

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Thursday, 10th July, 2025  
at 5.30 pm

## PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

### Members

Councillor Blackman (Chair)  
Councillor Y Frampton  
Councillor Galton  
Councillor Harwood  
Councillor Leggett  
Councillor McManus  
Councillor Renyard (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Shields  
Councillor Windle

### Appointed Members

Catherine Hobbs, Roman Catholic Church  
Rob Sanders, Church of England  
Vacant, Primary Parent Governor

### Contacts

Judy Cordell  
Snr Democratic Support Officer  
Tel. 023 8083 2766  
Email: [judy.cordell@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:judy.cordell@southampton.gov.uk)

Mark Pirnie  
Scrutiny Manager  
Tel: 023 8083 3886  
Email: [mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk)

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee holds the Executive to account, exercises the call-in process, and sets and monitors standards for scrutiny. It formulates a programme of scrutiny inquiries and appoints Scrutiny Panels to undertake them. Members of the Executive cannot serve on this Committee.

### **Role of Overview and Scrutiny**

Overview and Scrutiny includes the following three functions:

- Holding the Executive to account by questioning and evaluating the Executive's actions, both before and after decisions taken.
- Developing and reviewing Council policies, including the Policy Framework and Budget Strategy.
- Making reports and recommendations on any aspect of Council business and other matters that affect the City and its citizens.

Overview and Scrutiny can ask the Executive to reconsider a decision, but they do not have the power to change the decision themselves.

### **Southampton: Corporate Plan 2022-2030 sets out the four key outcomes:**

- **Strong Foundations for Life**.- For people to access and maximise opportunities to truly thrive, Southampton will focus on ensuring residents of all ages and backgrounds have strong foundations for life.
- **A proud and resilient city** - Southampton's greatest assets are our people. Enriched lives lead to thriving communities, which in turn create places where people want to live, work and study.
- **A prosperous city** - Southampton will focus on growing our local economy and bringing investment into our city.
- **A successful, sustainable organisation** - The successful delivery of the outcomes in this plan will be rooted in the culture of our organisation and becoming an effective and efficient council.

### **Procedure / Public Representations**

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting on any report included on the agenda in which they have a relevant interest. Any member of the public wishing to address the meeting should advise the Democratic Support Officer (DSO) whose contact details are on the front sheet of the agenda.

### **Access is available for disabled people.**

Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

### **Fire Procedure: -**

In the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound, and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

**Mobile Telephones: -** Please switch your mobile telephones to silent whilst in the meeting

**Use of Social Media: -** The Council supports the video or audio recording of meetings open to the public, for either live or subsequent broadcast. However, if, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting. By entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being recorded and to the use of those images and recordings for broadcasting and or training purposes. The meeting may be recorded by the press or members of the public. Any person or organisation filming, recording, or broadcasting any meeting of the Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them doing so. Details of the Council's Guidance on the recording of meetings is available on the Council's website.

**Smoking Policy:** - The Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

**Dates of Meetings for the Municipal Year:**

2025	2026
12 June	22 January
10 July	5 February
21 August	19 February
18 September	19 March
23 October	23 April
20 November	
18 December	

**CONDUCT OF MEETING**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The general role and terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, together with those for all Scrutiny Panels, are set out in Part 2 (Article 6) of the Council's Constitution, and their particular roles are set out in Part 4 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules – paragraph 5) of the Constitution.

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

**BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED**

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

**QUORUM**

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3.

**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" or "Other Interest" they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

**DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter that they or their spouse, partner, a person they are living with as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were a civil partner in relation to:

- (i) Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- (ii) Sponsorship:

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Southampton City Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expense incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

- (iii) Any contract which is made between you / your spouse etc (or a body in which the you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest) and Southampton City Council under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed, and which has not been fully discharged.
- (iv) Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Southampton.
- (v) Any license (held alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Southampton for a month or longer.
- (vi) Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) the landlord is Southampton City Council and the tenant is a body in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interests.
- (vii) Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Southampton, and either:
  - a) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body, or
  - b) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest that exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

### **Other Interests**

A Member must regard himself or herself as having an, 'Other Interest' in any membership of, or occupation of a position of general control or management in:

- Any public authority or body exercising functions of a public nature
- Any body directed to charitable purposes
- Any body whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy

### **Principles of Decision Making**

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

## **AGENDA**

### **1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

### **2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Council's Code of Conduct, Members to disclose any personal or pecuniary interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

NOTE: Members are reminded that, where applicable, they must complete the appropriate form recording details of any such interests and hand it to the Democratic Support Officer.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST**

Members are invited to declare any prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

### **4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP**

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

### **5 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

### **6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING) (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 12 June 2025 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

### **7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

To move that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the confidential annex to the following item.

Annex 1 to Appendix 4 is not for publication by virtue of category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) of paragraph 10.4 of Southampton City Council's ("the Council's") Access to Information Procedure Rules, as contained in the Council's Constitution.

It is not in the public interest to disclose this information as the report contains confidential and commercially sensitive information in relation to one of the Council's suppliers. It would prejudice the Council's ability to operate in a commercial environment and obtain best value in contract negotiations.

**8 FORWARD PLAN** (Pages 5 - 58)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager enabling the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to examine the content of the Forward Plan and to discuss issues of interest or concern with the Executive.

**9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY HANDBOOK - UPDATE** (Pages 59 - 86)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Committee approves the updated Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.

**10 MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE** (Pages 87 - 92)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager enabling the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to monitor and track progress on recommendations made to the Executive at previous meetings.

Wednesday, 2 July 2025

Director – Legal and Governance

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SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2025

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Present: Councillors Blackman (Chair), Y Frampton, Galton, Harwood, Leggett, Renyard (Vice-Chair), Shields (except part item 5), Windle and Whitbread (except part item 6 and 7-10)  
Appointed Member: Rob Sanders (except items 1-4 and part item 5)

Apologies: Councillors McManus

Also in attendance: Councillor Fielker, Leader of the Council

1. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

It was noted that following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillor McManus from the Committee, the Monitoring Officer, acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillor Whitbread to replace him for the purposes of this meeting.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor Renyard was elected Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes for the Committee meeting held on 24 April 2025 and the final Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Reducing Gambling Related Harms in Southampton meeting held on 8 May 2025, be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

The Chair moved that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the confidential Annex to the following item.

Annex 1, attached to Appendix 1, is not for publication by virtue of category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) of paragraph 10.4 of Southampton City Council's ("the Council's") Access to Information Procedure Rules, as contained in the Council's Constitution.

It is not in the public interest to disclose this information as the report contains confidential and commercially sensitive information in relation to one of the Council's

suppliers. It would prejudice the Council's ability to operate in a commercial environment and obtain best value in contract negotiations.

5. **FORWARD PLAN - ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY AND LEISURE CENTRE**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager which enabled the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to examine the content of the Forward Plan and to discuss issues of interest or concern with the Executive.

**St. Mary's Community and Leisure Centre**

Councillor Fielker, Leader of the Council, and James Marshall, Director of Customer, Leisure and Regulatory Services were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

Also in attendance and with consent addressed the meeting during the open session was Sue Atkins, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition raising concerns regarding accountability, democracy and privatisation related to the Centre.

The Committee went into confidential session for the remainder of this item.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the proposal submitted by Testlands were circulated to the Committee; and
- (ii) That the key details of the signed lease for St Mary's Leisure and Community Centre were shared with the Committee when available.

6. **CITY PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Leader of the Council detailing the Southampton 2035 City Plan.

Councillor Fielker, Leader of the Council, Jillian Kay, Chief Executive Munira Holloway, Director of Strategy and Performance and David Courcoux, Head of Policy and Strategic Partnerships were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Committee discussed:

- Partner engagement and the mechanisms for monitoring the City Plan's focus on creating a more equal city;
- The low public perception of the City's ambition and the need for better communication;
- The use of the term 'net zero' instead of 'carbon neutral' acknowledging the need for clarity; and
- Concerns regarding the potential impact of local government reorganisation on the City Plan.



**RESOLVED:** that:

- (i) to raise the profile of the plan and to hold stakeholders to account for delivery, the OSMC schedules an annual review of progress against the agreed priorities and targets in the City Plan and includes City Plan priorities in lines of enquiry whenever appropriate to do so;
- (ii) to ensure credibility, consideration is given to replacing the term Net Zero with Carbon Neutral in the final version of the City Plan;
- (iii) to maintain momentum, the Executive reflects on whether an annual review of the City Plan, alongside the bi-annual state of the city summit, would be advantageous; and
- (iv) membership of the Renaissance Board is shared with the Committee.

7. **LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE**

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee following a request detailing the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the Council's Action Plan.

Jillian Kay, Chief Executive and David Courcoux, Head of Policy and Strategic Partnerships were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Committee discussed with the Chief Executive the report including the potential for improvement and the strengths of the Council's staff and partners. In particular, the Improvement Board, staff engagement and the new People and Culture Strategy.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the feedback received from the LGA Peer Review team from their follow up visit to the Council in October was shared with the Committee.
- (ii) the Committee requested a report outlining progress against the approved CPC action plan for the June 2026 Committee meeting.

8. **SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - REDUCING GAMBLING-RELATED HARMS IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel, recommending that the Committee consider and approve the final report of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.

Councillor Cooper, Chair of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel, Reducing Gambling-Related Harms in Southampton, was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) To approve the final report of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel and to forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action;

- (ii) To delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to approve any minor amendments arising from considerations raised at the meeting held on 12 June 2025.

9. **HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager which recommended that the Committee considered and approved the draft terms of reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Shields in his capacity as the newly appointed Chair of the Scrutiny Panel and Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

**RESOLVED** to approve the terms of reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

10. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered and discussed the responses from the Executive to recommendations from previous meetings.

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>		OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>		FORWARD PLAN	
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>		10 JULY 2025	
<b>REPORT OF:</b>		SCRUTINY MANAGER	
<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Jillian Kay	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3220
	<b>E-mail</b>	Jillian.kay@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Mark Pirnie	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3886
	<b>E-mail</b>	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>			
<p>Annex 1 to Appendix 4 is not for publication by virtue of category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) of paragraph 10.4 of Southampton City Council's ("the Council's") Access to Information Procedure Rules, as contained in the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>It is not in the public interest to disclose this information as the report contains confidential and commercially sensitive information in relation to one of the Council's suppliers. It would prejudice the Council's ability to operate in a commercial environment and obtain best value in contract negotiations.</p>			
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>			
<p>This item enables the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) to examine the content of the Forward Plan and to discuss issues of interest or concern with the Executive to ensure that forthcoming decisions made by the Executive benefit local residents.</p>			
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>			
	(i)	That the Committee discuss the items listed in paragraph 3 of the report to highlight any matters which Members feel should be taken into account by the Executive when reaching a decision.	
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
1.	To enable Members to identify any matters which they feel Cabinet should take into account when reaching a decision.		
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>			
2.	None.		
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>			

3.	The Council's Forward Plan for Executive Decisions from 15 July 2025 has been published. The following issues were identified for discussion with the Decision Maker:		
	Portfolio	Decision	Requested By
	Leader	Transformation Programme Update	Cllr Blackman
	Finance & Corporate Services	Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	Cllr Blackman
	Leader	Corporate Plan	Cllr Blackman
	Compliance and Leisure	Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre - Transformation decision	Cllr Blackman
4.	Briefing papers responding to the items identified by members of the Committee are appended to this report. Members are invited to use the papers to explore the issues with the decision maker.		
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS			
Capital/Revenue			
5.	The details for the items identified in paragraph 3 are set out in the Executive decision making report issued prior to the decision being taken.		
Property/Other			
6.	The details for the items identified in paragraph 3 are set out in the Executive decision making report issued prior to the decision being taken.		
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS			
Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:			
7.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.		
Other Legal Implications:			
8.	The details for the items identified in paragraph 3 are set out in the Executive decision making report issued prior to the decision being taken.		
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS			
9.	The details for the items identified in paragraph 3 are set out in the Executive decision making report issued prior to the decision being taken.		
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS			
10.	The details for the items identified in paragraph 3 are set out in the Executive decision making report issued prior to the decision being taken.		
KEY DECISION		No	
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		None directly as a result of this report	
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION			
Appendices			

1.	Briefing Paper – Transformation Programme Update	
2.	Briefing Paper – Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	
3.	Briefing Paper – Corporate Plan	
4.	Briefing Paper – Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre: Transformation decision	
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>		
1.	None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?		Identified in Executive report
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		Identified in Executive report
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	
1.	None	

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## BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE  
**DATE:** 10 JULY 2025  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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### THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

#### SUMMARY:

At a meeting on 15 July 2025 Cabinet will consider a report of the Leader on the Council's transformation programme. The Cabinet report and appendices will be published on 7 July 2025.

#### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The report updating Cabinet on progress relating to the Council's transformation programme will be published on 7 July 2025.

#### RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL/RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

2. Details will be set out in the Executive decision making report published on 7 July 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 4.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

#### Appendices/Supporting Information:

3. Details will be set out in the Executive decision making report published on 7 July 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 4.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

<b>Further Information Available From:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	James Wills-Fleming – Transformation Director
	<b>Tel:</b>	023 8083 2054
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:james.wills-fleming@southampton.gov.uk">james.wills-fleming@southampton.gov.uk</a>

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## BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE  
**DATE:** 10 JULY 2025  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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### THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

#### SUMMARY:

At a meeting on 15 July 2025 Cabinet will consider a report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Cabinet report and appendices will be published on 7 July 2025.

#### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The report updating Cabinet on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy will be published on 7 July 2025.

#### RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL/RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

2. Details will be set out in the Executive decision making report published on 7 July 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 4.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

#### Appendices/Supporting Information:

3. Details will be set out in the Executive decision making report published on 7 July 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 4.30 pm | Southampton City Council](#)

<b>Further Information Available From:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	Hannah Doney – Director of Finance
	<b>Tel:</b>	023 8083 2132
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:hannah.doney@southampton.gov.uk">hannah.doney@southampton.gov.uk</a>

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## BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2025-28  
**DATE:** 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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### THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

#### 1. SUMMARY:

- 1.1 The Southampton 2035 City Plan sets out five missions for focus across the city over the coming decade – these are to build a more equal, healthier, safer, greener and growing Southampton.
- 1.2 The development of the Southampton 2035 City Plan presents an opportunity to align the Council's priorities with those citywide missions and to reintroduce a clear framework of corporate priorities for the council.
- 1.3 This report sets out the process undertaken to develop the draft Corporate Plan, as well as detail of how it would be embedded and monitored.

#### 2. BRIEFING DETAILS:

- 2.1 In 2024 a temporary updated Corporate Plan was agreed by Members with a focus on the council's immediate transformation needs. Since then, significant progress has been made establishing a detailed transformation programme and improving financial stability.
- 2.2 Against this backdrop, the January 2025 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report noted:  
*While the council has developed and is delivering a transformation programme, there is no clear vision, priorities or corporate plan which is understood and enables organisational performance and outcomes to be measured and celebrated.*

The CPC report included a recommendation that the council:

***Develop and deliver a Corporate Plan with a clear vision and key priorities:*** Urgently develop and deliver a medium term sustainable Corporate Plan, with a clear vision and set of key priorities which are relevant to Southampton, underpinned by values and behaviours which are coproduced by staff, members, and partners. Ensure you have expert senior leadership in communications to lead engagement with residents and staff in shaping and telling the city story. Recognise your EDI responsibilities in this piece of work - make sure your priorities reflect the diversity of your population.

- 2.3 The proposed adoption of the Southampton 2035 City Plan provides the opportunity to agree a new Corporate Plan which directly aligns with the five citywide missions.

# BRIEFING PAPER

- 2.4 The development of a new Corporate Plan not only addresses the CPC recommendation, but it is also an opportunity to directly align the council's work the five citywide missions and to re-establish a clear 'golden thread' for the council. The new Corporate Plan will also reflect the changing context of the council - financial stabilisation, a developed transformation plan, devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR).
- 2.5 The draft Corporate Plan was built on a small number of guiding principles:
- A three-year (2025-28) transitional plan to new post-LGR organisation.
  - Shaped around delivering the Southampton 2035 City Plan missions, our transformation, improvement and MTFS priorities.
  - Focus on consolidating progress and building on work already underway.
  - Informed by insight from residents drawn from the City Survey.
- 2.6 The draft plan follows the format of Southampton's previous 2022-2030 Corporate Plan. It is shaped around the five Southampton 2035 missions, each with a small number of priorities aligned to each, with actions set out to deliver the priority.
- 2.7 In addition to the five Southampton 2035 missions, the plan includes an enabling outcome setting out how we will improve the operation of the council to focus the way we work on making lives better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation.
- 2.8 A summary of the outcomes and priorities is set out below:

Outcome/Southampton 2035 Mission	Priority
A council that makes lives better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation	Transform to become a financially sustainable, efficient council
	Develop and support our workforce to succeed
	Make a success of Local Government Reorganisation
	Empower residents to have their say in the decisions which affect them
A more Equal Southampton	Make Southampton a more equal city by working with partners to deliver our Southampton 2035 City Plan
	Embed a 'better evidence, better decisions' approach to ensure services reflect the needs of the diverse communities and reduce inequalities
	Build a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace with a workforce which recognises and reflects the diverse community we serve
A Healthier Southampton	Support people to live healthy, active and independent lives
	Ensure young people have a good start in life
	Improve the quality of our homes and housing service and reduce homelessness
A Safer Southampton	Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour so that Southampton is and feels safer
	Protect the most vulnerable
A Greener Southampton	Protect our environment and become a sustainable net-zero city
	Make Southampton a cleaner, greener city

# BRIEFING PAPER

A Growing Southampton	Grow Southampton's economy in an inclusive, fair and sustainable way
	Ensure residents can access the benefits of growth through improved skills and employment support
	Deliver the homes, sustainable transport and social infrastructure Southampton needs to thrive
	Deliver culture-led regeneration and cultural activity to grow the cultural, creative and visitor economies and a vibrant destination

A full draft of the Corporate Plan is provided at Annex 1.

- 2.9 The three priorities in the 'more equal Southampton' outcome will form the council's Equality Objectives as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty and delivering the related Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation. The theme of creating a more equal city is incorporated throughout the Corporate Plan with many other actions having positive equality impacts for residents.
- 2.10 Once adopted, it is intended that the Corporate Plan becomes the principle corporate policy document, setting out SCC's core priorities as part of a renewed 'golden thread' for the organisation over the coming three years. Activity, resources and funding across the council will be aligned to the delivery of these priorities.



- 2.11 Directorate business plans, policies and strategies will be shaped to align with and deliver the outcomes and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. The actions needed to deliver the business plans will be reflected in the personal development reviews of individual colleagues allowing greater understanding of how their work contributes to the overall priorities of the council.
- 2.12 The quarterly Corporate Performance Report will be reviewed to align corporate reporting to the priorities in the new Corporate Plan, if agreed by Council. This will include an updated set of indicators aligned to both the Corporate Plan and Southampton 2035 City Plan outcomes.

## 3. RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial implications

The Southampton Corporate Plan sets out the council's priorities for the three years 2025 – 2028. Each of the priorities have been reviewed to identify areas where there may be resource implications. The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy will be aligned to the delivery of priorities within the Corporate Plan.

# BRIEFING PAPER

Any new expenditure, for example resulting from new statutory responsibilities or policy change, will need to be contained within existing service budgets, covered by grant funding or incorporated into future Medium Term Financial Strategies.

## **Policy framework implications**

The Southampton City Council Corporate Plan directly aligns with the five citywide missions proposed in the draft Southampton 2035 City Plan.

The Corporate Plan sets out the priorities for the council and its services. It is anticipated future Policy Framework plans and strategies will have regard to the priorities of the new Corporate Plan and the Southampton 2035 City Plan once adopted.

## **Risk management implications**

Delivery of the Corporate Plan will be monitored through the Corporate Performance Reporting and delivery of directorate business plans. Risks to delivery would be expected to be highlighted and managed via the Directorate risk registers with any significant risks potentially needing to be considered for inclusion on the council's Strategic Risk Register for Management Board oversight.

## **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

Annex 1: Draft Southampton City Council Corporate Plan

Annex 2: Draft Equality, Safety Impact Assessment

<b>Further information available from:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	David Courcoux Head of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:David.Courcoux@Southampton.gov.uk">David.Courcoux@Southampton.gov.uk</a>

## DRAFT v2.3 - Southampton City Council Corporate Plan

### Executive summary

Southampton is a place of incredible opportunity. Steeped in history, we are a city with a rich heritage and a thriving future.

This plan outlines our commitment to unlock that opportunity by building a more equal, healthier, safer, greener and growing city for everyone who calls Southampton home.

Building on the feedback from thousands of local people and aligning closely with the missions of the Southampton 2035 City Plan, this plan sets out the council's priorities to transform services, improve efficiency, and deliver better outcomes for residents—especially the most vulnerable.

To maximise our impact, we have shaped our priorities around the five missions of the Southampton 2035 City Plan:

- **A More Equal Southampton:** Tackling inequality through targeted interventions, inclusive decision-making, and a strengthened commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across services and within the Council's workforce.
- **A Healthier Southampton:** Focusing on prevention, early support, and integrated care to improve health outcomes, support independent living, and ensure children and young people thrive.
- **A Safer Southampton:** Reducing violent crime and anti-social behaviour, safeguarding vulnerable individuals, and fostering a city where everyone feels safe and supported.
- **A Greener Southampton:** Leading the transition to a net-zero city by 2035, enhancing biodiversity, improving recycling and air quality, and investing in green infrastructure and flood resilience.
- **A Growing Southampton:** Driving inclusive economic growth through regeneration, skills development, cultural investment, and infrastructure improvements, including housing and sustainable transport.

To deliver these changes we must continue to transform the way the council works to be better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation. We will do this by embracing technology, improving our use of data and ensuring we put our residents at the heart of our approach.

A more equal Southampton			
A healthier Southampton	A safer Southampton	A greener Southampton	A growing Southampton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support people to live healthy, active and independent lives</li> <li>Ensure young people have a good start in life</li> <li>Build community connection and resilience</li> <li>Improve the quality of our homes and housing service and reduce homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour so that Southampton feels safer</li> <li>Protect the most vulnerable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect our environment and become a sustainable net-zero city</li> <li>Make Southampton a cleaner, greener city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to grow Southampton's economy in an inclusive, fair and sustainable way</li> <li>Ensure residents can access the benefits of growth through improved skills and employment support</li> <li>Deliver the homes, sustainable transport and social infrastructure Southampton needs to thrive</li> <li>Champion our diverse culture, heritage and creative sectors</li> </ul>
A council that makes lives better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform to become a financially sustainable, efficient council                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and support our workforce to succeed</li> </ul> </li> <li>Empower residents to have their say in the decisions which affect them                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a success of Local Government Reorganisation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			



## Southampton 2035 City Plan

The Southampton 2035 City Plan outlines five core missions that the council, along with its partners across the city, have pledged to work towards over the decade leading up to 2035.

The missions were developed with feedback from thousands of local residents, businesses, partners, and community groups.

At the heart of that change is a commitment to **building a more equal city**, with specific missions to build a **Healthier, Safer, Greener** and **Growing** Southampton.

Southampton City Council (SCC) is committed to working with partners to deliver the ambitions of the Southampton 2035 City Plan. This Corporate Plan directly sets out how the council's activity over the coming years will support the delivery of the city missions, as well as improving how the organisation works.

## A more equal Southampton

As with the Southampton 2035 City Plan, the SCC Corporate Plan puts a commitment to a more equal city at its heart. Many of the priorities throughout this plan will specifically target the root causes of inequalities facing our residents.

Every major decision the council makes is assessed to identify and mitigate disproportionate impacts on people with protected characteristics. We also assess the impact on people who are care-experienced, people living in poverty and consider the impact on community safety.

To enhance this approach, we will also adopt a small number of focused equality objectives to improve the way we work as an organisation and meet our statutory duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### Our equality objectives

#### **Make Southampton a more equal city by working with partners to deliver our Southampton 2035 City Plan**

SCC and our partners have a clear vision to make Southampton a healthier, safer, greener and growing city. Each of these missions are underpinned by a commitment to build a more equal Southampton and tackle inequalities. From reducing income gaps to increasing independence, our collective focus on the Southampton 2035 missions puts reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for local people at its heart.

#### **Embed a 'better evidence, better decisions' approach to ensure services reflect the needs of the diverse communities and reduce inequalities**

- Build on our Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) to strengthen our collection, analysis and use of data.
- Improve our engagement with residents to ensure we hear the voices of all sections of our community.
- Encourage greater use of co-production and seek more involvement from residents in our decisions.
- Better understand who uses our services so we can identify and address barriers which cause inequity and ensure decisions meet the needs of our diverse communities.
- Strengthen the use of Equality and Safety Impact Assessments to ensure decision making is rooted in creating a more equal city.

#### **Build a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace with a workforce which recognises and reflects the diverse community we serve**

- Work with colleagues to develop a new people and culture strategy.
- Create an inclusive, welcoming and flexible work environment where all colleagues can thrive and feel that they belong.
- Empower our colleague resource networks and groups to be the voice of staff, championing and shaping colleague experiences within the organisation.
- Develop new inclusive methods of colleague recognition and routes for progression.
- Review our recruitment processes to drive equality and enhance protections for those with protected characteristics, veterans and care leavers.
- Continue to embed equality pay practices and reduce our gender and other protected characteristic pay gaps.

## **A council that makes lives better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation**

Improving the lives of our residents is the council's core business. To do that effectively we must be an efficient and financially sustainable organisation that is connected to the residents we serve. That will require a focus on transforming, improving and modernising services, developing our workforce and putting residents at the centre of our decision making. This will be critical when it comes to Local Government Reorganisation.

### **Priority: Transform to become a financially sustainable, efficient council**

We will continue to transform the council to deliver modern, efficient, value for money services which are easy for residents to access. We will use data and technology to shape our improvement and streamline how we make decisions to ensure we can respond quickly to residents' needs.

- Embed robust financial discipline to deliver balanced budgets without the need for exceptional financial support.
- Ensure the council secures value for money from every penny it spends, aligns spending to corporate priorities and uses audit to drive improvement.
- Work as One Council to deliver our shared priorities for Southampton.
- Take a 'better evidence, better decisions', data-led approach.
- Review the council's property assets to ensure buildings are providing value for money and public benefit.
- Review our governance processes to streamline decision making and ensure effective scrutiny.
- Embrace new technology, AI and digitisation to improve services.

### **Priority: Develop and support our workforce to succeed**

Our staff have the power to change residents' lives. They are the biggest asset we have and are critical to how we will improve services for local people. We will improve our support and development offer for staff, strengthen leadership and management, and drive equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Develop and deliver a new People and Culture strategy.
- Invest in our staff through a new programme of training and development opportunities.
- Relaunch our staff colleague resource groups and support them to champion the voice of staff.
- Drive a culture of continuous improvement and challenge ourselves to find better ways of working.
- Strengthen equality and diversity activity and actively seek to ensure our workforce reflects the community we serve.

- Make it easier to get issues resolved by the council by transforming customer services and increasing self-service options.
- Ensure services are customer focused and meet the needs of our diverse population.
- Strengthen our joint working with partners to deliver the Southampton 2035 City Plan.
- Work in partnership with our communities and the voluntary sector to maximise impact.

## A council that makes lives better for residents, simpler for colleagues and more affordable for the organisation

### Page 22 Priority: Empower residents to have their say in the decisions which affect them

Listening to residents and involving them in decision making is vital to ensuring services respond to local needs. We will improve how we communicate to ensure that residents can see how their views influence decisions.

- Carry out regular resident engagement and consultations and ensure the results shape priorities and inform improvement.
- Improve how we communicate and engage with residents to ensure we are effectively informing, listening and acting on residents' views and telling the story of the city of Southampton.
- Ensure the diverse voices of our community are heard and shape decisions.

### Priority: Make a success of Local Government Reorganisation

Government intends to reorganise local government and create a new unitary council covering a larger area. While this will be a complex change, there are great opportunities to improve services and to work with residents to shape the new organisation.

- Work with other councils to develop a geography for new unitary councils which retains and respects the identities of individual areas.
- Provide regular opportunities for residents, staff and partners to help shape the new unitary councils.
- Ensure the new unitary council is set up to offer efficient, accessible and value for money services which meet the needs of residents.

## A healthier Southampton

*We will create a healthier city by focusing on prevention, integrating health and social care and tackling the causes of poor health.*

By focusing on prevention, early support and inclusive services, we will reduce health inequalities, promote independence, and improve quality of life. From supporting children and families to improving housing and tackling homelessness, we will work to make Southampton a city where everyone can live well.

### Priority: Support people to live healthy, active and independent lives

Everyone in Southampton should have the opportunity to live well. By focusing on prevention, promoting active lives, and improving access to care services we'll help people stay independent for longer.

- Develop and deliver a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy with partners focused on tackling health inequalities.
- Reduce tobacco, alcohol and drug use and protect young people from vaping through prevention and targeted support.
- Work with partners to ensure there is a sustainable local market to deliver health and care services.
- Review and modernise our leisure facilities offer and upgrade the Outdoor Sports Centre to increase access to physical activity for all.
- Deliver the We Can Be Active strategy to support people to be more active in a way that suits them, including walking and cycling.
- Enable people to live independently in their own home through early help, assistive technology and community support.
- Deliver the mental health and wellbeing strategy with partners.
- Work with carers to refresh our carer's strategy and ensure they are recognised, valued and supported.
- Redesign and recommission early support services to improve prevention opportunities, particularly in relation to adult social care.

### Priority: Ensure young people have a good start in life

We want Southampton to be a city where children and young people are supported to thrive from the very beginning. By tailoring services to their needs, enhancing education and inclusion, and ensuring timely support for families, we will create the conditions for every young person to grow up safe, supported, and ambitious for their future.

- Take a child friendly approach to service provision across the city.
- Reflect our role as a corporate parent in everything we do.
- Work with schools to reduce exclusions, improve attendance and raise education outcomes.
- Develop additional SEND provision in mainstream schools and expand two special schools to become a more inclusive city.
- Support steps to improve childhood healthy weight and encourage active lives.
- Continue to prioritise community support and Family Hubs to ensure families are able to access the support they need.
- Provide new residential children's homes in Southampton to support young people in care.
- Embed the new school travel service model.

## A healthier Southampton

### **Priority: Improve the quality of our homes and housing service and reduce homelessness**

Everyone deserves a safe, secure, and decent place to live. We are committed to raising housing standards across Southampton—whether in council homes or the private rented sector—by investing in quality, safety, and environmental sustainability. We will put tenants at the heart of our services, strengthen our approach to preventing homelessness, and transform our housing service to improve standards and customer service.

- Improve rented housing standards by completing a condition survey of private rented homes in Southampton.
- Introduce a new licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and strengthen enforcement in the private rented sector.
- Become a good landlord by transforming our housing service and meeting the regulator of social housing's consumer standards.
- Put tenants at the heart of our decision making through improved housing tenant engagement.
- Invest to bring SCC housing up to the Decent Homes standard, meet Building Safety Act duties, and to create Decent Neighbourhoods.
- Develop an improved model for preventing homelessness based on local needs.
- Reduce fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of council homes and reducing damp and mould.

## A Growing Southampton

*We will help Southampton's economy grow in a sustainable and inclusive way.*

We are building a city where growth benefits everyone through inclusive economic development. We will build high-quality homes and infrastructure, create access to skills and employment, and support a thriving cultural scene. By investing in regeneration, transport, and housing, supporting local businesses and communities, and celebrating Southampton's unique identity, we will create a more prosperous, connected and vibrant city that offers opportunity for all.

### **Priority: Grow Southampton's economy in an inclusive, fair and sustainable way**

We will drive regeneration and investment that benefits all communities, creating a thriving local economy rooted in fairness and sustainability. By supporting local enterprise, attracting new opportunities, and strengthening our role in the wider region, we aim to build a resilient economy that delivers long-term prosperity for the city.

- Work with the Renaissance Board to deliver the Southampton Renaissance Vision for the city centre and improvements to district centres.
- Maximise the impact of the Revolving Regeneration Fund to accelerate growth and catalyse transformative regeneration.
- Develop and deliver a new Growth and Prosperity plan (Local Growth plan) for Southampton.
- Encourage inward investment and maximise the benefits of the Solent Freeport.
- Shape the development of a new Mayoral Combined County Authority to ensure Southampton's role as the economic driver of the region is recognised.
- Embed the 'Southampton Pound' (Community Wealth Building) principles, so our economy retains more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.
- Strengthen international partnerships to encourage trade, tourism, global collaborations and cultural exchange.

### **Priority: Deliver the homes, sustainable transport and social infrastructure Southampton needs to thrive**

A growing city needs the right foundations. We will invest in new homes, better transport, and essential infrastructure to support our communities and economy.

- Deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Transport Plan to improve transport links and connectivity in Southampton including:
  - o Progressing the Northam Rail Bridge replacement
  - o Development of metro proposals
  - o Public realm improvements
  - o New safe routes to schools
  - o More real time information bus stops, bus priority schemes and steps to keep bus travel affordable
- Enable the delivery of new homes across the city, ensuring the right mix of properties to meet our city's needs.
- Work with social housing providers to deliver new affordable homes at Townhill Park and across the city.
- Explore options for estate regeneration schemes to increase affordable housing supply in Southampton.
- Deliver a Local Plan which enables sustainable and inclusive growth whilst protecting the heritage and character of Southampton.

## A Growing Southampton

## **Priority: Ensure residents can access the benefits of growth through improved skills and employment support**

We want everyone in Southampton to benefit from the city's success. By improving access to skills, training, and employment support, we will help residents find good jobs, support local businesses to grow, and ensure our workforce is ready to seize the opportunities our city offers.

- Work with partners to develop a new Southampton Skills Strategy and create new skills and employment opportunities for local people.
- Improve links and alignment between employers and education providers through partnerships and relevant strategies.
- Support more residents to gain the qualifications and skills that are right for them.
- Ensure start-ups and existing businesses can access affordable support and advice to maximise opportunities, retain local talent and enable growth.
- Increase the availability of 'good work' and reduce unemployment to reduce health inequalities in the city.
- Grow the number of apprenticeships through the Apprenticeship Levy, and increase vocational experience through Employment Skills Plans.

## **Priority: Deliver culture-led regeneration and cultural activity to grow the cultural, creative and visitor economies and a vibrant destination**

We will harness the power of culture to shape a vibrant, inclusive and distinctive Southampton. By investing in our heritage, creative industries and driving culture-led regeneration, we will grow the city's visitor economy, support local talent, and create welcoming places that bring people together.

- Establish Southampton as a sustainable destination by delivering the Destination Management Plan, Cultural Strategy and Festivals and Events Strategy.
- Invest in preserving and enabling access to our heritage assets, collections, high-quality visitor attractions and cultural and events programmes.
- Provide welcoming, safe spaces through libraries and with partners supporting literacy, digital inclusion, education, skills, health and wellbeing.
- Invest in and embed culture-led regeneration and activity across the city, attracting and retaining inward investment and talent.



## A Greener Southampton

***We aim to make Southampton a greener, more environmentally sustainable and a net zero city. We will reduce carbon emissions, build energy-efficient homes, retrofit existing buildings, and boost sustainable travel.***

Southampton's future depends on the choices we make today to protect our environment and improve the places we live. We will lead by example in reducing carbon emissions, restoring nature, and preparing for the impacts of climate change. At the same time, we will focus on the everyday environment—keeping our streets clean, making it easier to recycle, and investing in green spaces that everyone can enjoy. By working with residents, businesses and partners, we will create a city that is not only more sustainable, but also healthier, more attractive, and better prepared for the future.

### Priority: Protect our environment and become a sustainable net-zero city

We are committed to tackling the climate emergency and protecting Southampton's natural environment for future generations. With partners and communities we'll work towards becoming a net-zero city, enhance biodiversity, and increase resilience to extreme weather, to build a greener, more sustainable city.

- Progress our commitment to become a net-zero organisation by 2030 and a net-zero city by 2035.
- Improve the biodiversity and condition of natural habitats across the city.
- Deliver a new Local Area Energy Plan to increase renewable energy generation and meet the city's sustainable growth aspirations.
- Campaign for and support partners to improve water quality in the River Itchen to enable more people to use the water.
- Seek external funding to deliver improvements to reduce flood risk and increase the city's resilience to extreme weather.
- Work to secure funding to deliver the River Itchen Flood Alleviation Scheme as part of unlocking the wider regeneration of the area.

### Priority: Make Southampton a cleaner, greener city

We want everyone to feel proud of Southampton. We will ensure our streets remain clean, invest in our green spaces, make it easier for residents to recycle and take action to improve air quality.

- Improve recycling rates by making it simpler to recycle and introducing food waste recycling for all households.
- Work with partners to deliver a new Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) recycling plant for the region.
- Reduce fly-tipping through improved prevention and enforcement.
- Ensure our streets, parks and public spaces remain clean and well maintained.
- Improve the condition of Mayflower Park by investing in a new coastal defence structure on the waterfront.
- Support work to secure National Park City status for Southampton.
- Invest to improve our parks and green spaces, retaining Green Flags and ensuring they remain accessible to all.
- Continue to improve the air quality across the city.

## A Safer Southampton

***We will make Southampton safer by focusing on reducing violent crime. This includes tackling domestic abuse, youth violence, and violence against women and girls.***

We will work with the police and partners to make Southampton safer, reduce crime and safeguard those most at risk. To make Southampton a city where everyone feels safe and able to thrive.

### **Priority: Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour so that Southampton feels safer**

We are committed to making Southampton a place where everyone feels safe and supported. By working with the police and local partners, we will take action to reduce violent crime, improve awareness of how to report concerns, and ensure our city remains welcoming and inclusive - especially for those who may be more vulnerable or at risk.

- Support the police and partners to reduce violent crime including domestic abuse, youth violence and violence against women and girls.
- Improve awareness of crime reporting through increased communications, in partnership with Hampshire police.
- Champion Southampton's City of Sanctuary status and encourage more city organisations to become places of sanctuary to ensure refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed into our diverse city.
- Deliver our Youth Justice Plan to reduce the levels of reoffending amongst young people and deliver focused violence deterrence programmes with the police and other partners.
- Develop a faster, effective and visible response to reported anti-social behaviour.

### **Priority: Protect the most vulnerable**

We will make Southampton a safer and more inclusive city by focusing on early support, safeguarding and targeted care. From improving public protection to supporting families and individuals with complex needs, we will work to reduce harm and ensure those most at risk are protected and empowered.

- Grow our local network of safe places and hate crime reporting centres.
- Strengthen security and public protection for major events and city venues in line with Martyn's Law requirements.
- Support children to live safely within their own families and be safe in and around the city.
- Protect adults who may be at risk by strengthening safeguarding partnership, policy and practice.
- Invest in road safety improvements to reduce accidents targeted at areas of highest need.



### Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. The Council's Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

#### Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out Southampton City Council's vision and priorities for the years ahead, focused around the five missions of the Southampton 2035 city plan to build a more equal, healthier, safer, greener and growing city for all.

#### Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)

Southampton had an estimated resident population of 264,957 in 2023. Delivery of the Corporate Plan will impact every resident in the city.

A summary of the city's population, including by protected characteristics is included in the [2025 Joint Strategic Needs Analysis](#).

#### Summary of Impact and Issues

The Corporate Plan sets out our priorities as an organisation for the next three years. It is focused on how Southampton City Council (SCC) will contribute to delivering the Southampton 2035 city plan missions, our transformation priorities to improve services and make the council more efficient, and our duties to deliver high quality services and support the most vulnerable.

This Corporate Plan puts a commitment to a more equal city at its heart. It includes a new set of focussed equality objectives to improve the way we work as an organisation and meet our statutory duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. It also includes activity to specifically target the root causes of inequalities facing our residents in each of the priority area.

Every major decision the council makes is assessed to identify and mitigate disproportionate impacts on those with protected characteristics, care experienced individuals, and those living in poverty as well as taking

account of community safety impacts.

Beyond the overall positive impacts summarised in this document, this ESIA highlights the actions we have committed to in the Corporate Plan that will allow us to advance equality in Southampton.

