

## **East Herts Council Report**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 21 March 2023

**Report by:** Scrutiny Officer

**Report title:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme - 21 March 2023

**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

- **Summary** – This report considers actions for inclusion in the committee’s existing Draft Work Programme and proposes amendments to the Draft Work Programme in supporting the Corporate Plan and “SEED” Priorities, approved by the Executive in February 2022.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

**(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**

**1.1 Appendix A** sets out the draft Work Programme which may be reviewed at any time.

1.2 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 the remaining civic year are shown at **Appendix A**. Paragraph 5.21.2 of the Constitution sets out what the Overview and Scrutiny should take into account when setting its own programme. The timing of some items shown may have to change depending on the availability of data (e.g. from central government) external sources and Officers.

2.2 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 that 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.

2.3 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 and is continually kept under review.

## **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 subsections 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 the 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 scrutinising 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, receive housing services.

**Environmental Sustainability**

Yes – the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview Scrutiny Committee receiving reports on the progress of the council's environmental strategies.

**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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