



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21st November, 2012

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Publication date: 13 November 2012

CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Sandra Hancock in Legal and Property Services on 01923 278377 or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K Collett (Chair)

Councillor A Khan (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Aron, N Bell, S Greenslade, K Hastrick, M Hofman, R Martins and S Rackett

AGENDA

PART A - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012 to be submitted and signed.

All minutes are available on the Council's website –

<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

4. SCRUTINY PANELS/TASK GROUPS

To note the minutes of the following Scrutiny Panels and Task Groups have been published since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

- Budget Panel – 11 September and 23 October 2012
- Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel – 18 September 2012
- Community Safety Partnership Task Group – 10 October 2012

All minutes are available on the Council's website –

<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

5. PREVIOUS REVIEW UPDATE: HOSPITAL PARKING CHARGES TASK GROUP
(Pages 1 - 4)

A representative from the West Herts Hospital NHS Trust will be attending the meeting to provide an update on the Task Group's recommendations.

6. CALL-IN

To consider any Executive decisions which have been called in by the requisite number of Members.

7. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND QUESTIONS (Pages 5 - 10)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the outstanding actions and questions from previous meetings.

8. QUARTER 2 2012/13 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Pages 11 - 30)

This report sets out the performance data for the second quarter of 2012/13.

9. BENEFITS DEPARTMENT UPDATE (Pages 31 - 34)

This report explains the improvement in Performance Indicators for the Benefits Service and explains the background to the statistics.

10. SCRUTINY REVIEW (Pages 35 - 74)

This report sets out details of the review carried out on the scrutiny structures introduced in May 2011.

11. PREVIOUS REVIEW UPDATE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING (Pages 75 - 78)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the latest update on recommendation 2 from the Affordable Housing Review.

12. PREVIOUS REVIEW UPDATE: CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (Pages 79 - 90)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review Cabinet's comments and consider whether it wishes to review the recommendations at a later date.

Task Groups

13. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK TASK GROUP (Pages 91 - 98)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review Cabinet's comments and consider whether it wishes to review the Task Group's recommendations at a later date.

14. TASK GROUP SUGGESTIONS (Pages 99 - 106)

A scrutiny suggestion has been put forward by Councillor Martins. The suggestion is attached and the Committee and Scrutiny Officer is waiting for a response from the Head of Planning. All non-executive Councillors have been emailed to ask them if they would be interested in taking part in this review should it be agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will provide details of interested Councillors at the meeting.

The Scrutiny Committee to discuss if they have any other suggestions for scrutiny topics.

15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday 20 December 2012 (For call-in only)
- Tuesday 15 January 2013 (For call-in only)
- Wednesday 23 January 2013

*PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Previous Review Update: Hospital Parking Charges Task Group update

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides an update on the Hospital Parking Charges Task Group's recommendations.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the latest update and considers whether it requires further information at a later date.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 At Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 23 June 2011 Members agreed to set up a Task Group to review 'Hospital parking and its high charges. At the following meeting held on 26 July 2011, the Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope and the Task Group membership.

3.2 The Task Group met on five occasions. The final meeting on 4 January 2012 agreed the final report and recommendations for presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 3.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Task Group's final report and recommendations at its meeting on 2 February. It endorsed the report for circulation to the representatives from the Hospital Trust and to the other witness.
- 3.4 The recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The Associate Director of Infrastructure has been invited to attend the meeting and to provide Members with an update on the parking arrangements at the hospital and whether there has been any progress on implementing any of the recommendations.
- 3.6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the latest update and consider whether it wishes to further review the recommendations at a later date.
- 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**
- 4.1 **Financial**
- 4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that there are no direct financial implications for the Council arising out of this report.
- 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)
- 4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Hospital Parking Charges Task Group's recommendations

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Hospital Parking Charges Task Group's final report
Overview and Scrutiny Committee minutes 23 June 2011, 26 July 2011 and

All reports and minutes are available on the Council's website –
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

File Reference

None

Review	Hospital Parking Charges
Committee/Task Group	Hospital Parking Charges Task Group
Chair	Councillor Karen Collett
Final report published	2 February 2012

Recommendation	
1.	Information on concessions to be made clearer and available in an information booklet.
2.	Parking charges to start at £2.50 for a two hour stay.
3.	Stakeholders to be surveyed prior to increase in parking charges.
4.	Vouchers to be offered in the event that visitors park for longer than their anticipated stay.
5.	Pay on exit system to be introduced.
6.	Signage and information on the free '30 minute' bays to be improved.
7.	Signage and information on parking areas for visitors to be improved.
8.	Signs informing on slippery roads to be installed.
9.	Signs to indicate distance to hospital reception to be installed.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Outstanding Actions and questions

Action to be carried out	Responsibility	Committee Date	Deadline	Comments/officer	
Performance Report					
PI 22	<p><u>RB2 KPI1ii – Time taken to process change of circumstances</u></p> <p>In Appendix B the above performance measure does not make it clear that it only refers to Housing and Council Tax Benefit and does not include Council Tax changes. Can this be clarified in the appendices of future reports?</p>	Partnerships and Performance Section Head	19/09/12	13/11/12	Please refer to Item 8 on this agenda
PI 23	<p><u>RB1 / RB2 / RB3 – Processing Housing Benefit claims</u></p> <p>Performance report indicates the target by the average number of days taken to process claims and changes in circumstances. When additional updates are provided the outstanding work is referred to by the number of documents.</p> <p>Please can this be made consistent and when possible explain the number of claimants affected by the work.</p>	Partnerships and Performance Section Head / Head of Revenues and Benefits / Portfolio Holder for Shared Services	19/09/12	21/11/12	Please refer to Item 8 on this agenda

Action to be carried out		Responsibility	Committee Date	Deadline	Comments/officer
PI 24	<p><u>Cor3 - % of stage 1 complaints resolved within 10 days</u></p> <p>This target had not been achieved and yet the trend showed an improvement. Further explanation needed in the comments column.</p>	Partnerships and Performance Section Head	19/09/12	13/11/12	Please refer to Item 8 on this agenda
PI 25	<p><u>Cor 1 to Cor 5</u></p> <p>It was noted that Environmental Services was the Service Lead on these performance measures. It was unclear whether they only related to Environmental Services or all Council Services. Needs to be made clear.</p>	Partnerships and Performance Section Head	19/09/12	13/11/12	Please refer to Item 8 on this agenda
PI 26	Provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with a copy of the Council's complaints procedure	Committee and Scrutiny Officer	19/09/12	15/10/12	The relevant web page was emailed to all Councillors on 4 October 2012 and a paper copy of the complaints form was forwarded to Members.

Action to be carried out	Responsibility	Committee Date	Deadline	Comments/officer	
Affordable Housing Review					
AHR 1	<p><u>Recommendation 1 – Affordable Housing threshold</u> – The status of the Core Strategy to be reviewed in 12 months.</p> <p>The original recommendations was –</p> <p>" That the reduction of the affordable housing threshold from 15 units to 10 units proposed by the Planning Policy Advisory Group be implemented and be reviewed after 18 months to see if it has resulted in additional affordable homes or deterred some developers from investing in Watford."</p>	OSC Committee	26 July 2011	March 2013	Added to rolling work programme
AHR 7	Review the first and second quarters' performance of the new Nomination Policy	Committee and Scrutiny Officer/ Housing Section Head	19/09/12	November 2013	Added to rolling work programme

Action to be carried out		Responsibility	Committee Date	Deadline	Comments/officer
Work Programme and Task Groups					
WP 8	Community Safety Partnership Task Group to be asked to review the provision of drug treatment in the borough	Committee and Scrutiny Officer and Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer	24 November 2011	1 December 2011 Revised date TBC	Referred to the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer supporting the Community Safety Partnership Task Group. Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be informed when the subject is due to be discussed at the Task Group. This topic is on the Task Group's work programme and will be reviewed once the relevant officers are available.
WP 11	OSC to examine the long-term impact on the four organisations which would be subject to the largest grant cuts.	Committee and Scrutiny Officer	2 February 2012	23 January 2013	Added to rolling work programme
WP 12	<u>Community Safety Partnership Task Group</u> When the Task Group reviews domestic violence and domestic abuse ensure that the information covers men as well as women.	Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer / Community Safety Manager	19/09/12	15/10/12	The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer was informed of the Scrutiny Committee's request and this was then referred to the organisations visiting the Task Group.

