



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Thursday, 4th September, 2025 at 7.00 pm*

**To:**

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)  
Cllr Nadia Martin (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr Steve Harden  
Cllr Rhian Jones  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Bill O'Donovan  
Cllr S. Trussler  
Cllr Becky Williams

**Standing Deputy**

Cllr A. Adeola  
Cllr C.W. Card  
Cllr Mara Makunura

Cllr T.W. Mitchell  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr Dhan Sarki

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to the Administrator, Adele Taylor, Democratic Services, Tel. (01252) 398831, Email. [adele.taylor@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:adele.taylor@rushmoor.gov.uk).

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – (Pages 1 - 6)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st July 2025 (copy attached).

## **2. APPOINTMENTS –**

- 1) To note the appointment of Cllr Rhian Jones as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Cllr Thomas Day and Cllr M.J. Roberts as Standing Deputy for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Cllr Sarah Spall for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

The appointments have been made by the Leader of the Labour Group in accordance with Standing Orders and arrangements to secure political balance.

- 2) To appoint a new Member to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Progress Group as a replacement for Cllr Thomas Day.

## **3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – (Pages 7 - 400)**

To receive Report No. ED2505 (copy attached), to allow for pre decision scrutiny on the Council's response to the Governments proposals for Local Government Reorganisation, prior to the Cabinet meeting on 16th September and the Council Meeting on 25th September, 2025. Appendix B, C and D, attached to this report, are exempt until full publication on 3rd September, 2025.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Gareth Williams, has been invited to attend the meeting.

## **4. WORK PLAN – (Pages 401 - 410)**

To consider the Work Plan for the 2025/26 Municipal Year (copy attached).

### **MEETING REPRESENTATION**

Members of the public may ask to speak at the meeting on any of the items on the agenda by writing to the Committee Administrator at the Council Offices, Farnborough by 5.00 pm two working days prior to the meeting.

Applications for items to be considered for the next meeting must be received in writing to the Committee Administrator fifteen working days prior to the meeting.

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 31st July, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)  
Cllr Nadia Martin (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr Thomas Day  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr Steve Harden  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Bill O'Donovan  
Cllr S. Trussler  
Cllr Becky Williams

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr M.J. Tennant.

## **6. APPOINTMENTS**

The Committee NOTED changes to the Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year, as set out below:

- Cllr C.P. Grattan to be appointed to the Committee in place of Cllr Abe Allen
- Cllr Dhan Sarki to be appointed as Standing Deputy for the Committee in place of Cllr C.P. Grattan

## **7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

## **8. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2023-27**

The Committee welcomed Mrs Zoe Paine, Strategy and Enabling Manager, and Mr Jermiane Pinto, Housing Options Manager, who were in attendance to provide an update on the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2023-27 as set out in Report No. PG2524. Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder, was also in attendance to answer Members' questions.

It was noted that the Strategy, adopted by the Council in 2023, was an overarching way to deal with all housing matters. The Strategy supported the Council's Homes for All priority and set out the approach to, housing delivery, homelessness prevention, and housing standards. The Committee were advised of the statutory duty to have a homelessness strategy and the good practice of having a published

strategic approach to housing matters, to help underpin the operational work of the service.

The Strategy covered three themes, these included:

- Theme 1 – increasing the supply of good quality homes for residents and prospective residents for every stage of life
- Theme 2 – support residents to access affordable, well managed and maintained housing in the private and social sectors
- Theme 3- work proactively to improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing in the Borough

A progress report was provided on each theme, which included:

