

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 19 July 2017	
Report No:	CAB/SE/17/041	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	19 September 2017
Chairman of the Committee:	Diane Hind Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 706542 Email: diane.hind@stedsbc.gov.uk	
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Purpose of report:	On 19 July 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items: (1) Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing; (2) Effective Member Development; (3) Use of Directed Surveillance Powers by the Anglia Revenues Partnership; and (4) Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report CAB/SE/17/041, 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? If yes, please give details		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? If yes, please give details		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? If yes, please give details		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? If yes, please give details		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? If yes, please give details		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 Cabinet Member for Housing (Report No: OAS/SE/17/020 and Verbal)

- 1.1.1 The Committee was reminded that on 20 July 2016, the Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Housing, setting out responsibilities covered under her portfolio.
- 1.1.2 At this meeting, the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, had been invited back to provide a follow-up presentation on her portfolio. Report No: OAS/SE/17/020, set out the focus for the follow-up presentation, which was to:
- Outline the main challenges faced since during the last two years within your portfolio;
 - Outline some key successes and any failures during the last two years 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 Cabinet Member for Housing and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided.
- 1.1.4 In particular, discussions were held on the review of the Vision 2031, which would commence in the next 18 months; Barley Homes Group Limited; transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers; emergency bed and breakfast accommodation; Member Development sessions on Universal Credit; delayed discharges from hospital; space standards; bringing empty homes back into use; domestic abuse and young people and affordable housing.
- 1.1.5 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

1.2 Effective Member Development (Report No: OAS/SE/17/021)

- 1.2.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/17/021, 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 and 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 use of webinars; e-learning (which the Committee noted was currently being trialled with a number of officers and Members); more joined up training with Suffolk County Council, e.g. safeguarding; Group Leaders discussing training at Group

meetings and acting as “training champions”; the need to inform the Learning and Development Advisor when Councillors had attended external training events; and developing a councillor profile form setting out training events attended elsewhere.

1.2.4 In response to a question raised regarding compulsory training, Members were informed that the Council’s Constitution was being reviewed and would include increasing a number of committees for which training would become mandatory, for example the Development Control Committee.

1.2.5 The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Joint Member Development Group be asked to consider the following recommendations for improving the Development Plan:

- 1) Each Political Group has a Councillor as its Training Champion.
- 2) Explores the use of webinars alongside work already being undertaken on e-learning.
- 3) Explores joined up training events with Suffolk County Council in West Suffolk.
- 4) A selection of Councillors be contacted by telephone, including some of those who did not respond to the recent Member Development Survey Questionnaire, to assess Member Development needs.
- 5) A councillor profile form be developed to show all training events attended but which would not be available to the public.
- 6) Members to be reminded to notify the Learning and Development Advisor of all training events they had attended, in particular training which was not facilitated by the Council.

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 and Suggestions for Scrutiny (Report No: OAS/SE/17/022)**

1.4.1 The Committee received and **noted** Report No: OAS/SE/17/022, which provided an update on the current status of the Committee's Work Programme for 2017-2018, which included current Task and Finish Groups.

1.4.2 The Committee also considered two suggestions for scrutiny which had been submitted relating to:

- Concerns raised by residents relating to various Highways issues; and
- A follow-up presentation by the Anglia Revenues Partnership on their Debt Management and Recovery Policy.

1.4.3 The Committee considered each suggestion, and taking into account information provided, the Committee **Resolved** that:

- 1) Representatives from the Anglia Revenues Partnership be invited to its scheduled meeting on 8 November 2017, to provide a follow-up presentation to the Committee on its debt management work.
- 2) The Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; appropriate officers from Suffolk County Council and Kier Limited be invited by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to an Extraordinary Committee meeting on 25 October 2017, to discuss various highways issues affecting residents in West Suffolk.

2. Background Papers

2.1.1 Report No: [OAS/SE/17/020](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Housing

2.1.2 Report No: [OAS/SE/17/021](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Effective Member Development

2.1.3 Report No: [OAS/SE/17/022](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny