East Herts Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 9 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Report title: Annual Report for 2025/26 and refresh of LEAF Priorities

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with an update on performance against LEAF priorities over the 2025/26 year and invites comments from Committee Members for refreshed LEAF priorities going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: that

A) Members review performance over the 2025/26 year; and

B) Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend any refreshed or amended LEAF priorities to Executive.

1.0 Proposals

1.1 That Committee Members review progress against last year's LEAF priorities and recommend any changes to these priorities going forward

2.0 Background

2.1 On 28th February 2024, Council approved its new "LEAF" corporate priorities. These set out the strategic priorities of the Council and were grouped under the following four headings:

- Listening, Open and Transparent
- Environmentally Focused

- Acting with the Community
- Fair and Inclusive

2.2 Under each of these headings are a series of sub objectives and actions which officers were tasked with delivering. The paper to Council can be found here: democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s65262/East Herts Council Corporate Plan.pdf?J=3

2.3 A further, more detailed set of actions, projects and measures were then implemented at an operational level. This framework helped inform the delivery plans for services, teams and individual staff performance goals. In theory, every member of East Herts Council staff should be able to relate their day to day actions to strategic delivery of LEAF priorities agreed by Members.

2.4 The LEAF priorities are kept under review by Executive on an annual basis and adjusted/ amended as required. This enables The Council to change priorities to accommodate new challenges (eg. in national legislation) and local issues as well as progress against key objectives.

2.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update in 2025 on progress over the 2024/25 year and made recommendations to Executive. These were considered by Executive and Full Council and refreshed priorities were adopted. The same process is being followed this year with progress being reported to Executive on 14th July and then Full Council on 22 July, where comments and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny will be considered.

2.6 **Appendix A** sets out updates against each area over the 2025/26 year in detail.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The LEAF Corporate Plan helps residents understand the priorities of the Council and how resources are used to achieve them. The plan also drives service, team and individual performance goals.

4.0 Options

4.1 LEAF priorities have been developed by the Joint Administration

with support and advice from officers on deliverability, risks and financial implications. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are able to recommend changes to priorities following an assessment of progress to date.

5.0 Risks

5.1 There is no legal requirement for councils to develop a corporate plan, however, should the Council fail to refresh priorities there may be a risk that resources are not directed towards achieving key priorities.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The new Corporate Plan priorities will guide the organisation's work over the coming years. They will be reviewed on an annual basis and agreed at Council. A key priority is to ensure that consultation is carried out effectively.

Community Safety
Not directly however some of the priorities and subsequent actions will be focused on supporting community safety

Data Protection
No

Equalities
As the Corporate Plan is translated into operational priorities, individual equalities impact assessments will be undertaken where there is a change to service delivery

Environmental Sustainability
Actions under the Environmentally Focused section of the Corporate Plan will address issues around Sustainability

Financial
No

Health and Safety
No

Human Resources
No

Human Rights
No

Legal
No

Specific Wards
No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material:

7.1 **Appendix A** – Annual Plan for 2024/25

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