### **Potential Positive Impacts**

This Corporate Plan places addressing inequality at the heart of the councils plans to deliver better outcomes for the people of Southampton. It will tackling inequality through targeted interventions, inclusive decision-making, and a strengthened commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across services and within the Council's workforce. As well as incorporating inequality into each area of the Corporate Plan, and committing to support the delivery of the Southampton 2035 City Plan, there are two specific equality objectives for SCC included:

- Embed a 'better evidence, better decisions' approach to ensure services reflect the needs of the diverse communities and reduce inequalities
- Build a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace with a workforce which recognises and reflects the diverse community we serve

<b>Responsible Service Manager</b>	David Courcoux, Head of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
<b>Date</b>	1/7/25
<b>Approved by Senior Manager</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

### **Potential Impact**

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	<p>Key outcomes for children and young people in Southampton continue to be poorer than the national average. Outcomes are significantly poorer (and starting earlier in life) for residents living in the most deprived areas of the city compared to those living in the least deprived areas. This is why we have selected giving young people a good start in life as a priority in the Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>To improve outcomes for children and young people and address inequality across a range of outcomes we have committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a child friendly approach to service provision across the city</li> <li>• Work with schools to reduce exclusions, improve attendance and raise education outcomes</li> <li>• Develop additional SEND provision in mainstream schools and expand two special schools to become a more inclusive city</li> <li>• Support steps to improve childhood healthy weight and encourage active lives</li> <li>• Continue to prioritise community support and Family Hubs to ensure families are able to access the support they need</li> </ul>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide new residential children's homes in Southampton to support young people in care</li> </ul>
	<p>In 2022, 37,768 people were aged 65 +, this is 14.3% of Southampton's population. This age group is forecasted to grow faster than any other group in Southampton, a rise of 18.7% between 2022 and 2029*. This forecast forms a key part of the Corporate Plan's priority to support people to live healthy, active and independent lives.</p>	<p>Actions to support older people and in the corporate plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable people to live independently in their own home through early help, assistive technology and community support</li> <li>• Redesign and recommission early support services to improve prevention opportunities, particularly in relation to adult social care</li> <li>• Review and modernise our leisure facilities offer and upgrade the Outdoor Sports Centre to increase access</li> </ul>

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\* <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/facts-figures/population/estimates-forecasts>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		to physical activity for all.
	<p>As part of our design principles included in our Transformation Plan we are looking to improve efficiency by delivering information and services using digital channels where possible. According to Age UK 22% of people aged 65+ – equivalent to 2.7 million people in the UK - do not use the internet, while others only use the internet in limited ways.</p>	<p>To support those who might experience digital exclusion we have committed to provide welcoming, safe spaces through libraries; with partners supporting literacy, digital inclusion, education, skills, health and wellbeing</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>17.7% (43,937) of residents in Southampton identify as having a disability under the Equality Act 2021. In our Corporate Plan we have two priorities that will help us focus on some of the causes of inequality faced by disabled people in Southampton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Support people to live healthy, active and independent lives.</li> </ul>	<p>To support the delivery against these priority areas the Corporate Plan commits to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop additional SEND provision in mainstream schools and expand two special schools to become a more inclusive city</li> <li>• Recognise the particular vulnerabilities of those with Special Educational Needs and</li> </ul>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<p>Disabilities (SEND) and ensure targeted support is in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable people to live independently in their own home through early help, assistive technology and community support</li> <li>• Work with carers to refresh our carer's strategy and ensure they are recognised, valued and supported</li> <li>• Protect adults who may be at risk by strengthening safeguarding partnership, policy and practice</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<p>0.8% or 1633 residents in Southampton have a gender identity that is different from that registered at birth (2021 Census). Nationally, high numbers of trans people report transphobia when accessing general health services, in the work place and in education settings. Two in five trans people nationally have experienced a hate crime or</p>	<p>In order to deliver on our commitment to protect the most vulnerable we have committed to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow our local network of safe places and hate crime reporting centres</li> <li>• Strengthen security and public protection for major events and city venues in line with Martyn's Law requirements</li> </ul>



Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	incident because of their gender identity <sup>†</sup> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect adults who may be at risk by strengthening safeguarding partnership, policy and practice</li> </ul> <p>In addition, our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy will include a focus on addressing health inequalities.</p>
<b>Care experienced</b>	Care experienced people often face barriers and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system.	<p>We are committed to working with our children in care council, young researchers and young inspectors, on changes to services that would impact those who are care experienced.</p> <p>In addition, we have committed to targeted education, health and care service support for 16-25 year olds with complex needs, some of who may be care experienced.</p>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Race</b>	<p>The Corporate Plan aims to champion our diverse culture, heritage and creative sector.</p> <p>Race continues to be the most frequently recorded motivating factor of hate crime in Southampton (61.9% in</p>	<p>Our Corporate Plan includes commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver cultural initiatives that are co-created with local people</li> </ul>

<sup>†</sup> <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/lgbtq-facts-and-figures>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>2023/24), with the Home Office also finding the majority of hate crimes across England and Wales to be racially motivated (70%)<sup>‡</sup>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in cultural organisations</li> <li>• Champion our City of Sanctuary status and encourage more city organisations to become places of sanctuary to ensure refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed into our diverse city</li> <li>• Ensure our workforce reflects the community we serve</li> </ul>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<p>In the 2021 Census - 50.0% (124,510) of Southampton residents consider themselves to have a religion:</p> <p>40.1% (99,910) Christian</p> <p>5.6% (13,893) Muslim</p> <p>1.7% (4,192) Sikh</p> <p>43.4% (108,000) have no religion</p>	<p>Our Corporate Plan includes commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Southampton as a sustainable destination by delivering the Destination Management Plan, Cultural Strategy and Festivals and Events Strategy</li> <li>• Invest in preserving and enabling access to our heritage assets, collections and high-quality visitor attractions and</li> </ul>

<sup>‡</sup> <https://data.southampton.gov.uk/media/setp4cw3/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2023-24.pdf>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<p>cultural programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and embed culture-led regeneration and activity across the city, attracting inward investment</li> </ul> <p>These actions will help us continue to celebrate Southampton's diversity.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>Southampton's population is 51% male and 49% female. Domestic violence is a key driver of violent crime in Southampton, with 30.6% of violent crimes flagged as domestic in the most recent year<sup>§</sup>. National statistics show that in 73.5% of domestic abuse cases the victim was female<sup>**</sup>.</p> <p>Female residents continue to feel significantly less safe across all settings after dark.</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan has a priority to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour so that Southampton is, and feels, safer as well as a priority to protect the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Within this we commit to support the police and partners to reduce violent crime including domestic abuse, youth violence and violence against women and girls. In addition to this we commit to developing a faster effective and visible response to anti social behaviour.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>The 2021 census showed that 4.9% (10,082) of residents are LGBTQ+.</p>	<p>Our commitment as a Council to build a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace with a workforce which</p>

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023#:~:text=Data%20supplied%20from%2028%20police,similar%20for%20most%20offence%20categories.>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>Nationally people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning (LGBTQ+) face discrimination and inequality in accessing a range of public services, from healthcare to education, and often face discrimination in the workplace.</p>	<p>recognises and reflects the diverse community we serve will improve the way we welcome and support LGBTQ+ colleagues.</p> <p>In addition, the Corporate Plan sets out that we will work with businesses, voluntary agencies, libraries, and community centres across the city to grow our local network of safe places, places of sanctuary, and hate crime reporting centres.</p>
<p><b>Community Safety</b></p>	<p>Southampton has high levels of deprivation, poverty and inequality across the city. Tackling the wider determinants of crime is key to reducing overall levels of crime in Southampton.</p> <p>We want everyone to feel safe in our city. In 2024, 42% of residents said they felt safe in their area after dark. In the city centre it's even lower at 29%. Female and disabled residents are even more likely to feel unsafe.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan focuses on making Southampton safer with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable.</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan sets out the following actions to help us address this inequality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the police and partners to reduce violent crime including domestic abuse, youth violence and violence against women and girls.</li> <li>• Improve awareness of crime reporting through increased communications, in partnership with Hampshire police.</li> <li>• Develop a faster, effective and visible response to reported anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow our local network of safe places and hate crime reporting centres.</li> <li>• Strengthen security and public protection for major events and city venues in line with Martyn's Law requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>Southampton has high levels of deprivation, poverty and inequality across the city.</p> <p>In 2022/23, child poverty across Southampton is 35.1%, above the national average of 31%<sup>††</sup>.</p> <p>Data from Department for Education (DfE) shows that 34% of all pupils in state funded schools in Southampton were known to be eligible for free school meals, which is significantly higher than the national average (23.8%).</p> <p>For this reason we have focused on ensuring young people have a good start in life.</p>	<p>One of the key ways in which we hope to reduce poverty across Southampton through delivery of our Corporate Plan is by ensuring residents can access the benefits of growth through improved skills and employment support.</p> <p>We hope the following actions will help us address the root causes of poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to develop a new Southampton Skills Strategy and create new skills and employment opportunities for local people</li> </ul>

<sup>††</sup> Action for Children – Where is Child Poverty Increasing

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve links and alignment between employers and education providers through partnerships and relevant strategies</li> <li>• Support more residents to gain the qualifications and skills that are right for them through employment support</li> <li>• Increase the availability of 'good work' and reduce unemployment to improve health inequalities in the city</li> <li>• Grow the number of apprenticeships through the Apprenticeship Levy, and increase vocational experience through Employment Skills Plans</li> <li>• Reduce fuel poverty by investing to improve the energy efficiency</li> </ul>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		<p>of council homes and reduce damp and mould.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to prioritise community support and Family Hubs to ensure families are able to access the support they need</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	Southampton has higher levels of health inequality than our statistical neighbours. It is a priority to support people to live healthy, active and independent lives.	<p>Our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy will include a focus on tackling health inequalities.</p> <p>This will include actions to support people to live active lives and remain independent in their own homes.</p>
<b>Other Significant Impacts</b>	N/A	N/A

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## BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** WOODMILL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CENTRE (WOODMILL)

**DATE:** 10 JULY 2025

**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (OSMC)

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### THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

#### SUMMARY:

1. The Cabinet report recommends that Cabinet approves Southampton Scouts to become the new freeholder of Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre (Woodmill) Stoneham site with Above Board Limited taking on a lease for the Mill Building.
2. This report outlines the work undertaken to appoint a new lease holder/ free holder, and the risks and implications for the recommended approach.
3. By Cabinet approving the recommendations of the report, Officers will undertake the required work to ensure the freeholder is appointed and in place by 1 September 2025 for the Woodmill.

#### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

4. The leisure transformation programme is aiming to improve the facilities mix across the city, driving up participation while reducing the cost of these facilities to the council. Work has identified that in order to achieve the best commercial position on the main leisure contract there needs to be a rationalisation of facilities. While specialist facilities are important to the city, the council is not best placed to run these and by including them within a traditional leisure contract providers build in additional costs to cover the associated risks. The following centre is a specialist centre within Southampton.
5. Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre (Woodmill) is located in Southampton, specifically at Woodmill Lane in Swaythling. It is situated on the River Itchen and offers a variety of activities, including water sports, climbing, archery, etc.
6. This project within the leisure transformation programme sought to look for organisations to take on the centre either through lease or sale, in order to grow and develop the community and leisure offer for the city and to reduce the costs and liability for Southampton City Council.
7. The competitive process to find a new tenant or purchaser for Woodmill sites started in October 2024, and the deadline for final bids for the site was Wednesday 14 May 2025.
8. Ahead of the competitive process, a selection criterion was developed which outlined the requirements of viable proposals for the centre. The criteria consisted of the following topics:

# BRIEFING PAPER

- Leisure offering - how the current Leisure offering is advanced and/or improved.
- Financial credibility, financial sustainability and longevity of the organisation.
- Business plan – information on medium to long term business planning and how they will achieve what the set out. Understanding the operating model.
- Plans to support the city's Leisure Strategy
- Community impact and access – how the plans and options impact on the Community whilst ensuring that there is continued access to provision across the sites.

The selection criteria was shared with all interested parties for them to view and use for their own proposal submissions.

9. A generic email address for Leisure ([leisure@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@southampton.gov.uk)) was created ahead of the competitive process opening to ensure partners had a route to raise queries. During the bidding period various interested parties contacted the Leisure email address to ask queries about the application process, and the site. Ahead of sharing any information about the site, all interested parties signed a Confidentiality Agreement.
10. An open day was held at Woodmill on the 9 October 2024 where interested organisations came together to have a tour and meet other organisations that may be interested. This was done to enhance partnership working and allow organisations to potentially pair up and have a joint bid. This also allowed the attendees to ask questions of the operational staff at the site and have a full understanding of how it works.
11. There were also 22 people from 9 organisations that attended Woodmill. There were a range of different organisations represented, from activity providers to charities who work with young people.
12. Condition surveys, and valuations were instructed in late 2024 and the results of both pieces of work were shared with the interested parties, alongside other information such as lifecycle maintenance plans, handover asset lists, etc.
13. Submission closed on Wednesday 14 May 2025 and there were two bids for the Woodmill site (one freehold and one leasehold proposal). Officers worked through the proposals to understand if they all met the criteria ahead of circulating them to the agreed assessment panel for final review and scoring. All proposals were sent and reviewed by the full assessment panel.
14. The assessment panel consisted of representatives from Leisure, Finance, Corporate Estates and Assets, and Public Health. The assessment panel scored each of the proposals individually, and a final assessment review was held on Wednesday 4 June 2025.
15. The outcome of the final review was to recommend that Southampton Scouts as the recommended operator and freeholder of Woodmill (Stoneham site) with Above Board Limited taking on a lease for the Mill Building.
16. Southampton City Scouts is a branch of The Scout Association in the UK, offering scouting programs to young people aged 4-25 in the Southampton area. Southampton Scouts has operated Wilverley Youth Campsite in the New Forest for over 50 years and oversees 11 sites across the city which are run in partnership with the community. This is

# BRIEFING PAPER

a joint bid with Southern Water who are interested in the borders of the site for work to improve the river environment and habitat for fish and other wildlife with a particular focus on Atlantic Salmon.

17. This organisation is committed to growing and improving the community offer and maintaining the existing school programme at Woodmill. Southampton Scouts will use their skills, experience and resources to develop the programme and offer. This will benefit the city with investment at each site.
18. At the Woodmill site there are two complimentary bids the Southampton Scouts / Southern Water bid for the Stoneham side of the site where activities take place and a bid from Above Board Ltd. For the Mill building, this company is currently a tenant of the Mill building and operates the SUP Shop and the Woodmill Kitchen, they will take responsibility for the whole of the Mill building.
19. Details of the recommended bids, including potential financials can be found in Annex 1. Annex 1 also contains details of the unsuccessful bids, and a summary of the rationale of the assessment panel.
20. The organisations will take responsibility of the relevant site from 1 September 2025.

