

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2010-2011

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March 2011

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## **Appendix 1: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations**

## Foreword



The purpose of Scrutiny is to make sure that the decisions and services of the Council are based on sound advice, in line with its policies and are influenced and informed by the views and needs of local people.

The Scrutiny Committee was introduced at North Hertfordshire District Council ten years ago. The Committee has developed well and has since been renamed as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to reflect the increasing responsibilities and initiatives required of it. As we have travelled through that development, many lessons have been learned. This report reflects on the work our Overview and Scrutiny Committee have undertaken in the past year and looks forward to developments in scrutiny next year.

There are four main principles of good scrutiny, developed by the Centre of Public Scrutiny, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have sought to follow these when developing the annual scrutiny work programme:

- ✓ to provide a critical friend challenge to executives/Cabinets;
- ✓ to reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
- ✓ to take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public; and
- ✓ to make an impact on the delivery of public services.

The Committee has used various methods to seek evidence and conduct appropriate reviews, including the establishment of special sub-groups and task and finish groups, to put these principles into practice. We have conducted a review of our own effectiveness in autumn 2010, the outcomes of which will inform our annual work programme and manner in which we conduct reviews entering the 2011 civic year.

As in previous years, much of the Committee's work programme has been taken from the Council's Forward Plan. This has given the Committee the opportunity to comment and make recommendations to Cabinet before their final decision on a policy is agreed.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to express our appreciation to the Cabinet for their continued co-operation and support and also to the Council Officers who have responded to our requests for evidence, responses to questions, and information to support our work.

A number of local partners, from both Statutory agencies and voluntary/community sector, have attended our Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to assist members in reviewing evidence and learning first hand the implications of any proposals for change locally; their contributions have been valuable, and we are indebted to them for taking the time to come along to meetings, provide us with figures and a community perspective.

Finally, I would like to thank my Vice Chair Ray Shakespeare-Smith, members of the Committee and its sub-committees and task & finish groups, along with the Council's officers who have worked well together in contributing to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for another year.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010-11**

### **Members**

Councillor Lawrence Oliver (Chairman)  
Councillor Raymond Shakespeare-Smith (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor Allison Ashley  
Councillor Alan Bardett  
Councillor David Billing  
Councillor John Bishop  
Councillor John Booth  
Councillor JM Cunningham  
Councillor Lee Downie  
Councillor Steve Jarvis  
Councillor David Kearns  
Councillor Paul Marment  
Councillor Alan Millard  
Councillor Elliot Needham  
Councillor Michael Paterson  
Councillor Mike Rice

### **Substitutes**

Councillor David Chambers  
Councillor Bill Davidson  
Councillor Robert Inwood  
Councillor Sal Jarvis  
Councillor Lorna Kercher  
Councillor Marilyn Kirkland  
Councillor Michael Muir  
Councillor Deepak Sangha

## **1. Overview and Scrutiny within North Hertfordshire District Council – our general approach**

- 1.1 The depth and breadth of the Council's work means that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has to use its resources efficiently in order to scrutinise as many topics as possible in the time available. It does so by:
- Considering a number of issues during its committee meetings and making recommendations to Cabinet;
  - Appointing dedicated task and finish groups which can examine issues in depth and make recommendations to improve services;
  - Charging dedicated Sub-Committees with specific tasks;
    - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee with keeping an eye on the Council's finances and reviewing its performance;
    - Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee with reviewing the work of our key partnerships, particularly the Community Safety Partnership and LSP, but not excluding others which the Council resource
  - Membership of the Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee which enables the interests of our District to be represented. This will be increasingly important as the National Health agenda, ways of working and local representatives are subject to considerable change.

## 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 The full Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets eight times per year. It considers a range of topics including key decisions going to Cabinet as well as other issues which the Committee has decided would benefit from closer scrutiny.
- 2.2 The Committee scrutinises issues in a number of ways:
- By considering reports from, and questioning officers about matters which are being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
  - By submitting written questions which require a written answer, and which members can follow up by asking supplementary questions in Committee;
  - By interviewing and questioning cabinet members about issues relating to their individual portfolios; and
  - By 'calling in' decisions which are of concern to members or to the public.
- 2.3 In 2010/11 the Committee made recommendations on topics to Cabinet and Council. A full list of these recommendations along with Cabinet's and Council's responses can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 Two formal questions have been asked by Members during the year.

