the Council's Finances

- The committee received an update on adult social care and public health budgets and commissioned a **Budget Working Group** to take a deep dive into financial planning for **demand management**.
- The working group made a recommendation to Cabinet that block booked-beds for long-term care provision be increased, to achieve more value for money in this budget area.

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee



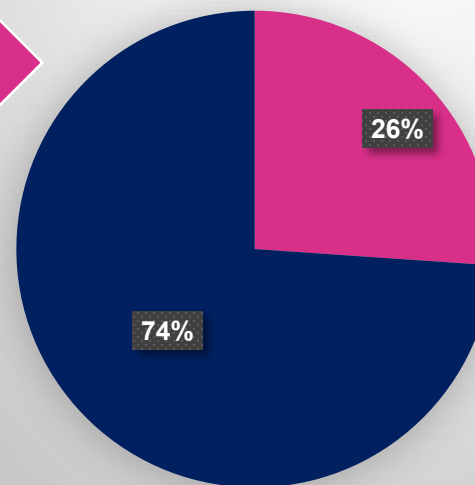
Health & Adult Social Care O&S
Outputs 2023/2024



- Reports with substantive recommendations
- Reports noted/ no substantive recommendations

26% increase in
recommendations
since last year

Health & Adult Social Care O&S
Outputs 2024/2025



- Reports with substantive recommendations
- Reports noted/ no substantive recommendations

Improvements & Successes

Strategic improvements
made across all O&S
Committees in 2024/25



Improvements & Successes- Training & Development

O&S Culture Development workshops

- Facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, three workshops were held with officers, Cabinet and O&S councillors to focus on the roles of each in underpinning a culture that enables successful scrutiny. Output – an O&S / Cabinet protocol is in development to capture agreements and good practices.

Leadership training for O&S Chairs

- All O&S Chairs have been provided LGA scrutiny leadership training, refreshed with any changes in chairing positions to ensure continuity of scrutiny expertise.

Targeted training for Children's Services O&S

- Facilitated by the LGA, a comprehensive package of support and mentoring was provided throughout 2024/25 to strengthen councillors' approach to child-centred, successful scrutiny. Councillors' knowledge of the children's services landscape was improved and focussed sessions on work planning and scoping work will enable the committee to better support and scrutinise the important services provided to support young people in the BCP area.

Regular briefings

- All committees established a series of regular briefing slots to enable them to stay informed and explore issues related to their remit. These informal slots free up committee time for value-added scrutiny topics. With standard invitations to all councillors, these regular briefings also provide opportunity for other councillors to stay informed of important issues.

*“The prevailing **organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes** of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, **it is important that this is led and owned by members**, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.” **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Improvements & Successes - Topics and scoping

The key to effective O&S outputs lies in the selection and scoping of topics. Improvements in 2024/25 included:

Closer working with Council	Maintaining a balance of scrutiny work	Key lines of enquiry	A lens for scrutiny
2025 saw a marked increase in recommendations from Council to O&S committees, particularly within the remit of the Environment & Place O&S Committee. This increase shows a greater council-wide understanding of the role that O&S can play in developing policy and providing critical friend test and challenge to burning issues raised at Council. Many of these topics have been raised by residents attending Council meetings, or through councillors bringing forward insight on matters of concern from their wards.	In the 2023 Best Value review, the Council was encouraged to reduce its focus on pre-decision scrutiny and increase the O&S policy development role. The imbalance of pre-decision scrutiny was successfully addressed in 2023/24 with pre decision scrutiny accounting for 21% of all scrutiny across all committees in the function. There was a small increase to 29% across the function in 2024/25. Pre-decision levels represent a higher proportion of O&S Board work as this committee aligns to the calendar of Cabinet meetings with the specific purpose of enabling pre-decision scrutiny where required.	Key lines of enquiry documents have been embedded as standard across all committees for use when scoping work topics. These encourage focus on lines of enquiry that will lead to valuable outcomes and ensure that O&S councillors' enquiries are clearly captured and officers have clarity on the ask of scrutiny.	Statutory guidance encourages the establishment of a clear and communicable role for scrutiny, over and above statutory rights and the role of holding decision makers to account. Three out of four O&S committees have now established lenses for their committees to more clearly identify their role and to help with topic choices and scrutiny enquiry lines.

*“Authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority” **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Improvements & Successes - Governance & Leadership

Call-In levels remain stable

- O&S call-in should be used as a last resort where there is a concern that a decision has not been made in keeping with budget and policy framework of the council or the principles of decision making. There was one call-in item considered during 2024/25, in keeping with an average of one call in per year during the 2019-24 period. The level of call-in items in BCP indicates that call-in is not used as a party-political tool. Low call-in levels may be an indication that governance arrangements in the council offer appropriate alternative opportunities to test and challenge decision making, such as a suitable level of pre-decision scrutiny opportunities and flexibility for all non-Cabinet members to ask question in O&S meetings and Cabinet meetings.

Regular O&S Chairs meetings

- 83
- O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs meet regularly to oversee the function, discussing cross-cutting topics, resource, training and development needs, successes and challenges.

Strengthened links to Audit

- The Chair and Vice Chair of Audit & Governance Committee have now been made standing invitees to O&S Chairs meetings to strengthen the links between O&S & Audit providing opportunity for alignment of work programmes to ensure the council's governance arrangements in this respect are robust.

Greater member- led approach

- Scrutiny councillors have taken a more active role in leading O&S enquiries. Rapporteurs have been established on specific topics, to undertake detailed enquiries independently, and report back to committee, successfully encouraging action on topics selected. Coupled with strong committee leadership from Chairs and Vice Chairs this is in keeping with one of the founding principles of O&S that scrutiny should be councillor led. A proactive member-led approach is also a vital tool for O&S members to share the workload across committee members and progress issues of importance to them despite resource constraints.

*“Scrutiny committees do have the power to ‘call in’ decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.” **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

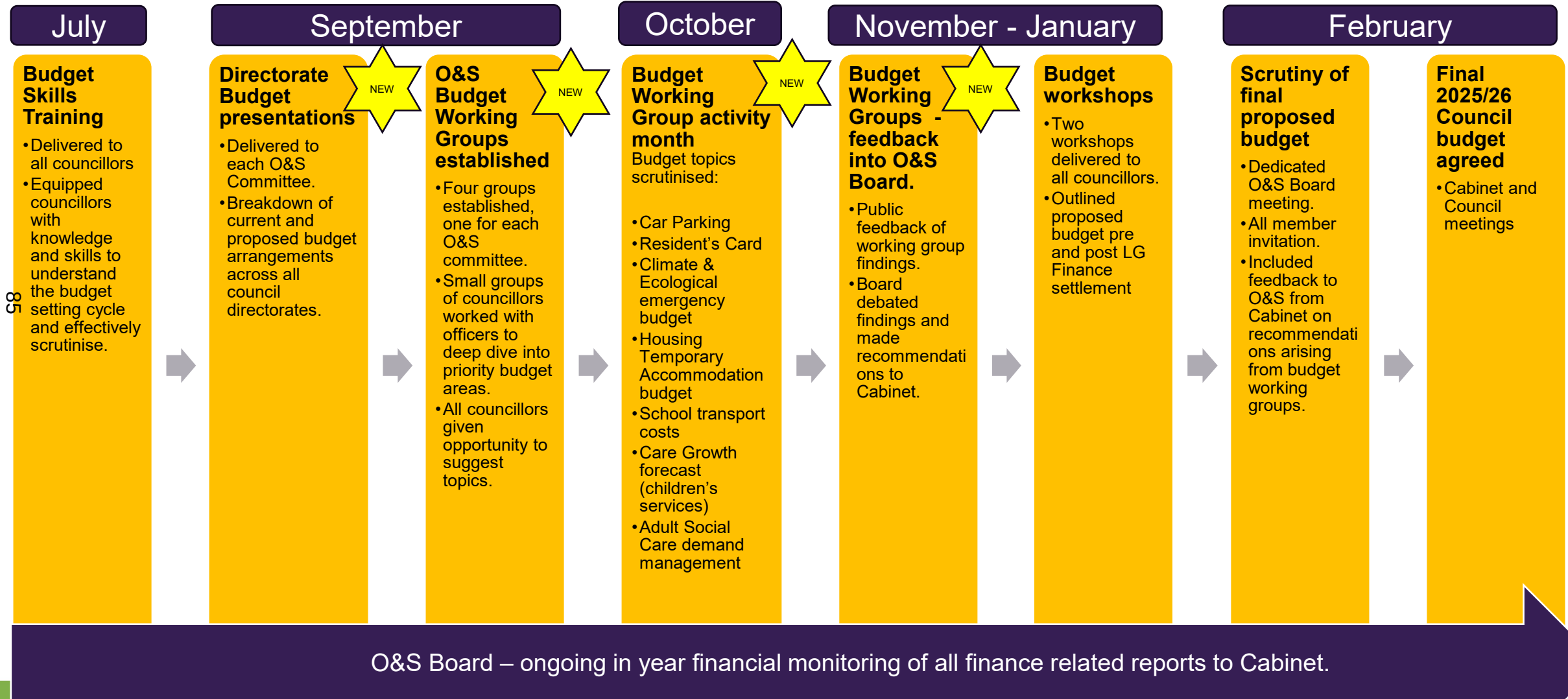
Improvements & Successes –

Proactive Budget Scrutiny

-
- Budget scrutiny opportunities were increased in 24/25. Scrutiny councillors provided test, challenge and ideas on the developing budget for the following year.
 - Proactive scrutiny was timed to give councillors the chance to input during development stages of the budget – not at the end when proposals are fully developed and impact is limited.
 - The enhanced model was recognised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as an example of excellence in proactive budget scrutiny.



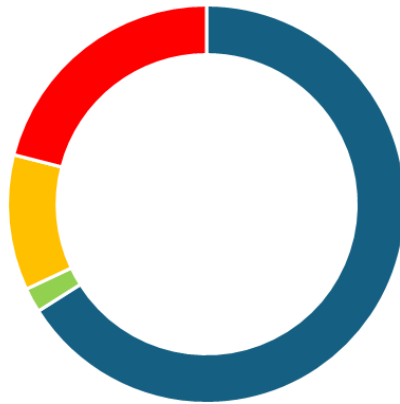
Improvements & Successes - Proactive Budget Scrutiny ctd.



Improvements & Successes – O&S Action Plan

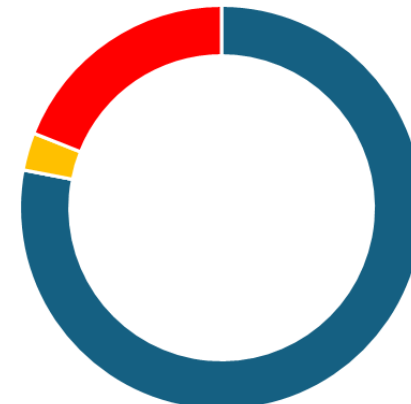
- The O&S Action Plan was agreed by Council in 2023 and contains strategic actions to improve O&S activity and bring it into line with statutory guidance.
- Progress made against the O&S Action Plan in 2024/25 took it to over 75% complete.
- Notable actions completed this year related to officer and member training to improve the culture needed to support effective scrutiny and targeted support to the Children's Services O&S Committee.
- The Action Plan has been progressed as resources allow, and after core O&S activity is resourced. It will continue to be progressed on this basis and reported annually to Council with this report. O&S lead members also monitor the Action Plan on a regular basis.

