



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 APRIL 2025
Subject	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Andrew Beaney, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: Andrew.beaney@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To formulate a provisional work programme for 2025/26, having regard to the TOPIC criteria and the suggestions put forward by officers and members.
Annexes	Annex A – TOPIC criteria Annex B – Proposed work plan and suggested items Annex C – Member briefings programme
Recommendation(s)	That Overview and Scrutiny resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree the provisional work programme for 2025/26 (Annex B).2. Agree the inclusion of any additional suggestions into the work programme.3. Note the suggested Task and Finish reviews for 2025/26.4. Note the provisional programme of member briefings and suggest any further briefing topics.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO

Consultees/ Consultation	Management team

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report invites the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree a provisional work programme for 2025/26. This follows a scrutiny self-assessment exercise, the results of which suggest that the Committee undertakes a work planning exercise and makes greater use of task and finish groups.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Overview and scrutiny committees are empowered to review and scrutinise decisions taken by the Executive and to investigate and make reports on any matters which affect the district or its inhabitants.
- 2.2** It is good practice for overview and scrutiny committees to operate a work plan which is agreed annually but is reviewed regularly at meetings and adjusted during the year in response to emerging issues or priorities. This approach helps to ensure that the Committee can undertake its functions in a planned and effective way.
- 2.3** The work plan will show the expected business for meetings through the year and may also provide details of any task and finish groups established by the Committee.
- 2.4** The business for meetings will include selected Executive reports for pre-decision scrutiny and reports on other issues prioritised by the Committee.

3. PRIORITISATION

- 3.1** When considering its work plan, the Committee is asked to prioritise which issues would benefit from scrutiny by elected Members and how the Committee can add value to the work of the Council to improve outcomes in the district. This is especially the case where the Committee wishes to commission reports from officers or engage with external organisations; activities which can be resource intensive. The TOPIC criteria (Annex A) is intended to provide some key principles the Committee may wish to have regard to when prioritising items for inclusion in the work programme (e.g. timeliness, ability to influence, etc.).

4. PROVISIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26

- 4.1** Officers have begun the process of producing a provisional work programme for 2025/26 (Annex B). This includes some pre-decision scrutiny items carried forwards from 2024/25 (e.g. Knights Court Business Case, Climate Change Strategy), regular or annual Executive reports for pre-decision scrutiny (e.g. quarterly performance reports, Budget, Local Plan Annual Monitoring report, etc.) and some additional items suggested by officers which have been considered against the TOPIC criteria:
- Local Government Reorganisation – pre-decision scrutiny of an Executive report expected in October/November 2025.
 - Community Grants Update – to consider the impact of the Westhive scheme and the new small grants scheme, which the Committee previously asked to be (re)introduced.

- Community Safety Partnership – to enable the Committee to undertake its statutory function as a Crime and Disorder Committee.
- Procurement and Contract Management Strategy – pre-decision scrutiny of an Executive report expected in Spring 2026.

- 4.2** Annex B also contains a list of items suggested by Members for inclusion in the work programme. The Committee is recommended to agree which of these items (and/or any other suggestions made at the meeting) should be included in the work programme, having regard to the TOPIC criteria (Annex A).
- 4.3** An alternative to including items in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is to include them in the programme of member briefing sessions. These sessions tend to take place remotely over Teams and provide an alternative means of Members receiving information and asking questions about Council services and key issues affecting the district. The current programme of member briefings for 2025/26, which includes some slots that are still to be allocated, is included as Annex C.
- 4.4** Following the decisions of the Committee on 16 April 2025, an updated version of the provisional work programme for 2025/26 will be presented to the first meeting of the Committee after the Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2025 for agreement. The work programme will then be reviewed at each Committee meeting so that the Committee may make adjustments to it during the year. The Committee will also review the Executive Work Programme at each meeting and decide which additional items to add to the Committee's work programme for pre-decision scrutiny.

5. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

- 5.1** A key outcome from the self-assessment exercise is that the Committee should make greater use of task and finish groups to explore key issues in depth and/or to shape policy development. The Council's management team has suggested that useful topics for task and finish groups would be public conveniences, waste transformation, and the leisure contract. The work of these or any other task and finish groups would need to be scoped in more detail but the intention is for one or more task and finish groups to be established by the Committee, and members appointed, at the first Committee meeting of the new civic year, on 21 May 2025.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1** The Committee can choose which items to include or not include within its work plan and may wish to suggest additional topics for member briefings.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The Council operates executive arrangements and as such must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Local Government Act 2000 provides the statutory basis for overview and scrutiny committees and their powers.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1** There are no significant risks arising from this report.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1** There are no differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1** There are no climate and ecological emergencies implications arising from this report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

(END)