

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD



Report subject	Request for scrutiny from a member of the public
Meeting date	18 October 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>In line with the Council's constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider a request that has been received for scrutiny of an issue. Any councillor or member of the public may request that a matter be scrutinised, and the Board must decide whether to include it into the Forward Plan for scrutiny at a future date. Reasons should be given if the Board declines the request.</p> <p>Members of the Board should note that this report and appendices are provided to aid deliberations on whether the scrutiny topic requested should join the Board's Forward Plan only.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Board considers the request for scrutiny and determines whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) to proceed with the request for scrutiny, by adding it to the Board's Forward Plan for a future date and providing an outline of the scope of the issue to be scrutinised;b) to not exercise its powers in this respect, providing reasons for its decision.
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Council's constitution makes provision at Part 4 Section C,2 for members of the public to make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. These should be considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny body in line with the requirements of the constitution.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Phil Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration Economy and Strategic Planning
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	All
Classification	For Decision

Background

The Council's constitution provides for councillors and members of the public to request that an issue be considered by an Overview and Scrutiny Board or Committee. A request for scrutiny of 'the potential benefits in terms of improved public confidence, effective use of Councillors' knowledge and time, and the overall cost savings that can all be achieved by changing from the present system of a single Planning Committee to one that has three committees, one for each town in the conurbation', has been submitted by Mr Bob Hutchings, Chairman of Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council. The request has been submitted on behalf of all five parish councils in the BCP area Burton Parish Council, Christchurch Town Council, Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council, Hurn Parish Council, and Throop & Holdenhurst Parish Council.

The request and required accompanying detail supplied by is attached as Appendix 1.

1. The constitution states that:

- a) all suggestions for overview and scrutiny work made to the council must be accompanied by detail outlining the background to the issue suggested, the proposed method of undertaking the work and likely timescale associated, and the anticipated outcome and the value to be added by the work proposed;
- b) no item of work suggested in this way shall join the forward plan of any overview and scrutiny committee without an assessment of this information;
- c) the resources available to the scrutiny body should be taken account of when adding work to its forward plan;
- d) any member of the public or councillor raising an item under this provision shall be precluded from raising the matter again for a period of 12 months from the date it was considered by the overview and scrutiny body.

2. To aid the Board's consideration of the request, Officers of the service will be present at the meeting to answer any questions of clarity. The member of the public has also provided a copy of the "Review of the BCP Planning Committee Structure," report, which was commissioned by Burton and Winkton Parish Council, Christchurch Town Council, Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council and Hurn Parish Council. A copy of this is attached at appendix B.
3. Board members should note that this information is provided to aid its initial assessment of whether to pursue scrutiny of the suggested issue and is not intended to stimulate full scrutiny and debate of the issue at this meeting.

Options Appraisal

4. The Board should consider the resources available to it to pursue the scrutiny request, along with the value that may be added by the inclusion of the item on the Forward Plan. Should the Board determine that there is value in pursuing scrutiny of the issue raised an outline scope should be identified. The matter may then be added to the Board's Forward Plan for a scrutiny at a date in the future.
5. If the Board decides not to pursue scrutiny at this time it should provide reasons for this decision.

Summary of financial implications

6. N/A to this decision.

Summary of legal implications

7. The right of any councillor to request that an item be scrutinised is set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The Council's constitution makes further provision for members of the public to also make requests for scrutiny. The process set out in the constitution must be followed for both.

Summary of human resources implications

8. N/A to this decision.

Summary of sustainability impact

9. N/A to this decision.

Summary of public health implications

10. N/A to this decision.

Summary of equality implications

11. N/A to this decision.

Summary of risk assessment

12. N/A to this decision.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A – ‘Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny’

Appendix B – ‘Review of the BCP Planning Committee Structure’