Action to be carried out	Responsibility	Committee Date	Deadline	Comments/officer	
Hospital Parking Charges Task Group					
HP 6	Review outcome of report	Committee and Scrutiny Officer	2 February 2012	November 2012	A representative from the Hospital Trust has advised that he is able to attend the meeting in November.
Previous Reviews Updates					
PR 2	<u>Services for the Deceased</u> Outstanding recommendations to be further reviewed	Committee and Scrutiny Officer	25 July 2012	February 2013	Added to the rolling work programme
PR 5	<u>Neighbourhood Forums</u> Contact the Communications Manager to discuss the best editions Members could include articles about Neighbourhood Forums and their projects.	Committee and Scrutiny Officer	25 July 2012	September 2012	The Committee and Scrutiny Officer emailed the Communications Manager on 14 August 2012. The Communications Manager has advised that he will be checking the publication dates suitable for including information on Neighbourhood Forums and their projects in About Watford. Further information will be circulated to all Councillors once known.

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*PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Title: Update on the council's key performance indicators and measures – second quarter (July - September) 2012/13

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 Watford BC's Corporate Plan 2012-16 set out the eight key performance indicators that the council has selected to measure its key priorities and where it knows it needed to improve performance during 2012/13. Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise and comment on the performance of these indicators on a quarterly basis. In June 2012, Committee discussed a proposed set of additional indicators that it would monitor during 2012/13.

1.2 This report, therefore, presents an update on the council's key performance indicators (KPIs) as at the end of quarter 2 2012/13 (July-September) as well as other performance measures identified and agreed by Committee for scrutiny during 2012/13.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Note and comment on the performance of the council's key performance indicators for 2012/13 at the end of quarter 2.

2.2 Note and comment on the performance of those additional performance measures identified for Committee's consideration at the end of quarter 2.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact:

Kathryn Robson, Partnerships and Performance Section Head

telephone extension: 8077 email: kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk

3.0 **Background information**

Each year, Watford Borough Council's Corporate Plan sets out the key performance indicators (KPIs) that the council has selected to measure its priorities and where it knows it needs to improve performance.

It was agreed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would scrutinise the council's performance in relation to these key performance indicators on a quarterly basis. At its meeting in June 2012, Committee agreed the additional performance measures be reported as part of its quarterly scrutiny of performance and a template reflecting this was developed.

This report presents the template that incorporates Committee's recommendations, including the performance of the council's KPIs at the end of quarter 2 2012/13.

3.1 **Key performance indicators (KPIs)**

3.1.1 For 2012/13 the council identified eight key performance indicators (KPIs). These are a continuation of the KPIs for the previous year and are attached as Appendix A.

3.1.2 **End of quarter 2 (2012/13) report on Watford BC KPIs – performance against target**

Of the 8 KPIs, KPI1 (time taken to process benefit claims – new + change of circumstances) is reported as two indicators as the council monitors it in two parts and KPI4 (street cleansing) as three indicators. This means 11 performance measures are reported in total. In terms of performance against target at the end of quarter 2 2012/13 (July – September)

- 5 were above target
- 1 was on target
- 4 were below target

The remaining performance measures – see below – is an annual indicator and will not be reported until the end of 2012/13:

- KPI7 - CO2 reductions from local authority operations

3.1.3 KPIs performing above target

The following KPIs were reported as performing above target at the end of quarter 2 2012/13.

KPI2	Residual household waste
KPI3	Household waste recycled and composted
KPI4i	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)
KPI4ii	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of detritus)
KPI4iii	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti)

3.1.4 KPI on target

There was one KPI reported as performing on target at the end of quarter 2 2012/13.

KPI6	Number of households in temporary accommodation
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3.1.5 KPI performing below target

The following KPIs were reported as performing below target at the end of quarter 2 2012/13.

KPI1i	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit - new claims
KPI1ii	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit - change of circumstances
KPI5	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
KPI8	The average working days lost to sickness per full time equivalent employee

3.1.6 Performance against target – actual performance

The table below shows the actual performance against target at the end of quarter 2 2012/13.

Indicator	Target	Result	Performance against target
Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit <i>- new claims</i>	28 days	29.5 days	
Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit <i>- change of circumstances</i>	15 days	35.75 days	
Residual household waste	128.09kg	126.51kg	
Household waste recycled and composted	41.45%	43.87%	
Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	4%	2%	
Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of detritus)	5%	3.44%	
Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti)	4%	2.67%	
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	169	120	
Number of households in temporary accommodation	90	90	
CO2 reductions from local authority operations	Annual indicator	N/A	N/A
The average working days lost to sickness per full time equivalent employee	1.63 days	2.68 days	

 = performing above target

 = performance on target

 = performing below target

3.2 End of quarter 2 2012/13 performance report overview

3.2.1 Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report at the end of quarter 2 2012/13 (July - September) is attached as Appendix B. Those performance measures that are not performing against target by 10% or more are highlighted with a **!**. This just relates to under performance. Where a measure is performing

well (on or above target) it is highlighted with a 😊 even if this is over 10%.

Areas to note from the progress report:

- The ongoing unusual weather conditions from July – September 2012 has had an impact on performance. In terms of waste and recycling, it has generated additional ‘green waste’, which has meant more waste has been sent for recycling.
- The second quarter continued to register some extremely good results for housing indicators in terms of number of households in bed and breakfast and the length of stay in hostel accommodation. This was partly the result of social housing units becoming available and providing housing solutions for households on the register. At this stage, it is not anticipated this supply will be sustained during 2012/13.
- Benefits performance is beginning to show signs of improvement, which was evidenced in second quarter performance. Committee is to receive a separate report on benefits performance.
- The council set a ‘stretch target’ for sickness absence for 2012/13 at 6.5 days. This was a response to consideration of previous years’ results and noting that the council’s performance had ‘plateaued’ to some extent at around 8.5 days. The stretch target was always seen as a challenge but additional measures are being implemented with staff to support achievement of 6.5 days – which is more in line with other authorities in Hertfordshire

3.3 **Benchmarking**

- 3.3.1 Although there is no longer a national requirement for local authorities to collect and report performance information as in the past when best value performance indicators, and subsequently national indicators, were set by government, most local authorities (like Watford) have chosen to continue to do so. This does mean that there is potential to benchmark some of Watford BC’s performance indicators, particularly within Hertfordshire. This can be helpful in building understanding of Watford BC’s performance where it is felt meaningful and useful to improving service delivery.

3.4 **Publishing performance information**

- 3.4.1 The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency was published by DCLG in September 2011. Within this Code, the government sets out the range of public data that should be published to ensure greater transparency. The aim of this is to enable the public to hold ‘politicians and public bodies to account’. In paragraph 12 of the Code, reference is made to:
- Policies, performance, external audits and key inspections and key indicators on the authorities’ fiscal and financial position.

