



James Ellis

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**MEETING** : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE**

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillor David Andrews (Chairman)

Councillors P Boylan, E Buckmaster, R Carter, N Clements, N Cox,  
C Horner (Vice-Chairman), G McAndrew, S Nicholls, C Redfern,  
M Swainston, J Thomas, G Williams and D Woollcombe

**Substitutes**

Conservative Group: Councillors A Holt and G Williamson  
Green Group: Councillors V Burt, C Hart, V Smith and  
S Watson  
Labour: Councillor D Jacobs  
Liberal Democrat: Councillors S Marlow and R Townsend

*(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member  
to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)*

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- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
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## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

### 2. Minutes - 12 September 2023 (Pages 6 - 20)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023.

### 3. Chairman's Announcements

### 4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' Declarations of Interest.

### 5. Draft 'A Listening Council: East Herts Council's principles for information giving, engagement and consultation' document (Pages 21 - 33)

Consideration of the draft proposed set of principles governing how the council will inform, engage and consult residents, businesses and stakeholders. The principles have been set out in a simple, draft document titled 'A Listening Council'.

### 6. Community Forum and Development Management Forum (Pages 34 - 50)

### 7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme (Pages 51 - 58)

## 8. Urgent Items

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

# Agenda Item 2

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 12  
SEPTEMBER 2023, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman)  
Councillors E Buckmaster, R Carter,  
N Clements, N Cox, C Horner,  
G McAndrew, S Nicholls, C Redfern,  
M Swainston, J Thomas and G Williams

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Daar, B Deering and T Hoskin

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Scrutiny Officer
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Claire Spendley	- Environmental Health

	Practitioner (Environment Team Manager)
Paul Thomas-Jones	- Service Manager – Environmental Health

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Bibby	- Hertfordshire County Council
Police Sergeant Miller	- Hertfordshire Constabulary

126 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Boylan. It was noted that Councillor Williamson was substituting for Councillor Boylan.

127 MINUTES - 21 MARCH AND 20 JUNE 2023

Councillor G Williamson proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 20 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 20 June 2023, be

confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

128 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Hertfordshire County Councillor Phil Bibby and Police Sergeant Miller (Hertfordshire Constabulary) to the meeting.

129 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

130 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report that considered the issue of pedestrian safety in Hertford Castle Ward, and in particular, focussed on a number of concerns that had been raised by Councillor Carter.

Councillor Carter set out the reasons for submitting this matter for scrutiny. She referred to specific evidence from Hertford Castle Ward and the evidence encouraging people to walk as well as residents feeling safe whilst walking and cycling.

Councillor Carter put several questions to Hertfordshire County Councillor Phil Bibby in respect of travel policy and whether equality was given to pedestrians and cyclists and how this was reflected in budgets, whether there was any specific funding for new projects and was funding ring-fenced for pedestrians and pavement repairs. She commented



that it was easier to get a pothole filled than to fix a pavement considered to be too narrow.

County Councillor Bibby talked about the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) policy and the cyclist and pedestrian first approach. He summarised the process for budgeting for road and footway repairs and repairs to cycleways. Councillor Bibby set out the size guidelines worked to in respect of site surveys and repairs to defects to roads, cycleways and footways.

Councillor Carter commented that many motorists were driving too fast and that many communities e.g. Hornsmill, would like to see a 20mph introduced into the area. County Councillor Bibby said that schools featured strongly in the criteria for 20-mph speed limits. He commented on the significant capital costs of setting up a 20-mph zones in potentially 500 areas in the County in terms of the traffic calming measures that were required to force motorists to drive more slowly. He explained the needs intervention policy which ensured that surfaces were reviewed regularly,

Councillor Buckmaster touched on road conditions and Hertfordshire County Council speed and volume studies. He also mentioned public engagement and the response rates to statutory consultation. He talked about initiatives to make walking a more attractive option such as cutting back weeds to prevent the narrowing of footways.

Councillor Buckmaster referred to the problems associated with pavement parking forcing some pedestrians out onto the road when negotiating

parked vehicles. He talked about school drop off and pick times and advisory 20-mph speed limits. He explained the process involved in supporting a request for a 20mph and the need for open consultation.

Councillor Redfern expressed her concerns in respect of pavement parking. County Councillor Bibby said that enforcement against pavement parking only displaced the problem to other locations. He also talked about the weight of evidence required in terms of accident statistics before action could be taken to enforce a lower speed limit.

Police Sergeant Miller talked about enforcement of speeds using speed camera traps and traffic speed boards. He said that the police did what they could and there was a balancing exercise of demand versus available resources.

Councillor McAndrew addressed the Committee at length in respect of Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and the policing of 20-mph zones and the consultation process. Councillor McAndrew explained how the introduction of a LCWIP would help support the council in securing Government Grants. He also referred to the issues caused by the introduction of traffic calming measures and people travelling at speed over humps.

Councillor Clements asked about the limit of achieving change in terms of the constraints on what Councils and authorities were trying to achieve. County Councillor Bibby said that the chief constraint was funding. He confirmed that an LCWIP was needed to

attract Government funding and said that a big barrier at consultation was the viewpoint from the public of “not in my backyard”. He confirmed that the LCWIP was needed to attract Government funding. He said that a better approach was to take the public on the journey of the changes rather than imposing changes. Councillor Buckmaster added that it was easier to put measures in place in new growth areas to encourage people to walk to schools and shops. Other areas were a challenge.

Councillor Clements sought clarification on the approach of clearing footpaths in winter months. HCC Bibby explained the County Council’s priorities and explained the limitations.

Councillor Carter asked what powers the police had to enforce against pavement parking. Sergeant Miller explained what constituted an obstruction said that some tickets were being issued for pavement parking as well as letters being sent to the registered keepers. He explained that the fines issued were not to some people, much of a deterrent.

County Councillor Bibby explained that enforcement of double yellow lines and traffic regulation orders would not prevent 100% of illegal parking or vehicles obstructing the footway. He confirmed to Councillor Carter that there were strict criteria for the siting of fixed speed cameras and resources had to be directed to where it would make the most difference.

The Chairman, Councillor Andrews, referred to the need to educate people in respect of road safety.

Councillor Nicholls commented on perceptions of speed and agreed with the need to educate parents regarding acceptable driving behaviour near schools.

