

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
20 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**14**

**TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER**

**1. SUMMARY**

1.1 The Committee's work programme for 2016/17.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on its work programme.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 To enable the Committee to plan its work effectively.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

5.1 None.

**6. FORWARD PLAN**

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

7.1 The programme for the Committee's meetings is at **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration, along with the Forward Plan for 19 August at **Appendix B**.

7.2 The Committee is asked to review its schedule for Executive Members' attendance:

- December – Cllr Cunningham;
- January – Cllr Levett;
- March – Cllr Needham;
- June – Cllr Gray;
- Cllr Burt – did not attend in September 2016, needs to be re-arranged.

## 8. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

### The Council's Approach to Managing Larger Projects

- 8.1 Pressure on members' diaries has caused problems in scheduling the first meeting of the Task and Finish group (TFG) on the **Council's Approach to Managing Larger Projects**. The review is unlikely to be completed before the end of November. A report should be ready for the Committee's meeting in January.

### Future Task and Finish Groups

- 8.2 The Committee is asked to review and prioritise its future programme. The next TFG will look at **Recharges and Value for Money (VFM)**.
- 8.3 The feedback from participants in the TFG on Performance Indicators held in July was very positive. This was arranged as a one off TFG held directly before the Committee's meeting with the whole Committee invited to attend. The Committee might like to consider holding another one like this, perhaps on the VFM and recharges TFG which is easily split into service areas.
- 8.4 The Committees has chosen the following topics for future TFGs:
- the urban/rural divide;
  - the Council's management of risk;
  - how the Council awards contracts;
  - consultation with the community;
  - Hitchin Town Hall;
  - The impact of the Council's new Grants Policy;
  - NHDC's Document Centre;
  - keeping North Herts tidy;
  - balancing cost savings against possible environmental impacts;
  - Section 106 Agreements.
- 8.5 At its meeting in July, the Committee asked that the Scrutiny Officer investigate the Community Halls Strategy with a view to adding **Community Centre Leases** to the list of future Task and Finish Group topics. This is on September's agenda and the Scrutiny Officer will discuss with the Committee which aspects of this topic it might be useful to scrutinise.
- 8.6 A number of issues were highlighted by the TFG on Council reports which were outside the scope of the review. The Committee may wish to consider picking some or all of them up in future. The issues included:
- Making policy and operational changes through over-arching strategies like the Medium Term Financial Strategy with little visibility;
  - The suitability of the Council's decision making processes for some of its faster moving services;
  - Taking reports through the Committee system to avoid making decisions and taking responsibility for them;
  - The efficiency of the process of bringing reports to Cabinet and other Committees.
- 8.7 Whichever topics are chosen, scheduling difficulties indicate that in future task and finish groups should be organised on fixed dates, with members signing up for them on that basis.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

## **10. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5 April 2011. There is a general duty, described below, that public bodies must meet, and this is underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions: give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no social value implications arising from this report.

## **14. APPENDICES**

14.1 Appendix A – Programme for Committee Meetings

14.2 Appendix B – Forward Plan for 19 August 2016

## **15. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 None