

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 OCTOBER 2011

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

WARD(S) AFFECTED: none

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report is intended to support the Corporate Business Scrutiny (CBS) Committee in reviewing and planning its work programme for 2011/12.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION that:</u>	
(A)	the work programme shown in this report be reviewed and agreed; and
(B)	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 CBS work programme are set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**.

2.0 Report

2.1 At the last meeting of CBS, members indicated their approval for the outline work programme including the rescheduling of the Data Sharing Protocol report.

2.2 The Information Commissioner's Office recently issued a Data Sharing Code of Practice and, after considering the implications of the document, lead Officers made a request to the CBS Chairman to further delay their report to the Committee. This was agreed.

- 2.3 The new guidance draws strongly on the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act and the Data Protection Act. This will require a wholesale revision in approach and one which moves this function away from its previous focus on the sharing of performance data to now sit within the wider remit of Information Management.
- 2.4 Lead Officers are asking to bring a more comprehensive report to members at the CBS meeting on 20 March 2012 in time for the new civic year. This timeframe will allow every department to be reviewed and any necessary actions put in place to ensure compliance under the new code.
- 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).

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's own current guidelines for selecting issues for review.

A summary of this information is printed at the back of Essential Reference Paper B.

Data Sharing Code of Practice published by Information Commission's Office.

http://www.ico.gov.uk/~media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Detailed_specialist_guides/data_sharing_code_of_practice.pdf

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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>