

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2009

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 and 2009/10

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 its work programme for 2008/09 and planning 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 work programme for the 2009/10 civic year are set out in Appendix A (page 9.5).

3.2 This report is being written and submitted before the Members' workshop on 24 February 2009 takes place. The workshop is designed to evaluate the scrutiny function in East Herts during 2008/09 and identify potential scrutiny topics for 2009/10. An update on the key outcomes of this workshop will be given at the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 March 2009.

3.3 Outcomes from the evaluation workshop will be incorporated into the East Herts Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09. A draft version of this report will be circulated to Members of Environment Scrutiny Committee (via email) for feedback and comment. The Annual Report will then be submitted to Annual Council on 13 May 2009.

4.0 Report

4.1 Consultation started early in 2009 to give Members the opportunity to consider what topics/issues should be scrutinised during the 2009/10 civic year.

4.2 The choice of topics should conform to the Council's agreed criteria as set out in Appendix B (page 9. 6).

4.3 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.

4.4 A review of the Council's constitution has recently been undertaken and a report with recommended amendments went to Corporate Business Scrutiny on 20 January 2009 and will go onto full Council on 25 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.

4.5 Members are asked to agree a draft work programme at this meeting of the 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 (page 9. 6).

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