

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

WARD(S) AFFECTED: none

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is intended to support the Community Scrutiny Committee in reviewing and planning its work programme for 2011/12.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR : Community Scrutiny Committee</u>	
(A)	that the work programme shown in this report be reviewed and agreed, and
(B)	that the scrutiny officer be asked to make any changes, additions or arrangements as might be discussed in the meeting.

1.0 Background

1.1 Items previously required, identified or suggested for the work programme are set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**.

2.0 Report

2.1 At the last meeting of Community Scrutiny in June, members indicated their approval for the outline work programme as drafted.

2.2 Members also agreed to support the council's wider review of Community Safety and a task and finish group has now been convened to take up this work.

2.3 The Task and Finish group is being asked to focus on two key issues:

- *With partnership resources reducing, how should the partnership prioritise the activities it supports?*
- *Despite East Herts having low crime levels and ranking so highly in independent quality of life surveys, why do residents appear more fearful of crime than the actual incidents of crime suggest?*

Proposed outcomes:

- *Develop a proposal to put to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) board about future funding strategy and priorities*
- *Produce a partnership risk template*
- *Produce a delivery plan to mainstream Community Safety within the council and partner organisations*

- 2.4 It is expected that the task and finish group will meet over the summer and early autumn to review aspects of funding and fit in with budget setting timetables (interim report Nov 2011) and then continue through autumn/winter to complete the review (reporting Feb 2012).
- 2.5 No new topics for scrutiny have been received from the public following the article explaining scrutiny and asking for suggestions for review from residents (which appeared in the spring 'council tax' edition of LINK magazine).
- 2.6 The Director of Community and Customer Services has made a request for the committee to receive an additional report on 'Community Grants' at the next meeting (22 Nov 2011). Last year scrutiny looked at the application process behind the grant schemes and helped refine the selection criteria – this report would be to look at the range of grant 'pots' and review them to focus much better on helping to achieve East Herts' corporate priorities.
- 2.7 Members of Community Scrutiny are reminded that the **Health Engagement Panel** is meeting on Tuesday 18 October 2011 (Council Chamber, starting at 19:00).
- 2.8 At the start of the meeting there will be a short briefing given by officers from East and North Herts NHS Trust on "Development of a local A&E service at QEII 2012-2014".
- 2.9 The main external speakers will be 1 or 2 managers representing the 8 local Children's Centres. All members are invited to attend the meeting, but the discussions may be of particular interest to those who have one of the Children's Centres within their ward.
- *Bramble Hill Children's Centre - Buntingford*
www.bramblehillchildrenscentre.org.uk/

- *Beane Valley Children's Centre - Watton at Stone*
www.beanevalley.org.uk
- *Windhill Children's Centres – Bishop's Stortford*
www.windhillchildrenscentres.org.uk
- *Duckling Green Children's Centre – Sawbridgeworth, Much Hadham and Hunsdon*
www.ducklinggreenc.org.uk
- *Silver Birches Children's Centre - Ware North*
www.silverbircheschildrenscentre.org.uk/
- *Ash Valley Children's Centre - Ware South*
Tel: 01920 468263
- *Hertford Selections Children's Centre - Hertford North*
www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/selections/
- *Churchfield Children's Centre - Hertford South*
www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/churchfields/

2.10 The Centre managers have been asked to cover

- *The role of the Children's Centre in the local community*
- *Outline/general health profile of families that you interact with*
- *The role of Children's Centres in reducing health inequalities and the opportunities that public health partnership work presents*
- *A sample of some health related projects delivered locally*
- *Children's Centres – next steps and looking to the future*

2.10 In a recent publication from the Local Government Group (Improvement and Development) it was stated: *"It has been estimated that investment in children's centres can bring wellbeing benefits to children and parents, ultimately delivering over £4 worth of benefits to society for every pound invested"* (The role of local government in promoting wellbeing: November 2010 page 12).

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'** which follows.

Background Papers

Four principles of good public scrutiny published by CfPS (Centre for Public Scrutiny) [click here for link to CfPS external site](#)

East Herts Council own current guidelines for selecting issues for review. A summary of this information is printed at the back of **Essential Reference Paper B**.

Local Government Group:

“the role of local government in promoting wellbeing”
(<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=23692693>)

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p>	<p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives:</p> <p>Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> <p>In monitoring the performance of the council's services and action plans, the Committee is monitoring the Council's achievement of all of its corporate objectives.</p> <p>Any additional issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's corporate objectives.</p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from members of the public, the Executive and all Members.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>According to the Council's constitution, the scrutiny committees are responsible for the setting of their own work programme in consultation with the Executive and in doing so they shall take into account wishes of members on that committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>Any additional meetings and every task and finish group has resource needs linked to officer support activity and time for officers from the services to make the required input.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>none</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the council and relations with partners.</p>