

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY
16 JUNE 2020, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Wyllie (Chairman)
Councillors S Bell, M Brady, K Crofton,
I Devonshire, H Drake, J Frecknall,
M Goldspink, D Hollebon, J Ranger,
D Snowdon, M Stevenson, N Symonds and
A Ward-Booth

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, E Buckmaster,
G Cutting, J Goodeve, G McAndrew and
S Rutland-Barsby

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Scrutiny Officer
Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Emily Coulter	- Graduate Management Trainee
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Chloe Hipwood	- Service Manager -

	Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Ian Sharratt	- Environmental Manager
David Snell	- Service Manager (Development Management)
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Paul Thomas-Jones	- Environmental Health Manager - Commercial
John Williams	- Electoral Services Manager

39 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

40 MINUTES - 4 FEBRUARY 2020

It was moved by Councillor Hollebon and seconded by Councillor Devonshire that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting

held on 4 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the length of the agenda for the meeting. He regretted that so many items were included, but noted that this had resulted from the cancellation of the March meeting. The Chairman stated that at future meetings the agenda would ideally be limited to two or three substantive items to ensure that all items could be given the appropriate level of scrutiny.

In relation to the current meeting, the Chairman proposed that the order of business be varied to consider item 11 as the next item of business, followed by items 5, 7 and 6 in that order, and then the remainder of the agenda as printed. The Committee agreed to the Chairman's proposal.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Kate Grigg, who was observing the proceedings on behalf of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in respect of any item on the agenda.

43 REVISED REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) POLICY AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INVESTIGATIONS POLICY

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report proposing that the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy, which had not been reviewed since 2010, be revised and updated taking into account significant legislative changes which have occurred in the intervening decade; and that a new Use of Social Media in Investigations Policy be adopted in order to deal specifically with investigations carried out by these means. The proposals followed an inspection of the Council in November 2019 by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), whose resulting report gave a recommendation of 'critical', outlining several areas where the Council was not meeting legal requirement; and actions that were required by May 2020 to address these.

Councillor Cutting, Executive Member for Corporate Services, welcomed the rapid and professional way in which the IPCO's recommendations had been addressed. The new policies would be kept under constant review, with an annual report being made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Snowdon felt that the proposed new policies were robust but asked how the unsatisfactory position highlighted by the IPCO had arisen. Councillor Cutting stated that this had predated both his appointment and that of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, but action had been taken to address the situation as soon as it was brought to the Council's attention. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services stated that he understood there had been a turnover of staff in certain areas that may have

contributed to the Council 'taking its eye off the ball' as the IPCO Inspector had put it. The current proposals, which had been developed in line with the IPCO's deadline, would rectify this situation and ensure that the Authority would be fully compliant going forward.

Councillor Frecknall and Councillor Goldspink wished to recognise the role undertaken by the Head of Housing and Health, who as Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services had started the work to get the Council back on track. In relation to the proposed Use of Social Media in Investigations Policy, Councillor Frecknall also asked whether an individual simply failing to set their privacy settings sufficiently high would be opening him or herself up to intrusive surveillance. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services stated that an occasional look at, for example an individual's Facebook profile was acceptable but regular and repeated checking in order to build up a picture of the user's life and habits could represent a breach of the policy. He further noted that the Council had not undertaken any surveillance operations for some time and did not anticipate doing so frequently.

Councillor Crofton commented that previous postholders' had not addressed this area of work adequately but he therefore found it surprising that the IPCO had not referred the matter to the Leader of the Council of Chief Executive earlier than they did.

It was moved by Councillor Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Snowdon, that the recommendations in the report be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the revised Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy and the new Use of Social Media in Investigations Policy be reviewed and the Executive Member for Corporate Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to give consideration to the matters raised by the Committee prior to the final proposed versions and accompanying report being sent for adoption by the Executive.

44 STREET CLEANSING AND VERGE MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Shared Waste Service Manager and the Leisure and Parks Development Manager submitted a report which provided an overview of the street cleansing service (shared with North Herts DC) and the verge maintenance service (delivered by East Herts Council on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council).

The Officers introduced their respective parts of the report, providing a brief description of each service function, an overview of performance, key challenges and areas for improvement, resource levels and key contacts.

The Chairman referred to additional papers that had been circulated to the Committee on a confidential basis and reminded Members that should they wish to discuss that information in detail it would be necessary for the Committee to move into private session.