23/24 Progress against Action Plan



■ Completed ■ On track ■ Some delay ■ Significant delay

24/25 Progress against Action Plan



■ Completed ■ On track ■ Some delay ■ Significant delay

Future Aims



Planned improvements to strengthen the practices and value of scrutiny

These are focussed on two clear aims:

- **Maximising Resource**
- **Value added scrutiny**

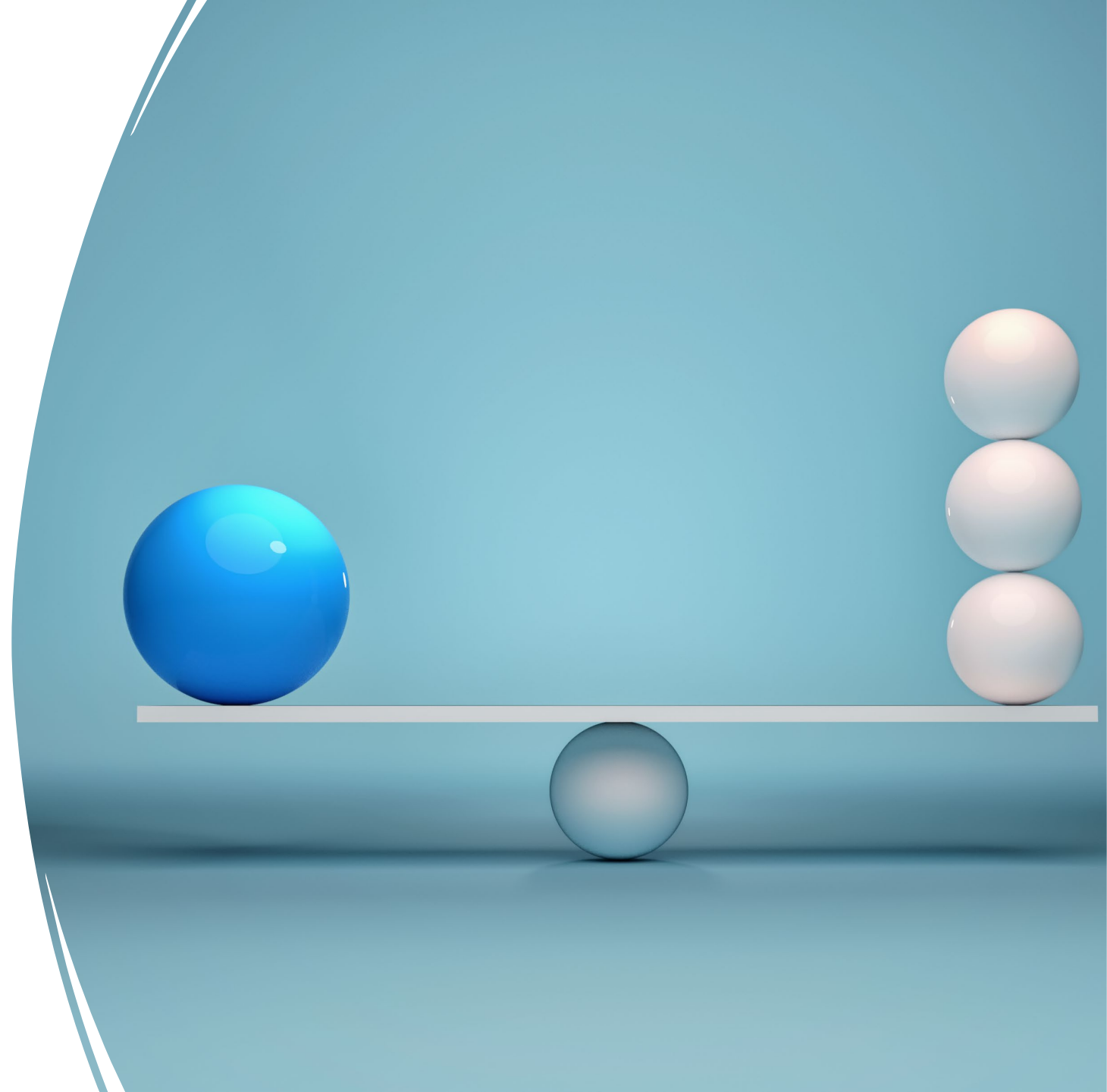
Future Aims – Maximising Resource

88

“The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.

*Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.” **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities



Future Aims – Maximising Resource

The biggest challenge to overview and scrutiny is how to use its resources for maximum impact. Resource to support Overview and Scrutiny work is limited and to have the most influence, must be used innovatively and targeted towards the topics that will have the most likelihood of tangible change and improvements for residents. **Measures suggested to maximise resource in 2025/26 include:**

Streamlining working groups

- It is recommended that the council move to a quality over quantity approach, with one O&S working group taking place at a time (previously up to 4 concurrently). This will encourage a focus on progressing the highest importance working groups and enable the work to progress in a timely way, before moving on to the next topic. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs will play a role in determining the priority order of working groups.

More test and challenge of topic suggestions and scopes

- As O&S leads, the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group are well placed to provide peer test and challenge to the topics and scopes suggested for scrutiny across all committees with the aim of ensuring that those selected are likely to lead to meaningful outcomes. Chairs and Vice Chairs meet regularly throughout the year and will add this to their oversight role.

Scoping champions

- In addition to added challenge from Chairs and Vice Chairs, it is recommended that any topic agreed for scoping will be assigned a committee member to liaise with other councillors and officers to ensure scopes will add value. Member championing will ensure that the issues of highest interest to committees are driven forward at pace by passionate members keen to explore issues of interest.

Matrix for prioritising topics

- In consultation with O&S Chairs, a topic prioritisation matrix will be introduced to assist committees in their work programming choices. A scored matrix will provide a more evidence-based method for councillors to assess and prioritise topics with the greatest likelihood of impact.

“Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.” * Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Future Aims – Maximising Resource ctd.

Other measures that will maximise O&S resource:

Rapporteurs –

Embedding the use of rapporteurs across all committees will enable individual members to champion issues of interest, monitor, progress and report back on issues to the full committee, freeing up committee time. This model has already been used successfully in some committees.

Self-serve councillor access to data –

Following the implementation of a Data Toolkit to assist Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee members navigate the complex health data landscape, a similar toolkit has been developed for Children's Services O&S members. Corporate performance data and will also be shared with all O&S committees on a regular basis. This will enable O&S members to horizon scan data on a self-serve basis, raising red flags into committee and using data to inform scrutiny topics choices.

Keeping agenda items low –

Attempting to scrutinise too many items in committee meetings can dilute the benefit of scrutiny and limit meaningful outcomes. Maintaining a focus on a maximum of 3 items per committee agenda and reducing from the levels seen in 2024/25 will ensure that each topic can be explored in sufficient depth to lead to valuable recommendations. Using other scrutiny mechanisms to receive information items and selecting only the topics where the committee can have the most influence will be essential to making the most of O&S resource.

Future Aims – Value added scrutiny

Scrutiny topics should impact positively on the work of the Council and, through this, BCP residents. Understanding and demonstrating this impact is an identified action within the O&S action plan. Planned measures to strengthen this include:

☐ **Introducing recommendation trackers**

- to enable O&S committees to track the recommendations made and ask for updates on implementation, ultimately assisting committees in understanding the impact that recommendations have had and how recommendations could be strengthened to maximise impact.

☐ **Annual surveys to gather insight on added value and impact**

- gathering feedback from councillors and officers on their perception of impact to help inform future work planning choices.

☐ **Regular monitoring of impact**

- reflecting on the value and success of scrutiny topics and methods through Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings.

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Listening to Residents

☐ **Topic suggestion form**

- an improved user-friendly form will be provided on the council website for residents to make scrutiny topic suggestions.

☐ **Increase resident driven scrutiny topics**

- scrutiny committees can become overwhelmed by internal focussed reports such as budget and performance reports. By making space on agendas for topics that either respond to burning issues for residents, are generated by resident suggestions or include listening opportunities to hear from the public, scrutiny will ensure that it is aligning to and serving the needs of residents. Listening sessions are already planned in 2025/26 for topics such as 'Van Life', to understand the needs of those who live in vehicles in BCP through choice or necessity.

Introduction

This action plan outlines improvement activity for BCP Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. This activity has been identified as appropriate to bring O&S practices to the level outlined in the Government's [Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities](#)

The actions also address recommendations arising from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities' (DLUHC) [external assurance review](#) and [Best Value Notice](#), issued on the 3 August 2023 as well as the Chief Executive's own [internal assurance review](#) conducted in Spring and updated in Summer 2023. The resulting [Assurance Review Action Plan](#) was established by the Council to respond to these recommendations.

Guidance Note

This action plan follows the themes of the statutory guidance which are categorised as follows:

- Culture • Resourcing • Selecting Committee Members • Power to Access Information • Planning Work • Evidence Sessions

All relevant paragraphs of the guidance have been included within the action plan, to aid reader's understanding of why actions have been identified. Please note that where actions are similar (eg. reflecting different aspects of councillor training required) they remain split into separate actions to demonstrate how these will uphold the statutory guidance. It should be noted that for this reason the action plan is highly detailed and serves as an operational tool to progress actions as well as for reporting on progress.

Actions are grouped and action leads identified as per the coding set out in the key below. Where actions are duplicated, the update is provided against the first arising action. A RAG rating is used to show progress against actions along with a commentary, with the latest updates provided in blue text.

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Key			
Code	Description	Action Lead	Code
	Member Training – induction and refresher	Democratic Services Team	MT1
	Member Training – Chairs		MT2
	Member Training – ongoing programme of training		MT3
	Officer Training		OT1
	Role Descriptions for O&S leads		RD1
	Chairs’ Meetings		CM1
	Work Selection and Scoping		WS1
	Community Insight		CI1
	Web Presence		WP1
	Working Methods		WM1
	Terms of Reference for O&S Committees		TOR1
	Constitution Review		CR1
	Library of O&S Resources		L1
	Protocol and Tool Development		P1
	Annual Reporting on O&S		AR1
	Resourcing		R1
	Communications		COM1
	Corporate Management Team Action	Corporate Management Team	CMT1
	Cabinet Action	Cabinet	C1
	Chief Executive/ Leader Action	Chief Executive/ Leader	CL1
	Supporting Children’s Services O&S	Democratic Services Team	CS1
RAG Rating			
Significant delay likely to affect action completion			
Some delay likely to affect action completion			
Action on track to complete as planned			
Action completed			

