



Please ask for: Matt Berry
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18 June 2026

Dear Councillor,

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
6:00pm, Monday 29 June 2026
Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

T. Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

Mawle, D. (Chair)
Sutherland, M. (Vice-Chair)
Bancroft, J. Fisher, P.
Cecil, D. Gaye, D.
Cecil, M. Hunt, A.
Deakin, S. Lyons, N.
Dunnett, M.

Agenda

Part 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

(i) To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2026 (enclosed).

4. Introduction to the Role of the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

Presentation from the Head of Business Support and Assurance

5. Annual Scrutiny Business Report 2025-26

Report of the Head of Law & Governance (Item 5.1 -5.4).

6. End of Year Performance Report 2025-26

To receive the end of year 2025/26 performance information for the Responsible Council Priority Delivery Plan (Item 6.1 – 6.13).

The documents included are as considered by Cabinet on 11 June 2026.

7. Climate Change Presentation

Presentation by Martyne Manning, Principal Climate Change Officer

8. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026-27

Report of the Head of Business Support and Assurance (Item 8.1 – 8.15).

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
Held on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 6:00pm
In the Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors

Dunnett, M.	Hill, J.O.
Gaye, D.	Sutherland, M.

Also in Attendance:

- Councillor J. Prestwood, Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader.

28. Appointment of Chair

Owing to the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, nominations were sought from those Members present to be the Chair for this meeting only.

Councillor J.O. Hill was duly appointed as Chair for the meeting.

29. Apologies

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillors J. Aston (Chair), L. Bullock and J. Johnson.

Apologies were also noted for Councillor S. Thornley, Leader of the Council and S.J. Thornley, Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader.

30. Declarations of Interest of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

31. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2025 and 28 January 2026 be approved.

32. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2025-26

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Business Support and Assurance (Item 4.1 – 4.10).

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised the following in respect of the report:

- The position with progress on delivery of the responsible council priority delivery plan actions was mixed, with updates on those actions behind schedule being:

1. Work on installing the replacement network switches had slipped but was now well underway and hoped to complete by the end of March.
 2. SharePoint file migration was 50% complete, with work to continue into 2026/27.
 3. Development of the shared services intranet was now complete.
 4. The Chief Executive advised that work related to the climate action board had slipped owing to a vacancy, but the postholder was now in place so work should catch up.
- The position in respect of the key performance indicators for the responsible council priority was positive, with all of them either achieving or being above target.

Resolved:

That the quarter 3 2025/26 performance update be noted.

33. Vacancies and Capacity Update as at 31 December 2025

Consideration was given to the update of the Head of Business Support and Assurance (Item 5.1 -5.4).

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised the following in respect of the update:

- This update was being provided following the initial information presented to the Committee in December last year. Information on capacity issues had been removed as the Committee had requested a further update on the vacancies position only.
- The number of vacancies at the end of October 2025 had originally been understated. This was not deliberate as some were imminent starters, so the relevant services managers had not marked the roles as vacancies when compiling the information.
- There had been more starters than leaves in the reporting period which was a positive.
- More starters than leavers in the quarters which is positive.
- The level of agency spend across the Council was set out, along with specific reasons for the level of spend within each service area.
- The majority of agency staff spend was to cover vacant posts that the Council was unable to recruit to. Agency staff were also used for temporary and seasonal needs to cope with peaks in workloads.
- The use of agency staff was managed at a service level by managers rather than centrally, and sometimes casual staff were used for non-professional posts.

Members raised the following queries / comments in respect of the update:

1. Where did the grant funding come from for posts in the Health & Wellbeing services?

The Chief Executive advised that the grants were provided by central government for specific purposes and only usually for one year, which made recruitment of staff to those roles difficult. If the funding was provided on a rolling basis, the Council would look to eventually make such posts permanent where able to do so.

2. Was grant funding a high proportion of the total cost on agency spend?

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised that the spending on homelessness staffing support was likely to be the biggest part of the grant funding allocation.

The Chief Executive further advised that there were times when vacant posts had no agency staff in place and so there would be no costs during those times. The Head of Business Support and Assurance further advised that some vacancy time element was built into the budgets to accept that there may be periods where a post was vacant once the staff member had left.

3. The use of seasonal and temporary staff needed putting into perspective as this element was sometimes overlooked and could be of benefit to the Council to hire people in this way.

4. What percentage of the overall wage bill did the agency spend equate to?

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised that this would have to be checked and reported back separately.

The Chief Executive advised that as an additional point of reference, the annual outturn reports showed where budget underspends had occurred owing to vacancies in each service area.

The Head of Business Support and Assurance further advised that where long-term vacancies existed, budget adjustments had been made to ensure that service needs could still be met.

Resolved:

That the vacancies update be noted.

34. Revenues and Benefits Debt Collection Process Review Task & Finish Group

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources (Item 6.1 – 6.20) (*presented by the Revenues and Benefits Manager*).

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised the following in respect of the report:

- The task & finish group had been set up for various reasons, in part to dispel the myth about the Council not taking action to collect historic debts.
- Cabinet had signed off £175,000 (matched by Stafford Borough Council) to fund the appointment of agency staff with specific focus on the work to recover historic debts. The wider team had been stretched in recent years owing to the pandemic and post-pandemic issues and backlogs, so the additional resource was secured to get the day job done.
- 4 full-time equivalent (fte) posts had been appointed to keep the day job going and 2 fte posts to focus on the historic debt recovery.
- The provision of the 4 fte posts had helped to reduce the backlog in the day-to-day work. The 2 fte posts had been a success story. The posts had not been in place for the full year and all the £175,000 had not yet been spent, but they had help to collect £2.2m of historic debt, of which the Cannock Chase Council share was £390,000, with the March 2026 data still to come.
- At the task & finish group meetings, Members indicated they were supportive of the recovery work continuing and being kept under regular review.

- A new senior post had been created last year to help the service with improved use of technology, and they were doing a really good job of moving things along in this regard.
- Owing to improvements in processing, automation and system usage, 4 fte vacancies in the Benefits team would be transferred to the Revenues team to further support delivery of the day-to-day work.
- There had been on push on getting more residents and businesses to sign up for e-billing, with particular success achieved for Business Rates payers, thereby reducing the services overall postage costs. As part of the annual billing exercise due to commence imminently, more residents and businesses would be encouraged to sign up.

Members raised the following queries / comments in respect of the report:

1. If e-billing reached 100%, how much would the Council save?

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised across both Councils, the saving would easily be at least £150,000 per year, although would likely be more with the forthcoming increase in postage costs.

2. Thanks to the manager and team for the information and analysis provided during each of the task & finish groups sessions as gave plenty for Members to get their teeth into and be reassured of the work the team were doing.

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The report be noted and accepted.
- (B) The results of the review be reported to Cabinet on 16 April 2026 (with updated arrears figures being included for the end of March performance).
- (C) Cabinet be asked to support the following recommendations:
 - (i) No significant changes be made to the Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy at this time.
 - (ii) Any statutory changes to the Council Tax and Business Rates collection process be included in an updated policy, and reported to Cabinet, as necessary.
 - (iii) Officers continue to identify those debts which are irrecoverable and when necessary, process them for write-off in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
 - (iv) The project to review older debts be continued into the 2026/27 financial year and that the effectiveness of continued action be reviewed on a six-monthly basis by the Section 151 Officer.

35. Local Government Reorganisation – Progress Update

Consideration was given to the update of the Head of Business Support and Assurance (Item 5.1 -5.4).

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised the following in respect of the update (presentation)

- The consultation on the five proposals submitted from the Staffordshire area was open until 26th March, so there was still time for people to respond.

- An invitation had been received to submit an expression of interest for the creation of a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA).

The Chief Executive advised that at meetings held with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the point had been made that devolution was not keeping pace with local government reorganisation (LGR). The Leader had now recently received a letter linking reorganisation to the FSA, with the proposed geography being the existing Staffordshire boundary, including Stoke-on-Trent. All Staffordshire councils involved in the LGR process were supportive of this proposal. A short consultation process was also taking place which the Council would respond to.

The Foundation level authorities were the basic level of Strategic Authorities and if the Government agreed to set one up, it would have to operate effectively within the existing geographies and then as the new authorities, but elected mayors were not part of the Foundation level. If the FSA was deemed to be successful then it could seek to elect a mayor in the future which would provide greater powers of local decision-making and bidding for funding etc, as well as likely taking on the powers currently held by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

- In preparation for LGR, an interim countywide structure was being set up with all relevant authorities and mirrored internally:

Countywide structure

- Members LGR Board
- Chief Executives' LGR and Devolution Programme Board
- Directors' Steering Group

Cannock Chase Council Specific Structure

- Cabinet
- Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
- Leadership Team

- The Directors' Group had met and inaugural workstream meetings would be starting next week on early preparation work., using the MHCLG work list and what matters had been identified locally.

The Chief Executive advised that the MHCLG's work list was there to help identify what systems and processes were already in place, ready for when the preferred reorganisation option was chosen by the Government. Completing all of the required actions would be a huge piece of work for all involved.

- Seven foundation work streams were in the process of being set up and integration workstreams would be set up at a later date focused on specific/specialist work areas. These were likely to be established when the preferred option was known.

The Chief Executive advised that once the preferred option was known, decisions would be made on which workstreams to continue with countywide or focused on the specific areas to be covered by the new authorities.

- A project management office was being set up between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to take the lead on overall project management work for LGR.

The Chief Executive advised that in respect of Member involvement post-May 2027, it was expected that Shadow Authority elections would take place in May that year, with those Members then in time becoming members of the new authorities. It was expected that the Government would legislate for existing councillors to continue in post until May 2028 and work with the shadow authority councillors on joint committees etc. Existing members would have a hugely important role in sharing local knowledge as part of the process and business as usual would continue in the meantime as services still had to be delivered.

Members raised the following queries / comments in respect of the update:

1. Would the shadow authority and shadow councillors form a Cabinet?

The Chief Executive advised that this would be the case, as a shadow leader would also have to be appointed who would then in turn choose Cabinet members. Significant decisions would need to be taken early on in the process for matters such as senior appointments and the name of the new authority. It was likely that the senior appointments would be made in summer 2027 ready to take up post in autumn 2027, which would only be six months before the new authority came onstream.

2. Will the Council have capacity within its existing teams to support delivery of all this work?

The Chief Executive advised that capacity would be a challenge for existing teams along with losing staff at all levels and existing councillors with local knowledge as the new authority would have fewer councillors representing the area. Discussions would be needed at the joint committee meetings on these and other issues.

The Head of Law & Governance advised that a lot of discussions would be required with the shadow authority to ensure that the new authority could operate legally from day one, and it would be critical to identify what the day one set up would be and what needed to be in place.

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised that it was already known that staffing capacity would have to be increased in certain areas to help deliver the work involved and this was also being discussed with the other councils.

The Chief Executive further advised that the five proposals submitted had built in a number of assumptions on savings and costs for the new authorities, but the decisions made by the shadow authority on staffing levels and numbers etc would determine the level of savings achieved and costs incurred.