- Theme 1-
  - housing demand – 1,964 families were currently on the Homefinder list looking for a variety of different types of accommodation at affordable rents
  - officers were now sourcing private rented housing market data from local agents to help better assess local demand
  - £2billion was to be made available through planning reform and Government capital funding via the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) aimed at helping deliver more homes – 60% of which would be social housing
  - introduction of new rent regimes for Registered Providers (RPs) and low interest loans
  - 94 homes had been delivered in the last financial year with a further 236 to be delivered by April 2026
  - work was ongoing towards securing developments that would deliver affordable homes via S106 sites and with RPs to secure funding for non S106 sites – for example £7.5million had been secured for use on the Wellesley development for social and affordable rent properties
  - work was underway towards securing pathways for supported accommodation for street homeless individuals and safe temporary accommodation for homeless households to reduce the need to utilise bed and breakfast accommodation
- Theme 2 –
  - the Council had achieved above the national average for homelessness prevention at 77.9% against 51.9% nationally
  - specialist staff had been recruited, including a domestic abuse worker and private rent and accommodation officer
  - the Communications team had a programme of work to engage with specific groups at risk of homelessness, this included addressing severe weather controls
  - work was underway with charities and faith groups to share expertise and enhance services to achieve positive outcomes
  - training was being provided to Members to inform how systems worked to assist with casework

- work was underway with the Registered Providers Group (RPG) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)
  - upgrades to the Abritas system had been made to allow direct messaging for quicker access, secure document downloading, self-serve options to reduce barriers and a mobile friendly design
- Theme 3-
    - regulatory and enforcement work continued to ensure good standards of housing, this was done through the RPG, Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman. In addition, the Council were a member of the Warmer Homes Consortium and promoted the Home Upgrade Grant
    - measures were being taken to ensure staff resource focussed on housing standards
    - development of effective communication to residents and landlords regarding the support and advice available

It was also reported that further changes were imminent, these included tenancy reforms to the Renters Right Act, new statutory duties for the Council in relation to the Supported Housing Act and reforms to the Decent Homes Standards (DHS) and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for social and affordable homes. It was also expected that Local Government Reorganisation would have an impact on the housing service.

In response to a query regarding DHS and MEES, and how noncompliance could affect residents, it was advised that the proposed reforms were currently in the consultation stages and work would have to be undertaken with the ombudsman and regulators to deal with any implications following any implementation of the proposed standards.

In response to a question regarding how the demand for social housing would be met, the Portfolio Holder advised that meetings were being arranged with the top five-ten Registered Providers, operating in the Borough, to enhance partnership working. Pockets of land potentially available for social housing development in the future included the Civic Quarter, Farnborough, a number of brownfield sites and some military land. The Committee discussed the Local Plan and how that had the opportunity to influence and meet the needs of local residents. The need for more bungalows was noted and it was advised that the Council were working with Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group (RAAG) and others, to best address this issue, taking account of land values, single storey properties were not a priority for developers. The Committee commented that the “pepper pot” approach, where social housing was scattered amongst private properties on developments, and how this helped sustain people’s feelings of being part of the community. In response to a query around demand for houses by age group, it was reported that the average age group was those in their mid-40s. Further data would be sought and shared via the Committee’s Action Tracker.

During a discussion regarding temporary accommodation, the Portfolio Holder advised that work was underway with a partner who purchased larger homes and converted them into Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO). There was also potential

for them to purchase existing HMO's and upgrade them to rent out. In response to a question, it was noted that there were currently only two-three individuals housed in hotels outside the Borough, two-three homeless people across the Borough and a high number of street attached. During April – June 2025, 78% of 91 cases of those at risk of homelessness had been prevented.

The Committee discussed shared ownership and were advised that there was good demand for this type of property, in particular two bed properties. Specific data was requested on the interest/take up of shared ownership, and this would be provide through the Committee's Action Tracker. It was noted that people looking for shared ownership properties could apply anywhere in the country and not just within Rushmoor. It response to a query regarding veterans and military personnel it was noted that these individuals took priority on shared ownership properties, if the individual had a local connection.

With regards to adaptations to properties, it was advised that this was the responsibility of HCC. Enquiries were referred to Occupational Therapy (OT) via HCC and it was thought that currently waiting lists were long. It was noted that individuals were able to use private OTs to expedite the process.

During a discussion on how the building of new homes could be quicker, it was advised that the Council had limited influence over private developers, however, it was reported that the requirements around Homes England funded developments was much stricter, and monies could be lost if developers failed to meet set timescales. SANG allocations could also be withdrawn if developers failed to develop to certain timescales.

The Committee discussed the 82 units at Union Yard, Aldershot, that had been allocated for key workers. It was noted that arrangements were in place with the provider and Frimley NHS Trust to ensure key workers and critical members of staff had access to the accommodation. It was also advised that there would be onsite management for the units and strong working links would be established with Frimley NHS Trust Human Resources teams to ensure standards were maintained.