3.4.2 The publication of this performance report forms part of Watford BC's response to this requirement of the Code.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS.**

4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that at this stage in the year there are no financial implications within this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications within this report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Watford BC 2012/13 key performance indicators

Appendix B – Watford BC - Measures of Performance – Progress report as of end of quarter 2 2012/13

Background papers:

- Quarterly update on service improvement plans for each service
- Corporate Plan 2012-16







Appendix A - Watford BC 2011/12 and 2012/13 key performance indicators

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Definition</u>
KPI1	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change of events* <i>* This is defined as one indicator although the council reports it as two parts – new (i) and change of circumstances (ii)</i>
KPI2	Residual household waste
KPI3	Household waste recycled and composted
KPI4	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus and graffiti)* <i>* This is defined as one indicator although it has four parts (i-iv). Three elements are key performance indicators</i>
KPI5	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
KPI6	Number of households in temporary accommodation
KPI7	CO2 reductions from local authority operations
KPI8	The average working days lost to sickness per full time equivalent employee







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WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL – MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE




Second quarter (July - September) 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Environmental Services									
ES1 KPI7	CO2 reductions from local authority operations	N/A (6% for year - annual indicator)	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A	Environmental Services	Still on track to achieve 5 years 30% reduction by XXX.
ES2 KPI2	Residual household waste per household	128.09kg (513.11kg for year)	126.51kg	1.16%		↓	↑	Environmental Services	Low is good – target exceeded.
ES3 KPI3	Household waste recycled and composted	41.45% (40.20% for year)	43.87%	5.84%		↑	↓	Environmental Services	High is good – target exceeded.
ES9	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arising which have been recycled	16.88% (17.43% for year)	15.14%	10.30%		↓	↓	Environmental Services	Tonnage collected reduced compared to last year and high tonnages of greenwaste have a negative effect on this figure.





Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹		Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
ES10	Percentage of waste sent for composting including waste which has been treated through a process of anaerobic digestion	24.59% (22.77% for year)	28.72%	16.8%		↑	↑	Environmental Services	Increase on last years figures due to extreme weather conditions
ES4 KPI4i	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	4% (4.5% for year)	2.00%	50%		↑	↑	Environmental Services	Low is good.
ES5 KPI4ii	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of detritus)	5% (6% for year)	3.44%	31.2%		↑	↓	Environmental Services	Low is good.
ES6 KPI4iii	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti)	4% (3.5% for year)	2.67%	33.25%		↑	↔	Environmental Services	Low is good.
ES7	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of fly posting)	0.3% (0.33% for year)	0.67%	123%		↑	↓	Environmental Services	Low is good – target not achieved.
ES8	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of fly tipping)	Effective (Annual indicator)	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A	Environmental Services	In order to improve performance , the council needs to reduce the number of fly tips, ideally without a large increase in our




Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
									<p>enforcement actions (to be most effective we need a reduction in fly tips and a reduction in enforcement actions) Work has been undertaken on the Domestic Waste Collection Policy. It is envisaged that implementation of the project plan to introduce this will tackle our hot spot areas and lead to an improvement in this indicator.</p>




Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Community Services									
CS12 KPI5	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	169	120	29%	!	N/A	↓	Community Services	Total to Quarter 2 includes: Leggatts (18 social rented), Aldenham Square (18 social, 6 shared ownership), Callowland (16 social rent), Rainbow House (16 social rent, 31 affordable, 15 shared ownership). Cassio Campus has been delayed which has contributed to the slippage from target which is often experienced through the complexities of the development process.
CS13 KPI6	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	90 (90 at end of quarter)	90	0%		↑	↑	Community Services	Continuing to monitor closely, increase compared to previous quarter where new build had reduced figures.







Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
CS15	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority	N/A (5 at Dec 2012 - annual indicator)	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A	Community Services	Estimate to be submitted once a year to DCLG in December. Working through the POSH partnership with WNHT on launch of No Second Night Out. Lead on Herts Single Homelessness Project.
CS16	Number of private sector units secured for use under RDGS, HALD or other initiatives	20 (80 for year)	17	15%	!	↓	N/A	Community Services	New team establishing contacts with landlords and maintaining a baseline level of properties via the bond. PSL scheme to be reviewed as not delivering number of units anticipated and future of housing benefit levels for temporary accommodation will impact on sustainability of the scheme.
CS16	The number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation	9 (9 at end of	3	66.67%	😊	↓	↑	Community Services	Reduction due to number of new build properties at end of year which will not be




Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13




Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
		quarter)							sustained. No households with children in over 6 weeks.

Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13




Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Planning									
PL1	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major' applications (% determined within 13 weeks)	85% (85% for year)	100%	17.65%		↔	↑	Planning	This is a very volatile indicator due to the very small number of applications received in this category. There was only 1 application in this category in the second quarter.
PL2	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' applications (% determined within 8 weeks)	90% (90% for year)	92.98%	3.31%		↑	↓	Planning	There were 57 applications in this category in the second quarter.
PL3	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' applications (% determined within 8 weeks)	90% (90% for year)	98.68%	9.64%		↓	↓	Planning	There were 151 applications in this category in the second quarter.

Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13






Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Legal and Property Services									
LP5	Voter registration	To be confirmed Annual indicator	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A		This is an annual indicator so only reported in Quarter 3

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Human Resources									
HR1 KPI	Sickness absence (working days lost)	1.63 days (6.5 days for year)	2.68 days	64.42%	!	↓	↓	Human Resources	The council has agreed a stretch target for performance for this year (6.5 days). New procedures designed to help achieve this stretch target are only just being introduced







Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹		Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Revenues and Benefits									
RB1 KPI1i	Av time to process benefits claims	28 days (28 days for year)	29.5 days	5.38%		↑	↑	Revenues and Benefits	Much improved performance to the end of Quarter 2.
RB2 KPI1ii	Av time to process change of circumstances for benefit claims	15 days (15 days for year)	35.75 days	138%	!	↓	↑	Revenues and Benefits	Capacity Plan nearing completion to set out future targets/goals/resources.
RB3	Av time to process benefit claims (from receipt of all information)	15 days (15 days for year)	12.15 days	19%		↑	-	Revenues and Benefits	Much improved performance to the end of Quarter 2.
RB4	Accuracy of information which affects the subsidy received by the Council	To be confirmed Annual indicator	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A		





Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
ICT									
IT1	ICT service availability to users during core working hours Priority 1 Applications – ABS (COA) Academy (Windows) Uniform Email Internet WBC Website Lagan File and Print Server	99.5% (99.5% for year)	99.64%	0.14%		↑	↑	ICT	The implementation of the infrastructure programme has improved performance from last year.
IT2	ICT service availability to users during core working hours Priority 2 Applications – Touchpaper EROS Gauge Resource Link Intranet	99.5% (99.5% for year)	100%	0.5%		↔	↑	ICT	As above.




Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Corporate									
Cor 1	Calls resolved at first point of contact	90% (90% for year)	99% excl transfers	10%		↔	↑	Environmental Services	Reporting figure excludes Switchboard transfer calls.
Cor 2	Complaints resolved at stage one	90% (90% for year)	71%	21.11%		↓	↓	Environmental Services	As at the end of the second quarter there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 unresolved cases • 7 escalated to stage 2
Cor 3	% of stage 1 complaints resolved within 10 days	80% (80% for year)	-	-	-	-	-	Environmental Services	Data not available for quarter.
Cor 4	CSC service levels – 95% all calls answered	95% all calls answered (95% for year)	98%	3.18%		↔	↓	Environmental Services	

Appendix B - Watford BC - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 - 2012/13

Ref	Measure	Target for Quarter 2 2012/13	Actual at end of 2012/13 (Quarter 2)	% variance ¹	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2012/13)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
Cor 5	CSC service levels - 80% calls answered in 20 secs	80% calls answered in 20 seconds (80% for year)	83%	3.75%		↑	↑	Environmental Services	

Key to performance against target

-  on target or above target
-  not on target but there is no cause for concern at this stage.
-  not on target/ more than 10% variance and is a cause for concern.