## **RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

### **Capital/ Revenue**

21. Capital and Revenue implications have been outlined within Annex 1.

### **Property/ Other**

22. Southampton City Council currently has freehold ownership of the Woodmill site.
23. Valuations and condition surveys have already been carried out for the sites Valuations were completed by Savills, and condition surveys completed by the internal Corporate Estate and Assets team.
24. There will be support required in producing title documents, and potential leases or licences for the new tenants. The Leisure team are currently in discussions with the Corporate Estate and Assets team regarding this work.
25. As a part of the property transaction the council will make use of covenants, and overage clauses to protect its interests and ensure the properties will be used in accordance with the proposal submitted.
26. Woodmill has a site split as a part of the proposal. The Stoneham side of the site will be a freehold transfer to Southern Water (who in turn will pass the activity area to Scouts by freehold) and therefore will pass all asset management responsibility to these organisations leaving no liability with the council. This includes the management of the riverbanks, salmon pool and river assets (sluice gates etc.) which are currently the responsibility of the council.

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27. In terms of additional protections around the Woodmill site under the Habitats Regulations compensation measures need to be in place and secured for perpetuity – defined by Natural England as 99 years. This is why Southern Water are looking at land acquisition opportunities such as Woodmill which will provide the security we need for this long-term requirement. Southern Water's planned suite of compensation measures will be agreed with the Environment Agency and Natural England and regular reporting will be required to demonstrate progress against delivery plans and the level of improvement/uplift delivered. Progress will be monitored by quarterly meetings with both regulators.

## **Statutory power to undertake proposals in the Cabinet Report**

28. The Council has the necessary statutory powers in the Local Government Act 1972 to proceed with the recommendation of this report. Section 123 (1) Local Government Act 1972 indicates that, a local authority may dispose of land held by it in any way it wishes so long as (section 123 (2)) the land is disposed for a consideration not less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.

29. The General Disposal Consent Order (England) 2003 gives consent for disposal at below best consideration reasonably obtainable provided that the undervalue is less than £2m and the proposal enhances the environmental economic and social wellbeing of the area.

## **Other legal implications**

30. Legal advice will be needed throughout the transfer to Southampton Scouts.

31. The council will ensure its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that this lease arrangement does not discriminate against any protected groups and promotes equality. This is further covered within the ESIA within Annex 2.

## **Policy framework implications**

32. Appointment of a new tenant is consistent with, and not contrary to, the Council's Policy Framework. It will support delivery of the priorities and outcomes set out in the Southampton City Strategy 2015 – 25, the Southampton City Corporate Plan 2022 – 30 (updated in 2024), Southampton's Cultural Strategy 2021-2031, Destination Management Plan 2021-2031, the We Can Be Active (WCBA) Strategy, and the Prevention agenda.

## **OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:**

33. Permanently cease leisure services at Woodmill: This option has been rejected as it does not meet the needs of the community or the council's objectives, this would be a short sighted decision for the city of Southampton.

34. Transfer the operation of Woodmill to in-house council management: This option has been considered and rejected as the council does not have the expertise, funding nor the infrastructure to enable provision of quality leisure services. This option is likely to be more expensive and provide poorer quality of services than through the approval of the recommendations of this report.

# BRIEFING PAPER

35. Retain Woodmill within the leisure contract under a new operator: One option considered but ultimately rejected was to retain Woodmill within the leisure contract under a new operator. It was acknowledged this site cost the council approximately £150,000 per year. The decision was made that the most appropriate course of action would be to remove it from the contract and seek a more suitable operator or freehold arrangement to support the long-term success of the site.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

36. A detailed risk register has been created to track all risks associated with the recommended approach. The risk register is regularly reviewed and updated. One particular risk is the timeline to have the new arrangements in place by 1 September, this may be mitigated through the use of a licence whereby the centres can remain open while the details of the property transaction continue in the background.

### Appendices/Supporting Information:

- Annex 1 - Woodmill – Confidential appendix
- Annex 2 - ESIA

<b>Further information available from:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	James Marshall - Director of Customer, Leisure and Regulatory Services
	<b>Tel:</b>	023 8083 3015
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:James.Marshall@southampton.gov.uk">James.Marshall@southampton.gov.uk</a>

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# Agenda Item 8

by virtue of paragraph number 3 of the Council's Access to information Procedure Rules

Appendix 7

Document is Confidential

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### Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. The Council's Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

<b>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</b>	<b>Woodmill (Leisure Transformation Project)</b>  The project aims to rationalise the leisure portfolio to provide fit for purpose facilities that meet the needs of the residents.  Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre (Woodmill) is located in Southampton, specifically at Woodmill Lane in Swaythling. It is situated on the River Itchen and offers a variety of activities, including water sports, climbing, archery, etc.  The project that has been undertaken is to find a new lease or freeholder for the site.  Cabinet are set to make a formal decision on the freehold/ lease arrangements of the centre in July 2025.
<b>Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)</b> <b>Southampton's population:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2023, the resident population of Southampton was estimated to be <b>264,957</b>, of which 129,721 (49.0%) were female and 135,236 (51.0%) were male.</li> <li>Children between the ages 0 to 5 make up 6.3% (16,808) of the population, which is similar to the England average of 6.5% (MYE 2022).</li> <li>18.6% (49,155) of Southampton's resident population is aged between 16 and 24 years compared to just 10.6% in England. This is largely due to Southampton being a university city and home to approximately 37,800 students.</li> </ul> <b>Southampton's physical activity profile:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the aging population (especially those aged 75–79) is expected to grow significantly by 2040, the 20–24 age group is projected to become the largest. Facilities must balance the needs of these two age groups by offering diverse programmes and spaces.</li> </ul>	

- The council area has a higher proportion of residents aged 15–44 than the national average, requiring leisure centres to appeal to younger adults while still addressing the needs of older and younger populations.
- Physical activity levels among adults in the council area (63.4%) are higher than regional and national averages, demonstrating a positive trend post-Covid. This momentum should be maintained through high-quality facilities and engaging programmes.
- Activity levels among children and young people are also notably higher than both regional and national averages, with a significant improvement since pre-Covid (53% currently vs. 40% pre-Covid). Investment should sustain and expand this engagement.
- The percentage of children meeting the national curriculum's 25m swimming requirement is projected to fall to just 43% by 2024/25, with only 35% in deprived areas. The closure of swimming pools during Covid-19 has worsened these figures, making investment in swimming facilities and school swimming programs a priority, particularly given the coastal nature of the borough.
- Leisure centres must remain flexible to accommodate changing demographics and trends. Investment should prioritise multi-functional spaces, energy-efficient designs and programming tailored to both younger and older populations.

An estimate of user numbers for the site has been presented below:

Site	User/ visitor numbers
Woodmill Outdoor Activity Centre	24,119

### Summary of Impact and Issues

The proposals for new operators at Woodmill fits with SCC's ambition to support residents to be active in a way that suits them. Being physically active can help improve physical and mental health as well as reducing isolation and anti-social behaviour and promoting community cohesion.

By continuing the leisure offer at the site it provides local opportunities to be active for the community and the city.

It will:

- Continue a leisure provision for the city and surrounding areas.
- Enable collaboration with local and national partners to enhance the leisure offer and expand resources.
- Provide a leisure offer that is open and accessible and reduces barriers to participation.
- Future proof the leisure offering and give stability.
- Foster innovative approaches and solutions through collaboration.
- Enable strong alignment with community needs and public health objectives.
- Support a better understanding of the local communities needs and priorities.
- Ensure joint ventures can be structured in various ways to suit specific needs and goals.
- Support access to grants and funding not available to the council.
- Improve public health outcomes, and enhanced community engagement.

If a new lease/ freeholder is not appointed for the site:

- The facility will continue to degrade without necessary upgrades, leading to potential safety issues and increased future costs.
- As the facility deteriorates, user satisfaction is likely to decline, potentially leading to decreased usage.
- The site will fail to align with the council's long-term vision of a sustainable, active community.

This approach enables a phased transition, reducing the risk of service disruption and ensuring a smooth changeover to the new model.

<b>Responsible Service Manager</b>	Dom Bennett
<b>Date</b>	25/06/2025
<b>Approved by Senior Manager</b>	James Marshall
<b>Date</b>	25/06/2025

### Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
<b>Age</b>	No significant impacts identified.	The new leaseholder/owner will take into account age related activities.  Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.
<b>Disability</b>	The centre is not currently fully accessible, there are some challenges for users with additional needs.	The new leaseholder/owner will take into account accessible provision.  Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.
<b>Gender Reassignment &amp; Sex</b>	Currently there are no gender-neutral changing areas	The new leaseholder/owner will take into account gender neutral changing rooms and toilets.  Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.

<b>Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Details of Impact</b>	<b>Possible Solutions &amp; Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>Care Experienced</b>	Financial impact of affordability of the activities.	<p>The new leaseholder/owner will take into account low cost and zero cost activities.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.</p>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	No significant impact	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No significant impacts identified	<p>The new leaseholder/owner will take into account the provision of antenatal classes and other pregnancy and maternity activities.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.</p>
<b>Race</b>	No significant impacts identified	<p>Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	No impacts identified	<p>The new leaseholder/owner will accommodate potential religion or belief impacts.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	No significant impact.	N/A
<b>Community Safety</b>	No significant impacts identified	The new leaseholder/owner will undertake engagement activities with communities to help shape the offering.
<b>Poverty</b>	No significant impacts identified	<p>The new leaseholder/owner will take into account low cost and zero cost activities.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken with Officers and the new leaseholder/owner to target</p>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		the priority groups set out within the We Can Be Active (WCBA) strategy and strive to achieve Sport England Guidance on inclusivity and accessibility.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	No significant impact.	N/A



<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY HANDBOOK - UPDATE		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	10 JULY 2025		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SCRUTINY MANAGER		
<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Jillian Kay	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3220
	<b>E-mail</b>	Jillian.kay@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Mark Pirnie	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3886
	<b>E-mail</b>	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>			
None			
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>			
<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Handbook sets out locally agreed procedures and processes for Scrutiny at Southampton City Council. The Handbook was reviewed in 2021 and revised in 2019. To reflect recent changes to the Scrutiny Panels agreed at the June 2025 meeting of the Committee, and changes to local health systems and Council services, the Committee are requested to approve an updated iteration of the Handbook attached as Appendix 1.</p>			
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>			
	(i)	That the Committee approves the updated Overview and Scrutiny Handbook attached as Appendix 1.	
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
1.	To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook is updated to reflect changes to the Scrutiny Panels and local services.		
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>			
2.	To not update the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook. This is not advised as the Handbook would be out of date and could limit the effectiveness of the scrutiny process.		
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>			
3.	The Overview and Scrutiny Handbook is designed to provide information for Members and Officers involved in scrutiny activities and aid the effectiveness of the scrutiny process. It is subject to revision by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee from time to time.		
4.	The Handbook was last revised in 2019 following the publication of statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities.		

5.	Following the decision by this Committee to establish a Housing Scrutiny Panel for 2025/26, as well as changes to the health and care landscape in Southampton and the structure of Children's Services since the previous update, it is appropriate that the Handbook is updated to reflect these changes.		
6.	The OSMC are requested to approve the updated version of the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook attached as Appendix 1.		
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>			
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>			
7.	None.		
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>			
8.	None.		
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>			
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>			
9.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.		
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>			
10.	None		
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>			
11.	Updating the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook to reflect changes provides clarity to elected members and aids the effectiveness of the scrutiny process.		
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>			
12.	None		
<b>KEY DECISION</b>		No	
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>		None directly as a result of this report	
<b><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></b>			
<b>Appendices</b>			
1.	Overview and Scrutiny Handbook – 2025 Update		
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>			
1.	None		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>			
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?			No
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>			
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?			No
<b>Other Background Documents</b>			



Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	Overview and Scrutiny Handbook: a practical guide for scrutiny members - <a href="#">Scrutiny Handbook 2021</a>	

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
HANDBOOK:**

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
FOR SCRUTINY MEMBERS**

**JULY 2025**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

1. This handbook is designed to provide information for Members and Officers involved in scrutiny activities and aid the effectiveness of the scrutiny process. It is subject to revision by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee from time to time. It sets out locally agreed procedures and processes for Scrutiny, and should be read alongside the Council's Constitution which reflects the legal requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 and other relevant legislation. The Constitution also contains the Code of Conduct for Members and the Officer / Member protocol, both of which are relevant to this handbook.
2. The statutory Overview & Scrutiny function is defined in Article 6 of the Constitution. The following definitions are used in this handbook:
  - The phrase "Scrutiny bodies" encompasses Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel, and the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
  - "Scrutiny Member" means a person who is a member of a Scrutiny body, and this can include non-Councillors.
3. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the appointment of at least one overview and scrutiny committee. Southampton City Council will have two bodies that will share the statutory function between them.

### Background

4. Overview and Scrutiny has a specific statutory basis under Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, which introduced Executive arrangements for local authorities. This was extended by the Health and Social Care Act 2001, which extended local authority scrutiny to NHS bodies. The Police and Justice Act 2006 empowers overview and scrutiny committees to scrutinise Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and the partners who comprise it, insofar as their activities relate to the partnership. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 lists a number of relevant partner authorities overview and scrutiny committees can request information from, and consequently engage them in the scrutiny process. This Act also formalised the Council's existing arrangements requiring the Executive to attend overview and scrutiny meetings when requested and introduced the power for any councillor to refer a local government matter to an overview and scrutiny committee, whether or not they are a member of that particular committee or sub-committee (commonly referred to as the Councillor Call for Action).
5. The work of overview and scrutiny aims to reflect the "4 Principles of Effective Scrutiny" established by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, which together aim to improve accountability in the local democratic processes and lead to improved public services. The 4 principles are:-
  - Providing a "critical friend" challenge
  - Enabling the voice and concerns of the public and local communities
  - Being undertaken by "independent minded governors" who lead and own the scrutiny process
  - Driving improvement in public services.

## Key functions

6. The Overview and Scrutiny function is a key element in the Council's democratic mechanism. One of its key roles is to hold the Executive to account by:-
  - Questioning and evaluating the Executive's actions, both before and after decisions are taken
  - Monitoring the performance and financial management of the Council
  - Developing and reviewing policies, including the Policy Framework and Budget Strategy
  - Making reports and recommendations on any aspect of Council business (ie non-executive functions) and other matters that affect the City and its citizens.
7. Overview and Scrutiny is a key mechanism for enabling Councillors to represent their constituents' views to the Executive to inform policy development. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny bodies will review local authority policies and matters of local concern and interest, and make recommendations to the Executive and Full Council. They are the main way in which the Executive is to be held to account in public for the discharge of the functions it is responsible for. In addition, through the "Call-In" procedure scrutiny members are able to require the Executive to publicly defend and, if necessary, reconsider important decisions.

## **FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURES FOR THE DELIVERY OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny function is undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel and the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

### **The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

8. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is responsible for:
- Setting the overall Scrutiny agenda
  - Setting and monitoring standards for Scrutiny
  - Establishing Scrutiny Panels
  - Preparing a Scrutiny Inquiry Programme
  - Scrutiny of all corporate and resource management issues
  - The exercise of all decisions called in
  - Scrutiny of the Forward Plan
  - Monitoring performance and budgets
  - Considering, at least once a year, actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the Safe City Partnership
  - Responding to the Councillor Call for Action with the exception of health matters where the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel will respond

### **The role of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

9. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel is legally a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
10. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel is responsible for undertaking the statutory scrutiny of health across Southampton. This role includes:
- Responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major health consultation exercises
  - Scrutiny of Adult Social Care issues in the City unless they are forward plan items. In such circumstances members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be invited to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting where they are discussed
  - Scrutinising key decisions of the health agencies in the City and the development and implementation of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy developed by the Health and Wellbeing Board
  - Liaising with, and responding to, matters brought to the Panels attention by Healthwatch Southampton
  - Undertaking inquiries relating to health and well-being issues in the city
  - Considering Councillor Calls for Action for health and social care matters.

### **The role of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel**

11. The Children and Families Scrutiny Panel is legally a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

12. The Children and Families Scrutiny Panel is responsible for undertaking the scrutiny of services for children and families across Southampton. This role includes:
- Scrutiny of Children and Families Services in the City, including children's social care, education and SEND, unless they are forward plan items. In such circumstances members of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel will be invited to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting where they are discussed.

### **The role of the Housing Scrutiny Panel**

13. The Housing Scrutiny Panel is legally a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
14. The Panel is responsible for undertaking scrutiny of Southampton City Council's Housing Services. This role includes:
- Scrutiny of the Housing Landlord function and the Housing Regeneration programme, unless they are forward plan items. In such circumstances members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel will be invited to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting where they are discussed.

### **Membership of Scrutiny Bodies**

15. Details of who can be a member of Scrutiny bodies are set out in rule 3 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Constitution, as are the arrangements for appointing Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny bodies. By local convention, it is agreed that:
- The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will be a Member from a political group other than that which forms the Executive
  - The Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee may, but does not have to, come from the group(s) forming the administration

### **Church and Parent Governor Representatives**

16. Under Regulations and the Local Government Act 2000, Church and Parent Representatives should be appointed as members of the Scrutiny panels dealing wholly or partly with the Council's education functions. They are eligible to chair Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and its panels and to vote on matters relating to education. Where a panel chaired by a Church or Parent representative deals with other (non-LEA) functions a Councillor should take over the Chair when non-education matters are being discussed so as to allow the Chair a casting vote if necessary.
17. In Southampton the following arrangements have been made for Church and Parent representatives –
- 2 Church Representatives: one nominated by the Roman Catholic (Bishop of Portsmouth) board of education and one by the Church of England (Winchester Diocese) board of education;



2 Parent Representatives who have been elected by parent governors at Southampton schools representing the primary and secondary sectors.

18. Unlike other non-Councillors, the 4 Church and Parent reps are by law allowed to vote on education matters considered by the Panel they are members of. They must be treated no differently than their Councillor colleagues, and have the same rights of access to information, as well as duties to declare interests and exercise powers of Call-In detailed in rule 12 of the O&S Procedure Rules in the Constitution in relation to education matters. These 4 representatives will, therefore, be invited to attend Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel when it is examining any education matter.

### **Duration of Scrutiny Meetings**

19. In the interests of economy, and in acknowledgement of the pressure on diaries of Cabinet Members and officers, meetings should not regularly be protracted or unduly long. Committee and Panel Chairs should ensure that the items of business are prioritised on the agenda, and that the meeting is conducted in a brisk and business-like manner, without compromising the ability of Scrutiny Panel Members to review agenda items in a thorough manner. Members have previously indicated that they prefer, where possible, that meetings should not exceed 2 hours in duration.

### **Executive Members**

20. Executive Members are not permitted to be Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Sub-Committees. Rule 3 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Constitution sets out the rules concerning when a former Executive Member may become a member of a Scrutiny body. In essence a 6 month “firebreak” period exists between ceasing to be a Cabinet Member and becoming a member of a Scrutiny body. There are exceptions, including when there is a change in the political control of the Council.

### **Attendance at Scrutiny Meetings**

21. The Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001, the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee / Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel / Children and Families Scrutiny Panel / Housing Scrutiny Panel the following legal powers:
  - To require officers and Executive Councillors (but not other Councillors or co-optees) both to attend before it and to answer questions;
  - To require the Chief Executive or Chair of an NHS Trust to attend before it and answer questions on health matters;
  - To require the attendance of a representative from the responsible authorities for crime and disorder to answer questions on community safety issues. Responsible authorities include the local authority, the police force, the fire and rescue authority and the integrated commissioning board;
  - To require relevant partner organisations to provide information when requested;
  - To invite (but not require) other persons to attend meetings, e.g. local MPs, utility providers, citizens’ groups etc.

22. Executive Councillors and officers are under a legal duty to comply both in attending and answering questions. No-one is required to answer any question they would be entitled to refuse to answer in a court of law. The legal duty to appear and answer questions does not arise until the Scrutiny body has passed a formal resolution to that effect and served a "Requirement for Attendance Notice" on the person concerned in accordance with the procedure set out in O&S procedure rule 10 in the Constitution. This requires a copy of the notice to be sent to the Monitoring Officer. However, the local convention is that such a notice would only be served if an invitation to attend was rejected or ignored. It is agreed between the political groups that all Councillors, whatever their status, will fully co-operate, and attend to answer questions when invited. If a Councillor refuses to attend for reasons thought unconvincing, this can be recorded in the Committee's / Panel's report. Failure to attend in breach of a Notice is a breach of standards and may be reported to the Governance Committee where an Executive Member has not attended.

### **Attendance of Officers**

23. Section 9F of the 2000 Act allows scrutiny bodies to require officers to attend to answer questions. Where the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or Scrutiny Panels exercise that power they should also consider the seniority of officers it would be appropriate to require to appear before it. They should always ensure that the right person with the required level of knowledge and responsibility is the person invited.

### **Who Scrutiny should call to question at Scrutiny meetings**

24. In deciding who to call, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and its Panel should consider the following framework of accountability:
25. **The Leader and Executive Members ("Cabinet")**  
Accountable for the political direction of the Executive which forms the Council's administration and, subject to their approval by full Council, propose and implement the policy framework and budget strategy. They also discharge those powers given to the executive, whether taken in Cabinet or individually.
26. **The Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Statutory Officers**  
The Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Statutory Officers are responsible for the implementation of the approved policy framework and budget strategy and for other decisions taken by executive Councillors or the regulatory committees, for the actions of Council directorates and officers under the scheme of delegation, for policy advice, financial and legal probity, value for money, disciplinary matters and for the Council's overall administration. Although responsible to the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) have their own particular responsibilities under statute independent of the full Council, the Cabinet, the Chief Executive or any other officers. These are set out in the Constitution.
27. **Service Directors and Heads of Service (Level 1)**  
Responsible for the implementation and delivery of policies and other decisions taken by the Cabinet or regulatory committee's in particular service/policy areas.

## **Manner of Questioning**

28. The overall principles which apply to attending Scrutiny meetings are the same as apply to attendance at any other Council meeting, and reflect the Officer / Member Protocol. It is recognised that Scrutiny may from time to time undertake work involving detailed examination and exploration of the reasons behind decisions or performance trends, and as such it is important to have clear ground rules for the benefit of both those attending to provide information and those carrying out the scrutiny.
29. The principles relating to Scrutiny are designed to ensure fairness to participants in the Scrutiny process and to facilitate effective Scrutiny which relies on the sharing of appropriate, good quality information:
- Every individual invited to appear before a Scrutiny Committee/Panel should be provided with an outline of the topics and areas they can be expected to answer questions on.
  - Questioning should remain within the subject area indicated to executive members, officers and other witnesses.
  - All individuals attending a meeting should be given a reasonable opportunity to answer questions and to clarify or correct anything they feel may have been misconstrued.
  - Everyone will be treated politely, fairly and with respect. (This has particular importance with regard to officers, where breach of this can give rise to grievance or even constructive unfair dismissal claims).
  - Certain matters may be subjudice or under investigation by the Council or other agencies, and it may be inappropriate to pursue certain matters at that time accordingly.
  - Members of the public can address a Committee/Panel at the discretion of the Chair.
  - Compliance with all legal requirements, including (but not limited to) the Human Rights Act and the Council's constitution – is important.
  - Scrutiny meetings are not disciplinary hearings, and Scrutiny Members should ensure that when examining the performance of the Executive that they do not stray into this territory. Discipline is the Chief Executive's function alone in relation to staff, and the Monitoring Officer, the Standards Sub-Committee and the National Standards Board as regards the conduct of Councillors/Members under the National Code of Local Government Conduct/Local Code of Conduct.

## **Consulting others about inquiries/reviews**

30. Where appropriate, and particularly when undertaking Scrutiny inquiries, Committees / Panels will seek to involve key partner organisations, groups, and individuals from outside the Council in the inquiry. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should formally consider how external parties can make the most effective contribution at the inquiry planning stage. Better outcomes are likely to be generated by seeking views from as many communities and interested

parties as necessary to get a balanced picture of the effects of policy and Executive decisions. In particular they should pay attention to obtaining views from 'hard to reach' groups such as minority ethnic communities and disabled people, and vulnerable citizens.

### **Declarations of interest through previous involvement in decision making**

31. If a Member is involved in the consideration of an item at a meeting of a Committee/Panel, he/she should regard him/herself as having a personal and a prejudicial interest if the business relates to a decision made, or action taken, by another of the authority's committees or sub-committees; or joint committees or joint sub-committees, of which he/she is also a member, unless the member is attending scrutiny to answer questions or give evidence relating to that decision or action.
32. Where a member has such a prejudicial interest they must:
  - Withdraw from the room where a meeting is being held whenever it becomes apparent that the matter is being considered at that meeting, unless he/she has obtained a dispensation from the authority's standards committee; and
  - Not seek improperly to influence a decision about that matter.

### **Rights to Copies of Executive's Documents**

33. The rules on access to the Executive's documents are set out in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' of the Constitution. Subject to the next paragraph, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Scrutiny Panels are entitled to copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the Executive [or its committees] and which contains material relating to –
  - any formal decision-making business transacted at a public or private meeting of the Executive or its committees; or
  - any decision taken by an individual Member of the Executive.
34. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee will not be entitled to see:
  - any working or background document that is in draft form (This does not apply to draft policy and strategy documents or the draft budget);
  - any part of a document that contains exempt or confidential information, unless that information is relevant to an action or decision they are reviewing or scrutinising or intend to scrutinise; or
  - advice provided to a Member in confidence, in line with the Officer / Member protocol.

### **Protection from Defamation**

35. Anyone attending a properly convened meeting of a Scrutiny Body, whether as a member of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee/Panel or a witness or officer supporting the meeting, has the legal protection of "qualified privilege" from personal liability in relation to the law of defamation.
36. This means –

- They cannot be sued for defamation in relation to anything said or written, provided they do not do so maliciously.
  - The final report will also have the same qualified privilege provided that potentially defamatory material is not included maliciously.
37. Qualified privilege only applies to defamation proceedings and would not cover conduct that might bring other legal liability for e.g. unfair dismissal. Also, it only applies to a properly convened meeting of a committee or sub-committee. This means a public meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee / Scrutiny Panels convened in accordance with the Access to Information provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, whether or not confidential/exempt items are on the agenda.

### **Declarations of Interest**

38. All Scrutiny agendas follow a standard format. At the start of the meeting Members are invited to declare:
- Personal and pecuniary interests
  - Prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at the meeting.
39. The Chair is not obliged to read these items out in full, and can simply ask Members whether they have any declarations to make under each item. However, if there are members of the press and public present at the meeting, then in the interests of openness, transparency and accountability it is advisable for the Chair to read the items in full.

### **Declaration of the Party Political Whip**

40. The Government believes whipping is incompatible with overview and scrutiny and recommends that whipping should not take place, and that where it does it should be declared. The proper and thorough examination of decisions and policies in the public interest should come before local party political allegiance and expediency. An item inviting Members to declare the application of any party political whip is included on all scrutiny agendas to reflect government guidance on best practice. If a Member declares the party whip, that fact is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Member is not required to leave the meeting.

### **Limits of the Scrutiny Process**

41. Scrutiny Committees/Panels do not exist to serve as a “court of appeal” against decisions or to pursue complaints by individuals (Councillors, officers or members of the public) as other procedures exist for this e.g. the Corporate Complaints Procedure, and external/statutory mechanisms, e.g. the Local Government Ombudsman or appeal to the courts. That said:
- Committees/Panels may investigate the manner in which decisions are made but should not pass judgements on the merits of a decision in individual cases.
  - They can comment, however, on the merits of a particular policy affecting individuals.