Councillor Carter said that more work needed to be done to encourage walking over the use of the private motor car. Police Sergeant Miller explained the role of the Police in schools to educate children.

The Chairman said he would encourage all schools to have travel plans and thanked County Councillor Bibby and Police Sergeant Miller for attending. Councillor Andrews proposed and Councillor Carter seconded, a motion that the issue of Pedestrian Safety to brought back to Members following discussions between the Chairman and Vice Chairman on a way forward. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the issue of pedestrian safety be brought back to Members following discussion between the Chairman and Vice Chairman on a way forward.

#### 131 AIR QUALITY IN EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report that updated Members on the following issues in respect of air quality in East Herts:

- the latest air quality figures for the three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in East Hertfordshire
- progress on producing the new Air Quality Action Plan to submit to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- progress on the council's DEFRA-funded active travel project that started in April 2023.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability talked about the progress on the active travel project and improvements in air quality during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that air quality had begun to deteriorate as vehicle traffic volumes had steadily increased.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability said that cars were producing fewer emissions but there were a lot more cars on the road. He said that tackling air quality was a shared problem that required shared solutions. There was a general discussion and debate in respect of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Councillor Buckmaster explained that monitoring was a role for public health and that Hertfordshire County Council had a substantial report coming out soon.

Councillor Horner commented on the importance of behaviour change and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP). Following a question from Councillor McAndrew, the Head of Housing and Health provided an update in respect of the latest work of the

breathe easy group. He was concerned about the information contained in the appendices.

Councillor McAndrew commented that there was an expectation that Members would be considering at this meeting an Air Quality Action Plan but that instead Members were being presented with a scoping document and he was disappointed with this considering the work which had already been done on this including a declaration of a climate emergency. He explained the need for Officers to develop the document to carry out the work, of the need for resources and manpower to carry out the functions given in the climate change emergency.

Councillor McAndrew sought assurances that the council had engaged with businesses, people walking and cycling.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability responded to the points made by Councillor McAndrew. He explained what consultations had been carried out and were in the pipeline and referred in particular to some of the more complex issues. He commented on the timescale for public consultation and the scoping document.

The Head of Housing and Health explained that what was before Members was not the final document and that more work was needed with the results being reported to Executive in October.

Councillor Nicholls proposed and Councillor Redfern seconded, a motion that the Air Quality Management

Area data in respect of pollution increases be acknowledged and a further report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2024. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that that the Air Quality Management Area data in respect of pollution increases be acknowledged and a further report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2024 for due consideration.

132 COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY AND PRIORITIES 2023/24

The Executive Member for Communities submitted a report that set out the updated priorities for 2023/24, with a slightly reworded policy in respect of the community grants policy. The Executive Member explained that this matter would be reported to Council on 18 October 2023.

The Executive Member for Communities talked about updates to community grants and reductions in 2022/23. She said that the previous maximum grant limit of £5,000 would be replaced with a grant range of £500 to £3,000. She stated that this range would enable the council to still make a significant number of grants.

Members were advised that other projects from community groups would be eligible for grants from the council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. These two extra funding programmes would be entitled to

cultural activities and environmental sustainability grants, which together totalled another £40,000.

The Executive Member for Communities talked about reductions in community grant funding and said that the community grants policy would be amended to reflect the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Williamson commented on how many smaller grants could be given out and whether some organisations might no longer qualify for smaller grants where they might previously have been awarded a grant of £300.

Councillor Clements commented on priorities and providing support to those who needed mental health support with gaining employment. He referred to supporting people with gaining CV writing skills and helping people into work.

Councillor McAndrew said that the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee had a grants funding programme, and this did include applications from town and parish councils. Councillor McAndrew asked a question in respect of grant funding and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer referred to the work of the Healthy Hubs and other return to work schemes. A question was asked in relation to Town and Parish Council precepts in terms of whether there was a list of the amounts that related to the precepts.



The Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer said a list was produced by Benefits and Revenues. He referred to alterations that had been made to the scoring assessment process.

The Chairman commented on how the revised policy might impact on Town and Parish councils in terms of compatibility given that they could precept or set a precept themselves. The Chairman asked Members to send any further comments to the Executive Member for Communities as the matter would be presented to council on 18 October 2023.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Clements seconded, a motion that the revised Community Grants Policy, including the priorities for 2023/24 be considered, and comments be passed to the Executive Member for Communities prior to presentation to the Executive for onward recommendation to Council for approval.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the revised Community Grants Policy including the priorities for 2023/24 be considered, and comments be passed to the Executive Member for Communities prior to presentation to the Executive for onward recommendation to Council for approval.

The Scrutiny Officer submitted the work programme report and explained that the work programme of items had been drafted following topics suggested at a July Workshop when Members were asked to put forward ideas for scrutiny which Members could review for the 2023/24 civic year.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that clarification had been sought from Heads of Service on some of the topics and responses had been forwarded to Members on 31 August. She said that it was now for Members to take a view on the topics and decide how these should be scrutinised and to determine the reporting timeframe for each topic.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the items listed in the work programme and agreed the following timescales for topics:

Social Housing Providers – Scrutiny Officer to seek information from Head of Housing and Health then approach Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to seek information on the questions posed. Information will be fed back to Members prior to January 2024 when Members will be asked to decide next steps. January 2024

Access to parks for disabled children – site visit in 2024 to gather evidence. Scrutiny Officer to liaise with key officer and advice Members.

Climate Change – Target Carbon Neutrality – January 2024 – Summary Bulletin to be circulated on the questions posed.

UK Share Prosperity Money – Overview and Scrutiny noted that an all Member Briefing was planned for 7 December when Members would be provided with a summary of all sources of funding. This could again be considered in the context of the Work Programme in January 2024.

Digital exclusion – The issue of literacy was discussed and Members sought further information from HCC.  
March 2024

IT and Digital Innovation (Cyber Security) – March 2024  
– Summary Information Bulletin

Smart Devices and improvement to Council services – Scrutiny Officer to approach Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Dr Howe (whose area is digital innovation and, smart devices and social change).

Policing – financial support given to PCSO provision, financial breakdowns. Scrutiny Officer to contact HAPTC for information - March 2024.

Councillor Clements proposed and Councillor Cox seconded, a motion that, subject to the above timescales, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme in Appendix 1 for 2023-24 be agreed. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that, subject to the above timescales, the work programme in Appendix 1 for 2023-24 be agreed.

