

**Report to:** People Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 22 September 2025

**By:** Deputy Chief Executive

**Title:** Work Programme update

**Purpose:** To review and discuss the People Scrutiny Committee's future work programme.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) review and agree the latest work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to ensure it reflects the correct focus of the committee including in relation to its role in the ongoing RPPR process;
  - 2) review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's Forward Plan as set out at Appendix 2 to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny.
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## **1 Background**

1.1 The work programme is an important tool in ensuring the correct focus and best use of the committee's time in scrutinising topics that are of importance to the residents of East Sussex, and the efficient and effective working of the Council. It also provides clarity for those who may be requested to give evidence to the committee on the issues under review, and the questions the committee requires answers to.

1.2 Discussion of the work programme provides the committee with the opportunity to consider topics that it may be of value to scrutinise, and to decide whether further scoping work is required. This provides a basis for deciding the best way of scrutinising a topic, the timescale, and who from the committee will be involved in carrying out the review work. If there are a number of potential topics for review, Members can determine the priority of the work within the resources available to the committee.

1.3 In setting and reviewing the work programme, Members should also consider the committee's input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process and identify any information needed to provide effective challenge on key issues and areas of work impacting on the Council's future planning.

## **2 Supporting information**

### ***Work Programme***

2.1 The committee's latest work programme is attached at Appendix 1, incorporating a number of updates including those outlined below. The committee is asked to consider, discuss and agree the work programme, subject to any further changes required.

### ***Scrutiny Reviews***

## Home to school transport

2.2 An initial scoping board on Transport for All Age Care was held in May 2025 where Members considered current statutory duties around transport in both adult social care and education; cost pressures; and programmes of work, planned and underway, to address these.

2.3 The Board agreed that it was not currently the right time for a scrutiny review in this area, due to work in progress, but that potential upcoming changes to transport policy in ASCH would be brought to the committee when appropriate. The Board considered there was potential to scrutinise areas in Home to School Transport and agreed that a rapid review in the autumn of some specific cost avoidance measures could add value. A further scoping board to consider these areas in more detail, and to consider if this topic is suitable for a full scrutiny review, is planned for October 2025.

## **Reference Groups**

### Local government reorganisation/devolution

2.4 The Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Reference Group, made up of Members of both Place and People Scrutiny Committees held its second meeting on 23 July 2025. The Reference Group considered and commented on updates on both the devolution and LGR processes. The Reference Group met again on 11 September 2025 and considered and provided comments to Cabinet on the East Sussex LGR proposal, as well as the latest developments in relation to devolution and proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Sussex.

## **Scrutiny engagement in RPPR planning**

2.5 This committee's input into the RPPR process is ongoing, both through specific RPPR reports and through more detailed scrutiny of specific issues through the wider work programme.

2.6 At the **July** meeting the committee discussed relevant parts of the 2024/25 year end monitoring report and the State of the County 2025 report, both of which had been considered by Cabinet in June. These reports enabled the committee to review current service and financial performance information, as well as considering new developments which will impact on services, to ensure a full understanding of the current context and future pressures for the areas within the remit of the committee.

2.7 The **September** meeting provides an opportunity for the committee to consider the latest policy and financial context for planning for 2026/27 and beyond, and to identify any further information it requires to support its engagement in the planning process for inclusion in its work programme. Currently, it is expected that further detail of the Government's plans for local government funding will be set out in a policy statement in late October or early November, which will inform a further RPPR planning update to Cabinet. This will be followed by detailed funding allocations set out in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which we expect to receive in December.

2.8 Meanwhile, demand for local services has continued to increase. The Quarter 1 2025/26 Council Monitoring report, to be considered by Cabinet on 24 September, is expected to provide some initial indications of how national and local conditions are impacting on ESCC in year.

2.9 The **November** committee meeting will provide an opportunity to review the latest update to Cabinet on planning for 2026/27, including the latest financial position and national policy reforms.

2.10 The committee's **RPPR Board** will then meet on 11 December 2025 to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the budget and emerging updated portfolio plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee in January 2026.

2.11 The **March 2026** meeting will enable the committee to review the process and its input into the RPPR process and receive feedback on how scrutiny input has been reflected in final plans. Any issues arising can be reflected in the future committee work programme.

2.12 As part of its ongoing input to RPPR, the committee is recommended to identify any further information it requires to support its engagement in the planning process. The committee is also recommended to consider any amendments to its work programme to aid its contribution to the ongoing RPPR process.

### ***Briefings and training***

2.13 An annual awayday is planned for 20 October 2025 for the committee to undertake a more in depth review of its current work programme in light of the latest priorities and to discuss any key issues and the committee's approach to scrutiny in further detail.

2.14 Upcoming items on the Member Training Programme relevant to the People Committee are highlighted on the work programme. As part of ongoing development, Members are invited to consider any other topics of interest for training to support their role on the committee.

### ***Forward Plan***

2.15 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 September to 31 December 2025 is included at Appendix 2. The committee is requested to review the forthcoming items on the Forward Plan to identify any issues within the remit of this committee that may require more detailed scrutiny. The Forward Plan is revised and published on a monthly basis and committee members should regularly review the Forward Plan.

## **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 An important part of managing the work of the People Scrutiny Committee, including its input into the RPPR process, is regularly reviewing the future work programme. This involves the Committee assessing its priorities, ensuring its ongoing reviews are completed in a timely fashion and identifying new areas for scrutiny.

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