

East Herts Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 23 March 2021

Report by: The Scrutiny Officer

Report title: Annual Scrutiny Report 2020/21

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Summary

- To introduce the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for 2020/21 and provide an overview of what Overview and Scrutiny scrutinised during this period. Members are asked to comment on the Annual Report prior to its consideration and approval by Council. Although Covid-19 has been an ever present danger since March 2020, legislation introduced by Parliament has allowed scheduled meetings to be held remotely for the first time, allowing the Council's decision-making processes to continue. These meetings have been accessible to the public live via the East Herts District YouTube channel.
- Members are asked to note that many of the actions commenced in 2019 were concluded in 2020 (or may still be ongoing e.g. Environmental Climate Change) so that there may be a consequent overlap of some actions and reports.

RECOMMENDATION FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- a) **The Annual Scrutiny Report on the work of the East Herts Scrutiny Committee during 2020/21 be received and**

recommended to Council for approval and publication.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is prepared each year and presented to Council. Reports from previous years are on the council's website.
- 1.2 The Annual Report for 2020/21 is attached as an appendix to this report and summarises the work of during the past year. No task and finish groups were set up in the 2020/21 civic year. Members are reminded that there may be some overlap between work commenced in an earlier year and concluded (or still ongoing) in 2020-21.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Once agreed by Council, the report will be published on the Council's website and notification of its 'e-location' will be made available.
- 2.2 It is acknowledged that Covid-19 has impacted on both businesses and individuals. It should be recognised that all decision making meetings of the Council have been publically available and live-streamed.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The Council's constitution states in Part 2, Chapter 7 at paragraph 7.4 that *"the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate."*
- 3.2 To comply with the requirements of the Council's Constitution

4.0 Options

4.1 No alternative have been considered.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Publication of an Annual Scrutiny report provides a summary of what issues have been reviewed which can be measured against the council's priorities. An Annual Scrutiny report may also help to provide a measure of assurance that democratic processes continue to be adhered to despite the impact of Covid-19 and that they are transparent and the decision-making process is "business as usual".

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 N/A in so far as the production of the Annual Scrutiny summary but individual report authors will have consulted prior to their reports to Committee.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes – detailed in the report

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 This report is based on the reports and minutes of Overview and Scrutiny meetings held during 2020/21 – up to February 2021. These are all available via the council's website.

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