

TITLE OF REPORT: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY DIRECTOR

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the policies and topics that the Scrutiny Committee plans to scrutinise. The report also updates members on the work of the scrutiny sub groups.

2. FORWARD PLAN

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

3. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

17 June 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sheltered Housing Task & Finish Group – Final Report▪ Adoption of New Housing Strategy▪ Adoption of a New Homelessness Strategy▪ Cllr F. John Smith, Leader of the Council
02 Sept 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Report of progress with the Rural Strategy Action Plan▪ Local Economic Development Task & Finish Group – Final Report▪ Adoption of Green Space Strategy▪ Submission Development Policies DPD - (TBC)▪ Cllr Ian Knighton, Leisure & E-Government Portfolio Holder
14 Oct 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cllr Richard Thake, Planning & Transport Portfolio Holder (TBC)▪ Strategic Approach to Car Parking
09 Dec 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Climate Change Strategy – (TBC)▪ Preferred Options Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) - (TBC)▪ Comprehensive Equality Policy – (TBC)▪ Cllr Claire Strong, Policy & Green Issues Portfolio Holder (TBC)
20 Jan 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cllr Tricia Gibbs, Community Engagement & Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder▪ Review of Scrutiny Task & Finish Group outcomes
24 Mar 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cllr Lynda Needham, Waste & Environment Portfolio Holder

4. SUB GROUPS

4.1 Local Economic Development Task & Finish Group

The first meeting of the group was held on 12th March 2008. The scope was agreed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1st April 2008. The group met on 8th April and spoke to the following witnesses: Paul Taylor (Baldock Town Partnership), Tony Nickels (Chair of Baldock Town Partnership), Martin Fletcher (Letchworth Town Centre Manager), Keith Hoskins (Hitchin Town Centre Manager), Geraint Burnell (Royston Town Centre Manager), Louise Symes (Planning Projects Manager, NHDC) and Andy Beavan (Local Development Framework Manager, NHDC).

The group also met on 12th June 2008 and spoke to the following witnesses: Paul Pullin, (Economic Development Officer, East Herts Council), Adam Wood, (Partnership Director, Herts Prosperity) and Tom Hennessey, (Team Leader for Economic Development & Regeneration, Herts County Council).

The next meeting will be held on 3rd July 2008.

4.2 Finance Scrutiny Sub Group

Nominations have been received for the membership of this sub group as follows:

Conservative: Cllrs; Michael Muir, Howard Marshall, Tom Brindley & John Booth
Lib Dem: Cllrs Steve Jarvis & Sal Jarvis
Labour: Cllrs; Lorna Kercher & Martin Stears

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Terry Hone

The Finance Sub-Group will be meeting on Monday 23rd June 2008. Therefore, it is suggested that, with the Committee's approval, any recommendations made will be reported directly to Cabinet on Tuesday 24th June 2008.

5. CHOOSING TOPICS TO REVIEW - 2008/09

5.1 On Monday 25th February 2008 twelve Members attended the annual scrutiny workshop. The workshop included a presentation on the likely implications for Members in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Police & Justice Act 2006 and the Councillor Call for Action. Members were also briefed about the Council's corporate objectives for 2008/09.

5.2 Members were split into two groups to discuss the topics they would like to be looked at in the new civic year. The following are the topics that were chosen by both groups:

- (a) Revisit major policy changes to monitor how effective they have been and look at any progress made (e.g. waste collection, fly tipping, Customer Service Centre)
- (b) Joint Scrutiny with a topic group at Hertfordshire County Council
- (c) Parking in residential areas
- (d) Green issues and the Council's carbon footprint (CO² emissions)
- (e) Does the provision of sports facilities meet the needs of communities (eg. youth, low income families, rural/urban areas)
- (f) Can the Council support / help to retain local community events
- (g) Effectiveness of the CCTV strategy (joint topic group with partners)
- (h) Increasing public involvement in the work of Scrutiny
- (i) Commercial waste and recycling (task & finish group **or** FSR)
- (j) Services for 50+ and reviewing the existing strategy.

- 5.3 At the Review of Task and Finish Groups meeting held on 14th January 2008, it was agreed that a list of criteria would be followed before a task and finish group is established by the completion of a form attached as Appendix A. In addition, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) would discuss any potential reviews in order to assess whether or not the review can be resourced adequately.
- 5.4 On 18 March 2008 CMT considered the resourcing implications of each topic and found that the two topics that would be able to be resourced this civic year are:
- Increasing public involvement in the work of Scrutiny, and;
 - Services for 50+ and reviewing the existing strategy.
- 5.5 A County scrutiny topic group is currently scrutinising services for the over 50's, which is scheduled to end by the Autumn. Therefore it will be important that any work that a task and finish group undertakes complements this work.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree on the two topics to include in their work programme for 2008/09, whilst leaving space for a "hot topic" during the year.
- 6.2 Members are asked to agree that the Finance Scrutiny Sub Group present any referrals or recommendations made at their meeting on 23rd June 2008 direct to Cabinet on 24th June 2008.
- 6.3 Members are asked to note the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09.

7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To enable the Scrutiny Committee to plan and carry out its workload efficiently and effectively.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Criteria used by the Scrutiny Committee before agreeing a task & finish group

Suggested Topic for Task & Finish Group Review:

Reason for suggesting the topic:

- Why should there be a review?
- How is it linked to one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities and/or is it an issue of public concern?
- How can scrutiny add value or influence change / improvement / efficiencies?

Supporting Evidence:

- Is there adequate support & additional resources available for this review?
- Can this review be undertaken between 3-6 months?
- Are there any other existing mechanisms that could look at this issue (eg. audit, partnership groups)?

Desired Outcome:

- What do you intend to achieve?

Name and contact details:

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