

## EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *none*

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### Purpose/Summary of Report

- To review and determine Environment Scrutiny Committee's future work programme

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY:**

**That:**

<b>(A)</b>	the work programme shown in this report be agreed
<b>(B)</b>	a Task and Finish group be set up to undertake a review of the Planning Enforcement Policy in conjunction with the review of that service's Performance Indicators already commissioned.

#### 1.0 Background

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

#### 2.0 Report

2.1 The draft agenda for 2015/16 meetings of Environment Scrutiny Committee is shown in **Essential Reference Paper B**. The timing of some items shown may have to change depending on availability of essential data (eg from central government).

2.2 Following agreement to make the Health and Wellbeing Panel into a full scrutiny committee, the Constitution has been updated to reflect this change in the authority's decision-making structure. The topic of 'fuel poverty' has been included within the remit of the new committee. This means the report 'Fuel Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for East Herts' originally scheduled for November's

Environment Scrutiny Committee will now be presented to Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny at their meeting on 8 December 2015.

- 2.3 Members will recall that Officers are to review performance indicators (PIs) relating to the planning enforcement service. The committee resolved that this work should be undertaken at its meeting of 9 June 2015. Consideration has been given to that matter, however it is apparent that the PIs which are currently in place related directly to the Council's current enforcement policy. The Planning Enforcement policy was reviewed in 2009/10 by a scrutiny Task and Finish group set up by this committee and that group developed the PIs that were put in place at the same time.
- 2.4 Following early review of those PIs now, it would be appropriate to give consideration again to the policy. A review of either PIs or policy in isolation is likely to lead to a situation where they do not satisfactorily relate to each other. Members of the public and those against whom enforcement action may be taken are likely to be confused and raise any differences as matters to be resolved in the processing of individual cases.
- 2.5 In addition, since the last review of the policy in 2009/10, there have been a number of updates to the national policy framework within which enforcement action is taken. The National Planning Policy Framework was published in 2012, followed by further guidance in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.6 As a result of the early work on consideration of the relevant PIs for the service area, the committee is invited to consider the wider picture of the associated Planning Enforcement policy and whether a process of wider review, to ensure that the policy remains appropriate, should be undertaken.
- 2.7 If the wider review meets with the committee's approval, Members are asked to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake the work within the original timescale agreed for the PI review. The PIs are due to be included in the 'Estimates and Future Targets' report to Joint Scrutiny on 9 Feb 2016 and the updated Planning Enforcement Policy report can come back to Environment Committee on 23 Feb 2016.
- 2.8 Members are asked whether there is any additional topic they wish to put forward for inclusion on any future agenda.

2.9 Members are also asked whether they wish to extend an invitation to one or more of the Executive members to attend a particular meeting or for a specific agenda item.

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: none

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