3. At what point would the issue of non-parished areas in the District be addressed?

The Chief Executive advised this would be when Members decided they wanted to do so, noting that work was underway in Stafford regarding a proposal to establish a Stafford Town Council.

The Head of Law & Governance further advised that a Community Governance Review (CGR) would have to be undertaken by the Council and be completed with 12 months of the review being agreed to. A CGR could be done by the new authority.

The Chief Executive further advised that the Government was not actively seeking the establishment of more parish and town councils as it was trying to reduce the overall cost of local government, but this did not stop people requesting that one be set up. The Government was also developing the idea of neighbourhood area

committees, although the plans were not well defined at this stage. It was expected that they may be the same size as the existing district and formed of members representing the area with some powers granted over the area concerned.

4. Whilst the Government was doing this for valid reasons, including costs, there would be a cost to the transitional process but there was no word yet on what that would look like.

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised that the bulk of the work would come once the process had happened. Some authorities that had already been through reorganisation were still doing transformation work three or four years after being established.

The Chief Executive advised that it was likely to be at least five years before the new authority was settled and working, with the risk being to keep services going during a period of significant transformation.

Resolved:

That the progress update be noted.

36. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26 Update

Verbal update from the Head of Business Support and Assurance

The Head of Business Support and Assurance advised this was the last meeting of the Committee for the current year and all items included on the approved work programme had been concluded.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

The meeting closed at 7:04pm.

Chair

Annual Scrutiny Business Report 2025/26

Committee: Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee / Council

Date of Meeting: 29 June 2026 / 8 July 2026

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the business conducted by the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee during 2025/26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council note the report and the work of Scrutiny during 2025/26.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To make Council aware of the scrutiny activity undertaken over the last municipal year.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Scrutiny is an important function in every council operating executive arrangements. It is important that members understand the role of scrutiny and that Council is kept informed of the work undertaken by Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee during the previous municipal year. Full details of committee agendas and reports can be found on the Council's website.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Good scrutiny can enhance decision making across all Council priorities. In particular it supports Priority 4: Responsible Council – 'to be a responsible Council and ensure we deliver good value for money'.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council operates Executive arrangements through the election of a Leader and Cabinet. Every local authority operating Executive arrangements is required to establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee to act as a check and balance to the Executive.
- 5.2 Scrutiny Committees are cross party committees each reflecting the overall political balance of the Council. They are not decision-making bodies but allow elected members who do not sit on the Cabinet to scrutinise and influence Executive decision making. This can take the form of scrutinising decisions that Cabinet are planning to take (policy review and development), those it plans to implement (through use of call-in procedures) and those that have already been implemented (through performance review).

- 5.3 National guidance advises that scrutiny work should be based upon four principles. It should:
- Provide constructive “critical friend” challenge
 - Reflect the voices and concerns of the public
 - Be led independently by members who take responsibility for their role, and
 - Drive improvement in services and strategic decision making
- 5.4 The Council has established three scrutiny committees, each with its own terms of reference and areas of oversight. The three areas are Responsible Council, Economic Prosperity, and Health, Wellbeing and The Community. Details of each committee’s remit, and the procedure rules for the scrutiny function, are set out in the Council’s Constitution.

Performance Review

- 5.5 Each committee regularly monitors Council performance, within its area of scrutiny, through the review of quarterly performance information. Information reported includes progress against delivery plans and key performance indicators and enables members to identify whether the Council is achieving its corporate plan objectives. Effective monitoring helps the Council to identify good and poor performance and to take action where needed to put things right.
- 5.6 Senior officers attend committee meetings to answer any questions, or respond to requests for clarification, and committees have the power to call senior officers and Cabinet members to account.
- 5.7 In addition to playing an important role in reviewing performance, each committee sets its own scrutiny work programme for the year. The following additional scrutiny work was carried out by the Responsible Council Committee during 2025/26.

Responsible Council

- 5.8 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee’s agreed work programme items for 2025/26 were:
- Local Government Reorganisation: progress updates.
 - Delivery of Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan: progress update.
 - Organisational capacity review (carried over from 2024/25).
 - Revenues & Benefits Service debt collection process review.
- 5.9 An update was provided at each Committee meeting regarding the progress with work on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The updates covered the preparation and submission of the Council’s preferred option for reorganisation, establishment of workstreams for the various aspects of reorganisation work, proposed public consultation on the five options submitted for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and submission of an expression of interest to form a Foundation Strategic Authority.

5.10 The progress update on the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was given at the 10 December 2025 meeting. The update provided an overview of the key elements Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and climate action activities and initiatives that had taken place since the Strategy and Action Plan were adopted.

5.11 An update on the Council's organisational capacity (including vacancies) was given at the 10 December 2025 meeting. The update provided an overview of the number of vacancies for each service area as at the end of October 2025, with details of why the posts were vacant, whether any interim arrangements were in place, reasons for difficult in recruiting to the vacant posts and any associated capacity / workload issues.

A further update was provided at the 10 March 2026 meeting that included the vacancy figures up to the end of December 2025 compared to the previous update, as well as an overview of the Council's spend on agency staff by service area and the reasons why agency staff were being used.

5.12 The review of the Revenues & Benefits Service debt collection processes was undertaken by a task & finish group comprised of the whole Committee. The task & finish group met on 4 separate occasions between September 2025 and March 2026 with the following remit:

- To ensure that debt collection arrangements were effective and proportionate in approach.
- To ensure that the Council's policies to support residents who were unable to pay were adequate.
- To review the results of the increased resource, dedicated to collection of prior year arrears.