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from: Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Culture				
Scrutiny is Member Led				
<i>The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.</i>	1a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – O&S in BCP is Member led	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	1b	Role descriptions to be developed for Councillors in leading O&S roles to clarify expectations for this role <i>Action delayed and will be rescheduled for development in lead up to next council term.</i>	Autumn 2023	RD1
	1c	Establish calendar of meeting dates for O&S chairs for collective leadership and oversight of the effectiveness of the O&S function.	Complete	CM1
Scrutiny is understood and recognised across the organisation				
<i>Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy – all members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements and for combined authorities.</i>	2a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Background and statutory powers of O&S, to raise the profile and importance of the scrutiny function within the organisation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	2b	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Background and statutory powers of O&S, to raise the profile and importance of the scrutiny function within the organisation <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>Scrutiny draws on community insight and selects topics of community relevance</i>				
<i>Councillors have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.</i>	3a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Councillors bring community insight to their scrutiny work	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	3b	Strengthen O&S work selection criteria, as set out in the constitution, to include consideration of the impact and value to the public when selecting work programme topics. Review for use in annual work programming for O&S Committees. O&S scrutiny request forms ask councillors to outline the value to be added by a proposed scrutiny topic. Use of this form is now embedded across the function and O&S work programmes now include more work balanced towards the impact on BCP residents. O&S Board has selected resident impact as a lens by which to plan and approach its work and committee discussions regularly include resident impact as a scrutiny enquiry line. Officers will continue to encourage selection of O&S topics that have tangible benefit to residents.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
	3c	Use is made of community insight through the selection of work topics that are driven by community need, evidence sessions, use of subject experts and data providing the view of residents and community groups. Councillors regularly suggest scrutiny topics based on their community insight and there has been an increase in topics with a public focus, with some topics being generated through matters raised to Council through public representations.	Complete, monitor long-term and revisit in annual work programming for all committees.	CI1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		Officers will continue to maintain focus on community insight and evidence based scrutiny when assisting councillors in work planning and scoping.		
	3d	Develop O&S web pages to clarify public role in O&S, ways to engage and improve ease of access for topic suggestion. Action delayed and will be advanced as resources allow.	Autumn 2024	WP1
Scrutiny has a clear role and focus				
<i>Identifying a clear role and focus – authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority</i>	4a	Scrutiny committees agree a clear communicable role or focus for the year when planning their work programme in order to assist in topic selection and in ensuring that stakeholders can anticipate which topics are likely to be of interest to scrutiny, and plan accordingly for engagement. This may be in the form of a 'lens' (eg. risk) through which to scrutinise topics, or a key priority or set of priorities for a committee (eg. 'budget' or 'ofsted improvement plan') Three out of four O&S committees have agreed a lens for their topic selection and scrutiny approach. The Children's O&S Committee chose not to agree a lens. This will be revisited in future work planning activity to ensure the lenses remain fit for purpose.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
	4b	Committees carefully consider the type and balance of work undertaken to ensure that work aims can be met within the meeting capacity available. This will require a determined focus to undertake work in diverse ways eg. - receiving information based reports outside of meetings, - establishing O&S rapporteurs (topic champions) to maintain oversight of an issue and report back to committee on exceptions - reducing the level of Cabinet decision scrutiny to free up capacity for more overview work. Working methods have been diversified to make better use of meeting resource. Information based reporting is regularly	Complete, monitor long-term.	WM1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		received outside of meetings of through a series of regular informal briefings, now established for each committee. Pre-decision scrutiny levels fell in 2023/4 and have remained stable in 2024/25. There has been an increase in the use of rapporteurs and the approach will be further embedded in 2025/26. There were 2 additional meetings held in 2024/25 which demonstrates that committee based work is mainly keeping to meeting capacity. In 2024/25 meeting duration was long in some cases, resulting in loss of members and less effective scrutiny for some items of business. All committees would benefit from a continued consistent focus on prioritisation to keep to a maximum of 3 items per agenda.		
	4c	Develop user friendly terms of reference documents for each O&S committee based on split of responsibility set out in constitution. Updated terms of reference are now circulated with the forward plan paper for each O&S Committee.	Complete	TOR1
<i>There is a clear distinction between scrutiny and audit</i>				
<i>Authorities should ensure a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny function and the audit function. While it is appropriate for scrutiny to pay due regard to the authority's financial position, this will need to happen in the context of the formal audit role. The authority's section 151 officer should advise scrutiny on how to manage this dynamic</i>	5a	Division of responsibility already established within the Articles of the Constitution.	Complete	CR1
	5b	A&G chair invitation to be scheduled into annual programme of O&S Chairs meetings A&G Chair & Vice Chair are now invited to O&S Chairs meetings as standard.	Complete	CM1
<i>While scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of the authority's whistleblowing arrangements, the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications.</i>	6	Develop a library of O&S oversight information, provided in an online format for Councillors to access independently, to include – The findings of independent whistleblowing investigations HASC O&S Committee has developed a data toolkit, which gathers data and policy information in a digestible format for	Spring/ Summer 2024	L1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		O&S members. This to be rolled out to all committees to include whistleblowing information. Action nearing completion for Children's Svs O&S Committee and is delayed for other committees. Will be progressed according to resource availability.		
The relationship between scrutiny and the executive is effective				
<i>Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny – authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between scrutiny and the executive, especially regarding the latter's future work programme.</i>	7a	Portfolio Holders attend O&S meetings when requested, or send deputies Attendance of Portfolio Holders at O&S when requested is now well established and will continue to be encouraged.	Complete, monitor long-term.	C1
	7b	The Cabinet Forward Plan is regularly updated with sufficient notice of forthcoming priorities to enable O&S to engage effectively at an early stage in policy shaping. This request remains in place as the Cabinet Forward Plan population could be strengthened. This relies on officers registering planned decisions early. This would give O&S members sufficient time to seek further information on forthcoming issues and plan scrutiny more effectively.	Immediate and ongoing request to Cabinet	C1
	7c	The Constitution sets out that it is good practice for there to be regular, informal dialogue between O&S leads and Portfolio Holders in order that O&S can understand developing Cabinet priorities, discuss and assess the value that Overview and Scrutiny can provide and contribute in a timely way to policy development (O&S Procedure Rule 8.3). Officers regularly encourage this action and some Chairs now have regular meetings in place for this purpose.	Complete, monitor long-term.	CR1
	7d	Role descriptions to be developed for Councillors in leading O&S roles to clarify expectation that scrutiny chairs establish informal working arrangements with relevant Portfolio Holders.	Autumn 2023	RD1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		Role description development has been delayed and will be rescheduled for completion in lead up to next council term, however lead O&S members are regularly encouraged to develop informal working arrangements with relevant Portfolio Holders and some now have regular meetings in place for this purpose.		
	7e	Lines of accountability between scrutiny committees and Portfolio Holders were agreed by Council in April 2022- review after election when any change to Cabinet portfolios are known and document these in a more granular way than is captured within the constitution to aid transparency. Lines of accountability are identified between each area of responsibility under a Portfolio Holder and the relevant O&S committee. This document is circulated with each O&S agenda.	Complete	TOR1
	7f	Maintain a review of the Portfolio/ O&S Committee alignment to ensure that it is fit for purpose, with amendments to be suggested via O&S annual report to Council, as required. Changes are reported annually as standard in the O&S annual report where required.	Complete, monitor annually through annual report process.	AR1
	8a	O&S considers work requested by Cabinet or Council using the criteria written into the constitution - Criteria already exists in constitution and is used to assess requests. A notable increase in requests from Cabinet and Council have been seen during 2024/25, demonstrating greater council-wide understanding of the role O&S can play in supporting the objectives of the council.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
<i>The executive should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee. This could be direct, e.g. by purporting to 'order' scrutiny to look at, or not look at, certain issues, or indirect, e.g. through the use of the whip or as a tool of political patronage, and the committee itself should remember its statutory purpose when carrying out its work. All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a 'critical friend' not a de facto 'opposition'. Scrutiny chairs have a particular role to play in establishing the profile and nature of their committee</i>	8b	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – All Political Groups be reminded of the incompatibility of the whip with O&S, and the forms that this may take.	Complete. Monitor the need for	MT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		The message was reinforced in training and the CEx had written confirmation from every Group Leader in 2024 that the party whip, or similar, will not be applied around the Overview and Scrutiny functions.	refresher training.	
	8c	O&S chairs to be opposition members, where practicable, to reduce risk of executive control being exercised over O&S – referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration of any appropriate Constitution changes to set out this good practice - prior to May 2024 O&S Chairs elections. Since May 2023 all O&S Committees have appointed a Chair, and in most cases, a Vice-Chair, from outside of the Administration. O&S Board has confirmed a wish to include this advice within the constitution. Package of work to review constitution to strengthen areas around O&S has not yet started and will be progressed as resources allow.	Spring 2024	CR1
	8d	Role descriptions to be developed for Councillors in leading roles to clarify expectation that scrutiny chairs establish informal committee pre-meetings, to assist the committee in working towards its aims and taking a cross-party approach to scrutiny. Role description development has been delayed and will be rescheduled for completion in lead up to next council term, however some O&S Chairs have established pre-meetings successfully to develop a scrutiny 'team' mindset and move away from political party lines, and officers continue to encourage these.	Autumn 2023	RD1
	8e	O&S Chairing skills training to be delivered to include the benefit of pre-meetings, and management of political dynamics in scrutiny to avoid a de facto opposition approach. Chairing skills training provided in Summer 2023 induction. Higher level of training through LGA leadership courses has	Complete, monitor long-term.	MT2

