

# ***Report to Council***

***Date of meeting: 28 June 2007***

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny**

**Chairman: Councillor R Morgan**

**Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246**

**Item: 7 (b)**

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## **Recommendation:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from May to the present be noted.**

## **Report.**

1. This is the start for a new year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At their first meeting held on 7 June 2007 the committee agreed to the setting up of 4 Standing Panels and 4 Task and Finish Panels, this being one less of each panel from last year. The Committee also agreed their work programme for the year, which is attached as an appendix to this report.

2. The Standing Panels each have a rolling programme that consider ongoing cyclical issues and are comprised of the Housing Standing Panel under the Chairmanship of Councillor S Murray; the Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel chaired by Councillor R Church; the Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Jon Whitehouse; and the Environment and Planning Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Mrs Smith.

3. Four new Task and Finish Panel were also constituted. They were:

a) The Leisure Task and Finish Panel, under the Chairmanship of Councillor Mrs Harding, looking at Future Management of Waltham Abbey Sports Centre; reviewing the feasibility for alternative Arts Development in the District; the monitoring of Youth Initiatives Scheme; and Olympic Bid - to undertake a review of the opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and bring forward proposals as to how the Council may wish to respond, including priorities for action and any resource implications.

b) The Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel, under the Chairmanship of Councillor Mrs Wagland considering in detail the provision of Value For Money within the Development Control (Planning Services) function, focusing specifically on the success of the 'hit squad' established to focus on the backlog of planning applications; how and to what extent performance in relation to the determination of planning applications has improved as a result of the 'hit squad' and other additional resources such as the new integrated computer system, the restructure of Planning Services and the application of Planning Delivery Grant; and how unit cost and other benchmarking information in relation to the Development Control function can be obtained to increase the effectiveness of the Value For Money Analysis for 2006/07 and future years.

c) The Town Centre and Car Parks Task and Finish Panel, under the Chairmanship of Councillor M Colling, looking at the type of town centres that should be encouraged in Epping Forest, the key factors affecting the vitality of each of our town centres and the steps required to assist and encourage the economies and growth of our town centres. The Panel also to look at the extent of anti-social behaviour in car parks and the action taken to date, the various technical solutions available and should closure of car parks be a necessary solution.

d) The Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel under the Chairmanship of Councillor M Cohen, they will continue to consider the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and its effect on Scrutiny in EFDC and how it could be improved, to consider the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in the new 'Scrutiny Plus' arrangements to be conducted with other partner agencies, to consider the proposal for a 'Community Call for Action' and its implications for EFDC Scrutiny and to consider the role of EFDCs Crime Reduction Team and the resources available to it.

4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- received a presentation from Simon Williams from London Underground Ltd on 7 June on the current state of play of the underground stations and car parks in the district;
- they also considered the interim report from the Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel noting their progress so far and acknowledging their need to continue their Panel into the new year;
- and resolved to write to Essex County Council to ask that an appropriate County Overview and Scrutiny Panel be asked to look into the problems experienced by people over rural transport.

## Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – 2007/08

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Report Deadline / Priority</b>	<b>Progress / Comments</b>	<b>Programme of Future Meetings</b>
(1) Scrutiny of London Underground Ltd	June 2007	To be considered at this meeting	10 July, 30 August, 4 October 8 November 13 December 2007 31 January, 6 March, 10 April 2008
(2) Scrutiny of Highways Local Service Agreement	Spring 2008		
(3) Scrutiny of organised bodies – West Essex PCT	To report in new year	Chairman of PCT Aiden Thomas attended 5 April 2007 OSC	
(4) Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership – Scrutiny of Chairman and Member level EFDC representatives	Spring 2008	Agreed that the representatives be invited to report to the Committee on an annual basis	
(5) Scrutiny of Essex Police – Neighbourhood Policing Initiative	To report in 2008	To receive another presentation on this next year.	
(6) Scrutiny of Cabinet Forward Plan	July 2007		
(7) Six monthly review - Monitoring of OS recommendations Free Saturday Car Parking – progress reports Review of work plan	October 2007		