

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – 9 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
SUPPORT SERVICES

2016/17 – 2019/20 SERVICE PLANS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- The purpose of this report is to present the service plans which outline the key activity the council intends to undertake between 2016/17 – 2019/20. These plans sit underneath the Corporate Strategic Plan and are the result of a new integrated finance and business planning process which began in summer 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY
COMMITTEES: The Executive be advised that the Joint Meeting of
Scrutiny Committees supports:**

(A)	The approval of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 Service Plans, key actions and performance indicators as detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’.
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1.0 Background

1.1 Following elections in May 2015, the new administration tasked officers to review the council’s financial and business planning process, so that the setting of council priorities could be more aligned to discussions around the budget. This resulted in a number of changes such as:

- Earlier engagement with members and officers on the budget setting process;
- Wider discussions on the needs and priorities of the district, looking at customer demand, workforce capacity and key financial drivers;
- Forward looking service plans with a 4 year horizon in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as opposed to one year plans.

1.2 This has enabled a more detailed and fundamental review of priorities, future demands and current capacity to produce a new set of actions from 2016/17 onwards. The key elements in this process have been as follows:

- July – August 2015: A review and self-assessment of all service areas to see how service outcomes align with financial need (i.e. understanding why underspends exist) and to develop an understanding of the current direction of travel and the future direction of travel for each service over the next four years. This involved looking at evidence currently available such as performance indicator data and customer demand data, anticipated legislative changes or Member redirection of priorities. This review was undertaken by each Head of Service, supported by Business Development and Strategic Finance;
- August – Early September 2015: The development of service plans for 2016/17 – 2019/20 based on a continuing ‘as is’ steer to help construct the base budget. Heads of Service prepared these in consultation with their Director and Portfolio Holder;
- September 2015: Alongside the development of service plans identification of additional projects and service options that the council could deliver should the base budget leave a surplus were drafted. Equally options for reduction of service provision were also identified should the base budget identify a deficit;
- October 2015: Publication of draft service plans including the self-assessment findings to all Members, with options for additional or reduced investment included (a 300 page document). An informal workshop took place on 20 October 2015 where Members were asked to vote on their preferences regarding additional or reduced investment;
- 23rd November 2015: An away day was held with the Executive team and the Corporate Management team to evaluate the findings from the October workshop. It was from this session that the new priorities for the next four years were shaped;
- December 2015: Draft service plans were updated by Heads of Service (in consultation with Directors) to reflect any additional or reduced investment options that Portfolio Holders supported in line with the new priorities.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’** contains an “executive summary” of the 2016/17 service plans. Unlike previous years, the service plans have been organised and presented along the same themes of the new Corporate Strategic Plan, as oppose to individual service by individual service. This style of presentation is designed to illustrate how service actions are contributing to corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The actions and measures captured do not reflect the full range of activities all services will be engaged in over the next 4 years. They represent the most high profile activity underpinning the new corporate strategic plan. There are many other, day to day and operational actions, projects and tasks that feature in the full service plan document which runs to around 300 pages in length). These are still essential for delivering good services to the residents of East Herts but are largely process or back office orientated and therefore lower profile. Where any of these actions are important to Members they have been capture within **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’** under “key actions not directly captured within the strategic plan”.
- 2.3 The financial Implications associated with delivering the service plans are set out in the Budget Report and the 2016/17 – 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Plan. This report is being presented to the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees on 19 January 2016 and to Executive on 2 February 2016.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper ‘A’**.

Background Papers:

None.

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