The Committee also received updates during the year on the work of the group. The final report and recommendations of the task & finish group were agreed by the Committee on 10 March 2026 and by the Cabinet on 16 April 2026.

5.13 At the 8 September 2025 meeting, the Committee considered a report on the Community Asset Transfer of the Prince of Wales Theatre, following Cabinet's decision on 4 September 2025 that the Transfer should not be approved. Following a debate, a majority of Committee members determined that the matter should not be referred back to Cabinet and no further action be taken.

5.14 As per the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, the Committee was consulted on the draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2026-2029 prior to being formally considered Cabinet and full Council at the February 2026 Budget meetings.

5.15 All items on the agreed work programme were completed during the year.

Future Work Programme

5.16 Each committee sets its initial annual work programme at the first business meeting of the new municipal year, taking into account any outstanding matters from the previous year and any new priorities for the upcoming year. The work programme is reviewed as a standing item at every meeting.

5.17 As per the Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation report considered by full Council on 17 March 2025, the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee will continue to be kept informed of progress on this work via related actions being included in the quarterly performance reporting.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None.

6.2 Legal

As set out in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

None.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None.

6.6 Health

None.

6.7 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices

None.

8 Previous Consideration

None.

9 Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Ian Curran

Report Track: Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee: 29/06/26
Council: 08/07/26

End of Year Performance Report 2025/26

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	11 June 2026
Report of:	Head of Business Support and Assurance
Portfolio:	Resources and Corporate Services

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans and the performance at the end of 2025-26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress at the end of 2025/26 relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities and the corrective action as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-26 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. The plan is supported by Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) which set out the key projects and actions for delivery each year. The PDPs were revised last year to reflect changes at an operational level and limitations on capacity.
- 3.2 Overall, 73% of the projects have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in Appendices 1a to 1d.
- 3.3 With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 57% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found in section 5 and in Appendix 2.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Annual Delivery Plans set out key strategic and operational projects which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-26 sets out the Council's priorities and strategic objectives. There are four overarching priorities:

1. To reinvigorate the economy and create a District that thrives.
2. To encourage and support residents to lead healthy and independent lives.
3. To ensure Cannock Chase is a place that residents are proud to call home.
4. To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council.





5.2 The priorities are supported by a number of objectives that set out what the Council is aiming to achieve, how we will deliver these and how we will measure our performance.

Priority Delivery Plans

5.3 The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in Appendices 1A to 1D to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council’s performance reporting framework. The PDPs were revised last year to reflect changes at an operational level and limitations on capacity.

5.4 A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the projects/actions set out in the PDPs is given in Appendices 1a-1d. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of progress in delivery of key projects/actions for 2025-26

Performance Rating	Action completed	Work on Target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Not Applicable	Total Number of Actions
Corporate Plan Priority					N/A	
Economic Prosperity	10	1	3	1	2	17
Health and Wellbeing	5			1		6
Community	11	1	3	1		16
Responsible Council	12	1	2	1	1	17
Total	38	3	8	4	3	56

5.5 At the end of 2025/26, of the 56 actions planned for delivery in this period:

- 41 (73%) have been completed or are on target;
- 12 (22%) are behind target; and
- 3 (5%) is no longer applicable.

5.6 The key achievements/deliverables during 2025/26 have been:

- The completion of the main demolition works in Cannock Town Centre, which is a significant milestone in the Council’s ambitious regeneration plans;
- The adoption of the Local Plan;

- The procurement and successful mobilisation of a new leisure contractor, alongside improvements to the leisure facilities;
- The distribution of the Council's food waste containers on schedule ready for the introduction of the new weekly food waste collection service in April 2026;
- The replacement of play equipment at the Union Street Play Area, through the use of UKSPF monies; and
- The setting up of a new Climate Action Board.





5.7 2025/26 also saw the submission of a proposal to the Government for the creation of two new unitary Councils to replace the current two-tier local authority arrangements in Staffordshire as part of the Government's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. A decision on this is expected in the summer.

5.8 Whilst overall performance has fallen by 12% compared to last year, a number of the projects delivered this year are significant in both scale and importance to the future of the District and its residents.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

5.9 In addition to the Delivery Plans, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in Appendix 2 and are summarised in Table 2:

Table 2 - Summary of key performance indicators for 2025-26

Corporate Plan Priority					N/A	Total Number of KPIs
	Performance exceeds target	Performance on target	Performance < 5% below target	Performance > 5% below target	Not Applicable / Annual	
Economy Prosperity	5		2			7
Health & Wellbeing					1	1
Community	4	1	2	2	3	12
Responsible Council	5	1	2	4	1	13
Total	14	2	6	6	5	33

5.10 Of the 28 indicators due to be reported on in quarter 4:

- 16 (57%) indicators show performance on or above target; and
- 12 (43%) indicators show performance below target.

5.11 Whilst overall there is a 20% drop in performance when compared to last year, there are still a significant number of services that have exceeded their performance targets:

- Processing of planning applications;
- Waste collection
- Homelessness
- Community Safety
- Processing of new benefit claims and changes of circumstances
- Customers Services Team – calls answered and wait times
- Responding to FOI requests

- 5.12 It should be noted that the actions and performance relating to the Housing Service have been removed from this report and are being reported separately as part of the arrangements to support the work of the Housing Board.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

~~Appendix 1a: Economic Prosperity PDP~~

~~Appendix 1b: Health and Wellbeing PDP~~

~~Appendix 1c: The Community PDP~~

Appendix 1d: Responsible Council PDP

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2022-26 - Council 27 April 2022





4-Year Delivery Plans 2022-26 - Cabinet 15 September 2022

Contact Officer: Judith Aupers
Telephone Number: 01543 464 411
Ward Interest: All Wards
Report Track: Cabinet 11/06/26
Key Decision: No

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025/26

Priority 4 - Responsible Council

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due / superseded	
12	1	2	1	1	17

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4

Climate Action Board is now in place and scheduled to meet quarterly.







