

# East Herts Council Report

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 18 January 2022

**Report by:** Scrutiny Officer

**Report title:** Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2021/22

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### Summary

- This report considers actions for inclusion in the committee's existing Draft Work Programme and proposes amendments to the ongoing Draft Work Programme.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, that:**

**(A) the main agenda items for the next meeting be agreed;**

**(B) the proposed Consolidated Work Programme, included at Appendix A, be approved,**

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

1.1 The Appendix setting out the draft work programme is now presented as a single report.

1.2 In deciding what items the committee should consider, Members need to have regard to the Corporate and Forward Plans and what is due to be considered at the next Executive. The item on the agenda this evening is for consideration and

decision by the Executive on 8 February 2022.

- 1.3 Members will note that one item for information has been included as a separate agenda item this is East Herts Healthy Hubs - promoting easier access to health and wellbeing advice and support. This report is an update and does not have any recommendations to the Executive. In order to make best use of the Committee's time, this is not for discussion at the meeting itself unless, at the pre-meeting, Members feel that a recommendation should be made to the Executive, then the key officer / Head of Service will be invited to attend the meeting to provide advice to Members.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The draft agenda items for 2022 meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is shown in **Appendix A**. The timing of some items shown may have to change depending on availability of essential data (e.g. from central government) external sources and officers.
- 2.2 Members are reminded that for a topic to be valid for Scrutiny it needs to be relevant to the work of the council and impact on a number of residents / or the wider area. In addition, there needs to be evidence, whether readily quantifiable or anecdotal, that this is an issue requiring investigation.
- 2.3 Members are welcome to submit a scrutiny proposal at any time by completing a Scrutiny Proposal Form (available from the Scrutiny Officer) which will provide officers with sufficient information to assess if it is appropriate for Scrutiny and to ensure their specific questions are addressed. The Scrutiny Officer will then liaise with officers and the Scrutiny Chairman to consider the best way to address the subject and complete a scoping document.
- 2.4 Members are also asked whether there is any training relevant to scrutiny or to the function and remit of the Overview and

Scrutiny Committee that they wish to suggest.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 This report provides an update on the current situation in relation to issues raised by Members.

### **4.0 Options**

4.1 The Work Programme will be kept under review by the committee throughout the coming year. It is worth noting that this is a draft work programme which is continually reviewed and will evolve as the work programme develops triggered by external and internal influences

### **5.0 Risks**

5.1 The establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is enshrined in the Local Government Act 2000 (section 9). The 2000 Act obliges local authorities to adopt political management systems with a separate Executive. Various sub sections (of the 2000 Act), set out the powers and duties for Overview and Scrutiny Committees including the right to investigate and make recommendations on anything which is the responsibility of the Executive. Legislative provisions can also be found in the Localism Act 2011 (Schedule 2) with options to retain or re-adopt a "committee system" (section 9B).

5.2 Potential risks arise for the council if policies and strategies are developed and/or enacted without sufficient scrutiny. Approval of an updated Work Programme contributes to the mitigation of this risk by ensuring key activities of the council are scrutinised.

### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

6.1 Scrutiny is an important part of the local democratic process

and represents the interests of residents. It holds the Executive to account on behalf of residents and helps review and improve services and functions run by the Council and its local partners.

6.2 The proposed Work Programme has implications for Members' time and the resources of the council devoted to scrutinizing the issues included.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

Yes – scrutiny of the services provided e.g. by registered providers of social housing will investigate how some of the most vulnerable people in the district, including those with protected characteristics, receive housing services.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes – although not subject to a further Task and Finish Group, the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving reports on the progress of the council's Environmental and Climate Forum.

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

Yes - scrutiny is enshrined in Statute (the Local Government Act 2000) as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

### **7.1 Appendix A – Draft Work Programme**

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