<b>What</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Data to be share on interest/take up of shared ownership	Zoe Paine, Strategy and Enabling Officer	August 2025
Data on demand for housing by age group	Jermaine Pinto, Housing Options Manager	August 2025
Data to be provided on take up of the Warmer Homes scheme	Jermaine Pinto, Housing Options Manager	August 2025

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder, Mrs Paine and Mr Pinto for their contribution to the meeting.

## 9. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan.

It was noted that a Special Meeting of the Committee had been scheduled for 4th September to carry out pre decision scrutiny on the Council's response to Local Government Reorganisation prior to Cabinet on 16th September and the Full Council Meeting on 25th September, 2025. The Progress Group would follow up on this at their meeting on 13th August, 2025.

It was advised that the Police and Community Safety Team would be in attendance at the Meeting on 18th September, 2025. The Progress Group would scope the item at its meeting on 13th August, 2025.

The potential future items would also be considered at the Progress Group meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIRMAN)

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<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>4 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>	<b>REPORT NO: ED2505</b>

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In July 2025 Cabinet considered Report ED2504 which provided an update on the work underway to prepare the Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The proposal would set out how a single tier of local government could be established across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW).
- 1.2 At that meeting Cabinet recommended that the Council confirm that a unitary council based on the areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke and Deane councils continued to be the preferred option for Rushmoor as, in line with the assessment criteria, it represents the best balance of a Council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money, but small enough to be connected to the place and the needs of the people the council serves.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 10 July Council agreed this recommendation and noted the programme of engagement being undertaken to ensure that all residents, business and partners had an opportunity to feed into the process.
- 1.4 KPMG have continued to support 12 councils across HIOW to complete the necessary evidence base and develop a business case to enable final proposals to be agreed and submitted to Government by 26 September 2025. Results from the consultation across the borough, joint consultation undertaken with Hart and Basingstoke and joint consultation with the other 11 Hampshire councils have fed into the proposal.
- 1.5 The next stage of the LGR process is the submission of a business case or 'case for change' which has to be made by 26 September 2025. Following the final business case submission, Government's current intention is that Ministers will decide their preferred option/options for LGR in Hampshire in the Autumn, consult on this during November and December 2025 and then make a decision on which proposal to implement in early 2026. Structural Change Orders would then need to go through Parliament, which is likely to happen in Autumn 2026. There would then be elections to the shadow authorities for the new unitary Councils in May 2027. Those shadow authorities will oversee the implementation of the new unitaries with them replacing existing councils on 1 April 2028.
- 1.6 As previously considered the proposal recommends that overall, there should be 4 mainland unitary councils plus the Isle of Wight. Within this there are 3 options for the south of the county and each Council will submit its preferred option to Government.

- 1.7 The proposal will be published in full on 3 September and made available to the Committee as soon as possible. To enable early consideration by this Committee and preparation for the meeting this report sets out key elements from the proposal (case for change) and where appropriate includes information in appendices which will remain exempt until 3 September. A short introductory presentation will also be provided at the beginning of the meeting.

## **2. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The full proposal sets out how four new unitary councils on the mainland, would meet the government's criteria and best serve our communities into the future by:

- driving economic growth and housing delivery
- delivering high quality and sustainable public services with a focus on innovation and transformation to improve outcomes for communities
- achieving significant savings while being large enough to be financially sustainable
- unlocking and maximising devolution arrangements, working effectively alongside the Isle of Wight Council and the new elected Mayor for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as constituent members of the strategic authority
- effectively engaging, empowering and serving their local communities by providing opportunities for residents to shape local decisions.

- 2.2 The proposal states that four new unitary Councils on the mainland, with an average population size of 500,000, provide significant scale in service delivery and will reduce costs accordingly while still being connected to the communities they serve. Importantly they will ensure services are tailored to respond to local needs and improve outcomes for residents.

- 2.3 Exempt Appendix A summarises how the proposal overall meets the following six assessment criteria

- A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
- Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Proposals should show how Councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
- New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

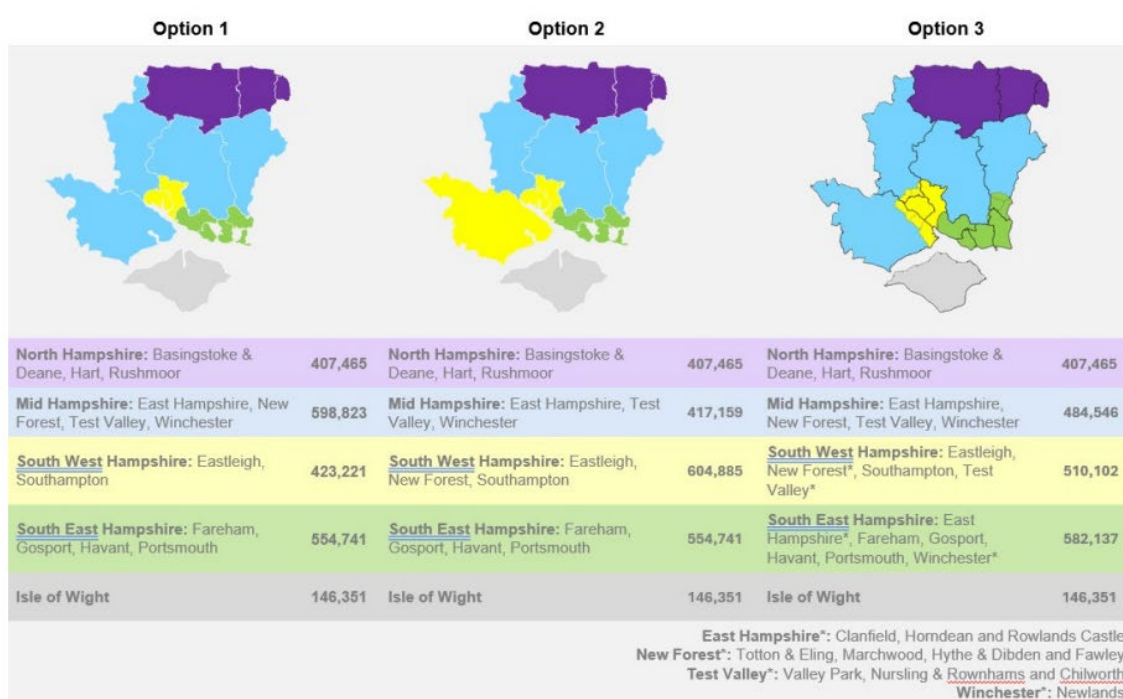
- 2.4 Exempt Appendix B of this report focuses on how the case demonstrates future financial sustainability, including assumptions on implementation costs. Exempt Appendix C sets out how the unitaries will enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. This includes the proposed democratic arrangements and reflects the recommendations from the Council's Policy and Projects Advisory Board who considered this matter at its meeting on 22 July 2025.

### **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 This work with other councils and KPMG has been discussed regularly with the Leaders working group which was established to support this work. The Leader, Interim Managing Director and officer programme team have been fully involved in the collective work with KPMG above, working with Hart and Basingstoke and the programme of stakeholder engagement (described below) including meetings with MHCLG, the District Councils' Network, key businesses, partners, and voluntary and community organisations.
- 3.2 Members have been kept up to date with the process through regular all-member on-line briefings and written updates.
- 3.3 A letter setting out details about the devolution and LGR process has been sent to over 180 partners, which includes a commitment to a period of engagement as LGR proposals are developed further. A dedicated page on the topics has been established on the Council's website and communications channels are being used to update residents, stakeholders and businesses on progress and encourage participation. Members and staff are being updated on a weekly basis on the topic. Staff briefings and engagement sessions have also taken place.
- 3.4 Members confirmed it was essential that our residents, businesses, towns and parishes and all stakeholders had the opportunity to have their say. A Hampshire wide consultation, supported by all 12 councils working collectively with KPMG ran from 30 June until 27 July. In addition, Basingstoke BC, Hart DC and Rushmoor BC commissioned face to face survey work with an on-line option to give residents the opportunity to provide views specifically on services they experience and the North Hampshire Unitary option.
- 3.5 The Council also undertook a wide range of face to face 'drop-in' opportunities across the borough during July where officers responded to questions about LGR and the Community Governance Review and encouraged participation in the online surveys. Despite talking with over 950 local residents, response to the LGR consultation surveys was relatively low.
- 3.6 In addition to engagement with residents there were a range of on-line and face to face events for partners, the voluntary sector, other key stakeholders, and businesses.
- 3.7 Exempt Appendix D includes 2 consultation reports, the first covering the consultation undertaken by the 12 Council's working together and the second the

consultation report from the survey work undertaken with Basingstoke and Deane and Hart District Council.

