

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2008

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

8. 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.

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

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.

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

2.2 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 for the remainder of 2008/09 are set out in Appendix A on page 8. 5

3.2 The item on 'Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and action plan' was originally scheduled for this meeting but due to long-term absence of a key officer, this report has had to be delayed until March 2009.

4.0 Report

4.1 A consultation process will start in the new year to give Members the opportunity to consider what topics/issues should be scrutinised during the 2009/10 civic year.

4.2 The choice of items should conform to the Council's agreed criteria as set out in Appendix B on page 8. 6

4.3 Members of this committee are asked to give some thought to this matter between now and the consultation events which will be held in Spring 2009.

4.4 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.

4.5 A review of the Council's constitution has recently been undertaken and a report with recommended amendments is going to Corporate Business Scrutiny in January 2009 and then 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 to this committee. Members might like to take this into account when considering topics/issues for next year.

4.6 Members will be asked to agree a draft work programme at the March 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 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 CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny).

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. Summary of the above attached as Appendix B on page 8. 6

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