

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: 29 April 2021

Report by: Scrutiny Officer

Report title: Annual Scrutiny Reports 2019/20 and 2020/21

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Summary

- This report introduces the Annual Scrutiny reports for 2019/20 and 2020/21 on behalf of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provides an overview of what Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised during this period. These reports would normally be reported on an annual basis but the 2019/20 was delayed as a result of Covid-19 and a decision to undertake a review of the scrutiny process here at East Herts. The review was undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2020 and their report was presented to the Executive on 30 March 2021.
- Members are asked to note that some of the actions 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.
- Although Covid-19 has dominated 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.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL: that

- a) The Annual Scrutiny Reports covering the civic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 be agreed and published on the Council's website.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 A 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 Reports for 2019/20 and 2021 are attached as appendices to this report and summarises the work of during these respective periods.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Once agreed by Council, the reports will be published on the Council's website and notification of the 'e-location' will be made available.
- 2.2 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 23 March 2021 received the report and requested that a minor change be made to the narrative of the Leader's Introduction to acknowledge the role played by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in supporting the work of the Executive. This was as follows:

Annual Scrutiny Report 2019/20

Insert into the Leader's Introduction:

“The Executive thanks Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Parking Task and Finish group’s substantial piece of work which was set up to examine elements of East Herts’ current parking policies. The Task and Finish group met seven times to consider issues within their terms of reference which resulted in a number of recommendations being made which are being kept under review by the Head of Operations”.

Annual Scrutiny Report 2020/21

Insert into the Leader’s Introduction:

“The Executive is particularly grateful to the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group in relation to Enhancing the Council’s working arrangements with Registered Providers which made a series of recommendations on how we could work with local registered providers of affordable housing to maximise the quality of housing Services for those wishing or needing to rent or buy an affordable home. This fed into a larger piece of work on Affordable Housing Research undertaken by the Housing Quality Network (HQN) which identified further options for enhancing the supply of affordable housing in line with local needs which the Executive considered on 5 January 2021”.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The Council’s Constitution Chapter 7 2g paragraph 7.4. states that Scrutiny Committee *“must report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate”* action.

3.2 This report complies with the requirements of the Council’s Constitution

4.0 Options

4.1 No alternatives 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 – references are made throughout the report e.g. where Scrutiny has established Task and Finish Groups e.g. in relation to Climate Change, Parking Policies.

Financial

There may be financial implications if the report is published but previous approaches have been to publish the report online. From an equality viewpoint this might necessitate make further adjustments to ensure that this document is made widely available to all groups.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes - Overview and Scrutiny committees are enshrined in law by virtue of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Localism Act 2011.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Constitution – Updated December 2020

Appendix A – Annual Scrutiny Report

Appendix B - Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) – Final Report published December 2020

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 December 2018 (Climate Change)

Council – 24 July 2019 (Climate Change motion)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11 June 2019 (Parking Policies : Task and Finish group)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 December 2019 (Parking Policies: Task and Finish Group)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 5 November 2019 (Waste Management)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 5 November 2019 (Council Tax empty properties)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 December 2019 (Council Tax empty properties)

Executive Agenda – 12 February 2019 – Climate Change

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 February 2020 (Cycling Provision in Bishop’s Stortford – Work Programme)

Overview and Security Committee – 4 February 2020 (Website satisfaction- Gov.Metric Performance)

Executive Agenda – 11 February 2020 (Parking Policies – Findings of T&FG)

Development Management Committee – 25 June 2020 (Bircherley Green)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 15 September 2020 (Social housing event review of relationship between the Council and Social Housing providers)

Development Management Committee – 24 September 2020 (Bircherley Green)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 5 November 2019 (Social Housing Event: Review of relationship between the Council and Social Housing Providers; T&FG) Minutes of T&FG 19 December 2019, 10 March 2019, 16 March 2020 , 25 June (adjourned) and 30 June 2020)

Executive – (Social housing event review of relationship between the Council and Social Housing providers) – recommendations to be considered in the context of a report to the Executive on 5 January 2021

Executive Agenda – 24 November 2020 (Parking Policies – Recommendations)

Contact Member: Councillor John Wyllie, Chairman of
Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
john.wyllie@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic
Services, Tel: 01279 502170
james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Lorraine Blackburn, Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 01279
502172. lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk