

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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**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:
- agree that task and finish groups be organised on fixed dates to avoid delays due to scheduling difficulties; and
  - review 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 4 November 2016 at **Appendix B**. It is likely that the Forward Plan will be updated once or twice before the Committee’s meeting in January. The Chairman will consider before the next meeting whether new items on the revised Forward Plan should be seen by the Committee.

- 7.2 The Committee is asked to review its schedule for Executive Members’ attendance which is currently:
- January – Cllr Levett;
  - March – Cllr Needham;
  - June – Cllr Gray;

7.3 Members will have seen Cllr Levett recently given the Council’s recent scrutiny of the local plan, and January may be too soon to see him again. It might be better to see either Cllr Gray or Cllr Burt who was unable to attend in September.

## 8. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

### Scheduling of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs)

- 8.1 There have been persistent problems arranging dates for the TFG on the Council's Approach to Managing Larger Projects, largely due to member and officer unavailability and diary clashes. As a result, the Committee's TFG programme has been severely delayed. As things stand, it is unlikely the TFG on Larger Projects will report before March 2017 at the earliest. This means the Committee will only have completed two TFGs in this civic year.
- 8.2 To avoid this sort of issue in future, it is recommended that TFGs are organised on **fixed dates** which members sign up to. If they cannot subsequently attend, they can send a substitute.

### Review of Protocol for Task and Finish Groups

- 8.3 The new protocol for handling task and finish groups was agreed in March 2016. It contained a number of new features which will need to be reviewed and this has been scheduled for January's meeting. The TFG on Larger Projects has also highlighted a number of issues including internal and external publicity, public participation and external inputs into TFGs which the Committee may want to consider when it reviews the protocol.

### Future Task and Finish Group Programme

- 8.4 The Committee is asked to review and prioritise its future programme. The next TFG is scheduled to look at **Recharges and Value for Money (VFM)**.
- 8.5 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 and Museum project;
  - 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.
- 8.6 At its meeting in September, the Committee asked that the Scrutiny Officer to consider whether there were any aspects of the Council's management of assets in general and Community Halls in particular which might be useful as future Task and Finish Group topics. The Scrutiny Officer will discuss this with the Committee at its meeting in December.

## 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 4 November 2016

## **15. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 None