- 3.8 In the proposal there are three options for four-new mainland unitaries with the Isle of Wight remaining independent. Each variation is based on establishing a unitary council centred around the major urban economies and the population centres of Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester and Basingstoke.
- 3.9 All three variations include a North Hampshire Unitary Council encompassing the areas covered by Rushmoor with Basingstoke and Deane and Hart and supported by all 12 councils. Two of the variations are based on amalgamating existing council areas whilst the third option includes some potential boundary changes. The three variations are shown in the diagram below:



- 3.10 All three options meet the criteria well with option 3 providing a more balanced population split across the proposed mainland unitaries and aligns most closely with the principles of establishing new unitary councils based around the major population centres and urban economies. This option is therefore recommended as the Council's preferred option.
- 3.11 The proposal also sets out that the Isle of Wight meets the criteria of exceptional circumstances to remain as existing island unitary authority due to its unique local identity and geography and the fact most services and infrastructure would just need to be duplicated on the Island, were they to be run from a unitary council on the mainland, due to the barriers provided by access only by boat. The full proposal ensures that any genuine opportunities for collaboration with the four new unitary councils on the mainland are maximised. This will include an enhanced partnership whereby the Isle of Wight Council works closely alongside the four new mainland unitaries to explore each opportunity they progress for

transformation and innovation as they move forward through implementation of the full proposal and beyond, to see how they could be applied to the Island.

#### **4. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

4.1 The Cabinet report will recommend that the Council approve the full proposal to government at Appendix 1 for submission to government by the 26th September 2025 deadline confirming that;

(1) a five-unitary council structure, with four new mainland unitary councils plus the Isle of Wight would best meet the Government's criteria and provide the most effective solution for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

(2) a unitary council based on the areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke and Deane is the recommended option for Rushmoor as, in line with the assessment criteria, it represents the best balance of a Council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money, but small enough to be connected the place and the needs of the people the council serves.

(3) In relation to the south of the county on balance, option 3 is the council's preferred option in the proposal. This option provides a more balanced population split across the proposed mainland unitaries and aligns most closely with the principles of establishing new unitary councils based around the major population centres and urban economies.

4.2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the information in the Appendices, and the full proposal once published, and provide any feedback for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 September.

