

## ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE O&S COMMITTEE

Report subject	<b>Work Plan</b>
Meeting date	20 May 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>That the Environment and Place O&amp;S Committee:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Consider and confirm the refreshed Work Plan priorities set out within the revised work plan at Appendix A.</b></li> <li><b>2. Update Council on the Committee's agreed actions in relation to issues referred to the Committee from Council as outlined in paragraph 23 of the report.</b></li> <li><b>3. Agree referrals to other Council bodies as outlined in paragraph 23 of the report.</b></li> </ol>
Reason for recommendations	<p>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.</p> <p>Updates to Council will ensure compliance with the constitution which requires Overview and Scrutiny Committees to report back on any Council referrals which are requested but not approved for scrutiny. Referrals to other Council bodies will reduce potential duplication of scrutiny efforts, in line with good practice.</p>
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. Resources available for 2026/27 scrutiny are set out in detail at paragraph 15 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.
9. Performance information: progress against the council's Corporate Strategy can be viewed on the council's [Performance Dashboard](#). The dashboard includes ratings to show where the council is on target, areas for monitoring or where action is required, and explanations. The dashboard includes measures relevant to all O&S committees and is provided to assist committees in their horizon scanning and work selection process.
10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has utilised a structured [Decision Matrix](#) as part of the process for prioritising work plan items, evaluating suggested topics against the following measures: resident impact, urgency, influence and the value scrutiny could add.

### **Work Programming 2026-27**

#### **Methodology**

11. In early 2026, potential topics for all O&S Committees were sourced from a range of stakeholders in a desktop exercise. Topics were received from councillors, officers, Cabinet members and partners of the council. O&S councillors were supported to review these topics in a workshop on 1 April 2026, with a view to determining their priorities for the next municipal year using an evidence-led approach. The Work

Plan has been developed through collaborative work with Officers and Councillors following a structured work planning process and reflects agreed priorities, statutory requirements and available scrutiny capacity.

12. The Committee agreed to continuing to operate through a sustainability lens, ensuring that all scrutiny activity considers environmental, social and economic impacts.
13. Items within the Work Plan include a mixture of pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports, proactive scrutiny topics, reactive items and briefing sessions. Updates and refinements may need to be made as further information is received throughout the year.
14. The session was designed to identify and prioritise topics where scrutiny can add the greatest value. Topics were assessed by Committee members using a consistent set of criteria, which included:
  - **Public Interest and Resident Impact** – the potential benefit to residents, communities and the environment
  - **Ability to influence** – the extent to which scrutiny can shape outcomes or decisions
  - **Risk and significance** – including financial, reputational or service delivery risks
  - **Timeliness** – alignment with upcoming decisions, strategies or emerging issues
  - **Deliverability** – whether the Committee has the capacity and resources to undertake the work effectively.

### Scrutiny resources available in 2026/27

15. When considering topic priorities, O&S members assessed these against a good practice approach of allocating 1 hour of scrutiny per topic for sufficient depth and effectiveness of inquiry, and 2/3 hours of scrutiny per committee. On this basis, the illustrative resource capacity for the Environment and Place Committee for 2026/27 is:
  - 2 hours unallocated pre-decision scrutiny = 2 Cabinet reports selected from Cabinet FP
  - 7 hours of proactive scrutiny = 7 Committee reports or fewer reports with more time allocated for deep dive scrutiny.
  - 1 hour reactive scrutiny = 1 Committee report.
16. In developing the programme, the Committee has:
  - Limited items to 2–3 per meeting to maintain focus and allow effective challenge
  - Identified topics requiring deeper investigation and allocated dedicated sessions
  - Built in flexibility to accommodate emerging issues and urgent scrutiny requests
  - Ensured alignment with Cabinet Forward Plan items to support pre-decision scrutiny

### Workshop Outcomes

17. Work planning initially generated a long list of potential scrutiny topics across the Environment and Place remit. These were refined and categorised into priority areas for inclusion in the Work Plan. Key outputs from the session included:
  - Agreement on a small number of **high-priority, high-impact topics** for detailed scrutiny (e.g. sustainable energy, Christchurch Harbour, and van life)
  - Identification of **pre-decision scrutiny requirements** linked to forthcoming Cabinet decisions (Housing Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Climate Action Plan)
  - Recognition of topics requiring **further evidence gathering** through partnerships and expert input (e.g. Net Zero Hub, Environment Agency, Wessex Water)

- Allocation of certain areas to **working groups and rapporteurs** to enable more detailed investigation outside formal committee meetings
  - A list of **reserve items**, to be progressed if capacity allows
  - Agreement on a number of **topics not prioritised**, with clear rationale (e.g. duplication with other work, limited influence, or existing coverage elsewhere)
18. This approach ensures that the final Work Plan is focused, deliverable and aligned with the Committee's strategic priorities and sustainability lens.