Progress has been made in implementing the Digital Strategy with work on improvements to the infrastructure (new switches) completed and the new shared intranet has gone live.

A comprehensive database has been created to capture compliance information. The long standing vacant Corporate Asset Manager post was recruited to and the new manager started in February 2026.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

Compliance work has slipped due to vacancies/lack of capacity. A new manager has started and is reviewing the position.





Priority 4 - Responsible Council

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Closure of the Accounts	Audit of the Accounts for 2023/24			X		Work has commenced on a phased approach to catching up on the backlog of unaudited accounts	
	VFM review 23/24			X		Work on the VFM review for 23/24 has concluded and been reported on. Work has also been completed on the 24/25 review and a draft report has been received from the External Auditors	
Transformation Strategy & Plan	Report to Cabinet setting out impact of LGR on Shared Services /Transformation work and agree proposed approach		X			The report was approved by Cabinet in November 2025.	
Digital Strategy (inc replacement of IT Systems)	Installation of new switches	X	X			Work on the replacement of the switches has been completed.	
	SharePoint File Migration - development of business case and work plan		X			Approximately 50% of the migration has been completed to date and we are aiming to complete the majority of the remaining files by the end of 2026/27. Progress has been affected by other work taking precedence	
	Development of new Shared Services Intranet		X			The new shared intranet went live in March	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Climate Change Strategy	Climate Change Strategy to be adopted	X				Council adopted the Strategy	★
	Climate Action Board in place			X		The first Board meeting took place on 6 th November 2025 and are scheduled for every quarter	★
	Data gathered for reporting to Climate Action Board		X			Q1 and Q2 data gathered from all service areas. Action plan progress reported to Climate Action Board November 25.	★
	Climate Action Board reports to Cabinet			X		Verbal update given at Cabinet briefing	★
Strategic asset management including the review of key assets	Building Condition Surveys - Budget to be allocated to undertake essential remedial works				X	Surveys are complete, recommended works are still being compiled into a programme over a 5 year project – most high risk works have been completed or started.	▲
	Statutory Compliance for all Council owned buildings:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Insurance Reinstatement Valuations for outstanding buildings 				X	In progress – The high risk Buildings have been completed as part of phase one. Further buildings have been identified and a Contractor has been appointed to undertake the Reinstatement Valuations.	▲





Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	Complete Lease & Asset Reviews:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint Agency Estates Surveyor 		X			Complete	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of Leased Buildings 				X	This action has been superseded. The Legal Team have confirmed that Commercial Leaseholders are not required to submit the Compliance Certifications. An annual reminder will be sent to all Leaseholders.	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lease Reviews Lease Negotiations 				X	10 Lease Reviews have been completed	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset Reviews 				X	The 2 planned Asset Reviews have been completed.	★
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement TIO to record Compliance Data across all buildings 				X	It has been decided not to proceed with TIO. Instead, a comprehensive database has been developed to capture compliance data.	★

KPIs for Priority 4 - Responsible Council

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
	Performance exceeds target	4	4	5	5	5
	Performance on target	1	2	2	1	1
	Performance < 5% below target	1	1		2	2
	Performance > 5% below target	1			4	4
N/A	Reported Annually / Not Applicable	6	6	6	1	1
	TOTAL	13	13	13	13	13

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Local Taxation and Benefits									
Days taken to process new HB/CT Claims	17.4	20 days	18	19.7	14.2	12.9	16.3	★	
Days taken to process new HB/CT change of circumstances	4.3	9 days	2.2	2.1	2.6	3.7	2.6	★	
% of Council Tax collected annually	97%	98% by year end	28%	54.7%	81.6%	96.8%	96.8%	▲	The slight dip in collections mirrors a local and national trend and seems to reflect residents being faced with increasing costs of living.
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98.3%	98% by year end	26.1%	53.8%	80.8%	97.9%	97.9%	▲	A dip in collections was expected due to increased charges made to Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses. The 0.1% deficit against target is accounted for by 40K worth of rates relating to properties which have been demolished and awaiting being taken out of rating.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Transformation & Assurance									
% of calls answered	94.5%	95%	96.2%	96.7%	97.1%	96.7%	96.7%	★	Despite an increase in calls in Q4, the number of calls answered and the response time have exceeded the target
Average call wait time	90 sec	90 seconds	44 secs	32 secs	33 secs	40 secs	37 secs	★	
Number of calls answered	86,466	N/A	20,602	17,404	17,089	20,015	75,110	★	
Law & Governance									
FOI requests within time i.e. 20 working days	84.6%	85%	74%	91.2%	92.3%	86.4%	86%	★	
Corporate Assets									
% of buildings with a valid annual landlord Gas Safety Record	100%	100%					76.92%	✘	There were 2 expired gas services at year end. The orders have been placed – we are awaiting the final certification. This figure now includes mothballed / vacant properties – which have not previously been reported on

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
% of buildings with a valid Electrical Certificate (within 5 years)	100%	100%					88.2%		There were 4 expired EICR's at year end. The orders have been placed – we are awaiting the final certification. This figure now includes mothballed / vacant properties – which have not previously been reported on
% of passenger lifts that have a valid 6 monthly thorough examination record	100%	100%					100%		
% of buildings that have a current Legionella risk assessment	100%	100%					48%		At year end 13 properties were overdue and orders have been placed – we are awaiting the certification.
% of buildings that have a current Fire risk assessment	100%	100%					56.6%		At year end 13 properties were overdue and orders have been placed – we are awaiting the final certification. This figure now includes mothballed / vacant properties – which have not previously been reported on

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026-27

Committee: Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 June 2026

Report of: Head of Business Support and Assurance

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the draft work programme for the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee for 2026-27.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee review the draft work programme for 2026-27 and advise on what they wish to include for the forthcoming year (see Appendix 4).