Councillor Hollebon and Councillor Frecknall each

stated that they had submitted questions in advance of the meeting and thanked the Officers for the responses provided.

Councillor Ward-Booth noted that the aim of 1,000 inspections across the contract each month was not being met and asked in the light of this how the Council could be assured that the contractor's performance was satisfactory. The Shared Waste Service Manager (Stevenage) responded that there had been some difficulty in recruiting permanent staff to the client team and in addition resources had been focussed on resolving teething problems in the area of waste collection. However it was now a priority over the coming months to rebuild the inspection capacity.

Councillor McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability added that one of the key ways in which the Council was informed regarding service performance was via customer enquiries and he stressed the importance of service requests and issues being reported via Customer Services so as to be captured by the monitoring system.

In relation to verge cutting, Councillor Goldspink and Councillor Symonds each referred to the ecological importance of wild flowers and asked whether this was taken into account when planning the length of cut and/or timing of the operations. The Leisure and Parks Development Manager stated that this could be given further consideration but any change to the service specification would be a matter for Hertfordshire County Council.

Councillor Frecknall noted that there had been a marked increase in street cleansing enquiries in January and February 2020 and asked what may have caused this. The Shared Waste Service Manager did not have this specific information to hand but reported that an increase in service requests was often experienced in periods of the year when vegetation died down.

Councillor Crofton felt that it would be useful for Members to be provided with a structure chart showing which named Officers were responsible for particular service areas. He also asked what could be done to improve services such as weed spraying and leaf clearance in rural parts of the district as in his view these were often inadequate and Members and others had to go to great efforts to get the services delivered.

Councillor Bell stated that some bins on the outskirts of Watton-at-Stone were not being emptied regularly.

The Shared Waste Service Manager drew Members' attention to paragraph 5.4 of the report which included a staff structure chart, albeit without names. She also reiterated that any concerns regarding service delivery should be reported via the Council's Customer Contact Centre as this would ensure that the appropriate deadlines were issued to the contractor and their responses monitored.

The Leisure and Parks Development Manager reported that weeds were sprayed twice a year and any increase in this frequency would be a matter for the County Council. Councillor Stevenson asked which herbicide

was used in the spraying operation. The Leisure and Parks Development Manager reported that Glyphosate was used, in the minimum quantities necessary.

The Chairman pointed out that the report contained three different spellings of 'Bishop's Stortford' and asked that these be corrected. He also stated that in the chart of highway works Winding Hill, Much Hadham was erroneously listed under Bishop's Stortford.

It was moved by Councillor Devonshire and seconded by Councillor Stevenson that the recommendation in the report be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the update report be received and noted.

45 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE SERVICE

The Head of Planning and Building Control submitted a report which provided information on the Council's Development Management Pre-Application Advice Service and a number of issues with the current operation of the service including fees and performance targets. These were currently being reviewed with the aim of improving the overall operation of the service and encouraging more customers to use it. The intention was to implement changes from autumn 2020.

Councillor Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth, welcomed the report and endorsed the points made by the Head of Planning and Building Control. She also reminded Members that in relation to strategic sites, developers were obliged to undertake a masterplanning process.

In response to a range of questions from Members of the Committee, the Head of Planning and Building Control and the Service Manager Development Management advised that:

- EHC's fees for the service were last reviewed in 2018. Minor and household applications were subject to fixed fees while major applications, which could range from ten units to many thousands, required an individual quote in each case. Precise benchmarking with other local authorities was problematic due to differences in the type and complexity of applications.
- Pre-application discussions and responses were confidential as they often included information that was financially and/or legally sensitive. Therefore it would not be possible routinely to involve local Members in pre-application meetings, unless the applicant wished to do so. The review could however look at ways in which Members' involvement could be increased. Councillor Devonshire felt that this would be useful as Members were sometimes presented with conflicting accounts of such meetings.
- Limited feedback was received from users of the

service. In this regard a number of Members felt that promotion of a feedback mechanism would be advantageous, for example an e-mail survey sent shortly after using the service.

- Records were not kept of how many applications that had been subject to pre-application advice were subsequently refused but granted on appeal. However, overall the Authority's record on appeals was good relative to the national average.
- Detailed figures on the number of applications for pre-application advice received were not available at the meeting. A number of Members regretted this, feeling that this was basic information to inform any discussion of the service. Officers explained that the report had been prepared to address the specific issues raised previously by the Committee but that detailed figures could be provided in future.
- Officers believed that it was worthwhile to continue the service as good pre-application advice could avoid delays in the planning process.
- Work was underway to establish the appropriate decision-making route and timescale for any proposed changes emerging from the review.
- Giving weight to pre-application advice received during the consideration of any subsequent

planning application would be problematic as legislation was clear on what could and could not be considered as a material planning consideration. Councillor Crofton stated that this issue should be considered further, feeling that applicants had a right to rely on the advice they had received.

The Chairman stated that Bishop's Stortford Town Council had sought to use the pre-application advice service on three occasions, and had found the service disappointing. In one case the response to a proposal to install solar panels had been that insufficient information was provided and no meeting with Officers had been offered. The Service Manager (Development Management) reported that in many cases insufficient information was provided by applicants. This could be addressed by the provision of more information about the service on the Council's website. The Chairman agreed that this would be useful.

It was moved by Councillor Devonshire and seconded by Councillor Snowdon that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to the addition of four points to address issues raised by Members during the discussion as follows:

- That Officers be requested to provide additional information on the Council's website to guide potential applicants on the information to be provided when seeking pre-application advice;
- That Officers consider as part of the review

whether and how Member involvement in the pre-application process might be achieved;

- That consideration be given to sending a survey to applicants after they use the pre-application advice service proactively to seek feedback on their experience of the service; and
- That Officers give consideration to whether greater weight can lawfully be given to pre-application advice received, during the consideration of any subsequent planning application.

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the report and the ongoing review of the service be noted;

(B) Officers be requested to provide additional information on the Council’s website to guide potential applicants on the information to be provided when seeking pre-application advice;

(C) Officers consider as part of the review whether and how Member involvement in the pre-application process could be achieved;

(D) consideration be given to sending a survey to applicants after they use the pre-application advice service proactively to seek feedback on their experience of the service; and

(E) Officers give consideration to whether greater weight can lawfully be given to pre-application advice received, during the consideration of any subsequent planning application.

46 PROPOSED REVISED STREET TRADING CONSENT POLICY

The Head of Housing and Health submitted a report proposing that the Council's existing Street Trading Consent Policy be revised and updated taking into account relevant case law and best practice, and ways in which the policy could further the Council's latest priorities and objectives. The Committee was invited to utilise its power under the Council's constitution to review draft strategies to be put to the Council for determination in due course.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health) outlined the proposed key changes to the existing policy, the anticipated potential impacts of these changes, the proposed changes to fees and the consultation undertaken. The proposals in the report would not require any additional resources to be identified.

Councillor Snowdon asked whether the proposed restriction on selling of food and confectionery within 100 metres of an educational establishment would be measured from the entrance or the perimeter of the establishment, and in a straight line or by the shortest road route.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health) advised that measurement would be taken as the crow flies

from the perimeter of the premises. The Chairman noted that this could cover quite a large area and a number of Members expressed concern that this could have the unintentional effect of preventing street trading, for example on an adjacent industrial estate. The Head of Housing and Health stated that the policy was not intended to 'catch out' any existing traders in this way and invited Members to let him know of any specific cases that they felt could be affected in this way.

Councillor Hollebon stated that she had raised a number of questions in advance of the meeting and thanked the Officers for their responses.

Councillor Snowdon proposed that the list of prohibited goods for which street trading consent would not be granted at section 6.1 k) of the proposed new policy be extended by the addition of two further items, namely Chinese Lanterns and Helium Balloons. Councillor Hollebon further proposed a third addition, namely Fireworks. Officers advised that this could be done although the sale of fireworks was regulated in any case by Trading Standards.

Councillor Frecknall suggested that in addition to prohibiting the use of petrol and diesel generators in Air Quality Management Areas, the policy should provide a general incentive for all traders to use more sustainable power sources.

Councillor Drake asked whether it was appropriate for street trading to take place at all in Air Quality Management Areas, as queueing customers could be

adversely affected by poor air quality. Councillors Hollebbon and Frecknall concurred. Officers advised that in most cases customers would only be present for a short time.

The Head of Housing and Health thanked Members for their comments and advised that the points raised would be considered either as part of finalising the new policy or via other appropriate mechanisms.