### 1: List of questions and answers received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Questioner	Date of answer
Play Areas	Councillor David Billing	18 January 2011

#### Councillor David Billing asked;

- Please could we see the detailed risk assessments relating to the need, or not, for fencing around toddlers' play areas - since this process has been carried out.
- Please could we also see the full results of public consultation on proposals for refurbishment of our play areas, including the issue of fencing.

#### The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services provided the following response.

*"Any play ground renovation is undertaken in accordance with the Councils Greenspace Strategy and associated Action Plans. As part of the development process consultation is undertaken with local residents and Ward Members the results of which feed into the final designs. Upon completion it is standard practice to commission a post installation inspection by RoSPA or similar organisation.*

*Maintenance inspections are undertaken on a daily and monthly basis and are also supported by independent inspections and risk assessments on an annual basis. The annual inspections are undertaken in late September of each year following the school summer holidays, which is the heaviest period of usage for our play areas. This enables any issues to be identified and resolved within the same financial year. Inspections in 2010 did not highlight any High Risk items and minimal numbers of Medium to Low risk items which are currently being resolved.*

*As part of the Greenspace Strategy, including our maintenance obligations the base level of equipment over the last five years has improved significantly as a result of proactive maintenance and ongoing investment.*

*The principles of play and the value of play are continuously evolving and this has affected the designs and lay outs of sites that have been renovated recently. This has included in some instances, where appropriate the removal or relocation of fencing that has traditionally been positioned to enclose the whole play area. Cabinet has agreed a small amendment to the Greenspace Strategy so that in the future if a fence is to be removed it has to be preceded by an appropriate risk assessment.*

*However if Members have concerns regarding any specific location Officers are happy to provide the requested information and discuss the concerns on site as appropriate.”*

NB: At the Cabinet meeting of 23 March 2011, the decision to replace fencing at King Georges Playground, Hitchin was taken subject to costs of replacement and maintenance being met by the Area Committee. It was agreed that any future application for replacement/retention of safety fencing around playgrounds should be made to Cabinet on a case by case basis for their agreement, and in the light of information made available to them regarding the accompanying detailed risk assessment.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Date of answer</b>
<b>Project Boards</b>	<b>Councillor Steve Jarvis</b>	<b>15 March 2011</b>

**Councillor Steve Jarvis asked;**

“The council’s financial regulations state that:

An appropriate project board as directed under the Council’s programme governance procedures must manage capital projects estimated to cost £1 million and above. Projects below £1 million that are considered sensitive because of time or funding constraints may require an appropriate project board as directed by the Chief Executive.

- What projects boards are currently in existence and what is their membership?
- What process is used to determine the appropriateness of the composition of project boards?
- What are the criteria for selection of the members of such boards and how are these appointments made?”

**The Strategic Director for Finance Policy and Governance provided the following response;**

*“The Council establishes Project Boards for a range of different types and scale of project. Their purpose is to provide support and advice to the person responsible for the delivery of the project on behalf of the Council. Their composition varies according to the nature of the project, its longevity and current status.*

*The attached table indicates the Project Boards currently in existence together with details of their membership. The process used to determine the composition of the Project Boards is that the requirements of the particular project are considered by CMT to determine the skills mix required on the project board at officer level, bearing in mind the overall work programme for the Council. CMT appoint the officer who will act as Project Executive. The Project Executive then recommends the other officer members of the project board and appropriate recommendations are made to the relevant portfolio*

holder and, as considered appropriate, the Leader of the Council concerning Member representation.