Part A

Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: 21 November 2012

Report of: Head of Revenues & Benefits

Title: Benefits Department Update

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report explains the improvement in Performance Indicators for the Benefits Service and explains the background to the statistics.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 The report is noted

2.2 That a further update is provided in 6 months' time on progress

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Phil Adlard on phil.adlard@watford.gov.uk or telephone extension 8023

Report Approved by:

David Gardner, Director for Corporate Resources & Governance, Three Rivers District Council, Lead Director for Revenues & Benefits Shared Service

Bernard Clarke, Strategic Finance Director, Watford Borough Council

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 **Management / Monitoring**

Watford Borough Council has a gross caseload of 12,718 claimants in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit. This is an increase of 581 over the past twelve months or 975 since September 2009.

To meet this increase in workload, the Shared Service has implemented the following procedures:

- “Triage”. New claims to Housing Benefit are seen by Customer Service Centre staff who offer assistance to claimants in completing the application form and ensuring that all required information is provided in support of the application. This ensures a greater number of claims can be assessed without the need to chase for further information, an action that adds delay to the processing times. The average time taken to process a new claim under these arrangements was 6.0 days in October.
- WCHT “Triage”. Housing Officers at WCHT are replicating the process above when signing on new tenants so that Housing Benefit awards are not delayed.
- Cases that have not been assessed are regularly monitored and assessors are notified when trigger points are reached, i.e. all supporting information being received or a deadline for providing information has passed, so that a decision is made without further delay.
- Claimants that we have requested further information from are now contacted by phone to chase up the provision of information which has resulted in the claim being processed sooner.
- We have engaged additional external resources through Serco and Liberata to assist in reducing the volume of work created by changes in circumstances and their productivity is monitored daily supported by regular weekly teleconferences with both organisations
- Staff are all allocated individual targets for dealing with claims and correspondence as part of the Appraisal Process and this is reviewed through regular 1-2-1 meetings.

3.2 Performance Indicators

3.2.1 The speed of processing new claims for Benefit is based on the time taken from the date that the claim form is received to the date that the decision to award benefit is made. This is complicated by the fact that if additional information is required the claimant has one calendar month to provide the information.

We have attempted to overcome this by the actions quoted above.

The indicator for the average time to process a new claim is shown below:

Month	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
Days	39.92	46.04	42.95	37.42	35.06	29.50	28.81

A further indicator requested by Overview & Scrutiny Committee was the average time taken from the provision of all information to the day a decision is made:

Month	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
Days	20.54	22.34	20.70	18.51	15.44	12.50	10.63

The final indicator is the average time taken to complete a change in circumstances. Again this is taken from the date the change is notified until the date the change is completed and the decision made.

Month	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
Days	36.98	34.43	35.49	34.17	36.39	35.35	27.93

3.3 Other Management Data

3.3.1 To monitor the outstanding workload, a weekly count of new claims is conducted. This has shown an improvement in the number of new claims outstanding and mirrors the reduction in the average time to process new claims.

Date	2 Apr	7 May	4 Jun	2 Jul	6 Aug	17 Sep	1 Oct	5 Nov
Claims	295	321	324	309	186	124	132	90

Of the 90 claims outstanding as at 5 November, 78 were awaiting further information from claimants.

A daily count of changes is also conducted that monitors the volume of outstanding pieces of work as a consequence of a change in circumstances. This reports on the work outstanding and held by either Serco, Liberata or in-house staff. A weekly summary is shown below

W/C	Serco		Liberata		In-House		Total	
	O/S	Pending	O/S	Pending	O/S	Pending	O/S	Pending
01/10/12	1093	327	0	0	2340	298	3433	625
08/10/12	774	374	1941	2	600	313	3315	689
15/10/12	1991	377	850	5	516	315	3357	697
22/10/12	1746	378	642	28	898	300	3286	706
29/10/12	1478	337	742	61	640	396	2860	794
05/11/12	1094	318	521	96	855	337	2470	751

3.4 Future Activity

3.4.1 To provide more access channels to claimants so that they can resolve basic queries and enable assessment staff to focus on assessment work, we have commenced the implementation of a number of self-service and other options.

These are:

- Self-Service facilities available for Benefit Claimants, Landlords as well as Council Taxpayers and Business Ratepayers

With the following to be implemented by the end of the Financial Year

- E-billing and e-notifications
- Integration of Academy Revenues & Benefits and Lagan Customer Relationship Management to enable more queries to be handled by CSC staff
- E-Claim facility
- Total Mobile Solution to enable more assessment work to be done in claimants' homes.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 Additional funding to cover the cost of the external resource provided by Serco and Liberata as approved by the Joint Shared Services Committee on 24 September 2012

4.1.2 A Growth bid to allow for Budget provision for continued use of these resources, as required, will be requested from the Joint Committee on 19 November 2012

4.2 Legal Issues

4.2.1 None

4.3 Equalities

4.3.1 None

4.4 Potential Risks

4.4.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

4.5 Staffing & Accommodation

There are no staffing or accommodation implications arising out of this report

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Scrutiny Review

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report sets out details of the review carried out on the scrutiny structures introduced in May 2011.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 that the Executive Decision Progress Report, attached as Appendix 1, be approved and included as a regular report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee with immediate effect.
- 2.2 that the revised Scrutiny Proposal Form, attached as Appendix 2, be approved and used with immediate effect.
- 2.3 that Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the information contained in this report and consider whether there is any further action required.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current scrutiny structure was introduced for the first time in May 2011, following initial approval by Council at its meeting on 17 November 2010.
- 3.2 Following the Council meeting the Constitution Working Party was tasked with carrying out further consideration of a new scrutiny structure. The work was carried out over two meetings, where the discussion included the future structure of scrutiny and the remuneration of the various scrutiny Chairs and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Vice-Chair.
- 3.3 The final proposals for the new scrutiny structure were given final approval by Council at its meeting on 25 May 2011 and took immediate effect.
- 3.4 The new structure comprised the over-arching Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget Panel and the Community Safety Partnership Task Group, which is a statutory requirement.
- 3.5 Staffing arrangements
- Prior to 1 April 2011 there was a dedicated scrutiny team located in Corporate Services, which comprised the part-time Scrutiny Manager and a Scrutiny Support Officer, and a separate committee team, comprising the Democratic Services Manager and two Democratic Services Officers, located in Legal and Property Services.
- 3.6 Under this arrangement the scrutiny team prepared and presented the reports to the various scrutiny committees and Task Groups. The Democratic Services Officers published the agendas, circulated the agendas and reports and attended the scrutiny committees and produced the minutes for the meetings. With regard to Task Groups, the Democratic Services Officers were only responsible for publishing the agendas and minutes on the Council's website. They did not attend Task Group meetings.
- 3.7 As part of service prioritisation the scrutiny function was transferred to Democratic Services and combined with the committee posts. The number of officers was reduced from 3.5 full-time equivalent posts to 3. The new posts were one Committee and Scrutiny Officer and two Committee and Scrutiny Support Officers. The officers are responsible for all aspects of the scrutiny function, writing and preparing reports; collating and producing the agenda; attending the meetings; presenting reports; writing the minutes and carrying out any required actions. The officers are also responsible for managing other committees allocated to them.
- 3.8 Due to the combined roles, it is felt that a maximum of two Task Groups can be carried out at any one time. However, since the introduction of a new permanent Scrutiny Panel to look at Outsourced Services (see Section 4), the team's capacity only allows for one review to take place at a time. Officers together with the Democratic Services Manager monitor the team's capacity on a regular basis.

4.0 **NEW SCRUTINY PANEL**

4.1 In 2011/12 a Task Group was set up to consider the Way Ahead for Council Services following a scrutiny topic suggestion by the Managing Director. The Task Group presented its final report, including three recommendations, to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 March 2012 and it was forwarded to Cabinet for its meeting on 20 March 2012.

