

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

12. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None.

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is intended to support the Environment Scrutiny Committee in reviewing and planning its work programme for 2010/11.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u>	
(A)	The work programme detailed in this report be reviewed and agreed; and
(B)	The scrutiny officer be asked to make any changes, additions or arrangements as might be discussed in the meeting.

1.0 Background

1.1 Items previously required, identified or suggested for the work programme are set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**.

1.2 In order to meet the shortened deadlines for the 'emergency budget' discussions, some items originally scheduled for the November meeting had to be brought forward. This prioritisation means some agenda items originally planned for today's meeting had to be held over to November. These changes were made with the agreement of the Chairman.

2.0 Report

2.1 Members of this scrutiny committee may be interested to know that Hertfordshire County Council has recently published their

scrutiny report on “Rail Services – scrutiny of train operating companies serving Hertfordshire”.

- 2.2 Their topic group sat on 20 May 2010 to question witnesses and receive written evidence from several district and borough councils, including East Herts.
- 2.3 All the documents, meeting minutes and the final report are available on-line through the Herts Direct website at http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/civic_calendar/overviewscrutiny/16027100/ or contact East Herts scrutiny officer for a copy (of the report).
- 2.4 The main theme of their recommendations centres around developing relationships with the main agencies involved in the industry and that “*a clear member role is developed for both county council and borough/district council members*”.
- 2.5 An opportunity could arise later in the year to undertake some Joint Scrutiny alongside neighbouring districts and boroughs which would look at developing the two-way relationship with Herts Highways.
- 2.6 This would be timed to feed into the writing of their contract specification and designed to influence the responsiveness and manner in which local issues are dealt with by Herts Highways, their contractor(s) and the relevant district/borough.
- 2.7 When available, more information will be brought to this committee.
- 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

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny) summarized in **Essential Reference Paper B** or [click here for link to CfPS external site](#)
East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. A summary of this information is printed at the back of **Essential Reference Paper B**.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p>	<p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives:</p> <p>Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Any additional issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's corporate objectives.</p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from members of the public, the Executive and all Members.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>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.</p>