Councillor Symonds asked whether the policy would regulate groups of persons who may be driven to areas of the district to peddle goods or services door-to-door. The Service Manager (Environmental Health) advised that this did not represent street trading but undertook to look into the matter and revert to Cllr Symonds with any relevant information.

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Snowdon, that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to three additional points to reflect the concerns raised by Members during the debate as follows:

- That the list of prohibited goods at section 6.1 k) of the proposed new policy should be extended also to include Chinese Lanterns, Helium Balloons and Fireworks;
- That the new policy should discourage any street trading within an Air Quality Management Area; and
- That any existing traders affected by the new

policy should be treated with the maximum consideration to avoid any adverse impact on existing businesses.

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

RESOLVED – the Executive Member for Wellbeing and the Head of Housing and Health be requested to give consideration to the matters raised by the Committee prior to drafting the final version of the proposed revised Street Trading Consent Policy and accompanying report for determination by the Council, and in particular:

- (A) the list of prohibited goods at section 6.1 k) of the proposed new policy should be extended also to include Chinese Lanterns, Helium Balloons and Fireworks;
- (B) the new policy should discourage any street trading within an Air Quality Management Area; and
- (C) any existing traders affected by the new policy should be treated with the maximum consideration to avoid any adverse impact on existing businesses.

47 HARTHAM LEISURE UPDATE BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR WELLBEING

Councillor E Buckmaster, Executive Member for

Wellbeing, gave a verbal update on the development of Hartham Leisure. Councillor Buckmaster stated that the planning application for Hartham Leisure Centre had been deferred by the Development Management Committee last January as Members were concerned at the potential impact of the proposed development on the sensitive setting of the site and regarding environmental sustainability.

Following this it was recognised that a different approach was required and Hartham Leisure Centre was removed from the framework agreement with Willmott Dixon (leaving Grange Paddocks to continue under that agreement), brought back in-house and further consultation undertaken including an all-Member briefing session. The new design concept placed greater emphasis on sustainability and a more sensitive physical design within the confines of the functional requirements of the building. The detailed design stage was now underway and it was expected that a planning application would be submitted in the early autumn.

Councillor Ward-Booth asked whether the costs of the new design would require additional resources to be identified and/or impact on the business plan or payback period of the project. Councillor Buckmaster stated that aim was still for the whole service to be financially sustainable and to keep within the budget previously agreed. The Project Officer confirmed that part of the rationale for bringing the project in-house was to deliver the redesign within the current capital budget. The construction sector market was currently looking favourable and officers believed that this could

be achieved.

Councillor Devonshire stated that he had requested the briefing. He thanked Councillor Buckmaster for providing it and said that he was encouraged by what he had heard. He asked that the Executive keep Members involved in the ongoing discussions so as to avoid the type of problems that had occurred previously during the planning process. Councillor Buckmaster confirmed that it was intended to engage again with Members and stakeholders before the submission of the new planning application.

It was moved by Councillor Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Bell, that the briefing be noted and the Executive Member thanked for his presentation.

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

RESOLVED – that the verbal update on Hartham Leisure be noted and the Executive Member for Wellbeing be thanked for his presentation to the Committee.

48 EAST HERTS HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2019-2023 - PROGRESS REPORT

The Healthy Lifestyle Programme Officer submitted a report that provided a review of progress to date of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023. Councillor E Buckmaster, Executive Member for Wellbeing, introduced the report. He stated that the strategy was designed to address nine identified health

challenges as listed in paragraph 2.3 of the report. Appendix A illustrated that East Herts outcomes were better than those for England as a whole, and for the rest of Hertfordshire in relation to 11 of 32 health indicators measured; whilst Appendix B outlined the progress made in relation to each of the health challenges.

Councillor Buckmaster highlighted a number of successful initiatives that had been undertaken within the strategy as listed at pages 93-94 and Appendix C of the report, in particular East Herts Social Prescribing Service; community grants; dementia-friendly initiatives; and work within the planning field to deliver healthy places across the district. Councillor Buckmaster also mentioned a number of initiatives more generally across the Council's services that were impacting positively on health and wellbeing.

Councillor Buckmaster stated that great progress had been made just before the lockdown with the launch of the Healthy Hubs. These linked well with the Social Prescribing Service and would operate as online as well as physical hubs.

