

RESOURCES & SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CORPORATE POLICY AND SUPPORT)

A.2 WORK PROGRAMMING – INCLUDING MONITORING OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report provides the Committee with its approved Work Programme for 2026/27, including progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme, feedback to the Committee on the decisions relating to previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquiries undertaken and a list of forthcoming decisions for which public notice has been given.

SCOPE - THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

To support the overview and scrutiny function of the Council, this report seeks to confirm the Committee's focus, through its work programme, for 2026/27 and related information to ensure the Committee can actively address issues within its terms of reference.

INVITEES

None.

BACKGROUND

The then Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) issued updated Overview and Scrutiny Statutory Guidance on 22 April 2024, replacing the previous 2019 guidance. The revised document reinforces the central role of scrutiny in ensuring that Local Authorities operate transparently, make evidence-based decisions, and remain accountable to their communities. It emphasises that effective scrutiny is a cornerstone of good governance and should be embedded as a core function rather than treated as an adjunct to executive decision-making.

The 2024 guidance places renewed focus on the culture and behaviours that enable scrutiny to thrive. It highlights the importance of constructive relationships between Senior Officers and Scrutiny Members, underpinned by mutual respect and a shared commitment to democratic accountability. The guidance stresses that scrutiny must be independent, Member-led, and adequately resourced, with councils expected to ensure that committees have access to the information, officer support, and specialist advice necessary to carry out their functions effectively.

A key theme in the updated guidance is the need for scrutiny work programmes to be strategically focused and aligned with the authority's priorities, risks, and performance challenges. Committees are encouraged to adopt a forward-looking, outcome-driven approach, selecting topics that will add demonstrable value for residents. The guidance also reiterates the importance of public engagement, transparency, and clear reporting, ensuring that scrutiny activity is visible and accessible to local communities.

The 2024 update further clarifies expectations around the scrutiny of external partners, including those delivering commissioned or shared services. It reinforces the principle that scrutiny has a legitimate role in examining the effectiveness, value for money, and governance of partnership arrangements, while maintaining a proportionate and collaborative approach. Overall, the revised guidance aims to strengthen the impact of scrutiny across the sector by promoting good practice, improving consistency, and supporting councils to deliver high-quality, accountable public services.

The inclusion of the matters set out in the “purpose of this report” section above seeks to further re-enforce the inter-relationship of the matters referred to. As such, it is designed to support consideration of work programming of the Committee and contribute to addressing progress with the Corporate Plan.

RELEVANT CORPORATE PLAN THEME/ANNUAL CABINET PRIORITY

In considering the Work Programme of enquiries, the Committee must have regard to the Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the themes of that Corporate Plan are:

- Pride in our area and services to residents
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities
- Championing our local environment
- Working with partners to improve quality of life
- Promoting our heritage offer, attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer
- Financial Sustainability and openness

DESIRED OUTCOME OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM

To enable the Committee to effectively plan and review priorities in scrutiny matters for the current 2026/27 scrutiny year, ensuring alignment with the Corporate Plan and maximising impact through focused enquiries. The Committee should confirm the membership of its Task and Finish Groups, consider feedback on previous recommendations, and review forthcoming decisions to inform its strategic direction and oversight responsibilities.

DETAILED INFORMATION

WORK PROGRAMME 2026/27

The details relating to the following matters are set out in the relevant Appendix identified:

- (1) Work Programme for 2026/267 approved by Full Council on 1 September 2026 – See Appendix A;
- (2) a list of previous recommendations made by the Committee and any updates relating to those recommendations – See Appendix B; and
- (2) a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice has been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee’s last meeting – See Appendix C.

In considering work programming matters, the Committee is reminded of the following key points arising from the CfGS review undertaken in 2021:

“Considering greater use of task and finish groups – This more informal type of O&S can allow improved cross-party working and detailed investigation of a single issue focussed on producing substantive recommendations.

Improved agenda planning and management - Committees should focus on one or two substantive items per agenda to allow for cross-cutting themes to be properly identified and explored, and different insights brought to bear on critical issues.

Considering how to engage the public in the work of O&S - This could include O&S going on more site visits in the community, inviting the public to offer ideas for work programmes, and greater use of social media channels for resident input and communicating the progress and impact of scrutiny work.

A clearer focus on democratic accountability - Scrutiny of Cabinet Members should form a key part of the work programme, providing an opportunity to hold the Leader and portfolio holders to account for delivery of the corporate plan and any other issues O&S feel is important.”

The Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is one of two overview and scrutiny committees established by the Council to specifically focus on the following areas of Council work (as detailed in Article 6.02(i) of the Council's Constitution):

“To perform the role of Overview and Scrutiny and its functions in relation to:

- The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee will normally be Members of a political group that is not represented on the Cabinet. The Committee will hold 8 scheduled meetings per year but with the Chairman able to call additional formal meetings. Meetings of Task and Finish Groups can be called as required, following the terms of reference being agreed by the Committee.*
- To perform the role of Overview and Scrutiny and its functions in relation to the effective use of the Council's resources including approval of discrete researched and evidenced reviews on the effectiveness.*

Financial Forecast Budget setting and monitoring (including General Fund & Housing Revenue Account)

- Colchester/Tendring Borders Garden Community*
- Housing Strategy and Homelessness Service*
- Service Delivery and Performance (where not delegated to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*
- Procurement and Contract Management*
- Transformation and Digital Strategies*
- Customer Service and Standards*

The Constitution provides for the two overview and scrutiny committees to submit a work programme to full Council for approval. Rule 7 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules sets out the position as follows:

“Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will submit a work programme for the year ahead and a review of the previous year's activities to the full Council for approval. In addition it will be responsible for co-ordinating and prioritising its work programme on an ongoing basis.

In preparing, co-ordinating and prioritising its programme, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take into account:-

- *The General Role and Principles of undertaking its functions, as set out in Part 2 Article 6;*
- *The planned work on the preparation of elements of the Budget and Policy Framework, as set out in the Council's Business Plan;*
- *The need for statutory timetables to be met;*
- *The wishes of all members of the committee;*
- *Requests from the Cabinet to carry out reviews; and*
- *Requests from Group Leaders in accordance with Rule 8."*

A review of the Committee's Work Programme, in the context of the next steps for Local Government Re-organisation, such as Parliament's anticipated approval of the Structural Changes Order will continue to be monitored as an ongoing item of business.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- a) considers its updated Work Programme 2026/27 (Appendix A), feedback to the Committee on the decisions made in respect of its previous recommendations (Appendix B) and the list of relevant forthcoming decisions (Appendix C);**
- b) notes the remaining contents of the report.**

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Full Council – 1 September 2026 – adoption of the Work Programme for the Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

- **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024), Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities. Published 22 April 2024.**
- **Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) – Legislative framework establishing Overview and Scrutiny functions.**
- **Localism Act 2011 – Relevant provisions relating to governance, transparency, and local accountability.**
- **Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 – Statutory requirements for scrutiny in combined authorities.**
- **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) – Overview & Scrutiny Development Review (2021)**
- **Tendring District Council Constitution – Article 6 and Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**
- **Corporate Plan 2024–2028**

➤ **Full Council Minutes – 1 September 2026**

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Work Programme 2025/26

Appendix B – Recommendations Monitoring

Appendix C – Forthcoming Decisions

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