*Project Boards are established following “Projects In a Controlled Environment” (PRINCE2 )principles and representatives of each stakeholder group with a direct influence on/or who are affected by the outcome may be included as “Suppliers” or “Users” as defined in PRINCE2 guidance. There needs to be a balance between involvement of portfolio holders/shadows and, where appropriate, local ward councillors, whilst not allowing the board to become unwieldy in terms of overall numbers. Project Boards are commensurate with the type and size of the project. A board member’s role is to advise the Executive and so the Board needs to be limited to the most key stakeholders/decision makers. Officer criteria are that they have management responsibility for staff/services that are key to the project delivery, or are key themselves.”*

2.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has not called in any items this year and has taken a proactive approach, through the use of the Forward Plan, to identify topics of interest in advance of them being considered at Cabinet.

2.6 Portfolio Holders have continued to attend Committee meetings to present areas of their work, highlight their achievements and challenges and discuss how the Committee can assist them in developing policies. As in previous years, the Committee values their support and contribution in this regard, and this year the Portfolio holders have been asked to focus on performance of their areas and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

### **3. The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

3.1 The members of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee are Councillors Michael Paterson (Chairman), Julian Cunningham (Vice-Chairman), Allison Ashley, Alan Bardett, Steve Jarvis, David Kearns and Lawrence Oliver, with substitutes of Councillors David Billing, Lee Downie, Alan Millard and Ray Shakespeare-Smith. The committee has met four times this year.

3.2 The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee was formed this year to continue the work of the Finance Sub-Group and has continued to scrutinise the quarterly outturns and the annual draft budget, making recommendations to Cabinet through the overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Finance and IT Portfolio Holder has also appeared before the Group to answer questions and explain the main issues in his portfolio.

3.3 The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee has completed quarterly review of the Council’s progress in the delivery of its Corporate Plan, our largest strategic document. The sub-committee have made recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding areas of under performance or where projects have failed to complete to agreed deadlines.

3.4 All recommendations from the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee are made to Cabinet through the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee and therefore recommendations can be seen at Appendix 1, Recommendations made to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **4. The Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

- 4.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee was created under Constitutional review agreed at Full Council in May 2010 in order to undertake the function of formal review of the Council's work in partnership activity. This was a departure from the former 'Crime and Disorder Partnership Scrutiny Sub Committee' created to fulfil legislative requirements in 2009. With a change in legislation, the new Partnerships Scrutiny Sub Committee fulfils those community safety functions alongside others.
- 4.2 The Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee met three times in the year from May 2010/April 2011 and thus the scope of its work and ability to undertake very detailed review of individual partnerships is necessarily constrained.
- 4.3 The Members of the Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee are Councillors Paul Marmont (Chairman), Alan Millard (Vice-Chairman), David Billing, John Bishop, Elliot Needham and Lawrence Oliver: Substitutes: Councillors J.M. Cunningham, Lee Downie, Steve Jarvis, David Kearns, and Ray Shakespeare-Smith
- 4.4 The Partnerships Scrutiny Sub Committee have received reports on
- The context of local partnership working in North Herts
  - The effectiveness of Designated Place of Public Safety Orders ('alcohol free' zones)
  - The application of the NHDC Partnership toolkit in the governance of partnerships of which the authority is a participant/member and update on actions required to ensure effective governance
  - Crime and disorder responsibilities
  - Terms of Reference for the Responsible Authorities Group and Joint Action Groups, each responsible for strategic and operational community safety issues respectively
  - Application of Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) in regard to covert surveillance – this is a statutory requirement placed on the authority's scrutiny function to review the council's application of the legislative requirement, not to review individual cases to which it is applied; the powers have not been exercised in the past year.
  - Attendance by members of the Herts Constabulary and CVS to provide personal updates from their areas of work, both in terms of general crime reduction and community safety activity, and of the work of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- 4.5 With the removal of 'burdens' announced by central government, and particularly in regard to inspection and removal of the Comprehensive Area Assessment, which provided an extensive and highly complex formal framework required of the authority in regard to partnership working, it is appropriate that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the latest position. It is possible that future scrutiny of those partnerships which the council continue to resource could be conducted by the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the authority, and that this should be considered within the structure of Overview and Scrutiny from May 2011 onward; Its future work programme will also need to reflect these significant changes too.



## **5. Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups**

- 5.1 Task and Finish groups are dedicated sub-groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The groups can consider topics in much more depth than is possible in a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. Each group consists typically of between five and eight members from all parties, and can appoint external members who have particular areas of expertise which can assist the Group. The task and finish group take written and oral evidence over a series of meetings, quiz witnesses and consider a good deal of other evidence through literature review, good practice from other agencies, etc.

A formal report is normally produced at the end which makes a number of recommendations for improvements. This is considered by the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being sent to Cabinet.

Only one Task and Finish Group completed its review in 2010/11, that of Trade Waste, with completion hastened by changed circumstances in regard to waste disposal countywide as detailed below; as we reach the year end, Overview and Scrutiny have recently had the opportunity to review and comment on the detail of the Herts Waste Partnership Agreement, and make any recommendations to Cabinet ahead of its approval. Another three task and finish groups commenced work; Facilities for Teenagers and Shared Services, both of which will report their recommendations shortly, and that of the Parking Strategy for the district, which has only recently been initiated.

### **5.2 Scrutiny of Trade Waste Task & Finish Group**

- 5.2.1 The members of this task and finish group as originally convened in late 2009, were Councillors Michael Muir (Chair), Alison Ashley, John Bishop, Marilyn Kirkland, Deepak Sangha and Mr Martin Stears-Handscomb.
- 5.2.2 The Group undertook a different approach to scrutinising the trade waste collection service. Instead of setting its own timetable, scope and agenda, as is generally the approach to a Task and Finish Group, the member group decided to scrutinise a review which officers were already undertaking and thus work in parallel throughout the process.
- 5.2.3 The Group held its first meeting on 9 December 2009, completing the review in September 2010, as reported to Overview and Scrutiny at its 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010 meeting. At its last meeting, the Task and Finish Group endorsed the officers' recommendations on the future of the service given central government changes to handling of what was formerly known as 'trade waste, now municipal waste, and its comments were sent straight to the Waste Management Project Board with the approval of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2.4 During the review period, the team responsible for waste management have reported progress back to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the following occasions
- 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009
  - 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009
  - 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009
  - 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### **5.3 Facilities for Teenagers Task & Finish Group**

5.3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a task and finish group to consider the facilities available for teenagers, that intention arising from the outcome of the former District Wide Survey reflecting community aspirations that there should be more facilities for teenagers. The members of this task and finish group were Councillors Judi Billing (Chair), Marilyn Kirkland, Paul Marment, Elliott Needham and Michael Weeks.

5.3.2 In order that the review could best capture the local position with regard to those facilities which already exist for teenagers, to consult with those providing the services as well as teenagers themselves, the review group chose not only to invite a range of witnesses to attend formal meetings, but also to conduct a number of personal interviews in a range of locations and venues used by young people. This has provided a very local perspective for each of the towns, and for youngsters living in our rural areas, as reflected within the final report of the Task and Finish Group. The recommendations of the group will be presented to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 2011/2012

5.3.3 'On site' visits were made by the Task and Finish Group as follows;

1 <sup>st</sup> July 2010	Bancroft Gardens Hitchin
9 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	Christian Centre, Hitchin
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	Southern Rural areas
20 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	Hitchin Youth Group
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2010	Jackmans Estate, Letchworth
7 <sup>th</sup> September 2010	Royston
September 2010	Baldock

### **5.4 Shared Services Task and Finish Group**

5.4.1 The Task and Finish Group on Shared Services commenced work in December 2010 with the development and agreement of the review scope; the intention is that the review should examine the processes used to identify services which could be suitable to share, principles of business process prior to sharing services and how best to measure the benefits. The intention is to develop and implement a framework, or toolkit, to standardise our corporate approach.

5.4.2 Members of the group are Councillors Paul Clark (Chairman), Julian Cunningham, Michael Paterson, Judi Billing and Paul Marment.

5.4.3 The group have to date interviewed internal, council officer witnesses to review progress in the following areas;

- NHDC involvement in the county Shared Managed Services (SMS) contract
- Existing shared arrangements in regard to building control, enforcement activities
- The move to a shared internal audit service by early summer 2011
- Ability for the Council to share financial transaction services

5.4.4 It is clear that the whole issue of shared services is moving very quickly, and the group have agreed that it should therefore aim to reach conclusion and report its recommendations after two more meetings at most. The external witness attending the March meeting is Steve Bishop Strategic Director of Finance from

the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council, shared management team.

## **6. Health Scrutiny**

- 6.1 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising health services (and other health matters) in Hertfordshire. 15 County Councillors sit on the Committee along with 10 District Councillors and 5 representatives of the Patient and Public Involvement Forums. The Committee currently meets at least quarterly. Aside from the regular scrutiny meetings, a number of 'one off' site visits and reviews have been undertaken, visiting a range of health facilities across the county.
- 6.2 The Health Scrutiny Committee currently has power to:
- review or scrutinise decisions made in connection with the discharge of any functions whether or not they are the responsibility of the Executive;
  - report and make recommendations in accordance with standing orders with respect to the discharge of any functions whether or not they are the responsibility of the Executive;
  - report or make recommendations in accordance with standing orders on matters which affect the County or its inhabitants;
  - recommend that a decision which is the responsibility of the Executive which has been taken but not implemented be reconsidered by the decision maker;
  - refer to the Council for review or scrutiny a decision which is the responsibility of the Executive and which has been taken but not implemented.
- 6.3 Cllr David Miller has attended the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee on behalf of NHDC throughout the year, his role being to represent NHDC's and the district's interests on health matters.

## **7. Developments In Scrutiny**

- 7.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and introduced the Councillor Call for Action which enables any member of the Council to refer to an overview and scrutiny committee any local government matter which is relevant to the functions of the committee and to his or her electoral area.
- 7.2 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, enabled joint committees in two-tier areas to examine any issue that affects the local area, not just Local Area Agreements. With the removal of Local Area Agreements by central government in autumn 2010, alongside the removal of associated performance monitoring, the situation has changed slightly, although the ability to conduct joint committees and reviews remains an option for appropriate areas of work.
- 7.3 The removal of Comprehensive Area Assessment and the set of national indicators against which local authorities were required to report progress, announced in autumn 2010, has removed much of the formal performance management monitoring role formerly assigned to the Performance Audit and Review Panel, and more recently to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee. As the Council moves to embrace these changes, reducing the amount of officer capacity dedicated to performance management and inspection, it will be equally important for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and committee structures to reflect these changes in future.

- 7.4 Changes to the structures, service levels and commissioning arrangements for the National Health Service, including the removal of Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, alongside the creation of GP Consortia, private/public service commissioning etc will require Health Scrutiny to be conducted differently. We are currently working with our Herts County Council colleagues to establish the structures and representation required to ensure effective scrutiny of delivery of health services locally, particularly with regard to the experience of those who matter most – patients, their families and carers.

Relevant changes to Health Scrutiny resource, method of reporting to and through NHDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and onward to North Herts' communities will be incorporated into the work programme and committee structure once this is available, currently anticipated to be by the end of March.

## **8. Participation**

- 8.1 As often as possible, the scrutiny process is open to involvement by local people and partners This is through various media, including face to face, online or in writing. The Scrutiny process is strengthened by involving partners, residents and service users. They can bring in expertise, local knowledge, fresh ideas and an element of external challenge.
- 8.2 The Committee encourages participation. Ways to get involved include:
- Suggesting a topic for investigation;
  - Providing evidence to or at a meeting; and
  - Becoming a co-optee on a topic group.
- 8.3 Six people have attended the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this year, but none have applied or chosen to speak to the Committee on any topics of particular concern. The level of participation will naturally vary according to the latest issues or decisions being made, but we would hope to increase participation in reviews in the coming years.
- 8.4 There was also a good deal of outside participation in the task and finish group on Facilities for teenagers This included evidence and face to face discussion with representatives of the Herts County Council Youth Service, Community Safety partners, as well as teenagers themselves. In order to facilitate the discussions with often 'hard to reach' groups of youngsters, the task and finish group chose to visit North Herts' towns, community facilities and town centres to discover first hand the various issues which affect use of existing facilities, prevent use for certain groups or preferences regarding future facilities. This has been a very successful approach and one which we will use again in relevant reviews.
- 8.5 For further details about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or how to get involved, please contact the Scrutiny Officer using any of the methods below:
- Write to: NHDC Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF
  - Tel: 01462 474612
  - Fax: 01462 474633
  - Email: [brendan.sullivan@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:brendan.sullivan@north-herts.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1 –OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 2010-11**