134 URGENT ITEMS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

## East Herts Council Report

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**Report by:** Councillor Chris Wilson, Executive Member for Resident Engagement

**Report title:** Draft 'A Listening Council: East Herts Council's principles for information giving, engagement and consultation' document

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### Summary

- This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider and provide comments on the draft proposed set of principles governing how the council will inform, engage and consult residents, businesses and stakeholders. The principles have been set out in a simple, draft document titled 'A Listening Council'. This committee report invites input at the earliest stage, that is, prior to the Executive considering whether to endorse the document for public consultation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny Committee members:**

- (A) To consider the draft 'A Listening Council' set of principles for informing, engaging and consulting residents, businesses and stakeholders and provide comments to the Executive Member for Resident Engagement.**

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 The Executive Member for Resident Engagement has reflected on the council's approach to involving residents, businesses and stakeholders in the council's decisions which affect them. While the Executive Member recognises there have been examples of excellent practice across the council in recent years, he now wishes to propose that the council enshrines open and transparent information giving, engagement and consultation at the heart of its way of working. To this end, a document has been drafted that lays out in as simple and straightforward a way as possible, the principles the council will follow when seeking to inform, engage and consult residents, businesses and stakeholders.

## **2.0 Reason(s)**

2.1 East Herts Council provides a significant number of services for local people and businesses alike. In addition, within a three tier government environment – county, district and parish – the district provides many of the services that have a considerable impact on individuals and communities, for example, though certainly not limited to:

- a) planning policy and decisions on developments both large and small
- b) waste collection
- c) custodianship of parks and open spaces
- d) efforts to tackle the climate emergency
- e) housing, especially if a household is facing homelessness
- f) regulation of pubs, nightclubs, taxis, premises selling food, animal welfare establishments and the like
- g) provision of leisure facilities.

2.2 In many ways, the council itself can be considered a 'partner' to East Herts residents' regarding their wellbeing and day-to-

day enjoyment of their surroundings. Thus, it is incumbent on the council to make every effort to work with and listen to residents, as well as businesses and stakeholders, not least of which because this helps the council make better decisions. Put simply, when the council talks to the people who live and work in the district, it can learn about problems, generate ideas for dealing with shared and often thorny issues and, hopefully, engender mutual understanding and 'buy in'.

- 2.3 With the pressures facing the council, residents, businesses and stakeholders alike, it can be a struggle to focus on meaningful engagement. That said, there are undoubtedly pockets of good practice within the council such as:
- a) involvement of local groups in identifying potential priorities for use of UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources
  - b) the well-established East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum and
  - c) the council's work with local people through the Hertford Playground Alliance to codesign a new children's play facilities at Hartham Common, a joint approach that saw the council shortlisted for the Municipal Journal's 'Delivering Better Outcomes' Award in 2022.
- 2.4 At the same time, however, the council does not have a clear, published set of principles governing how it will inform, engage and consult. The draft proposed 'A Listening Council' document at Appendix A aims to address this gap.
- 2.5 'A Listening Council' sets out what the council believes are the building blocks for effective information giving, engagement and consultation facilitated by the council, these being:
- transparency
  - straightforward, jargon-free messaging

- involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic
- a genuine desire to listen
- multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods
- reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard
- allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer
- a central, active role for all elected members
- listening to feedback.

2.6 The draft document makes clear that the building blocks are not just theory; it is proposed that the council will use them to guide information giving, engagement and consultation exercises.

2.7 Elsewhere on this Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting agenda is a proposal to establish:

- a) Community Forums which would bring together residents, members, housing developers and other stakeholders to raise and work together on the myriad issues that can naturally arise as new communities establish themselves on new, strategic housing developments and
- b) Development Management Forums which would enable local people and interested parties to input to proposed developments at an early, pre-planning application stage.

2.8 These two proposals are examples of how the council can put the theory laid out in 'A Listening Council' into practice for the direct benefit of local people.

2.9 The version of the 'A Listening Council' document before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the first draft. Members are invited to scrutinise its purpose and content and provide



feedback for the Executive Member for Resident Engagement to consider prior to presenting it to the Executive for their endorsement to consult the public about it. It is anticipated that should Executive endorse the document for consultation, Overview and Scrutiny Committee members will, should they wish, have an opportunity to scrutinise the post-consultation version.

### **3.0 Options**

- 3.1 Continue to carry out information giving, engagement and consultation on a case-by-case basis without a published set of principles – NOT RECOMMENDED as this can lead to problems such as inconsistency, perceived tokenism and a missed opportunity to learn from involvement exercises on an ongoing basis.
- 3.2 Endorse the document for presentation by the Executive Member for Resident Engagement to the Executive, including making suggested amendments for the consideration of the Executive Member should Overview and Scrutiny Committee members so choose – RECOMMENDED.

### **4.0 Risks**

- 4.1 There is a possible reputational risk that should the council ultimately adopt 'A Listening Council' it may be unable, due to capacity and/or financial resources, to conduct all its involvement exercises in line with the principles and thus invite criticism. This risk can be minimised by developing best practice guidance for officers and members and continually learning from different exercises on how best to involve people in a meaningful way within the resources available to the council.

## **5.0 Implications/Consultations**

### 5.1 Community Safety

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.2 Data Protection

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.3 Equalities

The 'A Listening Council' document explicitly includes 'Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard' among its underlying principles. It is to be expected that some groups with protected characteristics may go unheard by the council. Prior to finalisation of the document and its presentation to members for adoption, a full equalities impact assessment will be conducted to ensure any issues are recognised and addressed.

### 5.4 Environmental Sustainability

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.5 Financial

None arising directly from this report as, ultimately, any exercises to inform, engage or consult will be carried out within existing budgets.

### 5.6 Health and Safety

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.7 Human Resources

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.8 Human Rights

None arising directly from this report.

### 5.9 Legal

Some of the council's work requires, by statute and/or government guidance, consultation to be conducted via prescribed means and/or over a set period of time. This applies, for example, to consultation on revisions to the District Plan and changes to the council's various licensing policies. Ultimate adoption of the 'A Listening Council' principles would not in any way over-ride or fetter the council's adherence to externally determined consultation requirements.

5.10 Specific Wards  
No.

## **6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

6.1 Background Information: None.

6.2 Appendices

- a) **Appendix A** – draft proposed 'A Listening Consultation: East Herts Council's principles for information giving, engagement and consultation'.

