

# East Herts

## Annual Scrutiny Report 2025-26



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Councillor David Jacobs

## **Introduction from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Councillor David Jacobs**

It is my pleasure as Chairman to provide a summary of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the last 12 months. This report summarises the committee's activities during 2025-26, starting with our first meeting on 10 June 2025.

What follows is a summary of what the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has reviewed during the 2025-26 civic year. All reports and minutes are available from the link below.

**[Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Browse Meetings](#)**



**10 June 2025**

The full details of the reports, the recommendations and the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the webcast of the meeting, can be viewed [here](#).

### **Refreshed LEAF priorities and annual report for 2024-25**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with a report from the Leader of the Council and Director for Regeneration, Customer and Community Services that updated Members in respect of performance against LEAF priorities over the 2024/25 year and proposed amended LEAF priorities for the 2025/26 year onwards.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the performance over the 2024/25 year be reviewed, and Members reviewed the proposed amended LEAF priorities for 2025/26 and their comments were passed on to the Executive.

## **Council Tax Support Scheme**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report from the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance that updated members on the work undertaken so far in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme, and in respect of consultation with both the public and the Major Precepting Authorities in respect of proposed changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from 1 April 2026.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the update.



## 16 September 2025

The full details of the reports, the recommendations and the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the webcast of the meeting, can be viewed [here](#).

### Review of Resident Permit Zone Policy

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report from the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability on proposed targeted amendments to the Council's Resident Permit Parking (RPZ) policy and associated operational guidance. The changes aimed to increase flexibility, reduce procedural barriers and better align RPZs with the Council's objectives on sustainability, air quality, wellbeing and economic growth. The proposals were also informed by public feedback from the 2024 Parking Strategy consultation and an independent review by Citisense.

The Committee agreed that it had considered and provided comments on the proposed changes. Following a vote, the motion to note and comment on the revised RPZ operational guidance was carried.

## **Scrutiny of Registered Providers' Communications Methods**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a proposal to review the effectiveness of communication between housing associations (registered housing providers), their tenants, elected Members and Council officers.

The aim was to identify improvements, share best practice and, where appropriate, influence regulators or national bodies. The report set out a project plan and timetable for the review, including a draft questionnaire to gather feedback from housing associations.

The Committee agreed to the project plan, approved the establishment of a Task and Finish Group, and appointed Councillor Sue Nicholls as Chair.

## **Waste Collection Contract Interim Progress Report - Verbal Update**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with an interim progress update on the roll-out of the new waste and recycling containers, supported by a detailed verbal presentation responding to pre-submitted Member questions. A full written report would be brought to the meeting on 4 November 2025.

The update set out the context, scale and complexity of the project, comparing the initial position at the start of the roll-out on 4 August with the current position. Members were also informed about Veolia's contractual performance in collecting both recycling and residual waste.

Members received the verbal report.



## 4 November 2025

The full details of the reports, the recommendations and the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the webcast of the meeting, can be viewed [here](#).

## Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with a report on the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme and were asked to comment on the proposal to make no changes for 2026/27.

Members were updated on take-up following simplification of the application process, and on the cost-neutral nature of the scheme. The Committee considered the scheme in the context of the approach of local government reorganisation approaching.

Members discussed future options, caseload trends and the impact of universal credit, and agreed to support the proposal for no change to the scheme for the next financial year.

## **Community Forum and Development Management Forum Update**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update report on Community Forums and the Development Management Forums. Members considered the information provided in the report relating to the establishment of the Community Forum and Development Management Forum and had provided observations to the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

Members were generally supportive of the work undertaken in respect of engagement with the community through the forums. They were seen as a positive way of demonstrating the corporate strategies of the council – that being, listening, open and transparent. Suggestions were made by some committee members about spreading knowledge of the forums and their benefits to other ward members across the district.

## **Scrutiny of Registered Providers Communications Methods**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that updated Members on the Task and Finish Group on registered providers' that had met for the first time on 29 October 2025, with support from the Housing Lead Officer. Three further meetings would be held and expert witnesses would attend on 17 November and 4 December 2025, including council officers, Citizens Advice, the housing regulator, and representatives from large and small housing providers.

A final task and finish group meeting on 6 January 2026 would compile evidence and draft recommendations for the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and a final report would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2026.

The committee approved the progress of the Task and Finish Group and agreed that the final report be submitted on 20 January 2026.



## Mobilisation of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that updated Members on the mobilisation of the new Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract, focusing on the rollout of new services from August 2025.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee were updated on the performance of the contract and were presented with performance data on collections, missed bins and recycling. The Committee discussed the improvements and noted that further work was required.

Members also raised questions about project management, customer service impacts and digital systems. The Committee agreed that it had reviewed and commented on the contract mobilisation update.