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
		been offered to all O&S chairs, including following chairmanship changes to ensure continuity of expertise.		
<i>The chair of the scrutiny committee should determine the nature and extent of an executive member's participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal scrutiny task group meeting</i>	9a	Clarity of O&S powers in determining attendees and participation already written into constitution at O&S Procedure Rule 9.1	Complete	CR1
	9b	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Clarity of scrutiny's powers in determining attendees and participation in O&S.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	9c	Scrutiny committees to be asked to consider appropriate invitees when scoping a piece of work and to consider where more value may be added by an officer/ scrutiny session as opposed to a Cabinet member scrutiny Appropriate invitees are considered in the planning stage for all O&S work. Since May 2023 there has been a noticeable shift in emphasis within the Council, with officers and external witnesses being invited to contribute on specific issues at scrutiny as appropriate. The range of inquiry from councillors to both portfolio holders and officers is now more diverse and this will continue to be encouraged.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
Managing disagreement				
<i>Effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious. It is therefore inevitable that, at times, an executive will disagree with the findings or recommendations of a scrutiny committee. It is the job of both the executive and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of this happening, and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement. One way in which this can be done is via an 'executive-scrutiny protocol' which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest</i>	10	Executive members and O&S Chairs group to consider the value for BCP in preparing an executive – scrutiny protocol. Executive – scrutiny protocol in development following development session held with CfGS in 2025. Executive members and officers are now also invited into a series of meetings with O&S leads to give opportunity to discuss common aims and barriers to effective scrutiny.	Winter 2023	C1/ CM1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>themselves in unhelpful and unproductive ways. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a framework for disagreement and debate, and a way to manage it when it happens. Often, the value of such a protocol lies in the dialogue that underpins its preparation. It is important that these protocols are reviewed on a regular basis.</i>				
<i>Scrutiny committees do have the power to 'call in' decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.</i>	11	Use of call-in be monitored and reflected within annual report to Council. Call-in frequency is now reflected in the O&S annual report as standard as a measure of governance health.	Complete, monitor annually through annual report process.	AR1
Ensuring impartial advice from officers				
<i>Authorities, particularly senior officers, should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny committees. This is fundamental to effective scrutiny. Of particular importance is the role played by 'statutory officers' – the monitoring officer, the section 151 officer and the head of paid service, and where relevant the statutory scrutiny officer. These individuals have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.</i>	12	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – The importance of impartial advice to O&S Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
Communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority				
<i>The scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority's wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.</i>	13	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – The identity of those providing officer support to O&S. Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee				
<i>Part of communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority should happen through the formal, public role of full Council – particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council's work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.</i>	14a	Report annually to Council on the work of scrutiny, and progress on actions to improve scrutiny. <i>Annual report is received by Council annually as standard. 2025 report has been delayed on account of resource availability and will report during winter 2025.</i>	Complete, repeat annually.	AR1
<i>One way in which this can be done is by reports and recommendations being submitted to full Council rather than solely to the executive. Scrutiny should decide when it would be appropriate to submit reports for wider debate in this way, taking into account the relevance of reports to full Council business, as well as full Council's capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner. Such reports would supplement the annual report to full Council on scrutiny's activities and raise awareness of ongoing work.</i>	14b	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – The appropriate route for recommendations to full Council or Cabinet	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	14c	Consideration be given to any amendments required to constitution to clarify reporting routes from O&S - referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. <i>Package of work to review constitution to strengthen areas around O&S has not yet started and will be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Spring 2024	CR1
Communicating scrutiny's role to the public				
<i>Authorities should ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consideration should be given to how and when to engage the authority's communications officers, and any other relevant channels, to understand how to get that message across. This will usually require engagement early on in the work programming process</i>	15a	Consideration be given to the promotion of outcomes via Communications Team at the scoping stage of O&S work. <i>Some O&S activity relating to high profile decisions is already promoted by the Communications Team. Greater use could be made of promotion opportunities to raise the profile of O&S work. Resources have not been available for a comprehensive approach to this through annual work programming. Consideration of this will instead be encouraged on an ongoing basis at the scoping stage for all O&S work, as resources allow.</i>	In annual work programming for O&S Committees – Autumn 2023	COM1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
	15b	O&S webpage development - See action 3d above.	See relevant action above.	See relevant action above.
Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset				
<i>Formal committee meetings provide a vital opportunity for scrutiny members to question the executive and officers. Inevitably, some committee members will come from the same political party as a member they are scrutinising and might well have a long-standing personal, or familial, relationship with them.</i>	16a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – The importance of an independent mind-set to O&S	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
<i>Scrutiny members should bear in mind, however, that adopting an independent mind-set is fundamental to carrying out their work effectively. In practice, this is likely to require scrutiny chairs working proactively to identify any potentially contentious issues and plan how to manage them.</i>	16b	O&S Chairs are supported by Officers to identify and plan for contentious issues through Chairs briefings. Chairs are well supported by officers in regular briefings to scope and plan the level of interest anticipated in O&S work and any necessary meeting adjustments. Contentious issues such as Poole Park and CGR scrutiny - which included significant councillor and external interest - have been well managed by Chairs resulting in orderly meetings with good opportunity for additional input from interested parties.	Complete, monitor long-term	WS1
	16c	Establish calendar of meeting dates for O&S chairs to include-monitoring the independence of O&S Calendar of meetings planned for 2025/26.	Complete	CM1
Resourcing scrutiny				
<i>The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.</i> <i>Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and</i>	17	Consideration be given to the level of officer resource available to support scrutiny and that this is appropriate to ensure effective outputs that add value to the organisation – discussion with O&S chairs group, with views to be passed to Corporate Management Team. Resources available to support Overview and Scrutiny are stretched and the level of O&S activity against officer	Resource monitoring completed in 23/24 and 2024/25, but requires careful	R1/ CMT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64) <i>sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.</i> <i>When deciding on the level of resource to allocate to the scrutiny function, the factors an authority should consider include: • Scrutiny's legal powers and responsibilities; • The particular role and remit scrutiny will play in the authority; • The training requirements of scrutiny members and support officers, particularly the support needed to ask effective questions of the executive and other key partners, and make effective recommendations; • The need for ad hoc external support where expertise does not exist in the council; • Effectively-resourced scrutiny has been shown to add value to the work of authorities, improving their ability to meet the needs of local people; and • Effectively-resourced scrutiny can help policy formulation and so minimise the need for call-in of executive decisions</i>		resource is significantly higher in BCP Council than some other comparative councils. This has been well documented in O&S annual reports to Council and CMB to raise awareness. The most significant pressures relate to previous and cumulative Council decisions to increase the number of O&S committees and meeting numbers over time, not matched by officer resource to support these. Accompanied by an increase in other committees also resourced by the same team (Democratic Services) the overall resource available to support Overview and Scrutiny work has reduced whilst the level of O&S activity has increased. The impact of this has been a slow rate of progression for planned work, delays to strategic O&S work (such as annual work programme activity), limited resource available to respond to arising issues throughout the year and the likelihood that O&S outcomes have been limited in value as planned work has not benefitted from effective levels of officer support. Proposals have been made to Council in the 2025 annual report to reduce concurrent working group numbers and promote a 'quality of quantity' approach to O&S work. The outcome and impact of any changes agreed will be monitored by the O&S Chairs group and through future annual reports to Council.	ongoing monitoring	
<i>Authorities should also recognise that support for scrutiny committees, task groups and other activities is not solely about budgets and provision of officer time, although these are clearly extremely important elements. Effective support is also about the</i>	18a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Use of resource, and effective wider authority engagement in O&S	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>ways in which the wider authority engages with those who carry out the scrutiny function (both members and officers).</i>	18b	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Use of resource, and effective wider authority engagement in O&S <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
	18c	As required by the constitution, all requests for O&S committees to undertake work are considered by Committees against the current resource levels available to support the request <i>All committees are asked to take account of resources when considering requests for work, especially commissioned work such as working groups and additional meetings. Officer resource to support O&S work has been limited and has resulted in delays to topic progression. To address this, proposals have been made to Council in the 2025 annual report to reduce concurrent working group numbers and promote a 'quality of quantity' approach to O&S work. The outcome and impact of any changes agreed will be monitored by the O&S Chairs group and through future annual reports to Council.</i>	Complete in 23/24 – continue to monitor resource long-term.	R1
	18d	Establish calendar of meeting dates for O&S chairs to include-monitoring the total level of resource available across the O&S function <i>Calendar of meetings planned for 2025/26.</i>	Complete	CM1
Statutory scrutiny officers				
<i>Combined authorities, upper and single tier authorities are required to designate a statutory scrutiny officer, someone whose role is to:</i> <i>promote the role of the authority's scrutiny committee;</i> <i>provide support to the scrutiny committee and its members; and</i>	19a	Statutory scrutiny officer is appointed and sits within the Democratic Services Team.	Complete	R1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64) <i>• provide support and guidance to members and officers relating to the functions of the scrutiny committee.</i>	19b	The Statutory Scrutiny Officer role is set out in the constitution to aid authority wide understanding - referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. <i>Package of work to review constitution to strengthen areas around O&S has not yet started and will be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Winter 2023	CR1
	19c	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – The role of the statutory scrutiny officer, to increase visibility	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	19d	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – The role of the statutory scrutiny officer, to increase visibility. <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
	19e	Consider the interface of the statutory scrutiny officer role with Corporate Management Team to ensure that planning for engagement with scrutiny can be considered for significant forthcoming decisions. <i>O&S Specialist attends CMB as required to discuss key issues. Council Leader, Chief Executive, Sec 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer now invited into regular meetings with O&S Chairs to assist in identifying key issues to O&S.</i>	Complete	CMT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from: Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Officer resource models				
<i>Authorities should ensure that, whatever model they employ, officers tasked with providing scrutiny support are able to provide impartial advice. This might require consideration of the need to build safeguards into the way that support is provided. The nature of these safeguards will differ according to the specific role scrutiny plays in the organisation.</i>	20	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – The importance of impartial advice to O&S. Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
Selecting Committee Members				
<i>Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority.</i>	21a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Appropriate selection of committee members, in order that this can be taken account of by political groups when establishing their committee representation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve.</i> <i>Authorities should not take into account a member's perceived level of support for or opposition to a particular political party (notwithstanding the wider legal requirement for proportionality)</i> <i>Members invariably have different skill-sets. What an authority must consider when forming a committee is that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.</i>	21b	A programme of ongoing scrutiny skills training to be developed for delivery to O&S Councillors throughout municipal year 2023/24. Following induction training, a range of development opportunities have been provided to councillors through the LGA, the South West Scrutiny Network and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This has included bespoke in-house training to develop work programming and a collective understanding of a positive scrutiny culture. Online training opportunities are regularly promoted and taken up by councillors and O&S Chairs meetings have training as a standard item on agendas to review arising needs.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT3
<i>Authorities are reminded that members of the executive cannot be members of a scrutiny committee. Authorities should take care to ensure that, as a minimum, members holding less formal executive positions, e.g. as Cabinet assistants, do not sit on scrutinising committees looking at portfolios to which those roles relate.</i> <i>Authorities should articulate in their constitutions how conflicts of interest, including familial links between executive and scrutiny responsibilities should be managed, including where members stand down from the executive and move to a scrutiny role, and vice-versa.</i>	22a	Review Constitution rules for clarity on the principle of Executive lead members sitting on O&S referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. Constitution identifies that Executive lead members cannot sit on O&S.	Complete	CR1
	22b	Review constitution to consider providing further clarity on how to manage conflicts of interest, including when Councillors move between roles - referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. Package of work to review constitution to strengthen areas around O&S has not yet started and will be progressed as resources allow.	Winter 2023	CR1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
Selecting a chair				
<i>The Chair plays a leadership role on a scrutiny committee as they are largely responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working.</i>	23a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Appropriate selection of committee chairs, in order that this can be taken account of by political groups when establishing their proposed chair nominees	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
<i>The attributes authorities should and should not take into account when selecting individual committee members also apply to the selection of the Chair, but the Chair should also possess the ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus among committee members.</i>	23b	O&S Chairing skills training to be delivered to include - leadership skills. Chairing skills training provided in Summer 2023 induction. Higher level of training through LGA leadership courses has been offered to all O&S chairs, including following chairmanship changes to ensure continuity of expertise.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT2
<i>Given their pre-eminent role on the scrutiny committee, it is strongly recommended that the Chair not preside over scrutiny of their relatives</i>	24	Review constitution to consider providing further clarity on the Chair not presiding over scrutiny of relatives- referral to Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. Package of work to review constitution to strengthen areas around O&S has not yet started and will be progressed as resources allow.	Winter 2023	CR1
<i>The method for selecting a Chair is for each authority to decide for itself, however every authority should consider taking a vote by secret ballot.</i>	25a	Secret ballot method vote for Chair and Vice Chair is already in place within constitution at Meeting Procedure Rule 19.	Complete	CR1
	25b	See 8c above 'opposition chairs'	See relevant action above.	CR1
The role of the chair				
<i>Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the committee's independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the executive.</i>	26	O&S Chairing skills training to be delivered to include – independence of O&S, and the need to avoid de facto opposition role. Chairing skills training provided in Summer 2023 induction. Higher level of training through LGA leadership courses has been offered to all O&S chairs, including following chairmanship changes to ensure continuity of expertise.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT2

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
Training for committee members				
<i>Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.</i> <i>When deciding on training requirements for committee members, authorities should consider taking advantage of opportunities offered by external providers in the sector.</i>	27a	See action 2a above - new Councillor and refresher training on statutory powers of O&S	See relevant action above.	MT1
	27b	A programme of ongoing scrutiny skills training to be developed for delivery to O&S Councillors throughout municipal year 2023/24, to include – questioning skills training. Questioning skills training was incorporated into O&S induction training and refreshed through scrutiny culture development sessions and LGA training targeted at Children's O&S members. O&S Chairs keep training needs under review and additional training of this nature can be planned according to need and budget availability.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT3
	27c	Training to be delivered by external facilitators as appropriate and according to budget available. A mix of in-house support and external facilitators have been used in training and development to date to provide additional O&S expertise and insight to specific training areas as appropriate. This approach will continue to be used according to need and budget availability.	Complete, monitor long-term.	MT3
<i>While members and their support officers will often have significant local insight and an understanding of local people and their needs, the provision of outside expertise can be invaluable. There are two principal ways to procure this:</i> • <i>Co-option – formal co-option is provided for in legislation.</i> <i>Authorities must establish a co-option scheme to determine how individuals will be co-opted onto committees; and</i> • <i>Technical advisers – depending on the subject matter, independent local experts might exist who can provide advice and assistance in evaluating evidence</i>	28a	Facility to use external experts by O&S is already set out in constitution at Article 6, Rule 6.6.	Complete	CR1
	28b	Consideration be given to the appropriate use of external experts at the scoping stage of O&S work. Greater use of subject experts and community insight have been included in O&S since May 2023. Examples include a subject expert on the Safety Valve programme, developer input to Local Plan discussions, regular	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
		Healthwatch contributions at HASC O&S Committee, Chief Nurse input to Children's Svs O&S and expert insight from independent bodies on parish councils and charter trustees to CGR. The terms of reference of the Environment & Place O&S Committee were amended by Council in September 2023, to allow the inclusion of additional insight on sustainability matters in the form of two non-voting member independent members but this has not yet been taken up by the committee. Renewal of statutory Children's Services co-optees is in process. Use of community insight and evidence will continue to encourage at the scoping stage of forthcoming work.		
Powers to Access Information				
<i>A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds, and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.</i>	29a	Enhanced rights of O&S in relation to access to information are already set out in Constitution at Access to Information Procedure Rule 24.	Complete	CR1
<i>This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information. In particular, regulations give enhanced powers to a scrutiny member to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights for councillors to have access to information to perform their duties, including common law rights to request information and rights to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.</i>	29b	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – enhanced rights of O&S in relation to access to information	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
<i>When considering what information scrutiny needs in order to carry out its work, scrutiny members and the executive should consider scrutiny's role and the legal rights that committees and their individual members have, as well as their need to receive timely and accurate information to carry out their duties effectively.</i>				

