

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 20 July 2017	
Report No:	CAB/FH/17/040	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	12 September 2017
Chairman of the Committee:	Councillor Simon Cole Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07974 443762 Email: simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead Officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 20 July 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items: (1) Annual Presentation by the Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing; (2) Effective Member Development; (3) Use of Directed Surveillance Powers by the Anglia Revenues Partnership; and (4) Work Programme Update.	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report CAB/FH/17/040, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report for information only.	

Consultation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Reports listed under background papers below			
Wards affected:		All Wards	
Background papers:		Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report.	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Annual Presentation by the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing (Report No: OAS/FH/17/018 and Verbal)

- 1.1.1 The Committee was reminded that on 21 July 2016, the Committee received a presentation from the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, setting out responsibilities covered under her portfolio.
- 1.1.2 At this meeting, the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, had been invited back to provide a follow-up presentation on her portfolio. Report No: OAS/FH/17/018, set out the focus for the follow-up presentation, which was to:
- Outline the main challenges faced since during the last year within your portfolio;
 - Outline some key successes and any failures during the last year and any lessons learned;
 - Set out the vision for the Housing Portfolio through to 2019 and whether on target to meet that vision.
- 1.1.3 Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked questions of the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided.
- 1.1.4 In particular, discussions were held on the Barley Homes Group Limited; transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers; the Rough Sleeper Outreach worker; space standards; Houses in Multiple Occupation; Street Link; member development sessions on Universal Credit and street begging.
- 1.1.5 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

1.2 Effective Member Development (Report No: OAS/FH/17/019)

- 1.2.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/17/019, which built upon recent discussions held at its meeting in March 2017 with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance regarding member development.
- 1.2.2 The report sought scrutiny input into how the member development programme could be developed to ensure it most effectively helped members to deliver their role. Attached at Appendix A to the report were the outcomes from the recent Member Development Survey and at Appendix B was a list of previous events held an attendance figures.
- 1.2.3 The Committee discussed in detail various options set out in the report and asked questions to which responses were provided by the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance. In particular discussions were held on the need to provide sufficient notification of training sessions; tailoring training to the committee that members sat on; holding 20 minute training sessions/updates prior to a Committee meeting; the use of webinars and e-learning; and not repeating the same training sessions each year.

- 1.2.4 The Vice-Chairman of the Committee felt that the key point was to incentivise members to attend training sessions, and that it would be wrong to use the stick approach. Furthermore, members should not be treated as employees.
- 1.2.5 The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Member Development Steering Group be asked to consider the following recommendations for improving the Development Plan:
- 1) Explores the use of webinars alongside work already being undertaken on e-learning.
 - 2) Explores holding quick 20 minute learning sessions prior to the commencement of Committee meetings to update Committee members on legislative requirements; changes etc.
 - 3) Ensure that sufficient notice / publicity is provided on planned training sessions.
- 1.3 **Use of Directed Surveillance by the Anglia Revenues Partnership (Verbal)**
- 1.3.1 The Monitoring Officer presented a verbal report, which built upon discussions held at its meeting in April 2017 regarding the use of surveillances powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 by the Anglian Revenues Partnership (ARP) for carrying out benefits checks.
- 1.3.2 It was reported that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) carried out fraud investigations on behalf of the Anglia Revenues Partnership, and the DWP had not used these surveillance powers.
- 1.3.3 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the verbal update by the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4 **Work Programme Update (Report No: OAS/FH/17/020)**
- 1.4.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/17/020, which updated Member on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2017-2018 (Appendix 1).
- 1.4.2 The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) informed the Committee that the following additional items were to be included in its forward work programme for 9 November 2017:
- Development of a New West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2018-2020;
 - Annual Report from Barley Homes Group Limited.
- 1.4.3 The Committee **noted** the update on the current status of its forward work programme for 2017-2018 and the additional items to be included in its forward work programme for November 2017.

2. Background Papers

- 2.1.1 Report No: [OAS/FH/17/018](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Presentation by the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
- 2.1.2 Report No: [OAS/FH/17/019](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Effective Member Development
- 2.1.3 Report No: [OAS/FH/17/020](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update