4.2 The Task Group's second recommendation proposed –

"That there should be greater non-executive scrutiny of outsourced contracts. A politically balanced panel should be established to scrutinise all outsourced services on a regular basis. The panel would be a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee."

4.3 This recommendation was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting in March 2012.

4.4 The Committee and Scrutiny Officer emailed all Councillors on 22 May 2012 and invited non-executive members to express an interest if they wished to participate in the new Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

4.5 The Committee and Scrutiny Officer presented a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeking a decision on the number of Councillors making up, the membership based on political balance and the draft terms of reference.

4.6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the new Scrutiny Panel would comprise five Councillors.

4.7 The first meeting of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel took place on 18 September 2012. As it is a sub-committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee is informed when meetings of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel have taken place. The Scrutiny Panel's agenda and minutes are published on the Council's website.

5.0 **THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012**

5.1 The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 came into effect on 10 September 2012. This effectively abolished the Forward Plan and replaced it with a 28 day notice of all Executive key decisions and Officers and all Executive Part B (confidential) decisions, including non-key decisions.

5.2 The Forward Plan has therefore been replaced with the 'Notice of Executive Key Decisions and Executive Decisions which are confidential under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A'.

5.3 The new Notice is published as necessary rather than the monthly basis for the Forward Plan; this is in order to ensure that proposed decisions are included in the notice in sufficient time. If a proposed decision misses the 28 day deadline, it can only

proceed following notification to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee or with their permission if the decision has to be treated as urgent.

- 5.4 The regulations also states that a member of an overview and scrutiny committee is entitled to any information relating to a decision-making body of the authority as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event no more than 10 days later. However, this does not apply to exempt or confidential information unless the Member is reviewing or scrutinising the decision. If the Executive determines that the member of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not entitled to the information a written explanation must be given.
- 5.5 If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers that a decision was not classified as a key decision, it can require the Executive to submit a report to Council within a reasonable amount of time. The report should set out the particulars of the decision, the decision-maker and if the Executive consider the decision to be non-key the reason for that opinion.
- 5.6 The Council's Constitution has been updated by the Head of Legal and Property Services to reflect the new Regulations (Access to Information: Exempt Information Procedure Rules). The Council's Constitution is available on the Council's website.
- 5.7 Forward Plan report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The Committee and Scrutiny Officer regularly produced a report setting out the changes to the Council's Forward Plan since the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The report was set out in the standard committee report format. It involved comparing between two and three editions of the Forward Plan and noting any new additions, any changes and any items that had been deleted. This was often a time consuming process.
- 5.8 Prior to the new Regulations being introduced, the Democratic Services Manager and Committee and Scrutiny Officer discussed changing the report and producing the information in a different format. The result of this work is the Executive Decision Progress report (attached as **Appendix 1**).
- 5.9 The new report sets out proposed key decisions to be taken by the Executive, all key and non-key decisions taken by Cabinet, key decisions taken by Portfolio Holders and officers and all exempt and confidential Executive decisions. The table includes a column where any comments about a decision can be included. For example, it will include confirmation whether or not an executive decision had been called in or if there were any changes to the planned date on which a decision was to be taken. It will also indicate when the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been contacted to seek approval for an urgent decision to be taken by the Executive. All new items added to the report will have an indicator in the status column.
- 5.10 The new report will begin in May of each year and include any carried forward items from the previous year which still needed to be taken. It will finish at the end of the Municipal Year.
- 5.11 The new report will enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review proposed decisions to be taken and all decisions as set out in paragraph 5.9 above. In line with

the new Regulations it will also enable Members to consider whether the key decision procedure has not been followed and requires a report to be submitted to Council.

- 5.12 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider this new report and approve it as a regular item on the Scrutiny Committee's agenda.

6.0 **SCRUTINY PROPOSAL FORM**

- 6.1 The Democratic Services Manager and the Committee and Scrutiny Officer have reviewed the Scrutiny Proposal Form which was introduced in May 2011. A number of changes have been made to the new form as shown in **Appendix 2** and explained in more detail below. The finished document will form a complete record of the scrutiny review.

6.2 Section 1 – Scrutiny Suggestion

Section 1 will be provided to anyone wishing to propose a topic for scrutiny. It is very similar to the current form, but does include a few changes. Examples have been added to aid the completion of the form. The additional requested information will help the Task Group should the proposal be agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.3 Section 2 – Consultation with relevant Heads of Service

This section of the form is largely unchanged. There has been one additional question which asks whether there is any current or proposed review of the service which might have an impact on the scrutiny suggestion. This should highlight any potential service re-designs which may affect a scrutiny review. Sections 1 and 2 will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for it to consider whether to agree to a scrutiny review.

6.4 Section 3 – Follow up Actions

This section will be completed by the Committee and Scrutiny Officer following Overview and Scrutiny Committee's decision whether or not to proceed with the suggested topic. It will include a reason should Overview and Scrutiny Committee decide not to accept a proposed topic. The agreed membership will be included and an anticipated completion date set by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will ensure that reviews are carried out in a timely manner and not prolonged, thus enabling more reviews to be carried out.

6.5 Section 4 – Completion of the review

The final section will include details of when the review has been completed and the dates the final Task Group report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Executive. It will also record when the final report was forwarded to all participants in the review. The final part of this section will set out proposals for ongoing monitoring.

- 6.6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the revised scrutiny proposal form and approve it for immediate use.

7.0 ANNUAL SCRUTINY SURVEY 2011/12

7.1 The 2011/12 annual scrutiny survey sent to officers and Councillors incorporated a question asking whether the person responding had any suggestions for the improvement of scrutiny in the future. The survey sent to other attendees also sought views on areas that could be developed in the future. The responses are shown below with details of how officers are taking the comments on board, where appropriate.

7.2 Councillors' Responses to the Scrutiny Survey 2011/12

There were 11 responses from Councillors. The responses included references to training, clearer aim of scrutiny, updating others in group meetings and the need to be open. Here are extracts of some of the key points raised, with officers' responses in italics –

- “It needs to attract subjects for scrutiny from a wider community of both councillors, Watford Borough officers and the wider public.”

If the new scrutiny proposal form is approved by this committee it will be added to the Council's website on the scrutiny pages. It will be circulated to all Councillors and included as part of the New Members' Induction and added to the Intranet to enable it to be accessed by all officers.

- “Updates from members at group meetings on findings and actively encourage members to suggest topics at those meetings.”

This is not for officers to implement.

- “More training for chairs/vice chairs.”

Officers continually check for suitable training courses for all Councillors. When courses are identified the Member Development and Civic Officer informs all Councillors of the courses. If officers are unable to identify suitable courses they would approach the training broker with the requirements.

- (i) “Make part of the Induction process for new councillors; include a compulsory briefing on scrutiny so that all councillors understand the importance of scrutiny in their role; make sure ALL Councillors have to attend scrutiny courses or briefings every couple of years.”

(ii) “A clearer aim to all and what purpose it serves to be made available to all Councillors.”

As part of the Democratic Services Team presentation to the new Councillors at their induction, there was a short section on scrutiny and its role in the Council. All new Councillors were provided with a copy of the scrutiny proposal form.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer attended the new Councillors follow up induction on the 22 October and provided a presentation on scrutiny and the structure at Watford Borough Council. Those present were provided with a copy of the presentation and the current Scrutiny Proposal form.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer is planning to produce a scrutiny information pack or booklet. This will include an introduction to scrutiny and its role in the Council; the current scrutiny structure and information on questioning skills. She is also developing a library of scrutiny related documents and books which all Members will be able to access.

- “I am not sure that the overview committee is an improvement on the old system. One political group has been excluded from the overview committee. I am not sure this is good for the credibility of the scrutiny process.”

