

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 24 APRIL 2018

REPORT BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This report details the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee since the last meeting of the Executive on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>That Executive notes the contents of the report.</b>

**1.0 Background**

1.1 Since the last meeting of the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once on 20 February 2018 and considered the following items:

- Update from Executive Member for Economic Development
- Corporate Service Plans 2018/19
- Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2023
- Planning Enforcement Update
- Grounds Maintenance Contract Task and Finish Group Update
- Scrutiny Work Programme

## **2.0 Update from the Executive Member for Economic Development**

- 2.1 The Executive Member for Economic Development was invited to provide a presentation and update on his portfolio. Prior to the meeting taking place, the Executive Member was provided with some key questions from Scrutiny Members on areas they would like to be included in the update. The Committee discussed the presentation, which covered Economic Development, Parking and Transport, and asked questions of the Executive Member and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with a report detailing the Corporate Service Plans 2018/19 and Heads of Service were present to respond to specific questions.
- 2.3 The Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

## **3.0 Corporate Service Plans 2018/19**

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the Corporate Service Plans 2018/19. A summary and outline of key changes were provided by officers.
- 3.2 There was discussion of employee engagement with regard to the new intranet and Members suggested direct interviews with staff to gain feedback.
- 3.3 Officers provided clarification on the subject of 'extra care' housing and agreed to provide a further update to the Committee in due course.
- 3.4 Members welcomed the decrease in external reliance for legal support and the fact that the Council was now generating income by providing legal support to other local authorities.

- 3.5 Members welcomed the success of the Forever Active programme aimed at the over fifties, and stressed the importance of promotion of healthy lifestyles to those aged eighteen to thirty. Members noted that the Active-in programme was specifically aimed at this demographic and officers agreed to amend the service plan document to highlight this.
- 3.6 In discussion around the action to implement sustainable transport initiatives, Members suggested officers explore shuttle buses and car-share schemes for commuters travelling to train stations in the district. It was noted that the Council had recruited an officer to work on sustainable transport at a local level and all suggestions from Members would be welcomed.
- 3.7 In relation to the action to 'support and develop future input into strategic planning role', Members highlighted the importance of a coherent approach with neighbouring authorities and the need to ensure sufficient ambition with regard to Section 106 funding. The Committee noted that officers were working closely with other local authorities to ensure a co-ordinated approach to long-term planning and the Council was playing a key role in this area with its involvement in the Hertfordshire Infrastructure Planning Partnership (HIPP) and the Sustainable Development Board.
- 3.8 With regard to planning enforcement, it was noted that the action plan being implemented had ensured that the Council was now well placed to undertake planning enforcement more effectively.
- 3.9 The Committee recommended that Council approve the Corporate Service Plans 2018/19.
- 3.10 As requested by the Committee, all comments were detailed in a report for Council that was considered on 1 March 2018

#### 4.0 **Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2023**

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report presenting the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023.
- 4.2 Officers outlined how the East Herts social prescribing service interacted with a range of partners and Members welcomed its work in local communities. There was discussion of whether it would be possible to have a specialist social prescribing service aimed at specific groups such as children or those in need of mental health support. In discussion, it was suggested that Members work with Officers to explore ways in which all age groups could receive the benefits of social prescribing. Members thanked officers for their work on moving this initiative forward.
- 4.3 It was agreed that the Committee's comments would be taken into account by the Head of Housing and Health when the strategy is redrafted.

#### 5.0 **Planning Enforcement Update**

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report providing an update on planning enforcement.
- 5.2 Members highlighted the importance of good communication in terms of ensuring local members are aware of planning enforcement issues in their area. There was thorough discussion of how this could be best put into practise while ensuring any sensitive data would not be disclosed. The Committee noted the need to adhere to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and officers agreed to consult with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in order establish what information could be shared with local Members before proceeding.
- 5.3 The Committee recommended that the progress made be noted and the Head of Planning and Building Control seek

advice from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the request that planning enforcement case information be circulated to local Members with regard to cases within their ward.

## **6.0 Grounds Maintenance Contract Task and Finish Group Update**

6.1 The Committee considered an interim report from the Grounds Maintenance task and finish group, providing an update of its work so far and planned next steps.

6.2 There was discussion of whether the current contract could be extended and the Committee supported the proposal that the contract go out to competitive tender. In response to a question from a Member, Officers agreed to write to Members outlining the cost of the tendering process.

6.3 There was discussion of the potential to rationalise dog waste bins, which was supported by Members. The Committee discussed the contractor's potential increased costs in relation to their pension contributions and Members highlighted that this was an issue for the contractor to consider and not the responsibility of the Council.

6.4 Members discussed the maintenance of highways verges and the current arrangements with the County Council were outlined. Members supported the continuation of providing the financial 'top-up' to the County Council in order to ensure consistent maintenance of grass verges throughout the district.

6.5 The Committee recommended:

- that the proposal to procure a new contract for the provision of the grounds maintenance service as part of the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation as the preferred procurement approach be supported;
- that Members' views on the importance of price and

- quality on the tendering process be noted;
- that the rationalisation of litter and dog waste bins be supported;
- that the County Council 'top up' arrangements continue to ensure consistency of verge length district-wide;
- the other considerations outlined in the report be noted;
- additional task and finish group meetings be arranged to consider ongoing advice and evidence.

## **7.0 Scrutiny Work Programme**

7.1 The Committee received a report which provided an update on the current status of the Committee's Work Programme for 2017-2018, including Task and Finish Groups.

7.3 The Committee approved the draft Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Background Papers

None

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