### **Contact Member**

Councillor Chris Wilson, Executive Member for Resident Engagement  
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### **Contact Officer**

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### **Report Author**

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# A Listening Council

East Herts Council's principles for  
information giving, engagement and consultation

[eastherts.gov.uk](http://eastherts.gov.uk)



# A Listening Council

At East Herts Council, we are committed to fostering open and inclusive dialogue with our residents, businesses and partners. We believe that meaningful and transparent conversations are essential for informed decision-making and the development of effective solutions. Our principles for information giving, engagement and consultation will guide us in creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued so that, we truly believe, collaboration will lead to better outcomes.

## Understanding the different approaches

There are lots of ways the council can and does work with and involve residents, businesses and other partners on the things we do. The main ways are as follows.

### 1) Information giving

- This is a one-way form of communication where we provide people with details about what we are doing or planning to do but are not seeking input into those things.
- Sometimes we will simply give information not because we don't want to hear from people but because we are just telling people about something we have already consulted or updating or reminding them about our day-to-day services.
- Examples of ways in which will give information include social media posts, newsletters and press releases to local media.

### 2) Engagement

- Engagement is a more interactive approach where we involve people and ask for their input, opinions and feedback.
- Engagement can be ongoing and tends to focus on ongoing matters rather than being specifically linked to a single decision or issue. The aim is that through longer term engagement, people can help the council develop its overall priorities and how to address ongoing issues.
- Examples of the council enabling engagement include ongoing forums, community meetings and online discussion groups.

### 3) Consultation

- Consultation is a form of engagement whereby the council actively seeks the views, suggestions and preferences of people on a specific matter.
- The goal of consultation is to give people a meaningful role in shaping new policies and a genuine opportunity to influence specific decisions facing the council.
- Examples of ways of consulting include surveys, interviews, expert panels and meetings convened to address a specific proposed policy or decision that needs to be taken.

#### **Building blocks of effective information giving, engagement and consultation**

Here are the building blocks for effective information giving, engagement and consultation facilitated by the council:

- transparency
- straightforward, jargon-free messaging
- involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic
- a genuine desire to listen
- multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods
- reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard
- allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer
- a central, active role for all elected members
- listening to feedback.

#### **Putting theory into practice**

Our building blocks are not just theory, we will use them to ensure we are a **Listening Council** in the following ways.

##### **1) Transparency**

- We believe in clear and open communication.
- We will provide simple explanations of any involvement exercise's purpose, scope and potential impact, ensuring participants can see the context and importance of their contributions.

## **2) Straightforward, jargon-free messaging**

- Our goal is to make sure as many people as possible understand what we are trying to say because we know that not everyone will be familiar with how the council works.
- We will share our ideas and information without special jargon or technical language that could be confusing.
- We believe that by using everyday language, what we want to say can be most easily grasped by a diverse audience.

## **3) Involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic**

- We will seek the views of wards members and other local stakeholders on how best to reach local communities.
- We will use local printed media with the greatest readership in the locality where we are working with people.
- Whenever possible, we will use local examples and references in our consultation and engagement material to bring the issues to life for any particular community.

## **4) A genuine desire to listen**

- We want to hear our residents', businesses' and other stakeholders' views.
- We will encourage thoughtful contributions, allowing participants to share their expertise, concerns and hopes.
- We will provide opportunities for in-depth discussions and encourage participants to provide well-informed feedback.
- We will treat everyone with respect and empathy, fostering an environment where diverse opinions are heard and valued. Above all, we want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts.

## **5) Multi-channel involvement; not simply relying on online methods**

- We are dedicated to making our involvement processes accessible to all participants.

- We recognise that each exercise we run is unique and so we will tailor our approaches to suit the specific context and preferences of participants, adapting our methods to the circumstances.
- We will provide multiple channels for involvement, including, for example, online communication, public meetings, surveys and other methods to better match people's preferences and needs.

## **6) Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard**

- We see inclusivity and diversity as essential to high quality, meaningful involvement with the council.
- We will embrace a wide range of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds.
- We will actively seek input from individuals and groups representing different demographics, cultures and viewpoints to ensure we have as full an understanding of the issues at hand as possible.

## **7) Allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer**

- We want to engage early and often.
- By involving people early and maintaining ongoing communication, we believe we can help make sure their insights shape the outcome.
- As much as we possibly can, we will involve people at different stages of a project or decision-making process, from when we have our first ideas, to the time to decide whether to put the idea into action and to evaluation of the project.
- For any given issue on which we are seeking views, we will aim to produce (a) a clear, concise summary, (b) a more detailed document and (c) a detailed document with more in-depth background information.

## **8) A central, active role for all elected members**



- We understand that during any engagement or consultation processes all elected members have a responsibility to voice the interests, opinions and feedback of the residents they represent.
- In any exercise, elected members play a crucial role in ensuring that accurate and relevant information about the issues is communicated to the public.
- Elected members can help facilitate meaningful dialogue between the community and decision-makers.
- Given their insight into their local communities, elected members can raise important issues, propose amendments or suggest alternatives based on what they've picked up from the people, businesses and others in their area.
- We recognise that elected members may facilitate discussions aimed at finding common ground and achieving consensus.

## **9) Listening to feedback**

- We will take responsibility for acting on what we've learned from our engagement and consultation.
- We will provide feedback to participants on how their input has influenced decisions and outcomes, thus helping to demonstrate transparency in our actions.
- We will always try to improve our information giving, engagement and consultation processes based on feedback and lessons learned.

Version: draft for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

# Agenda Item 6

## East Herts Council Report

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 7 November 2023

**Report by:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

**Report title:** Listening Council: Community Forum and Development Management Forum

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### Summary

- This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider and provide observations on the proposal to set up Community Forums for Strategic Sites across the district and the proposal to establish a Development Management Forum. The outline for Community Forums is set out in **Appendix A** and the outline for the Development Management Forum is set out in **Appendix B**.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (A) **To consider the proposal for setting up Community Forums for Strategic Sites as outlined in Appendix A and provide any observations to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth; and**
- (B) **To consider the proposal for establishing Development Management Forum as outlined in Appendix B and provide any observations to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.**

## **1.0 Proposal(s)**

1.1 This report sets out the following proposals:

- 1) To establish Community Forums for large strategic sites being developed across the district in order to provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups, elected members and council officers to engage with each other, raise issues of interest or concern for existing and new communities with a view to enhancing the quality of community life and communication; and
- 2) To establish a Development Management Forum for planning applications which meet certain criteria. Generally, these would be complex/sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes. If the criteria are met then a Development Management Forum can be held early on in the planning application process in order for residents to share planning concerns with Members, Officers and Applicants in an open and transparent way.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 The Council wants people and communities to actively engage in the planning process and have an influence over the future development of their areas. We also know that people want to be involved in the decisions that shape the places they live, work and play.

2.2 Effective community engagement can lead to better plans, better decisions and more satisfactory outcomes, and it can help to avoid delays in the planning process too; however most importantly, it also improves confidence in the fairness of the planning system. Engagement needs to be meaningful

and to occur from the earliest stages in the planning process to enable community views to be reflected in development plans and individual development proposals.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 There are already opportunities built into the planning system to ensure people can get involved and have their say, including when local planning authorities are preparing their development plans and also during the development management processes when decisions are being made about proposed developments.
- 3.2 Local councils are required by the government to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The role of the SCI is to outline standards for community involvement in the planning process and to identify ways to achieve these standards. The Council's current SCI was adopted on the 23 October 2019 and is available to view online: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/statement-community-involvement-sci>.
- 3.3 The SCI 2019 describes how the public, businesses and interest groups within East Herts can get involved in the creation of local planning policy and the planning application process. This is essential to help improve understanding and openness of the planning process.
- 3.4 The Council wishes to involve all sectors of the community in the planning process and is committed to always meeting or exceeding the minimum legal requirements for consultation set out in the Planning Regulations.
- 3.5 A key area where community engagement ensures that stakeholder voices are incorporated into the planning process is through the Council's masterplanning process. The Council

has a policy in its District Plan (Policy DES1) which requires that all 'significant' applications undertake a masterplanning process<sup>1</sup>. The policy sets out that the masterplan will be collaboratively prepared involving the Council, site promoters, landowners, town and parish councils and other relevant stakeholders. The masterplan will be further informed by public participation. Further information on the Council's masterplanning approach is available to view online:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/masterplans>

- 3.6 The Council has already established a series of 'Steering Groups' across the district. These were set up to consider, review and critically assess emerging masterplans for the strategic site allocations in the District Plan. These groups have been very successful in allowing communities and other stakeholders to engage much earlier in the planning process.
- 3.7 Involving communities in proposals prior to formal planning processes provides an opportunity to contribute, share views and improve understanding of proposals, thereby reducing the risk of objections at a later stage.
- 3.8 The Council's approach to masterplanning and involvement of key stakeholders as part the masterplanning steering groups has provided a valuable contribution at an early stage of the planning process. Furthermore, engagement with existing and new residents is recognised as being vital as development starts happening on the ground. This is supported by recent experience at Bishop's Stortford North where poor communications from the housebuilders has meant that there has been little information about the development as it progresses and how issues on the ground are being managed

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<sup>1</sup> The significance of a development will be measured not only on its scale, but on the potential impact on the community and local character of the place into which it is to be introduced. Generally, a threshold of fifty homes or more will apply. However, in some cases, a smaller scale of development may be considered to have a significant effect.

as they arise.

3.9 In recognition of this and building on the success of the Masterplanning Steering Group approach, the Council proposes to set up Community Forums for large strategic sites being developed across the district to provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups, elected members and council officers to engage with each other over the lifetime of the development. The Forums will offer an opportunity for existing and new communities to raise issues of interest and concern, with a view to enhancing the quality of community life and communication.

3.10 **Appendix A** sets out the terms of reference for the Community Forums and initially it is proposed that the following Community Forums are established immediately:

