

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 21 JULY 2009

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12. WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

WARD(S) AFFECTED: all

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

(B) a task and finish group be established to review 'Markets in East Herts'

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 This report is intended to support the Community Scrutiny Committee in planning its work programme for 2009/10.

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, identified or suggested for the 2009/10 work programme were agreed at Community Scrutiny committee meeting on 7 April 2009.
- 3.2 At the time of writing that report, the timetable for the 2010/11 Integrated Financial and Service Planning Timetable had not been finalised, so no agenda items linked to this process appeared on the work programme.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 The 2010/11 Integrated Financial and Service Planning Timetable has now been set and the relevant agenda item added to Community Scrutiny work programme. This is shown in **bold** in Appendix 'A' (Pages 12.5 - 12.6).
- 4.2 As part of the Integrated Financial and Service Planning process, all Members of scrutiny are invited to attend Corporate Business Scrutiny for two key Joint Scrutiny meetings at the start of 2010. These are also listed in Appendix 'A' (Pages 12.5 - 12.6) to give members advance notice of these dates.
- 4.3 At the time of the last meeting in April, there was uncertainty over when the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would release the 'Place Survey' data. It has now been released and members may have seen general coverage in the local government press. It is expected that the ORS analysed data (specific to East Herts) will be available after 28 July 2009. On the basis of this schedule, an item has been included in the agenda for Corporate Business Scrutiny (CBS) on 25 August 2009.
- 4.4 This will be a detailed report covering all aspects of the survey. It will include a number of annual performance indicators, arising from the survey results, which are of interest to Community Scrutiny. Members are invited to attend this CBS meeting to get a full picture of the survey findings and review these figures in context.
- 4.5 There is a time lag between 'Place Survey' report publication and the date of the next Community Scrutiny meeting on 27 October 2009. However, Members might wish to allocate some time on the agenda of the October meeting to discuss in more detail any significant issues arising from the data (which are pertinent to the

terms of reference of this committee) - if it is felt to still be relevant by this autumn date.

- 4.6 Earlier in the year, during the scrutiny evaluation and planning workshops, Members identified the topic of 'Markets in East Herts' as a priority area for review and suggested a task and finish group could be set up to undertake this work.
- 4.7 In the current economic climate, Members were very keen to ensure that East Herts was doing all it could to maintain the viability and vibrancy of our towns. The Economic Development team already have a number of other initiatives underway but, with the high visibility of markets making them an important indicator of town centre vitality, it was felt they justified a closer examination.
- 4.8 Members are aware that, as a Council, we have no way of influencing the fate of larger, national companies (such as Woolworths) but East Herts has more direct control over its own markets and has responsibility for the licensing of other similar events.
- 4.9 If Members agree to progress this work, the nominated Chairman of the task and finish group should be a full member of the Community Scrutiny committee. Political group leaders would then be approached to put forward members to sit on the group. In order to facilitate this selection, it would help if the Committee could indicate the broad scope/parameters of the review and give a timescale for reporting back to Community Scrutiny 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 According to the Council's Constitution, the scrutiny committees are responsible for the setting of their own work programme in consultation with the Executive and in doing so they shall take into account wishes of members on that Committee who are not Members of the largest political group on the Council.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Any additional meetings and every task and finish group has resource needs linked to officer support activity and time for officers from the services to make the required input.

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 12.7)

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny)
East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review.

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