

Scrutiny Work Programme Suggestion Form

This form enables councillors to put forward items for review or discussion to the council's committees that carry out the overview and scrutiny function. These are the Scrutiny Committee, the Business & Housing Policy Committee and the Health & Environment Policy Committee.

If you need further assistance, please contact Democratic Services.

Proposer:	Cllr Brian Laming
Title of Item:	The Planning Enforcement Service
Relevant Corporate Head of Service:	Julie Pinnock
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jackie Porter

Please give a brief statement explaining what the issue is and why this item should be considered. Be sure to have a clear purpose and include any background information and evidence that will assist the committee in understanding the need for and timing of this item. Please advise if the matter is 'time-critical' as this will also assist in considering the scheduling of the matter':

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to establish a time-limited Task & Finish Group to conduct a focused review of Winchester City Council's Planning Enforcement Service.

As part of its work, Members will be reminded of the relevant sections of the Constitution, including the Schemes of Delegation relating to planning enforcement.

The session will also be guided by the Winchester City Council Planning Enforcement Policy adopted in July 2025, which will provide the structure for discussion. Officers will work with the Portfolio Holder to ensure that all necessary resources, relevant examples and background materials are available to Members to inform and support the discussions, whether in full Committee or within any associated task and finish groups.

The review will be undertaken through the following lenses:

1. Performance Monitoring and KPIs

Examine the effectiveness of current performance monitoring arrangements and the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact and efficiency of the planning enforcement service. Consider whether current metrics are meaningful, up-to-date, and aligned with the objectives of the new policy.

2. Transparency and Public Access

Consider the transparency of the planning enforcement service, with a focus on how accessible and understandable information and processes are to the public.

3. Comparative Benchmarking with Other Authorities

Compare our enforcement practice with peers to provide performance context:

- a) Timeliness: How quickly others act and the effect on costs and outcomes.
- b) Performance: Adequacy of performance monitoring and KPIs; compare metrics with other councils.
- c) Costs: Enforcement budgets of selected Southern England authorities, using measures such as budget per case and per capita.

4. Communication

- a) The availability of enforcement updates;
- b) Clarity of communications to residents;
- c) Timeliness and consistency of updates to Members and parish councils on enforcement activity within their areas;
- d) Communication of timeframes for initial investigation or action, with recognition of the legal and procedural complexities that may affect the pace of progress;
- e) How the service manages expectations, particularly where outcomes are subject to legal review, appeals, or require multi-agency coordination.

It is suggested that two working sessions are convened, each 90 minutes in length, comprising four Members plus the Portfolio Holder (2 Liberal Democrat, 1 Green, 1 Conservative). The first session would focus on Performance and Comparative Benchmarking, and the second on Public Access, Transparency and Communications. The output of this work will be a short report back to Scrutiny, concentrating on the recommended actions and approaches. This report will be prepared for the 10th February 2026 meeting, with the two sessions completed before the end of the current calendar year.

This review would enable the Committee to assess whether the service is delivering on the ambitions of the 2025 policy, and where improvements or refinements may be appropriate to strengthen trust, communication, and responsiveness.

What is the impact or effect on residents, how could they be included in the committee's considerations?

Considering the public expectation for effective enforcement to protect local amenity, the committee will examine how transparent communication of timeframes and processes, alongside readily accessible case updates, can manage resident expectations and build confidence.

What outcomes or changes would you like to see as a direct result of the committee addressing this item?

The group's work should directly result in a service that delivers on the ambitions of the 2025 policy by improving the service's performance monitoring, public transparency, and communication strategies, while incorporating insights from comparative benchmarking to refine operational practices

How does this item link to the council's priorities and corporate objectives?

This review directly links to the council's corporate objectives of being Efficient and Effective and fostering Listening and Learning, as it aims to strengthen trust, communication, and responsiveness within the planning enforcement service to improve resident satisfaction. It seeks to assess whether the service is delivering on the ambitions of the broader 2025 policy.