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION</u></b>	<b><u>CABINET DECISION</u></b>
<p align="center"><b>MEETING DATE 10<sup>th</sup> June 2010</b></p> <p><b>REFERRAL FROM THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - CORPORATE PLAN MONITORING</b></p> <p>That Cabinet should monitor the progress of the Corporate Plan for 2010 – 2011.</p> <p><b>CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING - CORPORATE PLAN 2011 - 12 - PRIORITIES AND TIMETABLE</b></p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee strongly recommends that Cabinet consider non-executive Member involvement in the challenge process at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p align="center"><b>MEETING DATE 15<sup>TH</sup> June 2010</b></p> <p>Cabinet had responded that exception reports regarding the Corporate Plan were brought to Cabinet and the intention was for this to continue;</p> <p>In relation to the issue of non-executive Member involvement in the challenge process, the Cabinet Chairman advised that this was customarily carried out through the Member Budget Workshops (this year scheduled for September 2010 and November 2010). However, she undertook to review the issue of non-executive Member involvement in the challenge process in the near future</p>
<p align="center"><b>MEETING DATE 20<sup>th</sup> JULY 2010</b></p> <p><b>ALLOCATION OF THE HOUSING &amp; PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT</b></p> <p>That Cabinet address the following concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iii) The lack of clearly defined outcomes;</li> <li>(ii) The apparent reliance for constant services, such as staffing, on grant funding;</li> <li>(iii) That there is sufficient flexibility to take account of the emerging Local Development Framework.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>MEETING DATE 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010</b></p> <p>In respect of the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Economic Development stated that the Grant was used as a funding allocation for specific areas and that to achieve the aims of certain aspects of the Local Development Framework then specialist staff were required. He was confident that there was sufficient flexibility and capacity in the allocated projects to achieve full use of the 2009/10 Grant.</p>

<p><b>PROPOSALS FOR ALLOCATION OF THE PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT FOR NORTH HERTS</b></p> <p>(1) That Cabinet considers the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the apparent lack of coherence in the set of proposals put forward and the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy;</p> <p>(2) That Cabinet be requested to pay particular attention to Paragraph 3.6 of the report which details NHDC responsibilities;</p> <p>(3) That an appropriate monitoring system for the proposals, which is driven by outcomes and not output, be put in place.</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RURAL STRATEGY FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE</b></p> <p>(1) That Cabinet consider whether or not to continue with development of a Rural Strategy, in the light of the expected Localism Bill due in December 2010;</p> <p>(2) That Cabinet consider whether the consultation process regarding the Rural Strategy should include appropriate Area Committees and seek detailed input from CMT on the timescales for developing the Strategy;</p> <p>(3) That Cabinet consider a method by which non-parished rural areas may be consulted regarding the Rural Strategy.</p>	<p>In respect of the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive stated that each proposal had clear objectives, with coherent linkages to policies in the approved Sustainable Community Strategy, detailed financial information, and exit strategies should they be required. The Council's role was to lead the LSP, but not to the detriment of its partner organisations. The Council was responsible for holding funds for the LSP, including PRG funding, and would release monies at the appropriate time. The activities of the LSP would be monitored generally via the Partnerships Scrutiny Sub-Committee.</p> <p>In respect of the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs stated that the consultation process on the Strategy had already commenced – the document could always be amended to reflect the requirements of the Localism Bill; it would be appropriate for the Area Committees to be consulted on the Draft Strategy in November 2010; and Officers were investigating a method involving non-parished areas in the process.</p>
<p><b>MEETING DATE 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010</b></p> <p><b>CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING: THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO BUDGET SETTING FOR 2011 TO 2015-2016</b></p> <p>That an additional column be added to Appendix F 'Function Groupings and Strategic Questions' which would provide outline costs (with a margin of 15 per cent) for each of the 12 specific projects and if possible costs for sub projects for the guidance of Councillors at the forthcoming</p>	<p><b>MEETING DATE 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010</b></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Finance replied that Appendix F was a strategic document, the intention of which was to invite Members, at the Budget Workshops, to look at the concept of the various proposals, rather than any financial</p>

