

TITLE OF REPORT: CONSULTATION OF MEMBERS ON THE SCRUTINY OF HIGHWAYS ISSUES IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report invites members to contribute to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group on Highways Issues. Members' responses will be considered by the task and finish group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable members to contribute to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group on Highways Issues.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 The task and finish group intends to consult all the area committees and canvas a range of community opinion as well.

6. TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON HIGHWAYS ARRANGEMENTS AND ISSUES

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose highways as its first Task and Finish Group of this Civic Year. The review will take place in August or September 2013.

- 6.2 The Scope for the Task and Finish Group is attached at Appendix A. The list of the witnesses is likely to be modified to include Ringway, community groups and others, depending on the views of the Task and Finish Group. The review seeks to:

- identify HCC's responsibility for highways issues and understand how effectively it exercises that responsibility in practice;
- understand the mechanisms for NHDC Councillors to feed into policy and operational decisions, and to raise any concerns or give feedback both to Herts County Council and to individual County Councillors;
- examine how communications could be improved between local Members, County Councillors and HCC, as this is likely to be the key issue; and
- canvas the views of other District and Borough Councils in Hertfordshire.

6.3 A significant amount of District Councillor time can be spent on highways matters even though it is a County Council responsibility. The task and finish group seeks the views of Members on service standards, consultation arrangements, provision of information, the new highways liaison arrangements and highways issues generally. To guide the discussion, a series of questions are set out below:

- What is the level of satisfaction with the current state of the highways?
- How clear is the County Council's approach to highways improvement, maintenance and repair?
- How much Member time is taken up with highways matters?
- How easy is it to report faults; and are they fixed properly and in good time?
- Are Members consulted about the County Council's changes to structures, processes, operations and policy; and how does this consultation take place?
- How does the new Highways Liaison Meeting compare to the previous Joint Member Panel process?
- How effective is the County Council's communication with the public of North Hertfordshire and its representatives?
- Are you satisfied with the information provided by the County Council on Highways matters?

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

9. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

11. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

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

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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13. APPENDICES

- 13.1 Appendix A – Scope: Highways Issues