

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2008

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

11. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

'D' RECOMMENDATION - that this report be used as a basis for reviewing the current work programme and planning future scrutiny work of this Committee.

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1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 This report is intended to support the Environment 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, identified or suggested for the work programme are set out in Appendix D on page 45.
- 3.2 At the last meeting of this Committee in February 2008, agreement was reached to establish a Climate Change task and finish group. This group met in May to discuss and approve the scoping of the work to be undertaken (item elsewhere on agenda of this meeting).
- 3.3 It is proposed that the group continue to meet as required during the 2008/09 year as per the scoping timetable. If this proposal is accepted, reports from this group will be scheduled as requested by the Committee.
- 3.4 Quarterly health checks on all PIs will be presented to Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee. These reports will be made available to all Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to review as soon as published. Any indicator which raises concerns and/or falls outside expected parameters can be identified by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Chairmen/vice chairmen who can request a report (covering ameliorating actions and outcome) to be presented to next appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 At the May Corporate Business Scrutiny meeting, it was proposed that the service plan/ budget timetable be set up to allow each scrutiny committee to review service plan options and budgets appropriate to its Terms of Reference at their autumn 2008 meetings.
- 3.6 Further budget scrutiny will be undertaken at Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting on 20 January 2009, to which all scrutiny Chairmen and Members would be invited and an additional full Council meeting has been proposed for early February 2009 to confirm the budget.
- 3.7 It has also been proposed that there is a formal joint scrutiny meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009 (in Corporate Business Scrutiny meeting slot) to allow all scrutiny committee members to consider the Service Plans from all Services. Only Corporate Business Scrutiny has a meeting slot which fits with the statutory deadlines linked to service planning/budget setting.

### 4.0 Report

- 4.1 Preliminary work programme 2008/09 attached as Appendix D on page 45.
- 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:

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

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. Summary of the above attached as Appendix E on page 47.

Contact Member: Cllr Will Quince – Chairman of Environment Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Lois Prior, Head of Strategic Direction – Extn: 1688.

Report Author: Marian Langley, Scrutiny Officer – Extn: 1612.