### **Review of Regulatory Committee’s Work**

42. Where a Committee/Panel reviews the work of another Council (i.e. non-Executive) committee it should not scrutinise individual decisions made by such committees, particularly decisions in respect of development control, licensing, registration, consents and other permissions. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in particular, as the co-ordinating Scrutiny body, will need to ensure such scrutiny is not an alternative to normal appeals procedures.

### **Review of Non-Executive Functions**

43. Although Committees/Panels have the power to make reports and recommendations on functions that are non-Executive functions, this should normally only be used as part of wider policy reviews.

## HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

### Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - Regular Agenda Items

44. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will normally meet monthly. At this meeting it will hold the Executive to account by a variety of mechanisms that will include:
- **The Forward Plan** - The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will discuss forthcoming decisions with the Executive and bring to the Executive's attention matters considered to be appropriate in taking individual decisions;
  - **Service and Financial Performance Information** – The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will receive the same quarterly performance monitoring reports and periodic financial monitoring as Cabinet Members, detailing service performance, financial monitoring information, and an explanatory narrative to enable progress to be monitored against the targets and commitments set out in the Council Plan;
  - **Any Policy Framework Plans** – Consideration of issues papers summarising the main elements of Policy Framework Plans to be recommended to the Council by the Executive;
  - **Any reports by other Review Bodies** – This might include reports from external inspection bodies. The Committee would be likely to seek the views of the Executive on comments made in the reports and identify actions proposed to address any of the issues raised;
  - **Items placed on the agenda by elected Members (including Councillor Calls for Action)** – This applies where an issue has been placed on the agenda by a member in accordance with overview and scrutiny procedure rule 9, or in accordance with the agreed process for dealing with Councillor Calls for Action.

### Policy Framework

45. Overview and Scrutiny has an integral role to fulfil in policy development. The Executive will consult the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee during the process of preparing the draft budget and draft plans and strategies. Details of this interaction are set out in the Constitution under the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
46. When elements of the Policy Framework are under review, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should consider:
- The Executive's initial proposals for the Policy Framework in the form of an Issues Paper detailing significant changes from the existing policy framework, how the proposals reflect any Scrutiny Inquiry or other review recommendations, and details of the consultation underpinning the proposals;
  - The evidence of individuals or organisations invited by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, or else requesting representations to comment on the policy framework proposals, e.g. from partner organisations.

47. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's role at this stage is essentially one of quality control, ensuring that the policy directions proposed have been adequately researched and developed, that adequate consultation has taken place, and that the results of the consultation are reflected in the proposals.
48. A report detailing the Committee's comments on the initial proposals will be submitted to the Executive after the meeting at which it was discussed. This report will also be submitted to Council for consideration along with the Executive's proposals.

## **Call-in**

49. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee may hold the Executive to account for the discharge of its functions by examining, challenging, and if necessary requesting changes to, executive decisions made, but not yet implemented. This power is exercised through "Call-In". The power does not enable the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to require that a decision be changed.
50. The Council's Call-In procedure is set out in rule 12 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Constitution. It applies to decisions taken by the Executive as a whole, or an individual Executive Councillor or an officer acting under delegated powers. The procedure's main features are:
  - Only Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee can exercise the Call-In function;
  - Call-In applies to all executive decisions taken by the Cabinet Members, either working individually or collectively, and to "key" executive decisions taken by officers under delegated powers;
  - The particular decision must not have been implemented at the time Call-In is made. However, it should be noted that the decision cannot be implemented until after the Call-In meeting has taken place;
  - Urgent decisions cannot be Called-In, as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will have already been involved in the question of whether the particular decision is urgent;
  - Call-In has a special role to play where a decision is thought to be contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the approved policy framework or budget.
51. Call-In procedures have the potential, if abused, to significantly disrupt the smooth running of the Council and should be used only in exceptional circumstances. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will report to Council on a 6 monthly basis the number of decisions that have been Called-In during that period, and the outcome of the Call-Ins.
52. In order to manage the use of Call-In, it is recommended that prior to calling in a decision, Members should:
  - Obtain and read the report on which the decision is based;
  - Discuss the decision and the reasons behind it with the decision maker/lead officer;
  - Identify on the Call-In notice the specific concerns arising from the decision to be discussed at the call-in meeting;



- Discuss their proposal to use the call-in procedure with the Scrutiny Manager.
53. It is not recommended that Call-In is applied to:
- Any decision in relation to the award of bus contracts where this would result in a break of service to the public;
  - Any decision relating to the award of a discretionary grant to a third party where the likely result of the delay would be that the decision could not be implemented prior to the commencement of the financial year to which the award relates, or be detrimental to that party.
54. The call-in process can be activated either by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee acting singly, or by any 2 members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee acting together, or by two of the Church and/or Parent Scrutiny Members acting together, but only in respect of the Council's functions as a local education authority.
55. Scrutiny Members are encouraged to submit Call-in notices as soon as possible, and avoid submitting them on the last day of the Call-in period. Timely deposit of Call-in notices will enable members who may have inadvertently submitted an invalid Call-in notice to have an opportunity to re-submit a valid one.
56. Call-in notices are available in hard copy from Democratic Services. The notices are also available on the Members' Zone of the intranet. When submitting hard copies, all Members requesting the Call-in must sign the notice. When submitting notices electronically each of the Members requesting the Call-in should be identified on the notice, and should confirm their request by e-mail. The notices submitted electronically should be sent to [mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk).

### **Items Placed on the Agenda by Elected Members - Including Councillor Call for Action**

57. Any member of the authority has the legal right to have included in the agenda for a meeting any local government matter relevant to that Committee/Panel's functions, and for it to be discussed at the meeting. This can be done by a Scrutiny Member depositing a "Scrutiny Request Form" in accordance with the procedure set out in Rule 8 & 9 of the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules or rules 26.5 and 26.6 of the council procedure rules on the Constitution. The key factor to be aware of is that the Scrutiny Request Form must be delivered to the Director, Legal and Governance at least 12 clear working days before the date of the next meeting. However, the earlier the form is delivered, the greater the opportunity for a more detailed report to be submitted to the meeting with facts to enable the issue to be scrutinised. When a Scrutiny Member exercises his/her power to place an item on the agenda the item would be placed on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or Scrutiny Panel agenda for discussion with the Executive Member and/or senior officers.
58. In addition the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced, to help frontline councillors raise matters on an authority's agenda on behalf of their constituents, the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA).
59. The aim of the CCfA is to support elected Members in achieving improvements for their local areas. The Act envisages that:

- councillors identify issues of significant concern to their communities;
  - they seek to resolve problems by talking to the local authority and other service providers;
  - if they cannot resolve matters, then they can refer them to overview and scrutiny committees.
60. At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in June 2009 a process was agreed for managing CCfA's in Southampton. The outline process is as follows:
- a. Ward Councillor resolves issue at a local level;
  - b. If unable to do so, Ward Councillor completes a CCfA request form available from Democratic Services and sends it to the Scrutiny Manager who will send it on to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Chair / Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chair, if health related;
  - c. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel will then determine whether to take the CCfA forward and s/he will inform the Ward Councillor whether s/he will accept the CCfA within 3 working days;
  - d. Relevant Members, partners and officers agree how the CCfA is to be handled;
  - e. The CCfA is heard at the first available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee / Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
  - f. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee / Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel agrees a resolution for the CCfA.
61. Reasons the Chair may not take the CCfA forward to Committee could include:
- Not enough information has been provided;
  - More could be done to resolve the issue at a local level, e.g. key people have not been contacted;
  - The CCfA is, or has stemmed from, a vexatious complaint;
  - The matter has recently been examined by Overview and Scrutiny (though the Ward Councillors may argue that certain aspects were not sufficiently covered hence a need for a CCfA);
  - The matter is the subject of an ombudsman complaint or other official complaints procedure;
  - The matter falls under excluded matters such as those decided by Regulatory Committees (Planning, Licensing and Education Appeals).
62. The Committee's/Panel's decision will mirror one of the following options:
- The Committee/Panel could determine not to make a report (perhaps because it is not considered the right time to consider a particular issue);
  - The Committee/Panel could write a report on the CCfA, which would be a public report;
  - The Committee/Panel could determine that it is a complex issue that requires further investigation, and undertake a Scrutiny Review or Overview of the issue.
63. The CCfA is not:
- A way to resolve individual casework problems;
  - An appeals process;
  - A forum for vexatious complaints.
64. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will consider all CCfA's with the exception of those relating to health and adult social care. These issues will be

considered by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

### **Recommendations and Scrutiny Monitoring Procedures**

65. During the course of meetings, members are encouraged to formulate recommendations on matters which they consider appropriate to pass a comment or to recommend a particular course of action to a Cabinet Member. Recommendations should be as concise and unambiguous as possible. The monitoring procedure allows action taken to be monitored against the original proposal made at the meeting.
66. All recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee are collated into a scrutiny monitoring form. This document is then put to 2 uses: -
  - Firstly, it is used as the means to identify work required from the Decision Maker. This ensures that the same wording is used at an early stage by everyone involved.
  - Secondly, it is reported back to the following Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting with the action taken being recorded. This enables the Committee to check that the Decision Maker is responding to their recommendations. The number of outstanding responses, and the length of time elapsed since the recommendation was made can be tracked.

## SCRUTINY INQUIRIES

### Planning for Scrutiny Inquiries

67. Annually the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will prepare a limited Scrutiny Inquiry programme.
68. The Committee will set the Terms of Reference for inquiries, and approve an inquiry plan identifying the number of meetings allocated to the inquiry, and an outline of the evidence to be heard at each meeting. The Committee will approve the inquiry final report and submit the report to the Cabinet for consideration.
69. It will be the role of the Chair of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel to ensure that the Panel maintains its focus on the terms of reference set by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

### Selecting Topics for Inquiry

70. Members may request that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee commissions an inquiry by tabling a motion to Council, where the matter will be discussed and, if passed, be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration.
71. Where Council passes a resolution that a subject is of such importance that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should be directed (as opposed to requested) to commission an inquiry, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee must commission the inquiry to be completed within 12 months (or such other timescales as council directs), postponing other work to accommodate such demands where necessary.
72. When considering whether to commission an inquiry into a particular policy or service area, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will take into account:
  - **Policy development:**  
Whether a review topic relates to an area that is going to be of major significance in terms of the development of policies and associated practices that need to be introduced in order to respond to national, regional or local developments, e.g. the refresh of a Policy Framework Plan, demographic changes etc. If so, then a scrutiny inquiry could help to influence the direction and shape of any policy proposals.
  - **Performance issues:**  
A service that fails to meet expected targets over a period of time or, appears to provide comparatively low value for money, or generate a large number of complaints and a high caseload of work for elected members could benefit from a review to explore how service delivery could be improved.
  - **Impact:**  
For an inquiry to be worth the member and officer resources invested, it must have the potential to make a difference to city life and improve a situation for the benefit of people living and working in Southampton.

- **Opportunity to engage partners:**

With many of the key issues facing the city being addressed through joint working and mechanisms which require the active engagement of key delivery partners, there is an opportunity for inquiry outcomes to benefit from the input of partners into the scrutiny process. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act also makes provision for what it terms “key partner authorities” (e.g the police and the integrated care board) providing information to overview and scrutiny committees.

- **Avoiding duplication:**

There are other review bodies within the Council (e.g. the Governance Committee) and external inspection bodies seeking to ensure the delivery of strategic objectives and improved operational services by the Council and its partners. It would not be an effective use of scrutiny resources to duplicate reviews. Where the scrutiny inquiry process could add value is by identifying issues that are not being reviewed elsewhere, or by connecting issues that have been reviewed individually but which have not brought together for the benefit of local residents.

- **Resources:**

Given the limited resources available to support the scrutiny function the Committee will need to satisfy itself that adequate officer resources are available to support the inquiry process, both from the Scrutiny function, and from the service areas in the Council or partner organisations who would be required to provide witnesses and technical advice.

## **The process of undertaking a Scrutiny Inquiry**

73. Once the terms of reference and the inquiry plan for a scrutiny inquiry have been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee’s the inquiry will be undertaken by the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel.
74. The inquiry will then proceed in accordance with the inquiry plan. Members will be provided with a summary of the key points from each discussion. On occasions members may be invited to informal meetings. These are not subject to access to information rules and are held in private. The purpose is to allow members to review and reflect on the information presented, to discuss potential areas for recommendations, and for drafting sections of the inquiry report.
75. At the end of the process the Panel will make any final changes to its report at a scheduled meeting. The Chair of the Panel will then present the final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The role of the Committee is to ensure that the Panel have met the agreed terms of reference of the inquiry and to formally approve a final document for submission to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will normally respond to an inquiry report within two months of submission to Cabinet.

## SCRUTINY SKILLS

76. This section outlines some of the key skills required to undertake successful scrutiny.

### Asking Questions

77. Scrutiny will be at its most effective when panel members examining a topic are able to ask the right people the right questions in order to get to the information required to make an effective assessment of the matter under consideration. Officers supporting Scrutiny will provide advice and support to Members if requested in advance of the meeting to ensure that Members are best placed to have the most appropriate Cabinet Members, officers and representatives from partners in attendance at their meetings. Guidance on asking questions is outlined below.

### Putting questions to Cabinet Members and officers

78. It is important to distinguish between the types of question that are most appropriate to be put to and answered by Cabinet Members, and those which are most appropriately put to and answered by officers. The paragraphs below give examples of the different types of question that can be asked of Cabinet Members and officers.
79. Cabinet members can be expected to answer questions about:-
- a) The general direction and content of policies, e.g.
    - *Why do you think this is the right policy?*
    - *What factors lead you to implement this policy?*
    - *Council X is known to have had problems in this area – why do you think the same thing won't happen in Southampton?*
    - *What are the key results and outcomes you would expect to see in 6/12 months' time?*
  - b) The reasons for chosen priorities, e.g.
    - *Why are you proposing to do X before Y?*
    - *Why are you allocating resources to this proposal now when Y is in such a bad way?*
  - c) Performance within their portfolio area
    - *What is your opinion of the overall performance of your portfolio this quarter?*
    - *Which areas of under-performance are currently of greatest concern to you?*
    - *What steps do you propose to undertake to ensure any areas of under-performance are improved?*
    - *It seems to me there are problems/shortcomings with X:-  
How serious do you think they are?  
What steps do you intend to take to improve the service?  
How soon do you think we can expect to see significant improvements?*
    - *It seems to me that something went seriously wrong with X:-  
What involvement did you have in overseeing the process (name whatever the process is)?*

*Do you think you knew enough about what was happening, and if not, why not?*  
*Why weren't you aware of any problem(s) earlier?*  
*What steps have you taken to make sure this won't happen again?*  
*Do you think these steps go far enough? (And refer to any areas where you think the cabinet member is not going far enough)*

80. If the Cabinet Member defers to officers for questions of this type, it is quite in order for the Scrutiny Member to indicate they would like the response to come from the Cabinet Member. If the Cabinet Member is unable or unwilling to do so then the Scrutiny Member may wish to make a comment on it.
81. Officers can be expected to answer questions about:-
- a) Technical terms and jargon referred to in a report
    - *What does X mean?*
    - *Can you explain how X will work?*
  - b) The methodology for collecting data referred to in a report
    - *How did you go about collecting the figures set out in paragraph X?*
    - *To what extent do these figures convey the overall picture?*
  - c) The detailed interpretation of data referred to in a report
    - *What period do these figures cover? (If not clearly labelled)*
  - d) Detailed issues of technical implementation
    - *I see from the report that there were problems with X. Why were these not highlighted earlier?*
  - e) Detailed issues of technical problem solving
    - *How soon do you think these remedies will take effect? (The Cabinet Member can then be asked if they think this is soon enough)*
  - f) Advice given to the Cabinet Member
    - *Does the decision proposed/implemented reflect the advice provided to the Cabinet Member?*
82. If upon reading a report there are issues in it where Scrutiny Members want detailed answers to questions which depend on facts not contained in any supporting report, then Members should contact the Scrutiny Manager and indicate the line of questioning they wish to pursue and the detail they are looking to examine. The Scrutiny Manager will then indicate to the relevant officers the nature of the data and information they need to prepare to answer questions on at the meeting. If this is not done and a detailed question is subsequently asked at a meeting, the officer is entitled to respond that they are unable to answer a detailed question of this type and it may not be possible to pursue this line of questioning at the meeting.

## Directing the Right Questions to the Right People

83. The less senior a member of staff, the lower his or her responsibility for policy and resource decisions within their area of work. If involved in the Scrutiny process at all, the contribution of members of staff below the level of Head of Service should be confined to matters of fact within their day to day working environment, including the practical results of particular policy choices. For example, they might be involved in providing a factual briefing but it would not be appropriate for them to discuss or comment on resource allocation or policy matters. Therefore, the agreed convention is that:
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee / Scrutiny Panels will not normally require the attendance of any officer below Head of Service level where policy matters are involved;
  - Officers below Head of Service level may attend but questioning should be confined to matters of fact only and not resource allocation or policy;
  - Officers may be asked for their professional views on services or policies.

## Formulating Good Quality Recommendations

84. The attributes of effective recommendations reflect the key data quality principles the Council has been embedding in its work. The list below highlights the most common ones which are relevant to the overview and scrutiny process.
- **Clarity:** Recommendations need to be clear and intelligible. They should be unambiguous and say what is meant, not what the proposer may have intended to say.
  - **Specific:** As well as possessing clarity, a good recommendation should be specific. This is best achieved by concise recommendations that attempt to deal with a single point, as opposed to bringing together a number of trains of thought within a single recommendation.
  - **Realistic:** A successful recommendation is one that can make a real difference to policy development or service delivery. In formulating the recommendation it is therefore important to take account of what is realistically achievable. Scrutiny should ultimately be judged by the difference it makes to improving city life, and not by the number of recommendations members produce.
  - **Action focussed:** The impact of scrutiny can be assessed if the recommendations are based on an action that can subsequently be undertaken either by the Executive or a partner organisation. There may be occasions when passive recommendations (e.g. those that welcome a proposal, or support an action) are appropriate, but in the main effective recommendations are those that propose a specific course of action underpinned by evidence presented to the Scrutiny Committee, or related to an intellectual case developed by the Scrutiny Committee.
  - **Measurable:** If there are specific changes or improvements that members are looking for, then these should be set out in the recommendation with an appropriate timescale. This is key to being able to measure the impact of the scrutiny recommendation further down the line.



## Achieving more successful recommendations

85. The following list of practices may assist members in formulating better quality recommendations.

- **Read all reports prior to the meeting:** Reports contain useful information which is important for members to be aware of at the start of the consideration of any issue.
- **Issues in reports need to be understood:** Reading reports and gaining an understanding of the issues is likely to result in being able to ask more challenging questions. This in turn can lead to a greater understanding of the issue and generate higher quality recommendations that may result in a measurable difference to residents' lives. If the issues are not clear and understandable from reading the reports, briefings can be arranged through the Scrutiny Manager in advance of the meeting.
- **Identify the key issues that are most likely to be the subject of recommendations:** Members prefer meetings that do not last for more than 2 hours. Therefore, preparation which prioritises and identifies the key issues will enable members to focus on the most important matters in the meeting and to enable recommendations to be focussed on these issues.
- **Ask the right questions:** It is impossible to identify a list of right questions that can be applied in every circumstance, but if the answers to questions such as "who", "what", "why", "where", "when" and "how" are not apparent from the report, then there is likely to be a need to ask them at the meeting.
- **Listen to information provided at the meeting:** Listening skills are absolutely key to successful scrutiny outcomes. Useful and critical pieces of information can be elicited if the right questions are asked, but the benefit of the information generated through the question process is lost if a Scrutiny Committee is not listening carefully to the response provided. The most successful supplementary questions are likely to be those generated in response to answers given to the previous question.
- **Effective use of pre-meetings:** A pre-meeting provides an opportunity for members to identify collectively the key issues and plan a campaign for asking questions, ensuring all their key concerns get covered. It is at the discretion of the Chair as to whether a pre-meeting should be held.

## Blocks to making successful recommendations

86. There are a number of reasons why significant issues being discussed do not result in successful recommendations being made. Some of the most common are identified below:-

- **Using meetings to collect information:** Good scrutiny is about making a difference to the overall quality of city life. This objective cannot be achieved if members use the meeting simply to collect information. To take the process forward members need to use the information obtained. If further information is needed to advance the scrutiny process then members should raise their concerns with the Scrutiny Manager prior to the start of the meeting. If necessary individual or collective briefings can then be arranged with appropriate officers.
- **Using scrutiny meetings to undertake case-work:** Scrutiny meetings enable members to look at whole areas of work and activity. Asking questions about

instances resulting from an individual case distracts the Scrutiny Committee from broader issues that are the subject of the meeting. This is not to say that the understanding of detail is not important to the scrutiny process, but it must be directly related to the planned outcome from the scrutiny discussion.

- **Compiling recommendations that express opinions or request further information, but do not lead to action:** If recommendations go no further than expressing views on a particular topic, then there is little prospect of them leading to a tangible change in city life. Similarly, simply asking for more information to be supplied either to a future meeting, or outside of the formal meeting process, cannot lead to the Scrutiny Panel being able to generate an outcome without further consideration of the issue.
- **Not being clear on what is wanted at the point of making recommendations:** If a member making a recommendation is not clear on what is trying to be achieved and why for local residents, then there is little chance of the recommendation making a difference to the overall quality of city life.

## CONCLUSION

87. This handbook sets out practical advice to members for the conduct of overview and scrutiny in Southampton City Council. The information and guidelines it contains aim to provide guidance and information on the most important and most common issues scrutiny members are likely to encounter. The document aims to be comprehensive, but cannot be exhaustive. If any issues and questions arise which it does not cover or are missing, or information provided is not clear and requires further explanation and guidance, members should contact the officer listed below, who will be able to respond to any questions and problems.

Mark Pirnie  
Scrutiny Manager (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)  
023 8083 3886  
[Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk)

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	10 JULY 2025		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SCRUTINY MANAGER		
<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Jillian Kay	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3220
	<b>E-mail</b>	Jillian.kay@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	Mark Pirnie	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3886
	<b>E-mail</b>	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	
<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>			
N/A			
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>			
This item enables the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to monitor and track progress on recommendations made to the Executive at previous meetings.			
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>			
	(i)	That the Committee considers the responses from the Executive to recommendations from previous meetings and provides feedback.	
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
1.	To assist the Committee in assessing the impact and consequence of recommendations made at previous meetings.		
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>			
2.	None.		
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>			
3.	Appendix 1 of the report sets out the recommendations made to the Executive at previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC). It also contains a summary of action taken by the Executive in response to the recommendations.		
4.	The progress status for each recommendation is indicated and if the OSMC confirms acceptance of the items marked as completed they will be removed from the list. In cases where action on the recommendation is outstanding or the Committee does not accept the matter has been adequately completed, it will be kept on the list and reported back to the next meeting. It will remain on the list until such time as the Committee accepts the recommendation as completed. Rejected recommendations will only be removed from the list after being reported to the OSMC.		

<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>		
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>		
5.	None.	
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>		
6.	None.	
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>		
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>		
7.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.	
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>		
8.	None	
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>		
9.	None.	
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>		
10.	None	
<b>KEY DECISION</b>		No
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>		None directly as a result of this report
<b><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></b>		
<b>Appendices</b>		
1.	Monitoring Scrutiny Recommendations – 10 July 2025	
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>		
1.	None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?		No
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None	

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee: Holding the Executive to Account

Scrutiny Monitoring – 10 July 2025

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
20/03/25	Economic Development	Economic Development & Southampton Renaissance	1) That the Committee are provided with an organogram / flow chart to help members visualise how the various strategies and plans are connected and are aligned to deliver the city's growth and prosperity ambitions.	As part of the development of the City Plan and Corporate Plan, work is currently underway within the Policy and Strategic Partnerships team to develop a comprehensive (visual) policy framework, to show clearly how various strategies and plans are connected. This will include how delivery of the city's growth and prosperity ambitions will be achieved (and the way in which this will align with other objectives and missions). This will shortly be completed and OSMC will be provided with this as soon as it's available.	
24/04/25	Environment & Transport	Food Waste Collections	1) That the opportunity to allow food waste to be collected with the green waste is explored.	Combining food waste and garden waste is under investigation by the Project Team to assess the viability of this proposal.	In progress
			2) That, unless an All-Member Briefing is delivered on food waste collections, the item returns to the Committee in the Autumn when the project plan has been developed.	Given the widespread impact of the introduction of food waste collections, it is intended that an All-Member Briefing will be delivered in the Autumn.	In progress
24/04/25	Compliance & Leisure	Leisure Contract	1) That a summary of the findings from the dilapidation surveys carried out on all leisure sites is circulated to the Committee when available.	The surveys have not been completed yet but a summary will be shared with the Committee once we have all the reports back.	
12/06/25	Leader	St Mary's Community & Leisure Centre	1) That the proposal submitted by Testlands is circulated to the Committee	Proposal shared with the Committee – 13/06/25	Completed

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
			2) That the key details of the signed lease for St Mary's Leisure and Community Centre are shared with the Committee when available.		
12/06/25	Leader	City Plan	1) That, to raise the profile of the plan and to hold stakeholders to account for delivery, the OSMC schedules an annual review of progress against the agreed priorities and targets in the City Plan and includes City Plan priorities in lines of enquiry whenever appropriate to do so.	Incorporated into OSMC work programme – Scrutiny Manager	
			2) That, to ensure credibility, consideration is given to the replacing the term Net Zero with Carbon Neutral in the final version of the City Plan.	<p>The commitment to achieving net zero reflects the councils existing commitments made in a number of strategies including the 2022-30 Corporate Plan as well as the Southampton City Council climate change strategy.</p> <p>The Council along with almost 300 other local authorities declared a climate emergency in 2019. Committing to a net zero target (as opposed to carbon neutral) is in line with national targets set out in the climate change act 2008.</p> <p>Southampton City Council are also members of UK100 a membership organisation currently supporting 116 local authorities to fulfil their commitments to deliver net zero.</p> <p>On this basis it is proposed to continue to use the term net zero in the city plan, accepting that it is an ambitious target.</p>	
			3) That, to maintain momentum, the Executive reflects on whether an annual review of the	In addition to the proposed bi-annual summit we will co-ordinate an annual report	

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
12/06/25 Page 91			City Plan, alongside the bi-annual state of the city summit, would be advantageous.	on the delivery of programmes to support the Southampton 2035 City Plan missions.  The Southampton City Council Corporate Plan will also be shaped around delivery of the City Plan allowing for closer monitoring of the council's efforts to support delivery of the missions.  A set of key performance indicators are also being developed to track progress on each of the Southampton 2035 City Pan outcome statements.	
			4) That membership of the Renaissance Board is shared with the Committee.	<a href="#">About The Southampton Renaissance Board</a> – Link to organisational membership	
	Leader	Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC)	1) That the feedback received from the LGA Peer Review team from their follow up visit to the Council in October is shared with the Committee.	The LGA Peer Review progress review report will be shared with OSMC and published on the council's website.	
			2) That the Committee requests a report outlining progress against the approved CPC action plan for the June 2026 OSMC meeting.	Incorporated into OSMC work programme – Scrutiny Manager	

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