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a politically balanced committee and has to reflect the political make up of the Council; if the political make up of the Council changes then the political make up of committees reflects those changes. All Members are entitled to attend any council meeting and if agreed by the committee ask questions.

Although not all political groups may be represented on the politically balanced scrutiny committees and panels, Task Groups are open to all non-executive councillors as they are not politically balanced. When Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to set up a new Task Group, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer contacts all Councillors inviting non-executive members to put their names forward if they wish to participate in the review. The list of interested Councillors is then provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

- “Task Groups need to be party to all the information needed to make a decision.”

The Democratic Services Team agrees with this comment and will endeavour to ensure this happens.

- “Scrutiny seems to be always playing catch-up, reacting to events rather than engaged in the activities of the council and decisions it takes at the time. I think scrutiny could be more effective if elected members had a more proactive real time role in council decision making process.”

Officers feel that scrutiny has begun to be more proactive. For example in 2011/12 the Way Ahead for Council Services Task Group considered various service delivery options and governance mechanisms. Its findings were forwarded to Cabinet. The three recommendations were endorsed and have been taken on board by the Council.

This year a Task Group was set up to consider the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework prior to officers presenting the final version to Cabinet in October. The Task Group commented on the

draft prior to it being issued for consultation and has reviewed the priorities proposed by officers and made comments. The Task Group's final report incorporating its conclusions and recommendations accompanied the officers' report to Cabinet seeking approval for the new Commissioning Framework. A report is included elsewhere on this agenda including the Cabinet's decision.

- “Appointment of competent and capable chairs, regardless of party, seems to be the key!”

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer and other Democratic Services Officers are happy to work with all councillors. Meetings can be held with chairs and vice chairs to discuss meeting programmes and any other scrutiny related subjects.

7.3 Officers' responses to the scrutiny survey 2011/12

There were three responses from officers suggesting improvements, which are highlighted below. Democratic Services' responses are shown in italics.

- (i) “By only appointing diligent Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees.”
(ii) “Needs a strong, effective and committed chair.”

Officers have no role in the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs as these are appointments agreed by Members either at Annual Council or at the first meeting of a Panel or Task Group.

As indicated in the previous section, Democratic Services Officers are happy to work with Chairs and Vice-Chairs in their role and to help identify any training they may wish to undertake.

- “Perhaps more guidance and structure to the scrutiny topics by increased pre work with the Chair and the team to understand concerns and develop the topic area to make things more meaningful and linked to the key corporate objectives.”

The current scrutiny proposal form requires the person proposing a scrutiny topic to provide an indication of their expectations of the review. The form also requires a topic to be linked to one of the Council's priorities. This continues in the latest version of the form referred to in section 6 of this report. Both versions of the form require the relevant Head of Service to comment on the proposed topic and these comments are included in the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The proposal form then sets the basis for the scope for the review.

Task Group Chairs are usually elected at the first meeting. It would therefore be difficult to have discussions with one councillor prior to the first meeting. The Democratic Services Team liaise with the relevant service prior to the start of the review and identify some of the initial work which needs to be carried out. Following the appointment of the Chair regular

meetings can be arranged to discuss the format for further meetings. Usually Task Groups will agree at the end of one meeting the area to be covered at the next and which officers, executive members or witnesses should be invited to attend. They will often agree questions to be forwarded to witnesses in preparation for the next meeting.

7.4 Attendees responses to the scrutiny survey 2011/12

In total four people responded to the attendees' survey. They were asked for views on their experiences at the meetings. Their responses are highlighted below with further comments from Democratic Services in italics.

- “Short briefing note on purpose of our attendance.”

Officers agree with this comment. A briefing note is usually prepared and forwarded to attendees for the next meeting but officers will work to improve this in the future.

- “As a participant I am not aware of if and how comments from the group were taken on board.”

Officers accept this criticism. It has been agreed that in future all participants at a meeting will receive a copy of the meeting's minutes and a copy of the final report.

- “I've attended the scrutiny committee twice now and I'm still unclear about the committee's purpose or how it achieves whatever it is trying to do. Similarly, I'm unclear about how the committee feels about the evidence/information provided as part of the process, or about the outcome of any decisions taken in response. It's possible that the minutes of these are stored on the Borough Council's website, but it would be useful to have them circulated to those who've given their time to be in attendance.”

Both the previous officers' comments are relevant to this viewpoint. Democratic Services Officers will also need to ensure that the Task Group clearly set out their conclusions at meetings and recommendations where appropriate. The officers recognise the important support provided by these external organisations and people.

8.0 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS' VIEWS**

8.1 Councillor Mark Watkin – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair 2011/12

“I had the honour to chair the newly formed Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2011/12. Not only did the Council signal a new approach to Scrutiny by forming this overarching body which would establish Task Groups to carry out the detailed work, but the way the scrutiny process was to be supported by officers was completely changed. Not surprisingly it took some time to get up to speed while we questioned what had been done before and established the new procedures and objectives. The detailed report from the Committee and Scrutiny Officer describes what was achieved.

I hope that now the system for scrutiny has been established both council officers, local organisations and members of the public will take the opportunity to submit suggestions for review. I want to end by thanking our officers under the leadership of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer and all the members who served on the overarching committee or on the task groups.”

8.2 Councillor Karen Collett – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair 2012/13 and Hospital Parking Charges Task Group Chair 2011/12

“In 2011, I proposed that a task group be set up to review ‘Hospital Parking’ and its high charges. I felt passionate that the people of Watford deserved to have a fair system in place as it was clearly something that they were concerned about. In July I took on a Chairing role of the task group and I was fortunate to have Councillors on board who were enthusiastic to deliver a positive outcome.

I was delighted that the 9 recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they covered many aspects such as, lower charges, pay on exit, clearer information on concessions and improved signage showing patients and visitors where to park. The final approved report was then circulated to the hospital representatives and I sincerely hope that these recommendations are seen as a way of improving parking services and highlighting the importance of customer care.

In June of this year I became Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is a role that I highly value. I enrolled in some training with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and this has heightened my enthusiasm for a balanced and effective voice. Our committee is a ‘Critical Friend’ one that enables the concerns of the public to be heard. ‘Perception can be stronger than facts’ and it is our responsibility to investigate and communicate the actualities. We are dealing with passionate issues, and so the need for transparency, culpability and engagement is significant.

I feel that it is essential for Councillors to engage in Scrutiny training and embrace the new arrangements. These arrangements have restored key decision making to our elected members, not only for their wards but for the whole of the Borough. I am sure you will agree with the support of our professional officers we can truly make a difference to the people of Watford.”

9.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 **Financial**

9.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that there are no financial implications arising directly out of this report.

9.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

9.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that any major changes suggested by the committee on how scrutiny operates will need to be forwarded to Council as a recommendation

9.3 Potential Risks

9.3.1 No potential risks have been identified.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Executive Decision Progress Report

Appendix 2 – Revised Scrutiny Proposal Form

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Reports and minutes of the following meetings

- Council – 17 November 2010 and 25 May 2011
- Constitution Working Party – 31 January 2011 and 30 March 2011
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 March 2012 and 20 June 2012
- Cabinet – 20 March 2012

All reports and minutes are available on the Council's website –
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Results of the Annual Scrutiny Survey 2011/12

File Reference

None

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Watford Borough Council

Executive Decision Progress Report

May 2012 – May 2013

Contact Officer: Sandra Hancock
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

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Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Agree to the set up of a Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel	Legal and Property	Cabinet	June 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 18 June 2012 Not called in
Adoption of the Framework and 5-year action plan for allotments across the Borough	Community Services	Cabinet	June 2012	Key decision Originally this decision was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in November 2011. Since then it has been deferred on several occasions. Agreed by Cabinet on 18 June 2012 Not called in
Watford Health Campus Programme Update and proposed site assembly development	Corporate Management	Cabinet	June 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 18 June 2012 Not called in
Review the outcome of the Sports Facilities Study and agree consultation and feasibility proposals to support the development of a Sports Facilities Strategy (Parts A and B)	Community Services	Cabinet	June 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 18 June 2012 Not called in

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Charter Place re-development (Part B)	Legal and Property	Cabinet	June 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 18 June 2012 Not called in
Service specification, performance standards and evaluation criteria for the procurement of Parks and Open Spaces, Waste and Recycling and Street Cleansing	Corporate Management	Cabinet	July 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 9 July 2012 Not called in
Community Right to Challenge under the Localism Act 2011	Legal and Property	Cabinet	Not applicable	Non-key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 9 July 2012 Not called in
Relocation of the Town Centre CCTV Control Room	Legal and Property	Cabinet	July 2012	Key decision Considered at Cabinet on 9 July 2012. Recommendation to Council, decision taken on 18 July 2012.