#### **LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:**

Appendix A - Summary Table of how the Proposal meets the six Government Criteria

Appendix B – Financial Sustainability

Appendix C – Proposed democratic arrangements

Appendix D - Consultation Reports

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

English Devolution White Paper

Cabinet report ACE2506

Cabinet report ED2504

#### **CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Report Author** – Karen Edwards, Executive Director

**Stacie Dicker** – Programme Officer

## Appendix A – Summary Table of how the Proposal meets the six Government Criteria

<p><b>Criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Balanced configuration:</b> The proposal ensures equitable distribution of resources by avoiding disparities in tax base, population, and GVA among new unitary councils.</li> <li>• <b>Tailored governance and leadership:</b> Strong local leadership with strategies customised to the unique geographies of each unitary area to drive economic growth, high quality service delivery and improved outcomes</li> <li>• <b>Economic development and innovation:</b> Creates a focused environment for business innovation and economic growth by leveraging strengths and fostering partnerships tailored to the needs of the different economic areas.</li> <li>• <b>Infrastructure and housing:</b> Prioritises shaping infrastructure and addressing housing needs with tailored approaches to support delivery and meet local requirements.</li> <li>• <b>Transport and connectivity:</b> Aligns travel geographies with unitary boundaries to enable integrated transport planning, improving connectivity, and reducing congestion.</li> <li>• <b>Community and skills development:</b> Invests in people to build an inclusive workforce, addressing skills gaps and raising living standards to support growth ambitions.</li> <li>• <b>Rural and local engagement:</b> Addresses unique rural challenges and enhances local engagement by aligning governance with community identities and travel-to-work patterns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial sustainability:</b> The proposal addresses current financial challenges by reducing duplicated functions in the two-tier system, centralising back-office support, and empowering each authority to manage its budget based on local needs through place focused transformation and innovation, thereby improving financial resilience.</li> <li>• <b>Efficiency and improving capacity:</b> Brings together capital and revenue planning and enhances transformation teams, the proposal achieves savings through transformation and service redesign tailored to local needs, improving overall service delivery. Recognising that Portsmouth and Southampton have already made many of these efficiencies.</li> <li>• <b>Economic growth and local focus:</b> Enables enhanced economic growth by forming unitary structures around distinct economic areas, ensuring opportunities are realised and challenges addressed to maximise economic potential.</li> <li>• <b>Population balance:</b> Creates balanced new unitary structures that reflect economic areas and local identities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local connections and community focus:</b> Effectiveness of services, particularly in areas such as adult social care, is driven by local connections and understanding community needs. The proposal includes co-producing services with local partners through a total place approach and maintaining local relationships which even larger unitaries cannot replicate.</li> </ul>

- **Place-based governance:** Captures local intelligence and prioritises prevention. The proposal aligns services with the lived realities of communities, ensuring they are delivered responsively.
- **Service design and transformation:** The proposal is based on creating genuinely new unitaries through a comprehensive approach to service design, focusing on high-quality and sustainable services. The proposal has prioritised collaboration and transformation opportunities, ensuring services are tailored to local needs. The Isle of Wight Council, whilst remaining independent, will have a transformation partnership with the new unitaries to ensure opportunities are maximised for the Island where appropriate.
- **Adult social care:** Our model focusses on localised neighbourhood service delivery, budgetary savings, and data-driven decision-making. It aligns with the NHS 10-year plan, focusing on prevention and community resilience.
- **Children and young people:** Promotes localised governance and collaboration, addressing educational challenges and supporting children with complex needs. Our proposal emphasises prevention, early intervention, and community-centred approaches.
- **Economic Growth and Strategic Planning:** Aligning services with local economic and social geographies, fostering collaboration and co-investment in infrastructure.
- **Public sector reform:** Aligns with the wider public sector reform agenda, focusing on place-based prevention and tailored collaborative service delivery to meet community needs effectively in each of our areas

**Criteria 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.**

- **Collaborative working:** Extensive collaboration among 12 Councils over six months, involving key stakeholder groups and regular meetings with leaders, chief executives, Section 151 officers, monitoring officers, directors and heads of service. This collaborative approach ensures that the proposal is robust, evidence-based, and informed by a wide range of perspectives.
- **Informed by local views:** The proposal is shaped by joint local government efforts and engagement with local people and partners. A joint survey was conducted to gather views from residents, businesses, and community groups, ensuring that the proposal reflects public sentiment and priorities. A series of workshops have been held with businesses and partners including from the public, voluntary and community sector and town and parish councils. Discussion have also been held with local members of parliament. The Councils are grateful to all of our communities and partners for helping to shape the proposal. This approach prioritises community identity and future-proofs local government to effectively respond to local needs.
- **Travel for work and leisure activities:** Builds on our strong travel-to-work ecosystem, supported by motorways, rail corridors, bus networks, ferries, and active-travel routes. The future unitary Councils are aligned with key population and economic centres as anchors, providing opportunities to streamline travel services.
- **Local identity:** Recognising and preserving the unique character and contributions of the North, Mid, South East, and South West areas and the Isle of Wight. Each area has distinct geographic, historical, economic and cultural identities, which are actively preserved and empowered through the proposal.

