

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 27 November 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Work Programme

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

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; and
 - 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;
 - 3) agree the recommendation of the Scoping Board on Street Works to progress with a scrutiny review, and agree the membership and Chair of that review as set out at paragraph 2.2.
 - 4) agree to form a reference group to scrutinise the Exceat Bridge replacement project, and agree the membership as set out at paragraph 2.7.
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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 29 September, and a number of updates were agreed. This Committee discussed an approach to scrutinising the Queensway Gateway Road construction through a future scrutiny review, as well as how it can more generally scrutinise major projects. The Committee added a number of agenda items to future meetings and some suggested training and briefing topics. These changes are reflected in the latest draft work programme attached at Appendix 1. The Committee is asked to consider, discuss and agree the work programme, subject to any further changes required.

Scrutiny Reviews

Street Works

2.2 At its meeting on 22 July 2025, the Committee agreed to establish scoping board for a potential scrutiny review of street works, to consider issues including the Council's approach to permitting road closures, communications with the public, diversions and lane rental. The scoping board met on 20 October 2025 with membership: Cllr Hilton, Cllr Hollidge, Cllr Lunn, Cllr Murphy and Cllr Redstone, and appointed Cllr Murphy as Chair.

2.3 The Scoping Board recommended that a review should take place that is focused on developing recommendations to improve the planning and coordination of street works undertaken by utility companies and minimising the disruption of works. The Board also agreed that the Lane Rental Scheme would not be looked at as part of this review, due to being relatively new and needing time to be fully established before detailed scrutiny could take place. The Board felt it would be helpful hold a further meeting with highways officers to understand the permitting and network management processes and the current challenges with this, which would help determine the key lines of inquiry for questioning utility company representatives at future review meetings. The Board therefore agreed for the Terms of Reference, setting out the scope of the review, to be drawn up following that meeting.

2.4 It is recommended that the Committee undertakes a scrutiny review of this area on the recommendation of the scoping board, with the aim of reporting to the Committee in March 2026. The Committee is asked to agree the membership of and Chair of this Review Board. The next meeting has been scheduled for 27 November, following the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting in the morning. The Terms of Reference will therefore be circulated via email to the Place Scrutiny Committee for approval following that meeting.

Reference Groups

Local government reorganisation and devolution

2.5 The Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Reference Group, made up of Members of both Place and People Scrutiny Committees, will hold its next meeting on 26 November to consider latest updates, and will continue to meet as both the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Combined County Authority and LGR in East Sussex progress.

Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)

2.6 The LTP4 Reference Group, which was established to provide input into the development of the LTP4, reconvened to receive a briefing on the update to the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) on 12 November 2025, to consider and comment on the update process.

Exceat Bridge

2.7 Following the Public Inquiry in May 2025, the Government has now provided the necessary legal orders for the Exceat Bridge replacement project to proceed as planned. Taking on board the discussion the committee recently had at its awayday regarding how it can scrutinise ongoing projects, it is proposed to consider this through the Exceat Bridge as a major infrastructure project that is due to commence. The committee is recommended to form a reference group to scrutinise the project with proposed membership: Cllr Murphy, Cllr Redstone, Cllr Shing and Cllr Wright.

Briefings and training

2.8 A briefing on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the Council has been arranged for the committee on 28 November 2025. As well as providing an overview of the Council's current work and approach to the use of AI, the Committee will also have the opportunity to review and comment on the Council's draft AI Policy ahead of it being considered by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change.

2.9 Upcoming items on the Member Training Programme relevant to the Place Scrutiny 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

2.10 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 November to 28 February 2026 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 Place 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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