

**AGENDA ITEM****REPORT TO EXECUTIVE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****18 MARCH 2025****REPORT OF THE HEAD  
OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES****SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 – SELECTION OF IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY  
REVIEWS****SUMMARY**

The report presents proposals for the scrutiny work programme for 2025/26 for consideration and approval by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Executive Scrutiny Committee is asked to approve the Work Programme for 2025/26.

**WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

1. The current year's work programme is summarised below. Reviews which have been completed or are underway are in **bold**.

<b>Select Committee</b>	<b>In-Depth Review Topics</b>
Adult Social Care and Health	<b>Access to GPs and Primary Medical Care</b> <b>Reablement Service</b>
Children and Young People	<b>Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment</b> <b>Holidays are Fun</b> Corporate Parenting*
Community Safety	<b>Outdoor Play Provision</b> <b>Welcoming and Safe Town Centres</b>
People	<b>Cost of Living Response</b> <b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b>
Place	<b>Unauthorised Roadside Advertising</b> <b>Affordable Housing</b> Muslim and Faith Burial Provision**

\* Given the amount of work that has taken place and is continuing in other forums, it is no longer considered appropriate to include this topic on the work programme for 2025/26.

\*\* A commitment to examine Muslim and Faith Burial Provision as the next Place Select Committee review has already been given.

## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

2. Each year the Chair of Executive Scrutiny Committee writes to all Members inviting them to put forward suggestions for in-depth scrutiny review topics. The suggestions received are prioritised by the Scrutiny Team using the PICK scoring system. Executive Scrutiny Committee is the decision-making body that sets the priorities and programme for the year ahead, allocating in-depth reviews to individual Select Committees. The setting of an annual work programme does not preclude topics being added to the programme mid-year where the need arises.
3. Over the years, we have sought to ensure that topics selected align with the priorities of the Council and this has been reflected in the prioritisation of the topics by Members. Currently the work programme of in-depth reviews is focusing on supporting the Council's priorities as part of the Powering Our Future (POF) programme. In view of the continued importance of aligning the Scrutiny Programme with the POF transformation work, it is proposed that this should remain the focus for 2025/26.
4. The Chair of the Committee has communicated this proposal to all Members at the same time inviting Members to advise of any additional urgent matter that they feel should be reviewed in 2025/26. The usual pro forma templates have been completed in respect of all the proposed topics.
5. A "PICK" priority scoring system is used to allocate a score to each topic suggestion. It should be stressed that the score is a tool to aid prioritisation and is not binding in any way. All topic suggestions received, and their scores are attached at **Appendix 1**.
6. The topics scored "above the line" are listed by Select Committee (**Appendix 2**) on the basis that Select Committees tend to complete two in depth policy reviews each year. Members are reminded that Select Committees have flexible remits and there is the option to move reviews between Committees.
7. The PICK scoring system is attached at **Appendix 3**. Individual topic pro formas are attached at **Appendix 4**.

## CONSULTATION

8. Councillors have been asked to advise of any urgent matter, or any issue already listed on the programme, that they feel should still be reviewed in 2025/26.

## FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The work programme is resourced within existing budgets. No legal implications are identified at this stage.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

10. There is a need to meet legislative requirements and for the Council to put in place internal mechanisms to ensure the safety and quality of key services in addition to deploying resources in the most effective way. The selection of appropriate topics for review can help to support service improvement; the selection of inappropriate topics will lead to the waste of officer and Member time and resources.

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Background Papers: None  
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific  
Property Implications: None

### Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Work Programme 2025/26

Ref No.	Suggested Topic	Public Interest	Impact	Council Efficiency & Performance	Keep in Context	Council Plan Priority	Outcome	Total	Comments
1	Muslim and Faith Burial Provision	Carried forward from previous year for Place Select Committee.							
2	Partnership Working in Early Help	3	3	2	3	2	3	16	
3	Animal Welfare	2	2	3	3	2	3	15	
4	Post 16 Provision	3	3	2	2	2	3	15	
5	Carers Support Service	3	3	2	2	2	3	15	
6	Children affected by Domestic Abuse	3	3	2	3	2	2	15	
7	Treatment Support for Alcohol	2	3	2	3	2	2	14	
8	Additionally Resourced SEND Provision	2	3	1	3	2	3	14	
9	Adult Education and Skills	3	2	1	3	2	3	14	
10	Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budgets	2	3	1	3	2	3	14	
11	Discharge to Assess	3	2	2	1	2	2	12	Update to Committee on implementation of transformation work
12	Governance of Capital Projects	2	2	1	2	0	2	9	
13	Best Value in Procurement	2	2	1	1	1	2	9	
14	Fly Tipping	3	2	2	0	1	1	9	Monitor through implementation of Waste Select Committee Review and review next year if appropriate
15	Children Not in School	3	1	1	0	1	1	7	Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill includes provisions to provide additional protections. CYP Select and Executive Scrutiny Committee to receive briefings.