<p><b>Criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic planning and local delivery:</b> A Combined/Strategic Authority with five well-balanced unitaries (four new unitaries on the mainland and the Isle of Wight Council) as constituent authorities. This structure enables strategic planning and coordination for nearly 2.2 million people, while the unitary councils focus on local delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Effective decision-making:</b> With five constituent members, our model provides a strong foundation for decision-making. It aims to avoid the pitfalls of smaller Combined Authorities, which may operate as rivals rather than cohesive governance bodies. Our approach draws on the success of Greater Manchester.</li> <li>• <b>Balanced new unitary authorities:</b> Populations between 400,000 and 600,000 of the new unitaries, ensuring balanced representation and avoiding democratic deficits. The proposal also includes the Isle of Wight, emphasising balanced representation and collaboration with non-constituent members like NHS bodies and National Parks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enhanced local representation:</b> Localised unitary authorities, which would allow for governance that is more tailored and representative. This structure would enable local leaders to better understand and address the unique challenges and opportunities within their areas.</li> <li>• <b>Improved service delivery:</b> Aligning governance structures with local needs and engaging local stakeholders in decision making, means our proposal will deliver services more effectively and efficiently. This will allow for the customisation of services to better fit the specific requirements of each community, leading to improved outcomes in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.</li> <li>• <b>Proposed councillor ratios:</b> Future indicative councillor ratios are designed to support the individual demands of the four-new mainland unitary configurations and the communities they serve. The proposed configurations aim to optimise the number of councillors to ensure effective representation and governance with an enhanced ward councillor role. The Isle of Wight would continue with its existing councillor numbers.</li> <li>• <b>Enhanced neighbourhood working and governance:</b> A localised place-based approach will see enhanced neighbourhood engagement and delivery models. The new Councils will co-design with communities and local partners neighbourhood governance arrangements that best meet local requirements for each area. This will deliver decision making at the lowest effective level to speed up delivery, tailored to each community's needs.</li> </ul>



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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The purpose of the work plan is to plan, manage and co-ordinate the ongoing activity and progress of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will be updated regularly and presented to each meeting of the Committee. It will include issues that are currently being actioned as well as those that will be subject to future work.

The Committees Terms of Reference are as follows:

- to perform all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council;
- to appoint such formal sub-committees and informal task and finish groups as it considers necessary to assist it in discharging its functions;
- to prepare and approve the overview and scrutiny work programme so as to ensure that the Committee's time is effectively and efficiently utilised;
- to undertake investigations into such matters relating to the Council's functions and powers as:
  - (1) may be referred by the Council, Committees, the Cabinet, or the Leader; or
  - (2) the Committee may consider appropriate; or
  - (3) have been referred to the Committee pursuant to the "call-in" procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution. (These can be decisions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, key decisions taken by an officer or under joint arrangements).
- to monitor and review the performance of the Council and services against relevant performance indicators and adopted plans;

Last Updated  
27/08/2025

- to review and/or scrutinise decisions proposed to be made (pre-decision scrutiny) or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- to review existing policy and strategy with a view to securing continuous improvement in the way in which the Council's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- to make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- to review and/or scrutinise any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- to discuss initiatives put forward for consideration by individual members of the Committee and any relevant 'call-for-action' in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution; and
- to consider petitions referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with provisions set out in the Petition Scheme set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.



**(A) ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING PROGRESSED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)	TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2025/26)	CURRENT WORK
To monitor the performance and activities of <b>Registered Providers</b> working in the Borough	<p>Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Halleh Koohestani (Chairman), S.J Masterson, Bill O'Donovan and M.D. Smith.</p> <p>Cllrs Abe Allen, G.B. Lyon and Becky Williams will act as Standing Deputies.</p>	The Group were due to meet on 11 September to discuss and plan the review of Registered Providers for 2025/26.
To review the <b>Council Tax Support</b> Scheme	Cllrs P.J. Cullum, C.P. Grattan, Halleh Koohestani (Chairman), M.J Roberts and S. Trussler.	Officers were in the process of preparing some data to share with Members with suggestions on the way forward considering the impacts of Local Government Reorganisation.
To consider further the economical and environmental impacts of <b>Farnborough Airport</b> on the Borough	<p>Cllrs Abe Allen, C. Card, P.J. Cullum, Halleh Koohestani (Chairman) G.B. Lyon and Bill O'Donovan.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance and Sustainability will be invited</p>	<b>NOTE</b> - meetings of the Farnborough Airport Task and Finish Group, which is tasked to look at the environmental and economic impacts of the airport, will be adjourned until the outstanding planning application has been determined.