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk. Where this information exists, and scrutiny members are given support to understand it, the potential for what officers might consider unfocused and unproductive requests is reduced as members will be able to frame their requests from a more informed position.</i>	30a	Develop a library of O&S oversight information, provided in an online format for Councillors to access independently, to include - Performance, Management, Finance, Risk, Complaints, Business Cases and Ombudsman information. This will assist in 'horizon scanning' to enhance the effectiveness of O&S work planning. Action to develop online library of resources not yet actioned and will progress as resources allow. Progress has been made towards sharing some of this information with O&S councillors regularly, such as through a HASC O&S data toolkit document that gathers much of the above data in one place, and through regular reporting of corporate performance information into O&S committees. Development of the online library will provide consistency of approach when completed.	Spring/ Summer 24	L1
	30b	A programme of ongoing scrutiny skills training to be developed for delivery to O&S Councillors throughout municipal year 2023/24, to include – Interpretation of performance, management and risk information, and its application to O&S work programming. LGA training opportunities in February and March 2024 on 'Data and Managing Council Performance' was promoted to all councillors. O&S Chairs keep training needs under review and additional training of this nature can be planned according to need and budget availability.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT3
<i>Officers should speak to scrutiny members to ensure they understand the reasons why information is needed, thereby making the authority better able to provide information that is relevant and timely, as well as ensuring that the authority complies with legal requirements.</i>	31	Support scrutiny committees to be clear in identifying information needs and to scope larger pieces of work effectively so that information expectations can be met by officers and executive members.	Complete – monitor long-term	WS1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>Regulations already stipulate a timeframe for executives to comply with requests from a scrutiny member. When agreeing to such requests, authorities should:</i> • <i>consider whether seeking clarification from the information requester could help better target the request; and</i> • <i>Ensure the information is supplied in a format appropriate to the recipient's needs.</i>		– In annual work programming for O&S Committees and ongoing, during work programming discussions at each meeting. Key Lines of Enquiry documents were introduced in 2023/24 and are now embedded across all committees. These capture key questions and data requests from committees for scrutiny topics, providing a clearer audit trail of the ask of scrutiny for both committees and information providers. In 2024, HASC O&S completed a working group on data and produced a Data Toolkit to capture its findings. This includes clear guidance on a standard data request for HASC O&S committee reports - a process that can be mirrored by the other committees. The Children's O&S has developed a similar toolkit throughout 2025 and will launch this soon.		
<i>While each request for information should be judged on its individual merits, authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request, with scrutiny committee members.</i>	32	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Default position of sharing information with O&S Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
<i>The law recognises that there might be instances where it is legitimate for an authority to withhold information and places a requirement on the executive to provide the scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision. However, members of the executive and senior officers should take particular care to avoid refusing requests, or limiting the information they provide, for reasons of party political or reputational expediency. Before an authority takes a decision not</i>	33a	Situations where information may be withheld from O&S, and actions to communicate this, are already set out in the Constitution at Access to Information Procedure Rule 24.	Complete	CR1
	33b	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Default position of sharing information with O&S, and situations where information may be withheld.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1

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<i>to share information it holds, it should give serious consideration to whether that information could be shared in closed session</i>	33c	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Default position of sharing information with O&S, and situations where information may be withheld. <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
<i>Committees should be aware of their legal power to require members of the executive and officers to attend before them to answer questions. It is the duty of members and officers to comply with such requests.</i>	34a	Requirement for Cabinet members and officers to attend O&S when requested is already set out in constitution at O&S Procedure Rule 9.	Complete	CR1
	34b	Identification of attendees and formal requests to Cabinet and officers to attend is required by the constitution and an embedded practice.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
	34c	Portfolio Holders attend O&S meetings in response to requests, or send deputies. <i>Attendance of Portfolio Holders at O&S when requested is now well established and will continue to be encouraged.</i>	Complete, monitor long-term.	C1
	34d	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Requirement of Cabinet members and officers to attend scrutiny when requested	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	34e	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Requirement of Cabinet members and officers to attend scrutiny when requested. <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
		understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.		
Seeking information from external organisations				
<i>Scrutiny members should also consider the need to supplement any authority-held information they receive with information and intelligence that might be available from other sources, and should note in particular their statutory powers to access information from certain external organisations</i>	35	Develop a library of O&S oversight information, provided in an online format for Councillors to access independently, to include - Information from external organisations, as appropriate, to support individual work items and annual work programming Action to develop online library of resources not yet actioned and will progress as resources allow. Progress has been made towards sharing some of this information with O&S councillors regularly, such as through a HASC O&S data toolkit document that gathers much of the above data in one place, and through regular reporting of corporate performance information into O&S committees. Development of the online library will provide consistency of approach when completed.	Spring/ Summer 24	L1
<i>When asking an external organisation to provide documentation or appear before it, and where that organisation is not legally obliged to do either, scrutiny committees should consider the following:</i>	36a	Guidelines for scrutinising external organisations is already included within the Council's Constitution at O&S Procedure Rule 10.	Complete	CR1
<i>a) The need to explain the purpose of scrutiny – the organisation being approached might have little or no awareness of the committee's work, or of an authority's scrutiny function more generally, and so might be reluctant to comply with any request;</i> <i>b) The benefits of an informal approach – individuals from external organisations can have fixed perceptions of what an evidence session entails and may be unwilling to subject themselves to detailed public scrutiny if they believe it could reflect badly on them or their employer. Making an informal approach can help reassure</i>	36b	Develop a user-friendly protocol to assist committees with approaching, preparing for and scrutinising external organisations. Not started. To be progressed as resources allow.	Summer 2024	P1

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<i>an organisation of the aims of the committee, the type of information being sought and the manner in which the evidence session would be conducted;</i> <i>c) How to encourage compliance with the request – scrutiny committees will want to frame their approach on a case by case basis. For contentious issues, committees might want to emphasise the opportunity their request gives the organisation to 'set the record straight' in a public setting; and</i> <i>d) Who to approach – a committee might instinctively want to ask the Chief Executive or Managing Director of an organisation to appear at an evidence session, however it could be more beneficial to engage front-line staff when seeking operational-level detail rather than senior executives who might only be able to talk in more general terms. When making a request to a specific individual, the committee should consider the type of information it is seeking, the nature of the organisation in question and the authority's pre-existing relationship with it.</i>				
Following 'the Council Pound'				
<i>Scrutiny committees will often have a keen interest in 'following the council pound', i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services.</i> <i>Authorities should recognise the legitimacy of this interest and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to scrutiny members and their support staff to obtain information from organisations the council has contracted to deliver services. In particular, when agreeing contracts with these bodies, authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a requirement for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees</i>	37	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Support to scrutiny committees in respect of scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
Planning Work				
<i>Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year.</i>	38a	O&S committees agree a work programme annually drawing ideas from relevant sources, that enables reports to be prepared and brought to the committee in a timely way. All O&S committees completed annual work programming in 2023/24, basing suggestions on a variety of relevant sources. Work programming in 2025 has been delayed. Whilst annual programming is good practice, committees are able to plan on a rolling basis in the absence of an annual approach and will continue to do so until resources can be released to support this.	Completed in 2023/24, delayed in 2025.	WS1
	38b	Work programmes are based on realistic assessment of resources available to O&S, also retaining capacity for some arising issues to be accommodated. All committees are asked to take account of resources when considering requests for work, especially commissioned work such as working groups and additional meetings. Officer resource to support O&S work has been limited and has resulted in delays to topic progression. To address this, proposals have been made to Council in the 2025 annual report to reduce concurrent working group numbers and promote a 'quality of quantity' approach to O&S work. The outcome and impact of any changes agreed will be monitored by the O&S Chairs group and through future annual reports to Council. All committees would benefit from retaining clear capacity within their annual work programmes to ensure space exists to respond to arising issues throughout the year without exceeding resource.	Monitor resource availability and impact of Council decision on work programme numbers.	R1
	38c	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Effective O&S Work programming and best use of resources	Complete. Monitor the need for	MT1

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	38d	Feedback is gathered on O&S outputs and a tool developed to measure the success of O&S. <i>Not started. This is identified as a key aim in the 2025 O&S annual report and will be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Summer 2024	P1
<i>Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees' work to make best use of the total resources available.</i>	39a	Each O&S committee may establish separate work plans, with responsibility for monitoring use of resource across all work plans sitting with O&S Board, supported by O&S Chairs. This is set out in the Constitution. <i>Proposals have been made in the 2025 O&S annual report that controls on the use of O&S resource be strengthened via the O&S Chairs group. If agreed, changes will be made to the constitution to reflect that. these members will agree the priority order of in-depth work across all committees to more effectively manage resource.</i>	Complete	CR1
	39b	Establish calendar of meeting dates for O&S chairs to include collective leadership monitoring of O&S resource <i>Calendar of meetings planned for 2025/26.</i>	Autumn 2023	CM1
Being clear about scrutiny's role				
<i>Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction. While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects 'the area, or the area's inhabitants', authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary, which means that there might be things that, despite being important, scrutiny will not be able to look at.</i>	40	See actions 4a, b and c above – O&S 'focus', working methods and terms of reference.	See relevant actions above	WS1/ WM1/ TOR1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				
<i>Different overall roles could include having a focus on risk, the authority's finances, or on the way the authority works with its partners.</i> <i>Applying this focus does not mean that certain subjects are 'off limits'. It is more about looking at topics and deciding whether their relative importance justifies the positive impact scrutiny's further involvement could bring.</i>				
<i>When thinking about scrutiny's focus, members should be supported by key senior officers. The statutory scrutiny officer, if an authority has one, will need to take a leading role in supporting members to clarify the role and function of scrutiny, and championing that role once agreed.</i>	41a	Senior officers and the statutory scrutiny officer support committees in selecting priorities that are of relevance and can add value to the organisation. – In annual work programming for O&S Committees and ongoing, during work programming discussions at each meeting. Senior officers provide good support to O&S in planning work. In 2025, the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer have all proactively suggested topics and approaches for scrutiny. All senior officers are asked to provide topic suggestions as part of standard annual work programming methodology. The O&S Specialist and Democratic Services team provide support on scrutiny priorities on an ongoing basis. This support is balanced against other service priorities and so is limited by resource availability. Scrutiny outcomes could be strengthened if direct officer support could be provided to greater depth and more consistently provided, and will remain resource dependent. All committees would benefit from regularly assessing the value that has been added by their work, to inform future work planning.	Complete, monitor long-term	WS1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