Councillor Buckmaster invited the Members' comments and suggestions on any ways in which the strategy could be further enhanced. He felt that one positive of the current situation had been the resurgence of community support resources including volunteers, that could be channelled to beneficial effect going forward, in particular to tackle the ongoing adverse effects of the Covid-19 emergency. He also noted that prior to the shutdown of the community

halls a variety of physical activities were available across 27 locations as a result of the earlier Forever Active programme for the over-50s, and suggested that the Committee may wish to support the continuation of this programme, linked to the Healthy Hubs.

Councillor Frecknall welcomed the report and the impressive range of work described. He felt that it would be important to harness the individuals' and skills that had been developed and to ring-fence resources to ensure these valued programmes were not lost. Councillor Buckmaster noted that the Leader of the Council was Chair of the Reassurance Cell and there were many skilled individuals and volunteers to whom the Council and partners could reach out and engage in rebuilding local communities.

Councillor Hollebbon endorsed Councillor Buckmaster's comments and thanked the Officers for their work on the strategy which she fully supported. Councillor Hollebbon felt that the Community Wellbeing Forum had been particularly successful and she thanked all the members of that Forum. Councillor Hollebbon also supported the proposal to relaunch the Forever Active program as this would fit in well with the aims of the strategy.

Councillor Ward-Booth welcomed the progress highlighted in the report. In relation to the Social Prescribing Service, he asked whether the Covid-19 emergency had given rise to increased levels of isolation and poor mental health and whether there were plans to expand the service. The Healthy Lifestyle Programme Officer reported that since 2018,

510 clients had been seen by the service and even during the Covid-19 emergency all clients had been contacted and referred to services as appropriate. Going forward it was planned to build on this success and introduce the service in a more holistic way to the Healthy Hubs to reach a wider demographic.

Councillor Devonshire asked whether the Social Prescribing Service would be extended in the west of the district. He also enquired as to the future of the Social Prescribing Officer's post which was currently agreed on a year-to-year basis. The Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer advised that the Healthy Hub in Hertford was expected to engage with a range of ages and demographics across Hertford, Ware, Watton-at-Stone and surrounding areas. In relation to the Social Prescribing Officer's post, funding was in place until March 2021 and options were currently being explored for its continuation beyond that date.

It was moved by Councillor Hollebon and seconded by Councillor Drake, that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to two additional points to reflect concerns raised by Members during the discussion as follows:

- That the Council should continue to reach out to the volunteer network that has been created around the response to Covid-19 in taking forward the various initiatives in the strategy; and
- That the Committee support the relaunch of the Forever Active programme.

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress to date on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan, and proposed amended approach to the Health and Wellbeing Work Programme emerging from the Councils response to Covid-19, be noted;

(B) the Executive Member for Wellbeing and the Head of Housing and Health be requested to give consideration to the matters raised by the Committee and in particular:

- (i) the Council should continue to reach out to the volunteer network that has been created around the response to Covid-19 in taking forward the various initiatives in the strategy; and
- (ii) the Committee support the relaunch of the Forever Active programme.

49 HOUSING AND HEALTH STRATEGY 2016-21 – ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Head of Housing and Health introduced the report of the Service Manager Housing Service, which set out the progress made in 2019/20 in delivering the strategic objectives stemming from the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-20 and the proposed new actions for 2020/21.

Councillor Ward-Booth noted that the anticipated number of affordable units to be delivered in 2020/21 was fewer than that achieved in 2019/20 and asked whether any increase was expected going forward, given developments in the pipeline. He also asked what funds were currently held by the Council in commuted sums for affordable housing.

The Head of Housing and Health stated that the number of affordable housing units delivered did fluctuate from year to year and may be affected by the Covid-19 emergency but was kept under close observation. Regarding commuted sums, approximately £2.1m was currently held.

Councillor Snowdon asked for further information on the proposed change to the negotiation process as referred to at Objective 1.8 in the report. The Head of Housing and Health advised that the proposed template was intended to ensure that East Herts Council's requirements in relation to affordable housing, nominations to properties etc were clear and up-front at the start of negotiations, in order to avoid unnecessary subsequent delays later. Overall the Council's record in achieving affordable housing was good, with the Development Plan target of 40% being achieved for most major (i.e. over 10 units) developments, the only exceptions being where there was external validation that this was not viable in a particular case.