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ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)	TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2025/26)	CURRENT WORK
	to the meeting as and when appropriate.	

**(B) ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING PROGRESSED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN LINE WITH THE COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025/26**

SKILLS ECONOMY AND BUSINESS	
ISSUE	CURRENT WORK
HOMES FOR ALL: QUALITY LIVING, AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
ISSUE	CURRENT WORK
Registered Providers Task and Finish Group	Reviewed work undertaken in the 2024/25 Municipal Year at the June OSC meeting and suggested that the Group consider the Terms of Reference and question the best use of time to achieve strategic discussions with RPs. Consideration would also be given to the makeup of the Group and the option to widen the membership.
Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy	Reviewed the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy to track progress since 2024/25 at the July meeting. The progress to date had been noted.
COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING: ACTIVE LIVES, HEALTHIER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES	
ISSUE	CURRENT WORK
PRIDE IN PLACE: CLEAN, SAFE AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS	
ISSUE	CURRENT WORK

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THE FUTURE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	
ISSUE	CURRENT WORK

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### WORKFLOW – June 2025- March 2026

DATE	ITEMS
12 June 2025	Appointments Registered Providers Annual Report – 2024/25 – ZP
31 July 2025	Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy – ZP/JP
4 September 2025	Local Government Reorganisation – KE/GW
18 September 2025	Police and Community Safety – JK/DL/GC
23 October 2025	<i>Community Engagement – How we consult with and understand the views of our residents</i>
11 December 2025	SERCO Walk this Waste Pilot
29 January 2026	Leisure Centre pre decision scrutiny
Feb (Date TBC)?	<i>Finance (FRP)</i>
26 March 2026	<i>Regen &amp; Civic Quarter</i>
Potential Future Items for the Committee in 2025/26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highways issues (condition of roads, speeding and road safety issues) – HCC – letter being drafted</li> <li>2. <i>Business Support &amp; Economic Development</i></li> </ol>

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Progress Meetings 2025/26

**Membership:** Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chair), Cllr Nadia Martin (Vice-Chair), Cllr Martin Tennant (Vice-Chair) and Cllrs Leola Card, Thomas Day, Gareth Lyon and Bill O'Donovan.

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DATE	ITEM	NOTES
17.06.2025	Registered Providers T&F Annual Report (12 June)	<b>ACTION</b> – the T&F Group alongside the Portfolio Holder to review the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Group. Consider how RPs can be rated on their operational standards through the use of score cards.
	Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy	Consideration be given to changing the date of the July Committee meeting to allow Cllr Dibble to attend. AT to look at date options and report back. Alternatives include, asking KD to join online or providing a summary of questions to be answered offline if go ahead with original date.
	Work Plan	See schedule above
13.08.2025	Community Safety and Policing	Scope item for meeting on 18 Sept (DL in attendance)  Updates from the Community Safety Team as per in previous years, to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of the Service</li><li>• Update on key work</li></ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's gone well</li> <li>• Concerns</li> <li>• Community Safety Survey feedback</li> <li>• Joint Scrutiny meeting feedback</li> </ul> <p>A request would be made to the police for a general overview of the last 12 months.</p> <p>High level info to be provided on protests and street preachers.</p> <p>Scope item for meeting on 4 Sept (KE in attendance). Content to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The case for change</li> <li>• How the model meets the criteria</li> <li>• Financial information</li> <li>• Results of the LGR consultation</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>The CGR survey results would not be included as the consultation finishes on 12 September.</p> <p>KE and GW would be in attendance, with JD as Lead officer.</p> <p>SERCO can't do October – move to December 2025 meeting Move Leisure Centre Pre decision scrutiny to January 2026 meeting Bump Finance (to inc. MTFS &amp; FRWG) to a future meeting</p> <p>Potential item for October 2025 Community Engagement- how we consult with and understand the views of our residents.</p>
29.09.2025		
03.11.2025		
17.12.2025		

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05.02.2026			
02.04.2026 Wash Up			
Other Items			

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