### **Next Steps and In Year Scrutiny Requests**

19. The Draft Work Plan for the Committee for 2026/27 is attached at appendix A. The work plan includes both items which have been scheduled to a meeting, a number of reserve items which will be scheduled to a meeting if capacity allows, commissioned, in-depth work the Committee has agreed and a number of suggested items which are not proposed to be progressed.
20. Commissioned work suggestions will be passed to the O&S Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group for consideration. The Group have responsibility for agreeing the order of progression for in-depth work, in line with Constitution requirements which allow for one working group to be progressed at a time across the whole O&S function. The agreed order of progression will be reported back to this Committee.
21. Key Lines of Enquiry documents will be progressed for individual scrutiny topics . Advice on scoping will be sought from officers to strengthen inquiries (in line with usual practice) and from the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs Group (to provide additional test and challenge, in line with updated Constitution requirements).
22. In year topic requests: notwithstanding the Committee's planning of its annual programme of work, councillors retain the right to suggest scrutiny topics throughout the year. Requests for scrutiny work may also be made by residents and other council bodies, such as full Council, at any time. For arising 'in year' requests, the Committee is recommended to make use of the matrix tool to weigh up the value of swapping scrutiny topics for others by referring to the body of evidence generated through the annual work planning workshop.

### **Items Not Prioritised**

23. The following topics were considered and not included in the current Work Plan or as a reserve item. In some cases, agreements were made for referrals to be made elsewhere for these topics and/ or reporting back to Council on referrals. The Committee is asked to formally agree the below recommendations for these topics (underscored), which are based on workshop agreements:

- a) **Heat Network Development** - This officer suggested topic is not prioritised within the 2026–27 Work Plan due to current resource constraints, but it is recommended that it is kept under review and reconsidered if additional capacity becomes available or if a substantive decision point arises.
- b) **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)** - This councillor suggested topic will be considered as part of the Housing Strategy work and associated working group activity. To avoid duplication, it is recommended that the Committee refer the scrutiny topic request form for this item to the Housing Strategy working group.
- c) **Achieving Carbon Neutrality** - This legacy topic (previously agreed but not progressed) is not included as a standalone item, as it was presented within a broad scope which is now better captured through other planned scrutiny activity, including the Climate Action Plan and wider sustainability-focused work.

- d) **Safe Accommodation Strategy Follow-up** – This legacy topic (previously agreed but not progressed) is not included in this Committee’s Work Plan, as it is now being progressed through the Overview and Scrutiny Board in wider scrutiny of a suite of associated strategies. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to scrutinise these elements of the Safe Accommodation Strategy:
- the development of KPIs relating to the Safe Accommodation Strategy,
  - the associated commissioning plan,
  - the implementation of the strategy, through an update at an appropriate future date.
- e) **Flooding and Infrastructure Resilience** - It is recommended that the Committee report to Council that this topic is not included within the Work Plan for the Committee at this stage, given the limited direct influence that the Council can have on some aspects of the topic. However, the Committee suggested that a Flood Advisory Group may be an appropriate route for this work.
- f) **Climate and Nature** - It is recommended that the Committee report to Council that this topic is not being progressed in line with the original referral from Council, as aspects of it are more effectively scoped within other planned scrutiny items, including the Climate Action Plan and sustainable energy work.
- g) **Redhill Paddling Pool** - It is recommended that the Committee report to Council that this topic is not included within the Work Plan, as the Committee considers that the scrutiny as requested by Council will no longer be impactful given the establishment of Town Councils in BCP and the potential, but as yet unknown direction, for asset transfer to these Councils. Noting that scrutiny relating to assets sits within the remit of O&S Board, it is also recommended that the O&S Board be requested to incorporate scrutiny on the status of assets such as Redhill Paddling Pool in any future work that they undertake relating to Town Councils and/ or asset transfer.

### Options Appraisal

24. The Committee is asked to consider and confirm the scrutiny priorities as outlined in the work plan attached at Appendix A and agree the recommendations as outlined in paragraph 23 for those topics which have not been selected for inclusion within the work plan.
25. To ensure that work can be accommodated within available resources, the total number of scrutiny slots available should not be exceeded. If priorities as outlined are not agreed by the Committee, topics should be swapped to remain within capacity.
26. Updating the Work Plan at this time will ensure clear direction for progression of reports in a timely way. If updates are not confirmed there may be an impact on report timings and other scrutiny activity.

### Summary of financial implications

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

### Summary of legal implications

28. 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**

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

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

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

### **Summary of public health implications**

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

### **Summary of equality implications**

32. 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**

33. 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’](#)
- [Performance Dashboard](#)
- [Decision Matrix](#)

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

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Refreshed Environment and Place Committee Work Plan