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Property review decision (Part B)	Legal and Property	Portfolio Holder (Planning and Legal and Property)	July 2012	Key decision Originally this decision was due to be taken in June 2012 but was deferred. Delegated decision taken on 9 July 2012 Not called in
Application to the Secretary of State to remove the allotment status from the Willow Lane site.	Legal and Property	Portfolio Holder (Planning and Legal and Property)	July 2012	Key decision Delegated decision taken on 9 July 2012 Not called in
Introduction of further cycling stands in Watford	Planning	Portfolio Holder (Planning and Legal and Property)	July 2012	Key decision Delegated decision taken on 16 July 2012 Not called in
Water Fountain Area, opposite the Town Hall steps	Planning	Portfolio Holder (Planning and Legal and Property)	July 2012	Non key decision Delegated decision taken on 16 July 2012 Not called in
Willow Lane Allotments (Section 106)	Legal and Property	Portfolio Holder (Mayor)	July 2012	Key decision Delegated decision taken on 16 July 2012 Not called in

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Agree the draft local Council Tax benefit scheme for consultation	Revenues and Benefits	Portfolio Holder (Mayor)	July 2012	Key decision Delegated decision taken on 23 July 2012 Not subject to call-in. The final scheme will be presented to Council for approval.
Property Review (not for publication – Paragraph 3 Schedule 12A)	Legal and Property	Portfolio Holder (Planning and Legal and Property)	September 2012 – then withdrawn	Key decision Originally due to be taken by the end of August 2012 then moved to September 2012. It has now been decided that this decision is not to be taken.
Decision to out source the ICT Shared Service and the supplier recommended as the Preferred Bidder	Information Technology	Cabinet	September 2012 – then withdrawn	New Key decision This decision was delegated to the Three Rivers and Watford Shared Services Joint Committee. Cabinet will therefore not be required to make a decision on this item.
Delivery of the Green Deal to Watford residents and businesses	Environmental Services	Cabinet	September 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 17 September 2012 Not called in

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Agree the design for the improvement for the Parade and evaluation criteria for selecting a contractor	Corporate Management	Cabinet	September 2012	Key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 17 September 2012 Not called in
Choice Based lettings scrutiny review	Legal and Property Services	Cabinet	Not applicable	Non-key decision Endorsed by Cabinet on 17 September 2012 Not called in
Summary of Financial Outturn 2011/12	Finance	Cabinet	Not applicable	Non-key decision Agreed by Cabinet on 17 September 2012 Not called in
Local Authority Mortgage Scheme	Legal and Property Services and Finance	Cabinet	See status column	Key decision As the item had not been included in the Forward Plan, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted, who gave permission for this item to be included on the agenda for the September Cabinet meeting. Agreed by Cabinet on 17 September 2012 Recommendation to Council agreed on 17 October 2012

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
To authorise a closure of part of the pedestrianised section of Hempstead Road adjacent to the Town Hall under s21 of Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to accommodate the Remembrance Day Event	Planning	Head of Planning		Non-key decision Approved by Head of Planning on 25 September 2012
The Borough of Watford (Nascot Area) (Prohibition of Waiting) Order 2012	Planning	Head of Planning		Non-key decision Approved by Head of Planning on 26 September 2012
Determinations made under the Building Regulations, in accordance with s.16 of the Building Act 1984	Planning	Head of Planning		Non-key decisions Approved by the Head of Planning between 1 October and 2 November 2012
Approve the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework 2013-16	Community Services	Cabinet	October 2012	Key Decision Agreed by Cabinet on 8 October 2012 Not called in

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
To approve the medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/2017	Finance	Cabinet	October 2012	<p>Key decision</p> <p>This decision did not meet the 28 day notice required. The reason for this was that notification was received just before the introduction of the new Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the matter could be dealt with in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 of the Constitution, "General Exception".</p> <p>Agreed by Cabinet on 8 October 2012</p> <p>Not called in</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Approval of final Charter Place land transaction with delegated powers to the Managing Director to enter into the necessary legal documentation	Corporate Management	Cabinet	October 2012	<p>Key decision</p> <p>This decision did not meet the 28 day notice required.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the matter could be dealt with in accordance with Procedure Rule 16 of the Constitution, "Special Urgency".</p> <p>The reason for the urgency was that the transfer was due to take place on 10 October.</p> <p>Agreed by Cabinet on 8 October 2012</p>
<p>The Borough of Watford (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2007 (Amendment) (no4) Order 2012</p> <p>The Borough of Watford (Watford Central Area and West Watford) (Controlled Parking Zones) Consolidation) Order 2012 (Amendment) (No.3) Order 2012</p>	Planning	Head of Planning		<p>Non-key decisions</p> <p>Approved by the Head of Planning on 9 October 2012</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
To authorise a closure of the High Street between Market Street and Water Lane s21 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to accommodate the switching on the Christmas lights event on 8 November 2012	Planning	Head of Planning		Non-key decisions Approved by the Head of Planning on 19 October 2012
Approve Watford Tenancy Strategy for adoption and publication	Community Services	Cabinet	November 2012	Key decision Cabinet 5 November 2012 Call-in deadline 5.00pm on 13 November 2012
To agree the write off of irrecoverable business rates	Revenues and Benefits	Cabinet	November 2012	New Key decision Cabinet 5 November 2012 Call-in deadline 5.00pm on 13 November 2012
Finance Digest 2012/2013: Period 6 (End of September)	Finance	Cabinet	Not applicable	Non-key decision Cabinet 5 November 2012 Call-in deadline 5.00pm on 13 November 2012

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Watford Market – going forward	Legal and Property Services	Cabinet	November 2012	<p>New</p> <p>Key decision</p> <p>This decision did not meet the 28 day notice required.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was notified that the matter would be dealt with at Cabinet on 5 November, in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 15 of the Constitution, “General Exception”.</p> <p>Cabinet 5 November 2012</p> <p>Call-in deadline 5.00pm on 13 November 2012</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Update on localising Council Tax Support	Revenues and Benefits	Cabinet	See status column	<p>New</p> <p>Key decision</p> <p>This decision did not meet the 28 day notice required.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the matter could be dealt with in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 16 of the Constitution, "Special Urgency".</p> <p>Cabinet 5 November 2012</p> <p>Not subject to call-in – the call-in procedures do not apply in order to allow consultation to take place and to maximise the time allowed for organisations and local residents to respond.</p>
Award contract to manage and maintain the Council's hostels and managed properties from 1 April 2013 (Part B)	Community Services	Cabinet	December 2012	<p>Key decision</p> <p>This report will be discussed in the private section of the meeting due to the content of the report. It is covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, which refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Decision to adopt a local lettings plan to encourage the development of new sustainable communities and make the best use of social accommodation for new Registered Provider development at Cassio Campus	Community Services	Mayor	December 2012	<p>New Key decision</p>
<p>To decide on proceedings to the best and final offer stage in the procurement of parks and open spaces, street cleansing and waste and recycling.</p> <p>(Part A and Part B reports)</p>	Corporate Management	Cabinet	December 2012	<p>New Key decision</p> <p>This report will be discussed in the private section of the meeting due to the content of the report. It is covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, which refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
Approval to accept the surrender of the long leasehold interest of Council land at Ascot Road, Watford (Former Post Officer site) and to simultaneously enter into new lease(s) with Morrisons (NewInco) (Part B)	Legal and Property Services	Cabinet	December 2012	<p>New Key decision</p> <p>This report will be discussed in the private section of the meeting due to the content of the report. It is covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, which refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p>
To note the options for the Council's new structure and approve the Corporate priorities as a basis for service business plans	Corporate Management	Cabinet	December 2012	<p>New Key decision</p>