Councillor Goldspink thanked the Officers for the report. She particularly welcomed Objective 1.4 regarding research into options for affordable housing

delivery; and Objective 3.2, to ensure that the Council's temporary accommodation offer was fit for purpose.

Councillor Brady referred to the figure of 675 affordable housing units delivered between 2017 and 2020 and asked what percentage this represented of the total supply of new homes over that period. She further enquired as to the precise level of affordable housing that had been negotiated in respect of the approximately 600 total units for the development in the Sele area in Hertford. The Head of Housing and Health stated that these figures were not available at the meeting but he undertook to circulate the information separately to the Committee Members.

The Chairman proposed and Councillor Goldspink seconded, a motion that the recommendations in the report be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Committee note progress in delivering the objectives stemming from the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-21;

(B) suggestions regarding actions for 2020/21 that contribute to the overall Strategic Objectives be passed to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Head of Housing and Health for consideration; and

(C) the Head of Housing and Health stated that he would provide Members with affordable housing figures as referred to above.

50 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report that reviewed the actions included in the Committee's existing work programme and proposed amendments to the ongoing work programme. The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that:

- The Centre for Public Scrutiny was undertaking a review of scrutiny arrangements at East Herts and would be reporting back in due course with any recommendations to the Executive and Council;
- In relation to the results of the Parking Review Task and Finish group, the Executive had considered the recommendations at its meeting on 11 February 2020 but further action had been deferred as a result of Covid-19. The Head of Operations had provided assurances that this will be progressed as soon as possible. Members were aware that under the Local Government Act 2000, Scrutiny has formal powers to ask the Executive to make a determination of its recommendations.
- The proposed items for inclusion on the September work programme were set out in the report. Going forward, regular meetings would be programmed quarterly (or sooner) with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny and

Audit and Governance Committees to co-ordinate the development of the work programmes in the context of the Forward Plan. The first meeting of this Co-ordinating Work Group would take place on 29 June 2020.

- In relation to the Social Housing Task and Finish Group, the final meeting, with senior officers of Clarion Housing, had been arranged for 25 June. A summary of the three meetings and any recommendations would be reported to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and then if necessary to the Executive.
- Further to item 11 on the current agenda, the work programme for the June 2021 meeting of the Committee would be amended to include the annual review of the RIPA policy.

Councillor Hollebon referred to the forthcoming Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) report. She felt that it was important that the CfPS's recommendations were also reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion. The Chairman and other Members concurred and asked that the Executive ensure that the Committee was provided with the opportunity to consider and comment on the CfPS report when it was available.

Councillor Goldspink stressed the importance of an early progress update on the Climate Change report and asked if this could come to the next meeting. The Scrutiny Officer advised that this had been discussed

with the Environmental Co-ordinator. The Scrutiny Officer undertook to circulate this update after the meeting. The Chairman agreed that it was important for this matter to be revisited on a regular basis.

Councillor Ward-Booth noted that the Committee's next scheduled meeting was not until 15 September 2020. He proposed that an additional meeting be held before September to consider the CfPS report (if available) and the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency – he suggested that this latter item should be broadened to include the forward planning work to establish 'new normal' working practices for the Council's services, and plans to respond to any further wave of Covid-19 cases.

The Chairman asked that the Scrutiny Officer look into Officer availability and other practicalities around a possible additional meeting of the Committee and email Members after the meeting to seek their views.

Councillor Ward-Booth moved and Councillor Hollebon seconded, a motion that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to two additional points to address the matters raised by Members during the discussion as follows:

- That the Executive be requested to ensure that the report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny on scrutiny arrangements in East Hertfordshire be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and comment prior to consideration by the, Executive and Council; and

- That the Scrutiny Officer look into Officer availability and other practicalities around a possible additional meeting of the Committee to be held before September 2020 and email Members to seek their views.

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the proposed work programme, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be approved subject to the matters noted above;

(B) the Executive be requested to ensure that the report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny on scrutiny arrangements in East Hertfordshire be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and comment prior to consideration by the Executive and Council; and

(C) the Scrutiny Officer look into Officer availability and other practicalities around a possible additional meeting of the Committee to be held before September 2020 and email Members to seek their views.

The meeting closed at 9:50 pm

Chairman
Date