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	41b	Statutory scrutiny officer to ensure that scrutiny priorities are promoted to Executive members and the wider officer corps via Corporate Management Board and information sharing with Cabinet members. All annual work programmes have been developed and are shared with each O&S committee agenda. Mechanisms are in place for promoting scrutiny priorities within the organisation: CMB has agreed to receive all O&S work programmes on a quarterly basis. The Leader and senior council officers are now invited into regular meetings with all O&S chairs to promote effective information sharing between O&S and executive. O&S lead members are regularly encouraged to form effective informal relationships with cabinet members for information sharing purposes.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1
Who to speak to				
<i>Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:</i> <i>The public -</i> <i>It is likely that formal 'consultation' with the public on the scrutiny work programme will be ineffective. Asking individual scrutiny members to have conversations with individuals and groups in their own local areas can work better. Insights gained from the public through individual pieces of scrutiny work can be fed back into the work programming process. Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results</i>	42a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Sources of input to annual work programming, to include community insight to their scrutiny work, partner information and Cabinet forthcoming priorities	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
	42b	See 3C above – use of community insight in O&S work	See relevant action above.	CI1
	42c	Statutory scrutiny officer to work with communications team to establish how scrutiny can promote its work priorities and gather public insight. To include proactive work with communications team in Spring 2024 to gather public insight to inform future annual work programming in Summer 2024. Not started, to be progressed as resources allow.	Spring 2024	COM1

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<i>Authorities should consider how their communications officers can help scrutiny engage with the public, and how wider internal expertise and local knowledge from both members and officers might make a contribution.</i> <i>The authority's partners –</i> <i>relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful:</i> <i>o Public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers);</i> <i>o Voluntary sector partners;</i> <i>o Contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies);</i> <i>o In parished areas, town, community and parish councils;</i> <i>o Neighbouring principal councils (both in two-tier and unitary areas);</i> <i>o Cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships; and</i> <i>o Others with a stake and interest in the local area – large local employers, for example.</i> <i>The executive –</i> <i>a principal partner in discussions on the work programme should be the executive (and senior officers). The executive should not direct scrutiny's work, but conversations will help scrutiny members better understand how their work can be designed to align with</i>	42d	See 35 above: Develop a library of O&S oversight information, provided in an online format for Councillors to access independently, to include - Information from external organisations, as appropriate, to support individual work items and annual work programming	See relevant action above.	L1
	42e	Cabinet is asked to provide input to annual O&S work programming to indicate forthcoming areas of work where O&S can add value. <i>Cabinet are asked to provide ideas for annual work programming as standard, and have also contributed in-year ideas for scrutiny in 2024/25.</i>	Complete.	C1
	42f	See 7b above: The Cabinet Forward Plan is regularly updated with sufficient notice of forthcoming priorities to enable O&S to engage effectively at an early stage in policy shaping	See relevant action above.	C1
	42g	See 7d above: Role descriptions to be developed for Councillors in leading O&S roles to clarify expectation that scrutiny chairs establish informal working arrangements with relevant Portfolio Holders to ensure scrutiny can be informed of Cabinet priorities in a timely way.	See relevant action above.	RD1

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<i>the best opportunities to influence the authority's wider work.</i>				
Information sources				
Scrutiny will need access to relevant information to inform its work programme. The type of information will depend on the specific role and function scrutiny plays within the authority, but might include: • Performance information from across the authority and its partners; • Finance and risk information from across the authority and its partners; • Corporate complaints information, and aggregated information from political groups about the subject matter of members' surgeries; • Business cases and options appraisals (and other planning information) for forthcoming major decisions. This information will be of particular use for pre -decision scrutiny; and • Reports and recommendations issued by relevant ombudsmen, especially the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. As committees can meet in closed session, commercial confidentiality should not preclude the sharing of information. Authorities should note, however, that the default for meetings should be that they are held in public	43a	See 30a above: Develop a library of O&S oversight information, provided in an online format for Councillors to access independently, to include - Performance, Management, Finance, Risk, Complaints, Business Cases and Ombudsman information. This will assist in 'horizon scanning' to enhance the effectiveness of O&S work planning.	See relevant action above.	L1
	43b	Presumption is made that library of information for O&S Councillors is public, with non- public information shared in appropriate alternative environment to ensure Councillors can remain informed. <i>The presumption for information shared with O&S to be public is already an embedded practice, with appropriate consideration given on an arising basis to O&S requests for non-public information.</i>	Complete, monitor long-term.	L1
Scrutiny members should consider keeping this information under regular review. It is likely to be easier to do this outside committee, rather than bringing such information to committee 'to note', or to provide an update, as a matter of course.	44	Support committees to work in more diverse ways to maintain oversight of key information, including circulating information outside of meetings and the use of rapporteurs or champions for particular topics. This will free up committee resource for value added scrutiny. <i>Working methods have now been diversified to make better use of meeting resource. Information based reporting is regularly received outside of meetings of through a series of regular informal briefings, now established for each committee. There</i>	In annual work programming for O&S Committees – Autumn 2023	WM1

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Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		has been an increase in the use of rapporteurs and the approach will be further embedded in 2025/26. This action has not been marked as completed, as, although working methods have diversified, analysis of 24/25 work outputs across all committees show an overbalance of monitoring/update reports in HASC and Children's Services O&S. This is taking up time that could be used for other value-added scrutiny. These committees would benefit from an ongoing rigorous approach to committee agenda planning, to ensure monitoring work does not over balance agendas and committee time can be used to reach valuable outcomes. Officers will continue to support this approach.		
Shortlisting topics				
<i>Approaches to shortlisting topics should reflect scrutiny's overall role in the authority. This will require the development of bespoke, local solutions, however when considering whether an item should be included in the work programme, the kind of questions a scrutiny committee should consider might include:</i> • Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue? • How could we best carry out work on this subject? • What would be the best outcome of this work? • How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?	45a	Extend the use of the 'scrutiny request form' already in place for commissioned items, to encourage consideration of the value to be added by all reports, such as scrutiny's consideration of Cabinet pre-decision items and officer proposed items. – In annual work programming for O&S Committees and ongoing, during work programming discussions at each meeting. The use of the 'scrutiny request form' is embedded for councillor requests. It is not currently used for requests to consider other items such as Cabinet items or officer proposed items. O&S Chairs have confirmed that they do not feel a documented process for officer or cabinet requests is necessary. Careful consideration of the likely benefits of all intended work prior to commencement, regardless of origin, will continue to be encouraged by officers that support O&S.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1

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<i>Some authorities use scoring systems to evaluate and rank work programme proposals. If these are used to provoke discussion and debate, based on evidence, about what priorities should be, they can be a useful tool. Others take a looser approach. Whichever method is adopted, a committee should be able to justify how and why a decision has been taken to include certain issues and not others.</i> <i>Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.</i>	45b	Review 'scrutiny request form' and update as appropriate to incorporate all suggested areas referenced in O&S guidance. <i>Not started. To be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Autumn 2023	P1
	45c	See 18c above: As required by the constitution, all requests for O&S work are considered by Committees against the current resource levels available to support the request	See relevant action above.	R1
Carrying out work				
Selected topics can be scrutinised in several ways, including: a) As a single item on a committee agenda – this often presents a limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue; b) At a single meeting – which could be a committee meeting or something less formal. This can provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of witnesses; c) At a task and finish review of two or three meetings – short, sharp scrutiny review are likely to be most effective even for complex topics. Properly focused, they ensure members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less;	46a	Methods of carrying out O&S work are set out within the Constitution at Article 6, Rule 6.9.	Complete	CR1
	46b	Support committees to actively consider diverse ways of working other than committee reports to secure most effective outputs. <i>O&S working methods have diversified and now regularly include committee reporting, outside of committee briefings, rapporteurs and working groups. Diverse working methods will continue to be encouraged.</i>	Complete, monitor long-term	WM1
	46c	Review and develop task and finish/ working group scoping document, protocol and joint working group protocol <i>Not started. To be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Summer 2024	P1

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d) Via a longer-term task and finish review – the 'traditional' task and finish model – with perhaps six or seven meetings spread over a number of months – is still appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. However, the resource implications of such work, and its length, can make it unattractive for all but the most complex matters; and e) By establishing a 'standing panel' – this falls short of establishing a whole new committee but may reflect a necessity to keep a watching brief over a critical local issue, especially where members feel they need to convene regularly to carry out that oversight. Again, the resource implications of this approach means that it will be rarely used.				
Evidence sessions				
Evidence sessions are a key way in which scrutiny committees inform their work. They might happen at formal committee, in less formal 'task and finish' groups or at standalone sessions. Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.	47	Consider the appropriateness of conducting evidence sessions to scrutinise particular topics when planning annual work programmes. These will need proactive planning to ensure that sufficient resource can be made available to support effective sessions. An evidence based approach is encouraged on an ongoing basis and there has been a small increase in the inclusion of external invitees during meetings to bring insight. A larger scale evidence gathering topic on Van Life is planned for 2025/26. Planning and conducting evidence sessions is valuable but resource intensive. The approach will therefore continue to be promoted as an effective form of scrutiny to be taken up as resources allow.	Action will progress as resources allow.	WM1

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How to plan <i>Effective planning does not necessarily involve a large number of pre-meetings, the development of complex scopes or the drafting of questioning plans. It is more often about setting overall objectives and then considering what type of questions (and the way in which they are asked) can best elicit the information the committee is seeking. This applies as much to individual agenda items as it does for longer evidence sessions – there should always be consideration in advance of what scrutiny is trying to get out of a particular evidence session.</i>	48	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Evidence led approach to O&S, and how to conduct an effective evidence session	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
<i>Chairs play a vital role in leading discussions on objective-setting and ensuring all members are aware of the specific role each will play during the evidence session.</i> <i>As far as possible there should be consensus among scrutiny members about the objective of an evidence session before it starts. It is important to recognise that members have different perspectives on certain issues, and so might not share the objectives for a session that are ultimately adopted. Where this happens, the Chair will need to be aware of this divergence of views and bear it in mind when planning the evidence session.</i>	49	O&S Chairing skills training to be delivered to include how to plan for and lead evidence sessions, establish aims and manage different objectives from committee members Chairing skills training provided in Summer 2023 induction. Higher level of training through LGA leadership courses has been offered to all O&S chairs, including following chairmanship changes to ensure continuity of expertise.	Complete, monitor long-term.	MT2
<i>Effective planning should mean that at the end of a session it is relatively straightforward for the chair to draw together themes and highlight the key findings. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to develop and agree recommendations immediately, but, unless the session is part of a wider inquiry, enough evidence should have been gathered to allow the chair to set a clear direction.</i> <i>After an evidence session, the committee might wish to hold a short 'wash-up' meeting to review whether their objectives were met and lessons could be learned for future sessions</i>	50	O&S Chairing skills training to be delivered to include how to draw together themes and highlight key findings at the end of evidence sessions – this approach to be extended to all O&S work items to ensure Chairs can provide transparent summary of discussions. Chairing skills training provided in Summer 2023 induction. Higher level of training through LGA leadership courses has been offered to all O&S chairs, including following chairmanship changes to ensure continuity of expertise.	Complete, monitor long-term	MT2