member Workshops.	details.
<p><b>TREASURY STRATEGY MID YEAR 2010 - 2011</b></p> <p>That the current Treasury Management Strategy be adopted by Council at the meeting to be held on 11 November 2010.</p>	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Finance welcomed the support of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He proposed a change to recommendation 8.1 in the report, and asked Cabinet to recommend to Council the continued adoption of the Strategy with one amendment, namely the replacement of the words “£7.5M per cash manager” with “£15M in total” in Paragraph 3.6.1 of Appendix A to the report.</p> <p>That the mid-year position on Treasury Management be noted;</p> <p>That the support of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the continued adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy 2010/11 be welcomed.</p>
<p><b>MEETING DATE 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010</b></p> <p><b>SECOND QUARTER CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2010 - 2011</b></p> <p>That subject to the completion of a comprehensive review of the existing capital programme estimates for the next two to three years to clarify the need for any prudential borrowing, Cabinet in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT borrow at the appropriate time against the Museum Services Development Scheme a total of up to £2,200,000 during the life of the project;</p> <p>(2) That Cabinet be requested to review all schemes in the Capital Programme that are indicating slippage e.g. Hitchin Swim Centre Car Park Extension, with a view to reducing the amount of prudential borrowing.</p>	<p><b>MEETING DATE 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010</b></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and consequently proposed the following wording for a revised recommendation 9.3 in the report:</p> <p>“That, subject to the completion of a comprehensive review of the existing Capital Programme estimates for the next two to three years to clarify the need for any prudential borrowing, Officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT, be authorised to borrow at the appropriate time for the Museum Services Development scheme up to £2.2million over the life of the project.”</p>

**CORPORATE PLAN MONITORING REPORT - 1 AUGUST 2010 TO 12 NOVEMBER 2010**

That Cabinet be advised that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub – Committee expressed strongly their concern about the continuous slippage of the due dates in the Corporate Plan presented at Appendix A;

(2) That Cabinet be requested to undertake an in- depth review of the Date Changes as detailed at Paragraph 5 to this report, the reasons for slippages, revisit all due dates and submit a revised Corporate Plan and supporting report to a future meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub – Committee;

(3) That Cabinet be requested to review the full current Corporate Plan in order to determine if all actions were still required.

**REVISED RURAL STRATEGY AND PARISH CHARTER FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE**

(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the principle of a Rural Strategy, however, the Committee expresses concern about the District Council's ability to resource and influence a number the activities within the key actions, particularly given the financial pressures that the Council currently faces;

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes that the documents will need to reflect the emerging Localism Bill and will almost certainly require adjustment accordingly and therefore request that Cabinet defers approval of the Rural Strategy pending the Localism Bill;

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the revisions to the Parish Charter.

Cabinet supported the proposed re-wording as set out above.

Cabinet had recognised the concerns of this Committee in regard to the slippages of the Corporate Plan Action Plans and had recommended that the review group be reconvened and that update reports be presented to Cabinet on a regular basis.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy acknowledged the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee) about the continuous slippage of due dates in the Corporate Plan. She advised that she proposed to re-convene the Corporate Plan Review Group to carry out a review of the Corporate Plan once the Council's budgetary position had been clarified, and that the Review Group would first meet in early February 2010 for this purpose, with a view to reporting a revised Corporate Plan to Council on 7 April 2011. She also considered that it would be useful for the Corporate Plan to be reported back to Cabinet on a regular basis for update and review.