- Stortford Fields (Part of Bishop's Stortford North)
- Gilston Area

3.11 In addition to this, it is anticipated that Community Forums will be required in the near future for:

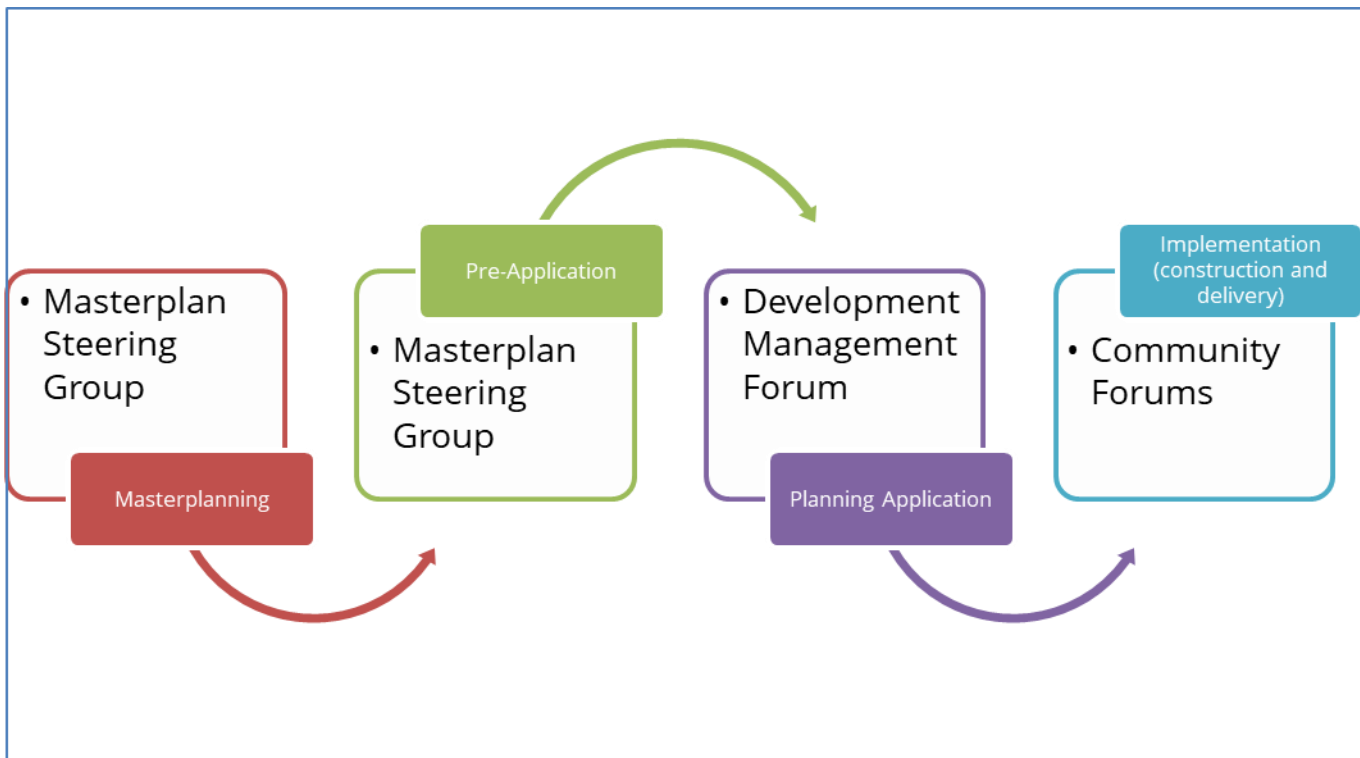
- East of Stevenage
- Hert3

3.12 This is not an exhaustive list and it can be kept under review depending on the timing of other strategic sites coming forward. For example, Community Forums for Ware 2 and Birchall Garden Suburb will also be appropriate depending on the outcome of the outline planning applications. Equally, the Community Forum proposed for Stortfields Fields may only be short term whilst the Community Trust is being established.

3.13 In addition to setting up Community Forums for certain large strategic sites, the Council is also proposing to establish a

Development Management Forum for planning applications which meet certain criteria. Generally, these would be complex/sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes. If all the criteria are met then a Development Management Forum can be held early on in the planning application process to facilitate the sharing of residents planning concerns and opportunities to enhance proposals with Members, Officers and Applicants in an open and transparent way.

- 3.14 A Development Management Forum is a meeting where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early on in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application. It is an informal meeting and the forum will not determine the application. The decision on planning applications will still be determined by the Council's Development Management Committee or through delegation to officers.
- 3.15 **Appendix B** sets out the detail of how the Development Management Forum would operate. The aim of the Forum is to allow early and constructive discussion of the planning issues raised by residents, to explore the scope for building consensus and resolving concerns while allowing enhancements informed by local knowledge to be considered into a proactive manner.
- 3.16 The diagram below shows how Steering Groups, Community Forums and the Development Management Forum sit in the planning application process.



## 4.0 Options

4.1 The Council could continue with the current practice and arrange meetings with residents as appropriate. However, given the scale of development and issues that can arise on the ground, this would be a missed opportunity. Instead, both proposals would allow the Council to act as a facilitator in bringing relevant parties together to discuss planning matters in an open and transparent way. It also opens out Forums to all residents, should they be interested in the matters for discussion.

## 5.0 Risks

5.1 If the Council were to continue meeting on an ad hoc basis with residents or leaving it solely to developers/applicants, there is a possible reputational risk. Whilst it is not always within the Council's control to resolve potential issues, it can facilitate a discussion with the applicants and concerned residents.



## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Data Protection**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Equalities**

None arising directly from this report. It is important that the Council reaches out to all residents and provide opportunities to listen to concerns. The Forums will be open to all, and compliment the approach outlined in the Councils Statement of Community Involvement.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Financial**

None arising directly from this report. This is on the basis that the proposals can be implemented using current resources and do not require any additional financial support beyond existing budgets.

### **Health and Safety**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Human Resources**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Human Rights**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Legal**

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out the relevant legislation and regulations relating to consultation

requirements for plan making and planning applications. The proposed forums do not affect these requirements.

### **Specific Wards**

None.

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

**Appendix A:** Community Forums – Implementation of Strategic Sites

**Appendix B:** Development Management Forum for East Herts

### **Contact Member**

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## **Appendix A: Community Forums**

### **Implementation of Strategic Sites**

#### **Scope & Purpose**

- To provide an opportunity for developer/s, residents, community groups, elected members and council officers to engage with each other.
- To offer an opportunity for residents to raise issues of interest or concern for existing and new communities with a view to enhancing the quality of community life.
- For council officers and elected members to share issues raised by residents with relevant parties and report back responses and / or that appropriate action has been taken.
- To provide regular, accurate and timely information to residents regarding relevant developments. This may involve planning related information as well as other issues related to growth pertaining to the developments covered by the forum including education, transport, community facilities and community development, where possible.

#### **Structure, Management and Format**

- The forum will be chaired by the Executive Member Planning and Growth.
- There will be two to three 'open to all' formal meetings a year, where appropriate, and other forms of engagement where necessary.
- Meeting dates will be set, wherever possible, on a rolling basis a year in advance.
- A range of methods will be used to deliver the forum. The most appropriate format will be chosen for the meeting in consultation with attendees and in accordance with the circumstances at the time. This could be in person meetings or virtual meetings.
- For in person meetings, appropriate venues related to the new development will be used to allow all residents to have an opportunity to attend.
- The format and agendas of individual meetings will be determined by the Chair and Head of Planning and Building Control based on the progress of each specific development. Suggestions for agenda items will be welcomed. The agenda for each Forum will include a standard item on suggested items for future sessions.
- The Code of Conduct set out below will assist in the running and management of the meeting so anyone present at the meeting is treated with respect and people act in a fair and responsible way. All attendees will be expected to abide by this.

## Communication and Publicity

A range of measures will be used to communicate with residents about the forums, including local advertising via flyers, web page, existing parish publications, email and social media.

- Presentations and notes will be published online.
- A distribution list will be developed and maintained based on registered forum attendees and any others wishing to be kept informed. Forums will be open to all. There will also be a registration form available to complete. Surveys and feedback mechanisms will be employed from time to time to ensure forums are meeting residents' needs and to facilitate continuous improvement.
- Agendas will be published no later than 7 days prior to the meeting.

## Code of Conduct

All people attending Forum events must undertake to act in a fair and responsible manner, treat all people with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude anyone. This is a collective responsibility of all present.

All people coming to Forum events agree by their presence that they will:

- Observe the authority of the Chair or facilitator at all times.
- Listen quietly to and respect the views and experiences of other people contributing.
- Allow others to have equal opportunity and time to share their opinions.
- Not use inflammatory language or aggressive behaviour of any kind.
- Focus their comments on the issues at hand.