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Developing recommendations <i>The development and agreement of recommendations is often an iterative process. It will usually be appropriate for this to be done only by members, assisted by co-optees where relevant. When deciding on recommendations, however, members should have due regard to advice received from officers, particularly the Monitoring Officer.</i> <i>The drafting of reports is usually, but not always, carried out by officers, directed by members.</i>				
	51a	Officer refresher training to be provided to include – Officers to provide timely, transparent advice to committees in all areas of O&S work, as appropriate. <i>Provided to senior officers in Winter 2024/ Spring 2025. Training included a CfGS led workshop with scrutiny and executive members and had a focus on embedding a clear understanding of scrutiny fundamentals and developing a positive scrutiny culture with all stakeholders across the organisation.</i>	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	OT1
	51b	For longer pieces of O&S work, a lead officer to be identified at the scoping stage who will support report drafting - include this within relevant protocols listed at 46c above. <i>This is included as standard within scoping documents for O&S working groups.</i> <i>Wider piece of work to review protocols (46c) not yet started. To be progressed as resources allow.</i>	Immediate, as arising (WS1/R1) Protocol review Summer 2024 (P1)	WS1/R1/P1
<i>Authorities draft reports and recommendations in a number of ways, but there are normally three stages:</i> <i>i. the development of a 'heads of report' – a document setting out general findings that members can then discuss as they consider the overall structure and focus of the report and its recommendations;</i> <i>ii. The development of those findings, which will set out some areas on which recommendations might be made; and</i> <i>iii. the drafting of the full report.</i> <i>Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where</i>	52	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – Consideration of appropriate recommendations and reporting route for O&S work, to include consideration of what SMART recommendations may look like. Consideration of this to take place at the scoping stage of O&S work, to ensure scope is clear enough and to provide an indication of the value that is likely to be added by the work undertaken.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1

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<i>appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.</i> <i>Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.</i>				
<i>Sharing draft recommendations with executive members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense-check</i>	53	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided to include – The role of executive member consultation during draft reporting stages.	Complete. Monitor the need for refresher training.	MT1
Chief Executive's Assurance Review, June 2023 – recommendations and comments relating to O&S				
<i>In a No Overall Control council it is useful to ensure there is an opportunity to elect a Chair from outside of the administration to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure appropriate scrutiny and holding the Executive to account.</i>	54a	Since May 2023 all O&S Committees have appointed a Chair, and in most cases, a Vice-Chair from outside of the Administration.	Complete – monitor long term.	CL1
<i>Opposition councillors have recently been given a majority of positions on the principal Overview and Scrutiny committees as a result of changes in the political balance calculations. Opposition councillors appear to be content to keep Conservative councillors as Chairs for the Committees where they are already in place, for the remainder of this Council term.</i>	54b	Action relating to potential constitutional changes to clarify the good practice of opposition chairs outlined at 8c above.	See relevant action above.	CR1
<i>Overview and scrutiny committees are to be encouraged to take evidence and contributions from officers as well as portfolio holders, to ensure a more informed basis to O&S recommendations.</i>	55	Multiple actions relating to O&S powers to question, skills training, and planning of evidence sessions are outlined above. These will all assist with encouraging evidence and contributions from officers as well as portfolio holders, to increase the effectiveness of scrutiny sessions. See 9a, 9b, 9c, 27b and 48 above.	See relevant actions above	See relevant actions above

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<i>There is still a marked reluctance amongst the broader overview and scrutiny committees to ask questions directly of officers and there are regular comments that leading councillors do not give clear answers to questions, but other councillors do not seek that clarity from officers, which they could.</i> <i>Since June there has been a noticeable shift in emphasis within the Council, with officers being invited to contribute on specific issues in Cabinet and this need needs to be extended to O&S committees</i> <i>Continue to encourage full participation and clarity of answers in all meetings, and incorporate into training for Overview and Scrutiny committee members.</i>				
<i>Overview and scrutiny committees should continue to increase their focus on policy development and engagement rather than pre-Cabinet scrutiny.</i>	56a	Since May 2023 significant effort has gone into reducing pre-Cabinet scrutiny levels to achieve a more even balance with other types of scrutiny. Actions to encourage this included training and development, CMB engagement to identify early policy discussion items and ongoing officer support to assist in weighing up the benefits of scrutiny topics. In 2023/4 pre-decision levels of scrutiny across all committees reduced to 21% and remained stable in 2024/25 at 29%. There was greater emphasis on earlier policy discussion with items such as debates on Devolution in 2024 being an example of this. With ten political groups making up the Council, the organic drive for pre- Cabinet scrutiny is likely to remain and diverse scrutiny topics will continue to be encouraged by support officers to avoid overbalance.	Complete, monitor long-term.	WS1

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	56b	Ongoing support to promote a balance of O&S work is identified through multiple actions above. Encouraging an effective balance of scrutiny work involves many factors including effective engagement with Cabinet and senior officers to ensure O&S understanding of forthcoming priorities; training; work planning actions and monitoring and reporting on scrutiny outputs to ensure Council ownership of the balance of O&S work. These actions will embed a practice of selecting topics which generate meaningful outcomes and balance policy engagement with pre-Cabinet scrutiny. See actions 1c, 4b,7b,7c,7d, 14a, 38c, 38d, 41, 42e, 43a, 45a above.	See relevant actions above	See relevant actions above
<i>Overview and scrutiny committees should consider putting more focus into corporate performance reporting, challenging the executive to ensure that improvement plans are having an effect and improving the services that are missing their targets.</i> <i>There is an opportunity to strengthen the focus of O&S on performance management, through the overview and scrutiny committees.</i> <i>Incorporate into training for Overview and Scrutiny committee members and monitor agendas, encouraging Overview and Scrutiny Committees to focus on performance management information.</i>	57	See 30a and 30b above relating to the provision of performance management information and associated training.	See relevant actions above	See relevant actions above
<i>Need to ensure the party whip is not applied to O&S functions. This message needs to be reinforced and the situation monitored.</i>	58	Actions relating to training, chairing and monitoring the independence of O&S are set out above. See 8b, 8d,8e, 16a and 16c and 26 above.	See relevant actions above	See relevant actions above

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<i>There has been no recent evidence of the party whip being applied to O&S functions, but this needs to be monitored. A positive statement will be sought from Group Leaders.</i>				
DLUHC External Assurance Review of BCP Council, August 2023 – recommendations and comments relating to O&S				
<i>The Council reviews the Transformation programme and agrees a realistic and deliverable programme by October 2023. The Council sets up effective mechanisms for Member oversight and monitoring of the delivery of the programme by June 2023</i>	59	O&S to consider and establish its role in this member oversight and monitoring. The O&S Board Chair and Vice Chair were members of the cross-party councillor working group to monitor the Transformation Programme, prior to its completion. This provided a mechanism for O&S to maintain oversight of and raise red flags to committee by exception. Cabinet reports were also selected for scrutiny to maintain oversight of key stages.	Complete, programme now concluded,	WS1
<i>The Council establishes a sound budget setting process and begins preparations for the 2024/25 budget as soon as possible after the local government elections and has proposals drafted for a sustainable MTFP and three-year budget by the end of September 2023</i>	60	O&S to consider and establish its role in the budget setting process A comprehensive package of budget scrutiny has been established since 2023. The O&S Board leads budget monitoring and final budget setting debate and includes other O&S Chairs in this, whilst individual committees have requested their own areas of deep dive scrutiny on specific budget areas. Training has been provided to councillors to support them in this role. Additionally, to better influence the budget during development stage, budget working groups were established by scrutiny in 2024. This approach has been adapted to a 'Budget Conversation' day for 2025 and BCP Council has been recognised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as a council leader for this approach. Executive members have also welcomed and encouraged this approach which is a demonstration of a healthy working relationship between O&S and Cabinet. This proactive budget work is resource intensive	In annual work programming for O&S Committees – Autumn 2023	WS1

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		for officers across the council and those that support O&S directly, and the approach requires careful evaluation to assess the benefit vs resource input. Similar approaches will continue to be encouraged in the future, balanced against resources.		
<i>The Council, with the active leadership of the respective group leaders, uses the opportunity of a new Council to reset the Member / Member and Member / officer culture and relationships. The new Council must use the support offered by the LGA and set up a comprehensive programme of Member induction and an on-going programme of Member training. The induction programme should be in place by June 2023 and the ongoing programme by July 2023</i>	61a	New Councillor and refresher training to be provided. Complete. See all actions coded MT1 above.	See relevant actions above.	MT1
	61b	See 21b above - A programme of ongoing scrutiny skills training to be developed for delivery to O&S Councillors throughout municipal year 2023/24.	See relevant action above.	MT3
	61c	See 23b above – O&S Chairing and leadership skills support to be provided.	See relevant action above.	MT2
	61d	LGA training opportunities to be taken up. The LGA has been widely engaged to provide support to O&S since May 2023. This includes Leadership Academy training for chairs, in-house delivery of support for O&S work programming, targeted children's services training for the Children's Svs O&S Committee, and promotion of LGA online training courses to councillors as arising.	Complete. Continue to take up opportunities on an ongoing basis.	WS1
<i>The Council puts in place a regular annual cycle for the business plans, mid-year reviews and year end reviews of all its companies to be reported to the appropriate scrutiny and decision-making bodies. This should be in place by June 2023 to begin the 2024/25 process</i>	62	O&S to consider and establish its role in this review process. Business plans are usually selected for scrutiny as standard, when available as Cabinet reports.	In annual work programming for O&S Committees – Autumn 2023	WS1
<i>The Council has four scrutiny committees – Corporate and Community; Children's Services; Health and Adult Social Care, and Place. Scrutiny has focused rather heavily on pre scrutiny of</i>	63	See 56a and 56b above.	See relevant actions above	See relevant

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)				actions above
<i>Cabinet decisions rather than having a broader focus or looking at policy development. I was told by a range of people that politics has got in the way of effective scrutiny. When scrutiny has looked at wider issues the feedback has been more positive – I was told of a good example of scrutiny inviting the Police and Crime Commissioner and neighbourhood watch representatives to a scrutiny committee. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny summarise scrutiny's role as providing a space to bring critical friend challenge and support to decision making; providing a way of challenging and supporting partner organisations; bringing issues that matter to local people and the local community into decision making; and surface issues that the Council should be engaging with but which are not yet part of formal decision making.</i> <i>From what I have seen there is an opportunity at BCP – as there is with many other councils – to develop the scrutiny role along the lines above rather than simply to focus on pre-cabinet scrutiny. There is an opportunity with a new Council to ensure that Councillors have training and support to enable them to develop their role in overview and scrutiny. This should be built into the Member induction and ongoing training programme.</i>				
<i>The DfE Advisor has commented that the Scrutiny Committee [Children's Services O&S] and particularly its Chair (prior to the elections) have been engaged in a proper and appropriate way. The Chair of scrutiny prior to the elections has now been appointed as the Cabinet Member and therefore the Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services. Given the position of children's services the change in both the Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair roles will need careful management and both Members will need focussed support to discharge these key roles.</i>	64a	Work programming support provided summer 2023. Further support to be provided to complete annual work programming. <i>Annual work programming delayed in 2025 but provided on a rolling meeting basis instead.</i>	Complete in 23/24, delayed in 2025.	CS1
	64b	Focussed support provided by service area lead to identify and provide relevant performance information to support the committee in its role. <i>Service area lead officer support provided to Children's O&S Chair and committee. This is well established and provided on an ongoing basis. Includes designated lead officer and meetings with the Executive Director and Portfolio Holder.</i>	Complete, monitor on ongoing basis.	CS1

Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan 2023-24

Relevant Extract from:	ID	Action for BCP Council with updates (Latest updates December 2023 in blue text)	RAG and timescales	Code
Statutory Guidance on O&S (ID 1-53) Chief Executive's Assurance Review (ID 54-58) DLUHC Assurance Review (ID 59 – 64)		Children's Services have offered to expand this to include quarterly meetings with all lead directors in Children's Services to provide a comprehensive update to the Chair of scrutiny, with these meetings to be implemented in late 2025.		
	64c	Ongoing training plan for the Committee in development. The LGA provided a targeted skills and knowledge training programme to Children's Svs O&S Committee members in 2024/25. A programme of briefing slots is now established for the committee to provide information needed for the committee to undertake their role but which doesn't require active scrutiny. This accompanies other scrutiny network training opportunities available to councillors on an arising basis.	Complete, monitor skills training needs on an ongoing basis and particularly when there is significant membership change.	CS1
	64d	Establish links with O&S Chairs in other authorities that have experience of similar improvement journey. Mentoring links now established through LGA training programme.	Complete, monitor take-up of opportunities ongoing.	CS1
	64e	LGA development opportunities promoted to Chair. The LGA provided a targeted skills and knowledge training programme to Children's Svs O&S Committee members in 2024/25. Mentoring links for Chair now established through LGA training programme. LGA Leadership Academy delivered to previous Chair in 2023 and planned for current Chair on next available course.	Complete. Development opportunities will continue to be promoted and take-up monitored on ongoing basis.	CS1

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

The Council is legally required by the Equality Act 2010 to evidence how it has considered its equality duties in its decision-making process.

