

# **East Herts Council Report**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: Tuesday 10 September 2024**

**Report by: Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

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

### **Summary**

- This report considers topics for inclusion in the Committee's Draft Work Programme. By establishing a work programme of topics for scrutiny Members are better able to plan their future workload, with an agenda which is focussed, maximising the efficacy of the scrutiny process by taking a longer term, strategic view of the issues facing the council.
- A suggested list of topics is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**(A) That the work Programme at Appendix 1, be agreed.**

#### **1.0 Background**

1.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the Draft Work Programme which may be reviewed at any time. Members are reminded to complete the scrutiny proposal form when putting forward an item for the draft work programme.

1.2 A key function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account for its decisions, to review existing policies and consider proposals for new policies. In doing so, it will act as the Executive's critical friend in the process. The principle power of scrutiny is to influence policies and decisions

made by the Council. Its aim should be to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough targeted examination of the council's services and procedures and make recommendations for improvement.

- 1.3 It has no formal powers to make changes but where a recommendation is made to the Executive, the Executive is required to respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if it decides not to accept a recommendation and the rationale for that decision. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) recommends that the Executive has to respond to any recommendation within two months.

## **2.0 Update**

- 2.1 Topics for scrutiny at the following meetings are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 10 September 2024:
- 5 November 2024
- 14 January 2025
- 4 March 2025

- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met for a workshop on Tuesday 11 June 2024, to discuss potential topics for scrutiny on the work programme for 2024/25. The following topics were discussed for possible scrutiny in 2024/25:

- Climate Change (climate emergency)
- Housing
- IT and Cyber Security
- Development Management and Community Forums

## **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 Members are welcome to submit a scrutiny proposal at any time. This form is available in the Microsoft Teams channel and provides Officers with sufficient information to assess if it is

appropriate for scrutiny and to ensure that specific questions are addressed. A Scrutiny Flowchart is also available which explains the processes involved in submitting a Scrutiny Proposal Form. Democratic Services will then liaise with Officers and the Chairman to consider the best way forward to address the subject and complete the scoping document.

#### **4.0 Options**

4.1 The work programme will be kept under review by the Committee throughout the coming year.

#### **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 Committee 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 risk (and Call-Ins) by ensuring key activities of the council are scrutinised.

#### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

##### **Community Safety**

No

##### **Data Protection**

No

##### **Equalities**

No

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes - the proposed Work Programme envisages the Overview and 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 1** - Summary of Topics

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