While the expectation is that all participating will act within the code of conduct, if any of the above values are not met during a meeting or event, the Chair, facilitator or nominated officer may take one or more of the following steps with the objective of restoring order.

- a) Remind any person not abiding by the code of conduct that should they continue their behaviour will not be tolerated and the following action may be taken.
- b) Any person making offensive, insulting, threatening, provocative, slanderous or obscene remarks, or who becomes boisterous, or who threatens or harasses any person or property while at a Forum event, will cause the event to be suspended for the shortest period required to allow order to be restored.
- c) Any person or people causing an event to be interrupted by reason of behaviours identified above, who does so more than once, can be asked to leave the event by the Chair or staff at the event. This can be for a specific length of time to allow the person or people to cool off or for the rest of the meeting or event, depending on the judgement of the Chair or staff present.

**Important Note:** The forum does not have decision-making powers and cannot be held accountable for growth and related issues.



## **Appendix B: Development Management Forum for East Herts**

### **What is a Development Management Forum?**

A development management forum is a meeting where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application.

### **What is the aim of a Development Management Forum?**

The aim of the forum is to allow early, constructive discussion of the planning issues raised by residents and to explore the scope for building consensus and resolving concerns.

### **Is it a formal decision making meeting?**

It is an informal meeting and the forum does not determine the application. The decision on planning applications is determined by the Council's Development Management Committee or through delegation to officers.

### **What types of applications fall within the Development Management Forum?**

Generally, complex and sensitive major planning applications for development of 50 or more homes.

There may be cases where the significance of development may not be measured solely on scale (e.g. 50 or more homes) but on the potential impact on the community and local character of the place into which it is to be introduced, and the ability to bring forward benefits to the community. This approach is consistent with the approach to masterplanning in the District Plan and any such requests will be considered at the time. Any such requests should be submitted (via email) to the Head of Planning and Building Control who will review with the Executive Councillor for Planning and Growth.

### **How is a Development Management Forum requested?**

A Development Management Forum can be called if all of the following requirements are met:

- Complex and sensitive major planning applications for 50 homes or more;
- The provision of at least 25 signatures and addresses of East Herts residents impacted by the proposals;
- The request has to be received within the initial 21 day consultation period;
- In support but only if there is a qualifying request of objection to be considered; and
- That solely relates to comments on an eligible planning application that is under consideration.

Requests must clearly state the planning concerns related to the application. Requests are also encouraged to say what changes might be made to the development to overcome concerns.

It will be expected that residents explain what changes are being sought at the Forum.

Timescales are set for the receipt of requests because the Council has to determine applications within timescales set by the Government.

### **What will the Development Management Forum not consider?**

A Development Management Forum request will not be considered for the following applications:

- to alter, extend or carry out other works to a house and its surroundings (householder applications)
- to create a new single house or other single residential unit
- for a change of use of an existing building(s)
- for works or alterations to existing buildings or other structures creating no additional floorspace
- for new commercial development of less than 200 square metres (gross) additional floorspace
- for advertisements
- to determine whether a use of land or building needs planning permission - ie a lawful development certificate
- for works or alterations to listed buildings
- to demolish a building in a conservation area
- by telecommunications operators asking whether the local authority's 'prior approval' is needed for the siting and appearance of works that would otherwise be 'permitted development' not requiring planning permission.

The Forum will not consider requests expressing an in-principle outright objection to the application with no suggestions for a compromise solution or a request not received within the correct timescales.

A Forum will not normally be held for a request relating to a current application amendment, or where a Forum has already been held on the current application.

### **How to submit a request for a Development Management Forum**

If the requirements for a request are all met, a submission can be made to the Head of Planning and Building Control via email [planning@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:planning@eastherts.gov.uk)

Applicants and residents will be expected to meet the next available Forum date because of the timescales and deadlines associated with planning applications.

### **How does the Development Management Forum work?**

Dates and times of the Development Management Forums will be made available on the Council's website.

The Development Management Forum will be attended by:

- up to three resident representatives. You can ask your local councillor to present your petition if you wish
- up to three representatives of the applicant
- members of the relevant committee that will determine the application
- ward councillors
- the planning officer dealing with the application
- other relevant officers, including a senior officer who chairs the meeting
- the press and public can attend as observers

### **What is the format of the Development Management Forum?**

- Introduction by chair and declaration of councillor interests
- presentation of the application by the applicant/agent
- presentation of the views of the those against the application (up to three representatives)
- presentation of the views of the those in support of the application (up to three representatives) where applicable
- member questions and issues arising – applicants to respond to questions.

In exceptional circumstances, the order of proceedings may be changed at the discretion of officers and the chair.

The planning officer will take the outcome of the meeting into account in further negotiations on the application and report to committee. The notes of the Forum will be attached to the committee report for information as an appendix.

### **The role of Members at Development Management Forum meetings?**

All members can attend Development Management Forum meetings.

The particular role that members can play at the meetings is dependent on whether or not they are likely to sit on the Committee which will have a formal role in determining the planning application.

All members can:

- use the meeting to understand the development, the issues important to local people and to the applicants, and how the relevant policies are being applied by asking questions;
- seek advice from officers as to the process to be followed, issues being reviewed and the likely policy position.



Members should not use the Forum to undertake negotiations or appear to put undue pressure on the officers in relation to any future decision on the scheme. Members are however entitled to robustly question developers and officers to fully understand issues presented at the Forum.

Local Members who are not on the Development Management Committee can greatly assist this process by taking an active part in the Forum meeting and asking questions. It is important to avoid creating any confusion in the minds of developers or local people about who speaks for the Council in negotiations or about the Council's negotiating position.

# Agenda Item 7

## East Herts Council Report

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 7 November 2023

**Report by:** Scrutiny Officer

**Report title:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme 2023/24

**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

### Summary

- This report considers topics for inclusion in the Committee's Draft Work Programme. By establishing a work programme of topics for scrutiny Members are better able to plan their future workload, with an agenda which is focussed, maximising the efficacy of the scrutiny process by taking a longer term, strategic view of the issues facing the council.
- Following the workshop on 27 July and Members' consideration of the draft scrutiny items at their last meeting, the suggested topics are detailed in Appendix 1.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

**(A) The update be noted; and**

**(B) The Work Programme at Appendix 1 be agreed**

**1.0 Proposal(s)**

1.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the Draft Work Programme which may be reviewed at any time.

- 1.2 A key function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account for its decisions, to review existing policies and consider proposals for new policies. In doing so, it will act as the Executive's critical friend in the process. The principle power of scrutiny is to influence policies and decisions made by the Council. Its aim should be to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough targeted examination of the council's services and procedures and make recommendations for improvement.
- 1.3 It has no formal powers to make changes but where a recommendation is made to the Executive, the Executive is required to respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if it decides not to accept a recommendation and the rationale for that decision. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) recommends that the Executive has to respond to any recommendation within two months.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 At the workshop on 27 July 2023, the Chairman explained that a main role of Overview and Scrutiny was to add value to the functions of the council in terms of its policies and in optimising the provision of services to its residents. Items for consideration for scrutiny must be evidenced-based with measurable outputs.
- 2.2 Topics for scrutiny are detailed in Appendix 1. By way of an update, the Scrutiny Officer is liaising with officers in relation to a Play Park Site Visit, PCSO Support, Cyber Security, Literacy in the District and Hertfordshire, Registered Social Landlords, Climate Change and Smart Devices (ie. Digital innovation and how this can be adopted to improve council services).
- 2.3 At the request of Members' a two-page Bulletin Summary on the Digital Innovation Zone (its vision and work) was circulated

to all Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September 2023.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 Members are welcome to submit a scrutiny proposal at any time. This form is available in the Microsoft Teams channel and provides Officers with sufficient information to assess if it is appropriate for scrutiny and to ensure that specific questions are addressed. A Scrutiny Flowchart is also available which explains the processes involved in submitting a Scrutiny Proposal Form. The Scrutiny Officer will then liaise with Officers and the Chairman to consider the best way forward to address the subject and complete the scoping document.

### **4.0 Options**

4.1 The work programme will be kept under review by the Committee throughout the coming year.

### **5.0 Risks**

5.1 The establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is enshrined in the Local Government Act 2000 (Section 9). The 2000 Act obliges local authorities to adopt political management systems with a separate Executive. Various sub sections of the 2000 Act set out the powers and duties for Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the right to investigate and make recommendations on anything which is the responsibility of the Executive. Legislative provisions can also be found in the Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 2) with options to retain or re-adopt a “committee system” Section 9B.

5.2 Potential risks arise for the council if policies and strategies are developed and / or enacted without sufficient scrutiny.

Approval of an updated work programme contributes to the mitigation of risk (and Call-Ins) by ensuring key activities of the council are scrutinised.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 Scrutiny is an important part of the local democratic process and represents the interests of residents. It holds the Executive to account on behalf of residents and helps review and improve the functions run by the Council and its local partners. With proper notification, members of the public can forward items for scrutiny (Section 5.19 of the Constitution) and if accepted by the Chairman, are allowed to address Members for a maximum of 15 minutes.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes – the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving reports on the progress of the council's environmental strategies.

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

Yes - scrutiny is enshrined in statute (the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

### **7.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Work Programme**

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## Programme of Proposed Scrutiny Topics

Topic	Corporate Objectives (SEED)	Questions/concerns	Scrutiny Approach (Bulletin, Report, rapid review or task and finish group)	Background Notes / Officers' comments	Reporting timeframe to
The Listening Council – Community Forum	Enablement		Report	Report requested by Executive Members	7 November 2023
Development Management Forum	Enablement			Report requested by Executive Members	7 November 2023
Air Quality Action Plan	Sustainability		Report and Action Plan	Action Plan for Members' Review	16 January 2024
Social Housing Providers	Sustainability and enablement	Quality of housing stock, complaints, response times to repairs. Performance and KPIs Steps being taken to achieve carbon neutrality. Member engagement	To be determined by Members	Information awaited.	16 January 2024
Climate Change – Carbon Neutrality	Sustainability	Support to residents and businesses? Changing residents' behaviour to achieve reductions in emissions. Will council achieve its goals?		Summary Bulletin to be provided by relevant Head of Service	16 January 2024
UK Share Prosperity Money	Enablement	Levelling up – how the UKSPF is being used.	All Member Briefing to be provided on 7 December 2023	All Member Briefing on 7 December may facilitate the answers to Members queries.	16 January 2024

Topic	Corporate Objectives (SEED)	Questions/concerns	Scrutiny Approach (Bulletin, Report, rapid review or task and finish group)	Background Notes / Officers' comments	Reporting timeframe to
Access to parks for disabled children and equipment provided	Enablement	Concerns about disabled access to Council parks, lack of facilities for disabled children	Site Visit	Site Visit to key parks – to be arranged.	5 March 2024
Digital Exclusion	Enablement, Digital by Default	Tackling digital exclusion and literacy:	Background Information	Information awaited.	5 March 2024
IT	Digital by Default	Functionality, value for money, security, forward looking	Summary Bulletin	Head of Service asked to provide a Summary Bulletin.	5 March 2024
Policing	Enablement	Neighbourhood Policing – pressure to contribute from Police to cost of PCSOs.	Background overview	Information awaited.	5 March 2024
East Herts Run Markets	Sustainability	Hire of stalls, issues faced, support to markets	Subject currently part of a larger piece of work under review. When available Members will be updated	Tentative date for discussion	5 March 2024
Digital Innovation Zone (Essex and Herts DIZ)	Digital by Default	a) The role of DIZ and how this connects with local businesses and residents to share the benefits of digital investment? b) How does this benefit us and residents?	Background overview	Summary Bulletin circulated to Members of O&S Committee on 29 September 2023	Any further action required to be determined by Members
Smart Devices and improvement to Council services	Digital by Default	How could the internet improve service delivery and reduce costs	At the Chairman's request Dr Catherine Howe (CfGS) approached for webinar information (20.9.23) <a href="https://publications.catherinewhite.info">Publications   Catherine Howe (curiouscatherine.info)</a>	Dr Howe asked to provide a link to how the Council can actively influence social change digitally to improve the delivery of services.	To be determined by Members
Pedestrian safety	Sustainability			Members were presented (in September) with a summary of approaches / action taken by HCC and Hertfordshire Police.	To be determined



Topic	Corporate Objectives (SEED)	Questions/concerns	Scrutiny Approach (Bulletin, Report, rapid review or task and finish group)	Background Notes / Officers' comments	Reporting timeframe to
				Chairman and Vice Chairman to liaise at a further date with Cllr Carter on what further action (as the scrutiny proposer), she may wish to see taken.	