The Council must have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

A link to the full text of [s149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) which must be considered when making decisions.

1	What is being reviewed?	The level of concurrent Overview and Scrutiny topic inquiries
2	What changes are being made?	Potential reduction of topics from one per Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee concurrently (across four committees) to one at a time across all committees. Topic priority order to be determined by O&S Chairs rather than O&S committees. Greater scoping controls to be applied by Overview and Scrutiny chairs.
3	Service Unit:	Democratic Services
4	Participants in the conversation:	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services
5	Conversation date/s:	September 2025
6	Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	Anyone submitting a topic for overview and scrutiny work, primarily councillors but also including officers, other council bodies (eg. Cabinet/ Council), and residents.
7	Do different groups have different needs or experiences? age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socio-economic status, carers, human rights.	The impact on all protected groups is neutral and there is no difference in needs or experiences for any protected group. Under the BCP Constitution all councillors and residents have the right to submit a topic for scrutiny work and this will not change.
8	Will this change affect any service users?	No - There will be no impact on any protected group as a result of the proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation.

9	Not applicable	
10	What are the benefits or positive equality impacts of the change on current or potential users?	The proposed changes to topic prioritisation may positively benefit the council and residents as prioritisation will by necessity become more robust and those topics of the highest importance and tangible impact to residents may be more likely to be selected for scrutiny. The impact on all protected groups will be equal.
11	What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?	As a result of more robust topic prioritisation some topics may not be selected for scrutiny which may otherwise have been progressed. This may include topics suggested by residents. However it is likely that topics that are less impactful are not progressed and this is in line with existing arrangements in place to guide O&S councillors when making judgements on scrutiny topic selection. The impact of this on all protected groups will be equal.
12	Will the change affect employees?	No.
13	Will the change affect the wider community?	No further than is outlined in the paragraphs above.
14	What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?	There are no significant negative impacts of proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation and so no mitigating actions are planned.
15	Summary of Equality Implications:	There are no direct equality implications arising from proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation. Benefits to communities may be seen in the selection of topics that have a greater positive impact on communities but this will not affect any protected group more than others. Overall, the outcome of proposals will have a neutral impact on equality.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	Work Plan
Meeting date	17 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Board is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: the Overview and Scrutiny Board review, update and confirm the Work Plan.
Reason for recommendations	The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda.
Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Work Plan updates

1. This report provides the latest version of the Committee's Work Plan at Appendix A and guidance on how to populate and review the Work Plan in line with the Council's Constitution. For the purposes of this report, all references to Overview and Scrutiny Committees shall also apply to the Overview and Scrutiny Board unless otherwise stated.
2. Items added to the Work Plan since the last publication are highlighted as **'NEW'**. Councillors are asked to consider and confirm the latest Work Plan, subject to any updates agreed at the meeting.
3. The most recent [Cabinet Forward Plan](#) can be viewed on the council's website. This link is included in each O&S Work Plan report for councillors to view and refer to when considering whether any items of pre-decision scrutiny will join the O&S Committee Work Plan.

Resources to support O&S Work

4. The Constitution requires that O&S committees take account of the resources available to support proposals for O&S work. Advice on maximising the resource available to O&S Committees is set out in the O&S Work Planning Guidance document referenced below.

Work programming guidance and tools

5. The [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#) document provides detail on the principles of scrutiny at BCP Council, the membership, functions and remit of each O&S committee and the variety of working methods available.
6. [The O&S Work Planning Guidance](#) document provides detail on all aspects of work planning including how to determine requests for scrutiny in line with the Council's constitution.
7. The [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#) was drawn up by O&S councillors in conjunction with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. The framework provides detail on the criteria for proactive, reactive and pre-decision scrutiny topics, and guidance on how these can be selected to contribute to value-added scrutiny outcomes.
8. The '[Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny](#)' form is an example form to be used by councillors and residents when making a new suggestion for a scrutiny topic. Word copies of the form are available from Democratic Services upon request by using the contact details on this agenda.

Options Appraisal

9. The O&S Committee is asked to review, update and confirm its Work Plan, taking account of the supporting documents provided and including the determination of any new requests for scrutiny. This will ensure member ownership of the Work Plan and that reports can be prepared in a timely way.
10. If updates to the Work Plan are not confirmed there may be an impact on timeliness of reports and other scrutiny activity.

Summary of financial implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Council's Constitution requires that all O&S bodies set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda. The recommendation proposed in this report will fulfil this requirement.

Summary of human resources implications

13. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

14. There are no sustainability resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

15. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

16. There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any councillor and any member of the public may make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included within O&S Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Summary of risk assessment

17. There is a risk of challenge to the Council if the Constitutional requirement to establish and publish a Work Plan is not met.

Background papers

- [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#)
- [O&S Work Planning Guidance document](#)
- [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#)
- [‘Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny’](#)

Further detail on these background papers is contained within the body of this report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Current O&S Work Plan

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BCP Council Overview and Scrutiny Board – Work Plan. Updated 6.11.2025

Guidance notes:

- 2/3 items per committee meeting is the recommended maximum for effective scrutiny.
- The O&S Board will approach work through a lens of **RESIDENT IMPACT AND EXPERIENCE**
- Items requiring further scoping are identified and should be scoped using the Key Lines of Enquiry tool.

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
Meeting Date: 17 November 2025				
1.	Vitality Stadium Land - Draft Heads of terms To outline the draft heads of terms and lease terms for the land parcels associated with the expansion of the Vitality Stadium, and provide officer recommendations on the preferred options.	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet decision	PH – Finance	Item added to the Cabinet FP - October 2025. Added to agenda at the Chair's request. This item / report will contain exempt information
2.	Blue Badge Update For the O&S Board to consider an update on the current situation with the processing of Blue Badges and potential future actions	Committee Report	PH – Customer, Communication and Culture Director of Customer and Property	The Board agreed to add this as an item to the work plan following a request for an (unvalidated) Councillor call-for-Action
3,	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report For the Board to consider the annual report for the BCP Overview and Scrutiny Function which details O&S work over the past year.	Committee Report	Scrutiny Specialist and O&S Committee Chairs	

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
Meeting Date: 8 December 2025				
1.	NEW Community Governance Review To consider the report from the Task and Finish Group to full Council to progress the implementation of CGR.	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a report to Council	Chai of the CGR Task and Finish Group	Item suggested for scrutiny at the October 2025 meeting
2.	Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Update and Budget monitoring Cabinet Reports To consider the updated MTFP including progress towards delivering a balanced 2026/27 budget.	Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet reports	PH – Finance Chief Financial Officer	O&S Board previously agreed to receive MTFP update reports
3.	Bournemouth Development Company: Winter Gardens Site Development Plan To consider a report which presents a new site development plan for Cabinet approval.	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet Report	PH – Leader Chief Operations Officer / Director of Investment and Development	Item agreed to be added from the Cabinet Forward Plan by the Board at its September meeting.
Meeting Date: 5 January 2026				
1.	Parking Enforcement Around Schools For the O&S Board to consider how illegal parking can be addressed around schools. To potentially include input from schools and parking enforcement team.	Enquiry session Scrutiny Rapporteur - Cllr A Chapmanlaw	PH – Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations PH – Childre, Young People, Education and Skills	Initial enquiries will be made through a scrutiny rapporteur to lead to an enquiry session with different parties. Date TBC

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
2.	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny of Community Safety Partnership The Overview and Scrutiny Board is the statutory body for crime and disorder scrutiny and will consider the annual report of the community safety partnership.	Annual Report	PH – Housing and Regulatory Director of Housing and Communities	
3.	Investment and Development Directorate - Regeneration Programme This report provides a bi-annual update on the progress of the Council's regeneration programme.	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet Report	PH - Leader of the Council Director Investment and Development	Tracking Cabinet report – moved from July meeting to September, now expected at December Cabinet
Meeting Date: 2 February 2026 BUDGET SCRUTINY				
	Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan To consider the budget	Pre-decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet/Council report	PH – Finance Chief Finance Officer	Annual Budget report
Meeting Date: 23 February 2026				
	There are no reports currently scheduled – items for this meeting are to be determined.			
Items for scrutiny (Meeting dates and/or methods to be determined)				
	Carters Quay	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet Report	PH – Housing and Regulatory Services	Item added to the Cabinet FP - June 2025. Originally

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
	To scrutinise the Cabinet report which provides an update to Councillors on the current situation			scheduled for October - moved to new date to be confirmed (TBC)
	Carter's Quay Development Impact To consider the impact of the Carter's Quay Development on residents living in the locality of the site.	As part of the Cabinet report	PH – Housing and Regulatory Services	Item agreed by the Board at its September 2025 meeting – following referral from the Audit and Governance Committee
	Accounting for Social Value in decision making	Committee Report	TBC	Item requires further scoping - KLOE document
	Working more collectively across BCP geographical areas / Locality Governance – This item is interdependent with the progressing Community Governance Review and will be revisited once this is completed.	TBC	TBC	This requires further scoping – KLOE document
	Culture of the Council To consider a number of different elements regarding the culture of the Council including member/officer relations, accountability and record keeping and recognition of different geographic localities.	TBC	TBC	Scrutiny Request received and agreed by the Board - June 2025
	Business Improvement Districts	Report/presentation to the O&S Board (TBC)	Leader of the Council	This was requested June 2025 as there was an existing item for issues arising from the preceding

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
	To consider issues raised by the business improvement districts operating within BCP.			briefing from the BIDs which hadn't been progressed
	Domestic Abuse Strategies To consider prior to Cabinet the Prevention of Domestic Abuse Strategy, and the Perpetrator Strategy including delivery plans	TBC – Pre-Cabinet decision Scrutiny		Item added to the Cabinet Forward Plan with a date TBC. The Board agreed to add to the Work Plan - October 2025
Working Groups and items addressed through alternative scrutiny methods				
	Public Consultations Framework Development – This group has completed its work into the consultation framework and will report its findings back to the Board inline with the timetabling of the draft framework.	Working Group	Director of Marketing, Communications and Policy PH – Customer, Communications and Culture	The Board established this working group at its meeting on 18 November The Group is continuing its work to look into recent consultations.
	Member involvement in the Complaints Process To investigate how this links with members ward work in specific issues.	Scrutiny Rapporteur – Cllr S Aitkenhead	PH - Customer, Communications and Culture	
	Briefing Sessions			
	Dates for O&S Board Briefing Sessions for 2025/26:		Potential Topics for Briefing Sessions	
	Monday 24 November		Regeneration and BDC	

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and purpose	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Additional Information
	Monday 9 March		Performance of the Council	