

East Herts Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 June 2022

Report by: Scrutiny Officer

Report title: Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2022/23

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- This report considers actions for inclusion in the committee's existing Draft Work Programme and proposes amendments to the ongoing Draft Work Programme in the light of the recent refresh of the Corporate Plan and "SEED" Priorities, approved by the Executive in February 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, that:

- (A) The main agenda items for the next meeting be agreed;**
- (B) Members make additional recommendations for any items they wish to scrutinise; and**
- (C) The proposed Work Programme, as amended, at Appendix A, be approved.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 **Appendix A** setting out the draft work programme is presented as a single report.

- 1.2 Members of the Committee met on 17 May 2022 to discuss what items might be considered for scrutiny from the potential items listed in the Work Programme which is appended to this report. While some suggestions have been proposed for the meetings in 2022, Members will still need to decide on what they wish to scrutinise for the remainder of the meetings in the Civic Year to 2023. The items listed in the Appendix are suggested items with reference to the Corporate Plan and Members can make their own recommendations on topics for scrutiny.
- 1.3 The Corporate Plan was approved by Council in March 2022. A key function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account for its decisions and to review existing policies and proposals for new policies. In deciding what items the committee should consider, Members should have regard to the Corporate and Forward Plans and what is due to be considered by the Executive.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The draft agenda items for 2022/23 meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is shown at **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 Paragraph 5.21.2 of the Constitution sets out what the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take into account when setting its work programme.
- 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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. With proper notification, Members of the Public can put forward items for scrutiny (section 5.19 of the constitution) and if accepted by the Chairman are allowed to address Members for a maximum of 15 minutes.
- 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 – the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving reports on the progress of the council's Environmental and Climate Forum. The Climate Change Strategy is one such report which has been considered at this meeting which will be submitted to Council for approval.

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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