

POLICY GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Committee Objectives & Work Programme for the Municipal Year

Meeting Date: Monday 9 June 2025

Contact Officer: Town Clerk - Sharon Groth

The purpose of this report is to update Members on this Committee's objectives and priorities for the current municipal year, focusing on funding, governance, legal aspects of projects, and the review and adoption of policies and strategies. This will enable the Town Cler to ensure there is a manageable programme of works, and to deploy the necessary resources appropriately.

Background

The Policy, Governance & Finance Committee serves as the strategic oversight body for the Council's financial management, governance framework, and major policy decisions. Following the comprehensive work programme established in previous years, this report provides an updated status of ongoing projects and identifies new priorities for 2025/26.

The Committee's work programme continues to reflect the substantial portfolio of projects and responsibilities that have evolved since the previous municipal year, with particular focus on completing outstanding S106 projects, strengthening governance frameworks, and ensuring effective financial stewardship.

Current Situation

The Council maintains a significant and complex work programme across multiple project categories. Members are referred to previous reports from this cycle of meetings of the spending Committees detailing those objectives and projects [the Town Clerk will endeavour to pull a concise report together to be tabled at the meeting]; however the reports cover:

- **Completed Projects:** Major achievements from 2024/25
- **Projects In Progress:** Current active projects requiring ongoing oversight
- **Preparation Pool/Unfunded Projects:** Future priorities awaiting funding or capacity
- **S106 Projects:** Developer-funded projects requiring Council project management

Key Developments Since Last Report

The Council has successfully delivered several major projects while maintaining progress on complex multi-year initiatives. However, the scale and complexity of the work programme continues to place significant demands on officer capacity, particularly with WODC's

expectation that the Town Council will project manage S106 developments without or with limited district council support.

The emerging Strategic Plan, will provide clearer direction for prioritising resources and aligning committee work programmes with the Council's long-term objectives which the Town Clerk hopes to be in a position to present to Council before the summer recess.

Capacity and Resource Considerations

Members should note that the current work programme represents a substantial commitment of both financial and human resources. The timing of major projects has been carefully scheduled to balance officer capacity with delivery expectations, with some larger projects necessarily planned for 2026/27 to ensure quality delivery.

The Committee's oversight role remains critical in ensuring projects are delivered efficiently while maintaining the Council's governance standards and financial controls.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

a) Equality - The work programme includes projects that enhance accessibility and community facilities, ensuring equitable access to Council services and amenities across all demographics.

b) Biodiversity - Major projects incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures, particularly in open space developments and facility improvements, supporting the Council's environmental commitments.

c) Crime & Disorder - Infrastructure projects include appropriate lighting, sight lines, and design features that contribute to community safety and crime prevention.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency - All projects are assessed against the Council's Climate Emergency declaration, with sustainable design, energy efficiency, and environmental impact minimisation prioritised in project planning and delivery.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Key Risk Factors:

- **Capacity Risk:** The substantial work programme requires careful resource management to avoid over-commitment and ensure quality delivery

- **Financial Risk:** Multiple major projects require robust financial planning and monitoring to maintain fiscal responsibility
- **Delivery Risk:** External dependencies, particularly with S106 projects and partner organisations, require contingency planning
- **Governance Risk:** The complexity of projects demands strong oversight to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements

Risk Mitigation: The Committee's regular review of the work programme ensures early identification of capacity constraints and enables proactive resource reallocation. The Strategic Plan provides a framework for prioritising projects when resources are constrained.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The Committee's work programme delivers significant social value through:

- Enhanced community facilities and recreational opportunities
- Improved accessibility and inclusion across Council services
- Economic benefits through local procurement and employment
- Environmental improvements contributing to community wellbeing
- Strengthened governance and transparency in local decision-making

Financial implications

Key considerations for financial implications of the work programme include:

- **Revenue Impact:** Ongoing operational costs of new facilities and services
- **Capital Programme:** Phased delivery of major projects within approved budgets
- **External Funding:** Maximising grant opportunities and S106 contributions
- **Reserves Management:** Strategic use of earmarked reserves to support project delivery
- **Long-term Sustainability:** Ensuring projects contribute to the Council's long-term financial resilience

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider any further projects or Committee objectives it wishes to add to its work programme for 2025/26.