

TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 SEPTEMBER 2025

Public Questions

John Palmer

Can you explain the revelation, buried in the committee's first publication of its intended High-Level Work Programme (agenda item 10), that "Use of consultants" is relegated to being only a longer-term priority for scrutiny? Leader Heather Kidd prioritised "stopping using expensive consultants" in the "New Leader's Mission for Change" Newsroom story of 22 May. A declared Administration immediate priority in May: now being quietly kicked into the long grass?

Response:

Thank you for your question. In considering this matter it is first necessary to be clear about the function of scrutiny and of the difference between scrutiny and cabinet.

Cabinet is the decision making body of the council; scrutiny is not.

In response to the specific point it would be cabinet that holds the responsibility regarding renewing or cancelling a consultancy and they do not need the consent of, or an opinion from, this committee.

The item in our work programme relates to our committee decision to assess the historic use of consultants to see what lessons can be learned and to judge their effectiveness. It is scheduled for later in the cycle as we do need to allow time for the outcomes of any changes made on their recommendation to be measured.