

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 12 JUNE 2018

REPORT BY PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report details the comments and recommendations made by the Performance, Audit and Governance Committee since the last meeting of the Executive on 24th April 2018.

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

1.0 Background

1.1 Since the last meeting of the Executive, the Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee have met once on 22nd May 2018 and considered the following items:

- **Appointment of Vice Chairman**
Cllr Wyllie was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee.
- **Housing and Health Strategy Update**
- **Draft Annual Report 2017/18**
- **Castle Weir Micro Hydro Scheme**
- **Work Programme 2018/19**

2.0 Housing and Health Strategy Update

- 2.1 The Committee considered a report outlining progress made in 2017/18 in delivering the objectives of the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-2021.
- 2.2 The Committee discussed key elements of the report including multiple occupancy housing; the Warmer Homes scheme; the insulation of older homes (particularly in rural areas); and noted that the Council's requirements for affordable homes were outlined in the draft District Plan. There was discussion of how property downsizing could be encouraged and the importance of providing smaller homes built to a high standard, including bungalows, in the areas where those considering downsizing lived. The Committee noted that officers were working with the County Council on the Extra Care offer. Temporary accommodation was discussed and it was noted that the number of households in temporary accommodation in East Herts was low due to the efficient running of the housing register but officers would continue to keep this under review, particularly in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- 2.3 The Committee supported the proposal of including an item on Housing Association performance, including their efficiency in dealing with repairs and maintenance issues, in the work programme and the Chairman agreed to complete a proposal form so that officers could scope this subject for scrutiny.
- 2.4 The Committee noted the progress made in 2017/18 in delivering the objectives stemming from the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-21.
- 2.5 The Committee recommended that its suggestions regarding ways to achieve the objectives in the Action Plan be forwarded to the Head of Housing and Health for consideration.

3.0 Draft Annual Report 2017/18

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report providing an update on progress against corporate strategic plan priorities for the previous year.
- 3.2 The Committee discussed specific elements of the report, including broadband in rural areas and new developments and noted that officers were focused on supporting both the County Council and local ward Members in lobbying on this, as East Herts Council's control over this was limited. There was discussion regarding the new Council website and the potential impact of universal credit and how officers were preparing for it. With regard to taxi licensing, the Committee noted that officers were working with neighbouring local authorities in order to ensure a common approach and consistent standards.
- 3.3 The Committee recommended that an update on the Launchpad pilot be added to the work programme for its September meeting.
- 3.4 The Committee recommended that progress against the Corporate Strategic Plan priorities over 2017/18 be noted and the draft annual plan be recommended to the Executive for approval.

4.0 Castle Weir Micro Hydro Scheme

- 4.1 The Committee received a report providing an update on the project to construct a micro-hydro power scheme at Castle Weir, Hertford, and setting out the current business case and updated costs based on inflation.
- 4.2 Members welcomed this report and expressed support for the project, highlighting the fact that it could be a great example of sustainable energy for the community which may attract visitors and would link in with the aims of the Climate Change

Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. Members also discussed the construction and Environment Agency requirements in relation to this.

- 4.3 The Committee agreed that its comments on the revised business case and revised timetable be passed to the Head of Housing and Health.
- 4.4 The Committee recommended that the positive impact of the proposals on the Council's carbon reduction and sustainability targets, as detailed in the report, be passed to the Head of Housing and Health.

5.0 Work Programme 2018/19

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report, providing details of the PAG Scrutiny Committee draft work programme for 2018/19.
- 5.2 It was noted that the Members of the Committee would be invited to an informal work programme planning workshop on 21 June, which would provide an opportunity for Members to contribute suggestions for subjects to be included in the work programme for 2018/19.

Background Papers

None

Contact Members: Councillor M Pope, Chairman, Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee
mark.pope@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Alison Stuart– Head of Legal and Democratic Services
alison.stuart@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Authors: Fiona Corcoran – Scrutiny Officer
fiona.corcoran@eastherts.gov.uk