

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 20 November 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

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

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) review and agree the latest work programme set out at Appendix A to ensure it reflects the correct focus of the committee including in relation to its role in the ongoing RPPR process;
 - 2) accept the recommendations of the recent Scoping Board to progress with a scrutiny review of Personal Transport Budgets and Independent Travel Training (as set out at paragraphs 2.5-2.7) and agree the proposed Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix B (*to follow*); and
 - 3) review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's Forward Plan as set out at Appendix C 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 work programme was reviewed by the Committee at its work planning awayday on 20 October, where it was agreed that input into local responses to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) pressures, as well as upcoming national SEND reforms, should remain a key focus of the Committee, and that this should be explored through the Children's Services Reforms Reference Group. The Committee also agreed to scrutinise the Adult Social Care and Health's (ASCH) response to the recent Care Quality Commission report as well as progress against its action plan.

2.2 The Committee agreed to add the following items to the work programme:

- Children's Mental Health support, including its role in attendance
- The Carers Partnership Plan and support for carers

2.3 These changes are reflected in the latest draft work programme attached at **Appendix A**. The Committee is asked to review, discuss any further amendments to, and agree the latest work programme.

2.4 When considering potential topics for inclusion in the work programme, the Committee is asked to consider a range of questions. These include:

- Is the topic relevant to the Council's Corporate Priorities?
- Is the issue of concern or of relevance to East Sussex residents?
- Can Scrutiny have an impact and add value by scrutinising this issue, service or policy?
- Is the issue one that the Committee can realistically influence?
- Are the resources needed to undertake the review available?

Scrutiny Reviews

Home to school transport

2.5 A further scoping board took place in October which considered updates from officers on Home to School Transport demand and cost pressures; programmes of work underway; and national policy updates, including awaited SEND reforms which are anticipated to have significant impacts on SEND policy. The Board agreed that in light of pending national reforms, a broad review of Home to School Transport would be unfeasible, however there was value in conducting a focused scrutiny review on local cost avoidance measures including use of Personal Transport Budgets and Independent Travel Training. The Scoping Board has recommended the Committee should proceed with a scrutiny review to consider how the Council can increase the uptake of Personal Transport Budgets and Independent Travel Training, aiming to identify barriers to uptake and support increased engagement.

2.6 It is recommended that the Committee undertakes a scrutiny review of this area with the aim of reporting to the Committee in March 2026. The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at **Appendix B** (*to follow*) for the Committee's approval.

2.7 The Committee is also asked to agree the membership and Chair of this Review Board.

Reference Groups

Health and Social Care Integration Programme

2.8 The Group last met on 6 October 2025 to consider quarterly progress on the Shared Delivery Plan. The Group also received an update on ongoing reforms to Integrated Care Boards and the wider NHS, discussing potential impacts for East Sussex. The Group will hold further meetings aligned to key milestones in the integration programme.

Briefings and training

2.9 As part of its ongoing development, the Committee used part of its annual awayday to review its use of pre-meets and questioning strategies to ensure effective questioning and impactful committee meetings.

2.10 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

2.11 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 November to 28 February 2026 is included at **Appendix C**. 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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