<p><b>LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY (Sport Facility Strategy)</b></p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the concept of a Sports Facility Strategy, but are unable to support or comment in detail on the full Strategy document as this was not made available for Members to consider in hard copy.</p>	<p>Cabinet accepted and agreed with the recommendation that the report be deferred pending production of a hard copy/CD of the Strategy for Members.</p>
<p><b>MEETING DATE 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011</b></p> <p><b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>That Cabinet be requested to give serious consideration to an increase of £5m to £20M for Total Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days in order to increase investment income.</p> <p><b>SPORT FACILITY STRATEGY FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE</b></p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the adoption of the Sports Facility Strategy and Associated Action Plan.</p>	<p><i>The Accountancy Manager advised that the 2011/12 Treasury Management Statement (Appendix C to the report) contained no major changes from the 2010/11 version. He commented, however, that 2003 Local Government Act changed the requirements to set-aside Housing capital receipts. Officers were currently investigating the options that may now be available for using the Council's set-aside receipts, the outcome of which could result in a revision during the year to the Prudential Indicators and the investment interest forecast.</i></p> <p>The Chairman stated that, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT, there was no difficulty in acceding to the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to increase to £20M the maximum level of Total Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days.</p> <p>Cabinet accepted and agreed with the recommendation that the report be deferred pending production of a hard copy/CD of the Strategy for Members.</p>

<p><b>CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE</b></p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the lack of progress against the Action Plans included in the Climate Change Update and invites Cabinet to consider the implications.</p>	<p>The referral was noted by Cabinet and the Policy Holder confirmed that much work had been done on Action Plans subject to the financial constraints imposed by the Council. However, it was anticipated that Level 1 accreditation would be achieved in March 2011 and that an article on progress with all parts of the Climate Change Strategy would be published in MIS and as confirmed in the Cabinet Minute.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEETING DATE 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2011</b></p> <p><b>THE ADOPTION OF A LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN</b></p> <p>(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the development and presentation of the Local Investment Plan with a view to assisting in the securement of funding from the HCA;</p> <p>(2) That Cabinet be requested to note the following concerns on the Local Investment Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The implications of supply and demand for the provision of housing in North Hertfordshire;</li> <li>b. The situation regarding housing demand in North Hertfordshire, especially affordable housing;</li> <li>c. That the LIP be amended to emphasise the shortfall in affordable housing in North Hertfordshire particularly for certain groups (Page 22);</li> <li>d. That the need for an additional 560 affordable housing units per annum be clarified as regards the length of the delivery period (Page 22);</li> <li>e. That the reference to the Ivel Court, Regeneration Project (Page 27) that be amended to reflect the data from the Indices of Deprivation (Page 18);</li> <li>f. That the statement on the prioritisation of housing in rural areas be explained in more detail (Page 24);</li> <li>g. That the reference to the expression 'Intermediate Tenure' should be expanded with specific reference to the challenges concerning the general affordability and the ability to attain mortgages for shared ownership properties (Page 22):</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEETING DATE 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011</b></p> <p>That the Local Investment Plan (LIP) for North Hertfordshire, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved, subject to detailed changes to reflect wherever possible the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that do not alter the overall content of the document;</p>

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| <p>h. That the word 'each' be removed from the third paragraph on Page 28;</p> <p>i. That the use of the terms 'private sector housing' and 'privately rented homes' be clarified in the second paragraph on Page 11;</p> <p>j. That the impending review of costs, including the possible review of dwelling standards (Code for Sustainable Homes - Level 4 to Level 3), be clarified further to reflect that other strategic priorities would be considered as part of this discussion (Page 43).</p> <p>(3) That Cabinet be requested to adopt the Local Investment Plan inclusive of the recommendations made at (2) above.</p> |  |
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