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The scrutiny committee is responsible for ensuring effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's priorities and strategic objectives as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2026-28

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the element of the Corporate Plan that relates to the priority for being a Responsible Council. An extract from the Corporate Plan for 2026-28 setting out details of the priority and strategic objectives is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The services or functions of the Council falling with the remit of the Committee are set out at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to identify corporate issues and/or ones that are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider.

The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Guidance on selecting reviews is included in Appendices 3A and 3B.

- 3.4 Members are invited to comment on the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 4. Members are also encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme may be revised during the year as necessary.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

- (i) It provides for effective scrutiny of the Council's priority for being a "Responsible Council".

5 Report Detail

Background

5.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan for 2026-28 was approved by Council on 22 April 2026. The Plan sets out 4 priorities and this Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising Priority 4 – Responsible Council.

5.2 The Responsible Council Priority has 4 objectives:

- (i) Improve our customers' access to services.
- (ii) Deliver Value for Money to local taxpayers
- (iii) Be accountable for our decisions and uphold good governance across the Council.
- (iv) The efficient transfer of Council services and its workforce to the new Unitary Council in 2028 with minimal disruption to our community.

An extract from the Corporate Plan setting out details of the priority, the strategic objectives and actions is attached at Appendix 1.

5.3 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility for scrutinising the corporate and support functions of the Council as set out in Appendix 2.

Developing the Work Programme

5.4 To support Members in their Scrutiny role and in particular in developing a work programme a Scrutiny Toolkit has been produced; a copy of this has been circulated separately to Members. An extract from the toolkit relating to developing a work programme is attached at Appendix 3A and an extract from the LGA's guidance is attached at Appendix 3B.

5.5 In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- Is the matter a concern to local people (you may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing)?
- Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?
- Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance?
- What difference could scrutiny make?
- What would happen if you did not look at this issue?

5.6 The work programme can be revised during the year to reflect emerging priorities, but it is important to plan ahead and allow time for reports to be prepared and invitations to be sent to relevant parties.

- 5.7 Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they want to include in the Work Programme, a draft work programme is attached at Appendix 4 to this report which includes some standing items (e.g., performance progress reports) and suggestions as to potential reviews.

Undertaking the Scrutiny Reviews

- 5.8 Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Committee. A template to assist with scoping the review is also attached at Appendix 5.
- 5.9 Members may wish to:
- Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice).
 - Invite expert witnesses to give their views.
 - Seeking the views of service users and/or the general public.
- 5.10 Members should also consider what they can do to support the review e.g.:
- Undertaking research e.g., via the internet.
 - Seeking the views of ward members or specific interest groups.

Reporting on Scrutiny Reviews

- 5.11 In addition to reporting to the Committee on the outcome of any reviews, the Committee may wish to make recommendations to Cabinet or another Committee.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Any costs to be incurred in undertaking any review will need to be contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

None.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

None.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact.

Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

6.6 Health

None.

6.7 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Extract from the Corporate Plan – Priority 4 Responsible Council

Appendix 2: Overview of services falling with the Committee's remit

Appendix 3A: Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Appendix 3B: Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Appendix 4: Draft Work Programme 2026/27

Appendix 5: Template for Scoping a Scrutiny Review

Cannock Chase Council - Corporate Plan 2026-28**PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL****‘To be a responsible Council and ensure we deliver good value for money’**

The Council faces considerable uncertainty over the next 2 years as we face reductions in funding and prepare for local government reorganisation. It is important that we are prudent and plan ahead for the transfer of services and staff to the new unitary council.

We will continue to improve the ways in which customers can access our services and at a time that suits them through better use of technology; while continuing to provide contact via the telephone or face-to-face for those customers who need more personal support.

What we want to achieve:

- **Improve our customers’ access to services.**
- **Deliver Value for money to local taxpayers.**
- **Be accountable for our decisions and uphold good governance across the Council.**
- **The efficient transfer of Council services and its workforce to the new Unitary Council in 2028 with minimal disruption to our community.**

How we will deliver this:**Major Projects:**

Over the next 2 years we will:

- Work with neighbouring Councils to develop and deliver a plan for the transfer of services and the workforce to a new unitary Council. We will also develop a plan for our own preparatory work.
- Complete delivery of the value for money / governance improvement plan.
- Deliver the digital strategy.

Operational Service Delivery:

- Maintain in person local customer services and advice over the telephone for our customers.
- Provide more services on-line.
- Consult with the public and/or stakeholders on key projects that affect our communities.
- Seek to maximise collection of council tax and business rates, including arrears.
- Efficient processing of benefit applications (council tax and housing benefit).
- Annual review of our governance arrangements

**Services / Function Falling Within the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee's Remit**

Service Area	Sub-Areas
Corporate Issues	
Tim Clegg - Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate / cross cutting Issues
Corporate Issues	
Chris Forrester - Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget consultation (as appropriate)
Resources	Deputy S151 Officer (Finance Services)
Chris Forrester - Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management accounts • Financial planning • Exchequer • Financial systems support
	Local Taxation and Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) collection • Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits
Transformation & Assurance	Internal Audit & Risk
Judith Aupers – Head of Business Support & Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit • Risk Management • Insurance • Health & Safety
	Technology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Reprographics
	Human Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Learning and organisational development • Payroll • Equality and Diversity
	Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR & marketing • Graphic design • Website & intranet • Consultation, engagement & research

Service Area	Sub-Areas
	<p data-bbox="678 219 1522 264">Customer Services</p> <ul data-bbox="678 277 1522 517" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 277 1522 322">• Customer Services (telephony and reception services) <li data-bbox="678 394 906 427">• Procurement <li data-bbox="678 443 807 477">• Policy <li data-bbox="678 492 906 517">• Performance
Law & Governance	Legal Services
<p data-bbox="71 600 494 678">Ian Curran – Head of Law & Governance</p>	<ul data-bbox="678 600 1522 734" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 600 932 633">• Legal Services <li data-bbox="678 649 1372 734">• Information Governance (<i>Data Protection and Freedom of Information</i>) <p data-bbox="678 748 1522 792">Democratic and Corporate Services</p> <ul data-bbox="678 806 1522 1077" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 806 1019 840">• Democratic Services <li data-bbox="678 855 983 889">• Electoral Services <li data-bbox="678 904 1000 938">• Corporate Services <li data-bbox="678 954 1083 987">• Executive / Civic Support <li data-bbox="678 1003 970 1037">• Support Services <li data-bbox="678 1052 1497 1077">• Complaints (including Ombudsman and MP enquiries)
Housing & Corporate Assets	Corporate Assets
<p data-bbox="71 1160 643 1238">Nirmal Samrai - Head of Housing & Corporate Assets</p>	<ul data-bbox="678 1160 1522 1417" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 1160 1497 1238">• Land and Property Holdings (excluding HRA Property) – Maintenance of Assets and Purchases / Disposals <li data-bbox="678 1245 1010 1279">• Estate Management <li data-bbox="678 1294 1426 1328">• Leasehold Management of Commercial Premises <li data-bbox="678 1344 1023 1377">• Utilities Management <li data-bbox="678 1393 1074 1417">• Caretaking and Cleaning
Regulatory Services	
<p data-bbox="71 1496 512 1574">Gabrielle Whitehouse - Head of Regulatory Services</p>	<ul data-bbox="678 1496 1522 1776" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 1496 1382 1574">• Civil Contingencies - Emergency Planning and Business Continuity <li data-bbox="678 1581 922 1615">• Land Charges <li data-bbox="678 1630 1153 1664">• Street Naming and Numbering <li data-bbox="678 1680 1426 1776">• Climate Change / Sustainability - action planning, nature recovery, engagement, adaptation, carbon literacy

Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Developing the Work Programme

Members have a key role to play in developing the work programme for the Scrutiny Committees and it is important that manageable programmes are developed. The Scrutiny Committees will need to filter potential items of work; to be selective and to prioritise.

Given the limited resources available, in particular the constraints on member and officer time, it is unrealistic to select more than a few items for intensive review. Realistically, a single committee cannot undertake more than two in-depth reviews per year.

In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

Public interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen. Things to think about include:

- Any issues raised with you when canvassing.
- Have any surveys or research undertaken by the Council identified any concerns.
- is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?

Ability to change - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence. Think about what difference Scrutiny could make and what would happen if you did not look at this issue.

Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well. You should consider, the scale of the underperformance, whether it is a one off or whether there is an ongoing issue. Has the service been flagged up in an external inspection report for poor performance?

Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the District

Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort

Work programmes should be determined at the start of each municipal year and reviewed and revised regularly. Any reviews not started or completed by the year end can be referred for consideration as part of the following year's work programme. The best advice is to start small, learn what works well and what does not and then be more ambitious. It is far easier to add items to the workload than to remove them.

Different items may require different approaches. For example, the Scrutiny Committees can examine the Forward Plan, but may only choose to examine one or two items in any depth. Similarly, if the Scrutiny Committee is asked their views by the Cabinet on key policies and plans, such consultation does not have to involve in-depth investigation.

Similarly with reviews, a more selective approach should be taken, examining more problematic areas in greater depth and others with a lighter touch may prove to be more beneficial.

Members will also need to think about how to manage the workload, whether issues are considered by the whole committee, whether a task and finish group is set up or whether 'paired members' or individual 'lead' members are used.

Stage 1: Agree the Issue

The first step is for scrutiny members to be sure that the subject to be reviewed is significant. Undertaking in-depth reviews is resource-intensive – of member and officer resources. Investing such a high level of resources should only be undertaken for **high priority issues**.

The following are criteria which, alongside the PAPER issues from page 9, could be used to 'check' a topic against, to ensure that it would make a worthwhile review:

- Issue identified by members as key issue (through members' surgeries and other constituency activities).
- Performance issues within a service (e.g., significant under or overachievement of targets).
- Service considered to be important by the community (through market research, citizens' panels and so on).
- High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service.
- Public interest issue highlighted in local media.
- High level of budgetary commitment to policy/service area.
- Persistent financial issues e.g., significant under or overspends.
- Council corporate priority area.
- Central government priority area
- Issue raised in Inspection Reports
- Issue referred by the Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee
- New government guidance or legislation.

Stage 2: Determine the nature of member involvement

The committee will need to decide how members will drive the review. There are three possible approaches to member involvement:

- The whole committee investigates the issue.
- A task and finish working group is established to drive the investigation.
- Individual or paired members drive the review.

For the majority of reviews, the first two are likely to predominate, although individual or paired members may be used to review particular aspects of the subject area. Whichever approach is adopted, all activities should be conducted in the same spirit with the same willingness to experiment, challenge and explore different ways of doing things. Members are encouraged to take an active role in reviews, e.g., undertaking their own research on the internet, through visits, etc.