**Appendix 2****Topic Suggestions by Committee**

<b>Select Committee</b>	<b>Potential Topics (In order of start date)</b>
Adult Services and Health	Post 16 Provision Adult Education and Skills
Children and Young People	Children affected by Domestic Abuse Additionally Resourced SEND Provision
Community Safety	Animal Welfare Treatment Support for Alcohol
People	Partnership Working in Early Help Carers Support
Place	Muslim and Faith Burial Provision Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budgets

## Appendix 3

### PICK Priority Setting

#### **P for Public Interest**

Members' representative roles are an essential feature of Scrutiny. They are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that the policies, practice and services delivered to the people of the Borough, by both the Council and external organisations, are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny. This could include current issues. For example, dignity is consistently cited as a high priority for service users (e.g. Mid Staffordshire Enquiry, care in Winterbourne hospital) and scrutiny committees are well placed to influence the agenda locally and drive forward better-quality services). Members themselves will have a good knowledge of local issues and concerns. Surgeries, Parish Councils, Residents Associations and Community Groups are all sources of resident's views. Consultation and Surveys undertaken by the Council and others can also provide a wealth of information.

#### **I for Impact**

Scrutiny is about making a difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. Not all issues of concern will have equal impact on the well-being of the community and there may be issues which are important to residents but where the Council can exert little or no influence. This should be considered when deciding the programme of work, giving priority to the big issues that have most impact and where scrutiny can tangibly influence the outcome. To maximise impact, particularly when scrutinising external activity, attention should also be given to how the committee could influence policy and practice.

#### **C for Council Performance**

Scrutiny is about improving performance and ensuring the Council's customers are served well. With the abolition of external inspection regimes, scrutiny has an even more important role to play in self-regulation. Members will need good quality information to identify areas where the Council, and other external organisations, are performing poorly. Areas where performance has dropped should be our priority. As well as driving up Council performance, scrutiny also has an important role in scrutinising the efficiency and value for money of Council services and organisational development. In the current financial climate, the challenge for scrutiny is investigating whether improvements can be made within existing resources or with less resource and identify ways that demand for services can be reduced.

#### **K for Keep in Context**

To avoid duplication or wasted effort priorities should take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered. Is there another review happening or planned? Is the service about to be inspected by an external body? Are there major legislative or policy initiatives already resulting in change? If these circumstances exist Members may decide to link up with other approaches or defer a decision until the outcomes are known or conclude that the other approaches will address the issues. Reference should also be made to proposed programmes of work in the Council's plans and strategies and whether topic suggestion is in line with the Council's four policy principles.

#### **Council Plan**

All topic suggestions should be in line with the Council Plan.

#### **Outcome**

Greater weighing will be given to those suggestions where it is clear that scrutiny will make a tangible difference, can exert influence, achieve savings and reduce pressure on demand for services.

## Scoring System

- **Public Interest:** the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen

Score	Measure
0	no public interest
1	low public interest
2	medium public interest
3	high public interest

- **Impact:** priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area

Score	Measure
0	no direct impact
1	low impact
2	medium impact
3	high impact

- **Council Performance and efficiency:** priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well or proposals will identify efficiencies/ savings and reduce pressure on demand for services. NB a higher score is given to low performance.

Score	Measure
0	'Green' on or above target performance
1	'Amber',
2	low performance 'Red'

- **Keep in Context:** work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Score	Measure
0	Already dealt with/ not a Council/ public sector priority
1	Longer term aspiration or plan
2	Need for review acknowledged and worked planned elsewhere
3	Need for review acknowledged

In addition, extra weighting will be given to suggestions which are in line with the Council's priorities and where it is clear that scrutiny can achieve a positive outcome:

- **Council Plan Priority**

Score	Measure
0	Not a Council Plan priority
1	Council Plan priority but worked planned elsewhere
2	Council Plan priority and need for review acknowledged

- **Outcome**

Score	Measure
1	Low value added
2	Medium value added
3	High value added