

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group – September 2025

Review of scrutiny item requests

| Scrutiny request pro-forma | Request details |
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| No. 25 | |
| 1. Member request | Councillor V J Bell |
| 2. Area of scrutiny requested and reasons for it | Poor performance of Planning Department in dealing with and determining various planning applications. Concerns raised by experienced and qualified professionals on their dealings with the Planning Department on applications and subsequent appeals. |
| 3. Indicate which part of the Committee's remit the request falls within | Matters relating to delivery of the Council's Priorities. |
| 4. If other, give further details | |
| 5. Has the matter been raised directly with Officers or another Committee? | No |
| 6. If yes to 5, give further details including dates and any response | |
| 7. Expected outcome of this requested scrutiny item | Greater efficiency from the Planning Department thus leading to fewer complaints from architects, residents and developers. |

Officer review and comments

1. While these matters clearly fall within the remit of the Committee for potential review and scrutiny, the request is widely drawn and needs much greater qualification to enable focused scrutiny.
2. More fundamentally however, at the time of this request the matter had not been raised with Officers. Since the request seems to centre on individual applications / appeals, and complaints received by a Councillor, these are primarily operational issues which at least in the first instance should be pursued with Officers of the Planning Department – essentially at both senior levels of management. This would be in line with the principles set out in the Member / Officer Relations Protocol for a good working relationship including two-way communication. It would be contrary to the Committee's own operating protocol to take on a scrutiny review before this has been done.
3. There may be issues arising from this scrutiny request which may also benefit from a wider discussion in the Planning Chairs' Forum, the next meeting of which is due to be arranged in the near future.