Vital to the whole review activity is that members take full control of which policy problems and solutions are explored and how that exploration takes place. Members need to take responsibility for, and ownership of, the outputs and outcomes of reviews.

Stage 3: Scoping Exercise

Any resource-intensive review requires careful project planning and the better the planning *beforehand* the more successful the review will be in the longer term. There are 4 key issues to consider when scoping the review:

- What are the core questions the review is seeking to answer? (**no more than 3**)
- What is the purpose of the Review? (**in one sentence**)
- What will **not** be included?
- What is the timescale?

Careful project management involves drawing up a project plan for the review. Time spent planning is time well spent, and if a review scope is robust, it makes it less likely that there will be pressure to modify if once work is under way.

Such a plan should cover:

- A fixed period for the activity.
- The creation by members of a 'term of reference' for the review.
- Calling of independent and expert witnesses.
- Hearing of evidence from stakeholders, communities, and citizens, led by members.
- Member visits, information, and data collection: qualitative and quantitative.
- A series of events at which members sift, discuss, and assess evidence gathered.
- Checking of member responses to evidence and data with stakeholders, communities, citizens, and experts.
- Final report to Council and/or Cabinet Decision by Council and/or Cabinet reported to the committee.
- Review and up-date of the implementation or development of the policy – with targets and criteria for assessment.

Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Work programming

The role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures. However, it is not possible to examine every service in detail, so it is important for the scrutiny committee to prioritise and plan its workload. Some councils do this at the beginning of each year, and some do it on an ongoing basis.

Planned scrutiny

Work programming is the process for determining which topics scrutiny will look at over the coming year, either at committee meetings or in task and finish groups. This involves evaluating several factors to decide which topics are to be investigated and when. The process will typically involve long-listing and then shortlisting topics before making a final decision.

Responsive scrutiny

The priorities for scrutiny need to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. This makes sure scrutiny can be flexible and responsive to high priority issues or policy changes that occur throughout the year.



The scrutiny topic selection process

Each council has its own method for selecting topics for scrutiny; in some councils there may be a very structured selection process, while in others it may be more informal. Whatever level of detail is involved, the general process should include the following activities.

Identify issues

You can identify potential issues by:

- consulting with a range of stakeholders, both internal and external to the council – this would include all elected members and senior officers, as well as relevant outside bodies
- looking at corporate priorities, business plans and the forward plan of the council (and the council's neighbouring councils)
- considering events and decisions in the council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
- reviewing council performance information and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
- conducting work to engage with local people, for example, through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.

Prioritise topics

Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

Plan scrutiny work

Decide which scrutiny topics to review and include them in the work programme for consideration and updating at each scrutiny meeting.

Review and evaluate

Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added by scrutiny.



Criteria for prioritising scrutiny topics

The following criteria provide a useful guide for identifying which topics are suitable for scrutiny to review, and prioritising them.

Topics are suitable for scrutiny when:

- scrutiny could have an impact and add value.
- the topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people.
- the resources are available that would be required to conduct the review, in terms of manpower and budget.
- it avoids work duplication elsewhere.
- the issue is one that the committee can realistically influence.
- the issue is related to an area where the council, or one of its partners, is not performing well.
- the issue is relevant to all or large parts of the local area.
- the review would be in the council's interests.

Topics are not suitable for scrutiny when:

- the issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent.
- the topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there).
- scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact upon outcomes.
- the topic may be 'sub judice' or prejudicial to the council's interest.
- the topic is too broad to make a review realistic.
- they do not relate to executive matters, for example, planning or licensing decisions.
- new legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- the topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

Defining scrutiny topics

For every item on the work programme / new referral, answers to the following questions should be made clear:

- What is the issue / activity / project under consideration?
- What is scrutiny being asked to do?
- What are the reasons for / expected benefits of involving scrutiny in the matter?
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?



Challenge 1 – Prioritising topics

Consider the issues that are important to the people you represent in your ward.

List the five issues you think are the most important, then put them in order of priority; make a note of your reasoning.

Think about how you would translate these into strategic issues which might be appropriate for scrutiny. Here is an example:

The issue

Several residents have been complaining that the trees in the local area are not being pruned regularly enough, becoming a hazard, and presenting a potential danger to the public. Complaints include difficulty in walking on the pavement, damage to tall vehicles, trip hazards from tree roots and gardens being overshadowed by trees.

Strategic considerations

The council needs to consider how it allocates its environmental services' resources so that it can be efficient while also meeting the needs of residents.

It can look at:

- how services are procured, commissioned, and contracted.
- which are the most hazardous streets and where the biggest improvements can be made.
- prioritising and planning a programme of work for tree pruning.

Having done so, consider how you would translate this into the scope for a scrutiny committee review.

**Proposed Work Programme for 2026-27 for the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date	Item
29 June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Annual Business Report for 2025-26 • End of Year Performance Report for 2025-26 for the Responsible Council PDP • Determine Review Programme for 2026-27
24 September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 1 Progress Report April to June 2026 • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)
14 December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 2 Progress Report July to September 2026 • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)
26 January 2027	This meeting is for consultation on the budget/financial strategy only
15 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 3 Progress Report October to December 2026 • Outcome of Scrutiny Review(s)

Progress Updates:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Six monthly review of additional resource to the Revenues and Benefits Collection Department



Scrutiny Review Template

Review Title
Scope of the Review / Terms of Reference
Reason for Scrutiny
Membership of the Review Group
Key Tasks / Review Plan
Sources of Evidence
Timescale