Presenting the mobilisation update to Overview and Scrutiny helped the waste team focus on the key issues faced during mobilisation, demonstrate how improvements were being made, and clearly show how well the new services had been introduced. It also gave members a balanced picture of the issues around the mobilisation, especially the container rollout, also to demonstrate the success of the new service design and how it was implemented. Additionally:

- It gave a formal forum to set out the issues that arose and for a full explanation to be given - this helped to dispel some of the misunderstandings.
- It gave the waste team the opportunity to focus on that period, review the data, lessons learnt and actions taken, to also advise on what had already been corrected and where further improvement was still required.
- The team had the opportunity to give reassurance to members on how issues were being actively managed, and tracked through to resolution.
- Overview and Scrutiny gave us the opportunity to share the improved performance, and how the service changes increased recycling and reduced residual waste.



## 20 January 2026

The full details of the reports, the recommendations and the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the webcast of the meeting, can be viewed [here](#).

### **Extension of the Ground contract and the use of glyphosate in the grounds' maintenance contract**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with a report on the current ground's maintenance contract with Glendale, which was in year six of an eight-year term and due to expire in December 2027, with an option to extend for up to a further five years.

Members were advised that retendering would need to begin in 2026, would take around two years, and would incur additional costs, while an extension could allow for improvements to the contract, including reducing the use of glyphosate.

Members reviewed the proposals to extend the Glendale grounds maintenance contract beyond 2027 and discussed concerns about the continued use of glyphosate, including environmental, health and biodiversity impacts.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that its comments on alternative weed-control methods and reducing glyphosate be passed onto Executive Member for Wellbeing.

## **Scrutiny of Registered Providers' Communications Methods**

Councillor Sue Nicholls, Chair of the Task and Finish Group set up in 2025, presented a report from the Task and Finish Group reviewing how registered housing providers communicate with tenants, Members and council officers.

The review had highlighted inconsistent engagement, identified good practice, and found that poor communication can lead to frustration, escalation of issues and reduced trust, particularly for vulnerable residents. The Group made a number of recommendations to improve communication and working practices, informed by evidence from providers, partners and national findings from the Housing Ombudsman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed related issues, including Citizens Advice links and casework handling, and agreed that the Task and Finish Group's recommendations be forwarded to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods for consideration and onward referral to the Executive.

This work made proposals to improve communications for the benefit of residents including:

- Reviewing the contact details for registered housing providers and helping elected members identify who manages housing stock by ward



- Providing opportunities for providers new to East Herts to get involved in partnership groups and forums used to assist joint working in the district
- Developing a regular housing newsletter to publicise good work and promote networking opportunities between elected members and registered housing providers

An update is due to come back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 12 months in respect of progress against the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.



**10 March 2026**

The full details of the reports, the recommendations and the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the webcast of the meeting, can be viewed [here](#).

**Presentation by Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability (Cllr Hoskin) – The council’s approach to achieving net zero carbon by 2030: scrutiny of East Herts Council’s 2025 Carbon Emissions report**

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability gave a presentation that updated Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the council’s progress towards net zero carbon, outlining national and local targets, emissions trends since the 2019 baseline, and actions taken to reduce carbon.

The presentation highlighted recent performance data, green asset sequestration, projected emissions to 2027, and the remaining gap to reach net zero by 2030.

Members asked a number of detailed questions, and received the presentation.

## **Progress on the Parking Strategy**

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report that updated Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with the East Herts Parking Strategy, which aimed to simplify and standardise parking while supporting sustainability and long-term behaviour change.

Members were reminded that the Parking Strategy goes beyond parking services, bringing together actions across the council and its partners. It was based on three core objectives: encouraging sustainable travel, ensuring parking was fairer and more consistent across East Herts, and managing parking more considerately. Each objective is supported by specific actions, with progress already made on several initiatives aimed at long-term behaviour change and modal shift.

The Committee discussed tariffs, car park capacity, enforcement, emissions-based charging, permits, and the risk of unintended consequences such as displacement parking. Members recommended that the Executive consider emissions-based parking rates, better monitoring of impacts, changing single yellow line restrictions to specific hours, and promoting resident and business permits.

## **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy Review**

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance submitted a report that set out that the council had reviewed its Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy, which sets out how covert surveillance could be used in very limited circumstances to support investigations. Members were advised that whilst these powers were not routinely used and the council instead relied on overt measures such as clearly signposted CCTV, it was legally required to keep an up-to-date, robust policy in place. An external inspection confirmed the council's overall compliance but recommended that the policy be brought back to members and that relevant officers receive refresher training.

The updated policy was being progressed for formal approval, and specialist training had been arranged, ensuring the council remains compliant, transparent, and prepared should such powers ever be required in exceptional cases.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the report, and their comments were passed on to the Executive by the Director of Legal, Policy and Governance.