

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 JANUARY 2009

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

11. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

WARD(S) AFFECTED: all

'D' RECOMMENDATION – (A) this report be used as a basis for reviewing the current work programme and planning the future scrutiny work of this committee; and

(B) Members confirm their preferred timing and format for the CAB (East Herts Citizens Advice Service) annual report.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 This report is intended to support the Community Scrutiny Committee in planning its work programme for 2008/09.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives

2.1 In monitoring the performance of the council's services and action plans, the Committee is monitoring the Council's achievement of all of its corporate objectives.

2.2 Any additional issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's corporate objectives.

2.3 Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives:

Fit for purpose, services fit for you

Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

Leading the way, working together

Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Items previously required or identified for the work programme are set out in Appendix 'A' (Page 11.5).
- 3.2 An invitation has been extended to all Members of Scrutiny committees to attend the next Corporate Business Scrutiny meeting (24 February 2009) for the agenda item 'Consideration of Service Plans'. This will allow those Members to discuss and debate issues relating to services falling under their terms of reference, within the required timescale.
- 3.3 Community Scrutiny has asked to receive an annual report from the CAB. The last report was presented to this committee on 22 April 2008. A return visit has been pre-scheduled for 7 April 2009. Members are asked to confirm whether the timing is still appropriate/suitable and whether they wish to change the format of the presentation and up-date the 'brief' given to the East Herts Citizens Advice Service (EHCAS) management team.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 The next meeting of this committee is the final one scheduled for the 2008/09 civic year. Members are asked if there are any topics/issues they would like added to the agenda on that date to complete their work for the year.
- 4.2 A consultation process began in the new year to give Members the opportunity to consider what topics/issues should be scrutinised during the 2009/10 civic year.
- 4.3 The choice of items should conform to the Council's agreed criteria as set out in Appendix 'B' (Page 11.6).
- 4.4 Members of this committee are asked to give further thought to this matter between now and the remaining consultation events which will be held during Spring 2009.
- 4.5 There are 5 main roles for scrutiny, and committees are encouraged to draw their topics/issues from across as wide a range as possible;
- policy development
 - policy review
 - performance monitoring
 - holding the executive to account and

- external scrutiny.
- 4.6 A review of the Council's constitution has recently been undertaken and a report with recommended amendments went to Corporate Business Scrutiny on 20 January 2009. It will now go onto full Council in March. One proposed amendment is to move responsibility for scrutiny of Building Control, Planning Enforcement and Development Control from Community Scrutiny Committee to Environment Scrutiny. Members may need to take this into account when considering potential Community Scrutiny topics/issues for next year.
- 4.7 Members will be asked to agree a draft work programme at the April 2009 meeting of this Committee - but there will be flexibility to amend this in the light of items published on the Forward Plans, issues which arise during the year of major concern to residents or in response to any Call-In activity (which falls under the terms of reference for this committee).
- 5.0 Consultation
- 5.1 Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from members of the public, the Executive and all Members.
- 6.0 Legal Implications
- 6.1 None arising from the recommendations of this report
- 7.0 Financial Implications
- 7.1 None arising from the recommendations of this report
- 8.0 Human Resource Implications
- 8.1 None.
- 9.0 Risk Management Implications
- 9.1 Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the Council and relations with partners.

Background Papers

Summary attached as Appendix 'B' (Page 11.6)

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny)

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review.

Contact Member: Cllr Colin Woodward – Chairman Community Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Ceridwen Pettit – Head of Strategic Direction and Performance Manager – Extn 2240

Contact Officer: Marian Langley, Scrutiny Officer – Extn 1612