Decision	Department	Decision maker	Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions)	Status
<p>An update on the Watford Health Campus including a decision subject to further negotiations if needed to enter into a joint venture (LABV) agreement with Kier. Agreement to grant exclusivity to the LABV to develop on Council owned land at the Campus.</p> <p>Review of options and agreement of a preferred option and agreement of a preferred option for the Farm Terrace allotments.</p> <p>(Part A and Part B reports)</p>	Corporate Management	Cabinet	December 2012	<p>New</p> <p>Key decision</p> <p>Part of this report will be discussed in the private section of the meeting as the Part B report will contain financially sensitive information relating to the decision to entering the LABV.</p> <p>It is covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, which refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p>
Approval of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy	Community Services	Cabinet	Before February 2013	Key decision

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Selection of topics and issues for scrutiny by councillors, officers or members of the public

Anyone wishing to suggest a topic for scrutiny must complete Section 1 of this form.

1. Sources

The following are sources of ideas for the work programme:

- Performance indicators, both national and internal.
- Views of Cabinet and Leadership Team especially in relation to policy subjects.
- The Council's surveys, such as the annual residents' survey.
- The Complaints Report which is compiled annually by the Customer Service Centre.
- Service complaints more widely; although individual cases will not be taken up if a large volume of complaints is received about a single issue then it may be appropriate to pursue the topic.
- Reports of external inspections of services.
- The views of the Council's partners.
- Issues picked up by ward councillors in their locality.
- Notice of Executive Key Decisions and Executive Decisions which are confidential under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A'.

2. Outcomes

Success indicators could include:

- Having identified local needs;
- Having evaluated alternative ways of working/how a service could improve and making recommendations to the Executive or the Council's partners;

- Having developed an awareness of any contractual, economic, legal or structural constraints on Council's or its partners approach.

3. Criteria

To qualify for consideration the topic must meet the following criteria:

- Affect a group or community of people. Scrutiny will not normally look at individual service complaints.
- Relate to a service, event or issue in which Watford Borough Council has a significant stake.
- Not be an issue that Scrutiny has covered during the last year.
- Not be a planning or licensing issue, or any other matter dealt with by another council committee.
- To match one or more of the Council's current priorities.
- To be feasible and able to be completed within the timescale projected for the work.
- There must be availability within the relevant department/service to support the review.
- Be a topic that members wish to scrutinise.

Suggestions for topics to be scrutinised – evaluation table

A Member, Officer or member of the public suggesting a topic for scrutiny must complete Section1 as fully as possible. Completed tables will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny for consideration.

Section 1 – Scrutiny Suggestion	
Proposer: Councillor/Officer/Member of public	
<p>Topic recommended for scrutiny:</p> <p><i>Please include as much detail as is available about the specific such as;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>areas which should be <u>included</u> in the review.</i> • <i>areas which should be <u>excluded</u> from the review.</i> • <i>Whether the focus should be on past performance, future policy or both.</i> 	<p><i>Give details</i></p>
<p>Why have you recommended this topic for scrutiny?</p>	<p><i>Give details</i></p>

What are the specific outcomes you wish to see from the review?

Examples might include:

- *To identify what is being done and what the potential barriers are;*
- *To review relevant performance indicators;*
- *To compare our policies with those of a similar authority;*
- *To assess the environmental/social impacts;*
- *To Benchmark current service provision;*
- *To find out community perceptions and experience;*
- *To identify the gap between provision and need*

Give details

<p>How do you think evidence might be obtained?</p> <p><i>Examples might include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires/Surveys • Site visits • Interviewing witnesses • Research • Performance data • Public hearings • Comparisons with other local authorities 	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p>
<p>Does the proposed item meet the following criteria?</p>	
<p>It must affect a group or community of people</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p>
<p>It must relate to a service, event or issue in which the council has a significant stake</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p>

<p>It must not have been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months</p> <p><i>There will be exceptions to this arising from notified changing circumstances. Scrutiny will also maintain an interest in the progress of recommendations and issues arising from past reports.</i></p>	<p><i>Please confirm</i></p>
<p>It must not be an issue, such as planning or licensing, which is dealt with by another council committee</p>	<p><i>Please confirm</i></p>
<p>Does the topic meet the council's priorities?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making Watford a better place to live in 2. To provide the lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth 3. Promoting an active, cohesive and well informed Town 4. To operate the Council efficiently and effectively <p><i>Please confirm which ones</i></p>

<p>Are you aware of any limitations of time, other constraints or risks which need to be taken into account?</p> <p><i>Factors to consider are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>forthcoming milestones, demands on the relevant service area and member availability:</i>• <i>imminent policy changes either locally, regionally or nationally within the area under review.</i>	<p><i>Include details</i></p>
<p>Does the topic involve a Council partner or other outside body?</p>	<p><i>Include details</i></p>

<p>Are there likely to be any Equality implications which will need to be considered?</p> <p><i>Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age</i> • <i>Disability</i> • <i>Gender reassignment</i> • <i>Pregnancy or maternity</i> • <i>Race</i> • <i>Religion or belief</i> • <i>Sex</i> • <i>Sexual orientation</i> • <i>Marriage or civil partnership (only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)</i> 	<p><i>Give details</i></p>
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<p>Sign off</p>			
<p>Councillor/Officer</p>	<p>date</p>	<p>Head of Service</p>	<p>date</p>

The following sections to be completed by Democratic Services in consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary

Section 2	
Consultation with relevant Heads of Service	
<i>It is important to ensure that the relevant service can support a review by providing the necessary documents and attending meetings as necessary. The Head of Service's comments should be obtained before the request to hold a review is put to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</i>	
Has the relevant Head of Service been consulted?	<i>Yes/no (if no, please give reason)</i>
Is there any current or proposed review of service which would affect this suggestion?	<i>Yes/no (if yes, please provide details)</i>
Is this a topic which the service department(s) is able to support	<i>Include HoS comments here</i>
When was the last time this service was the subject of a scrutiny review?	<i>Include date if known</i>

Is the issue something which will be of significant interest to the public and if so, how should this be managed?

Section 3 – Follow up Actions	
Agreed by Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Yes/No <i>If “no” give reasons</i>
Agreed Membership	
Anticipated completion date	
Likely number of meetings	
Where will the findings of the Task Group be reported to and approximately when?	

Section 4 – Completion of the review	
<p>Date final report considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p><i>If the final report is not to be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee please provide a reason.</i></p>	
<p>Date final report considered by the Executive (Cabinet and/or Portfolio Holder)</p> <p><i>If the report is not to be presented to the Executive please provide a reason.</i></p>	
<p>Date final report forwarded to other interested parties.</p> <p><i>This includes all parties who provided evidence for the review or attended as witnesses.</i></p>	
<p>Proposals for ongoing monitoring of action plan, outcomes and impact</p>	

*PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Previous Review Update: Affordable Housing – recommendation 2

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the second recommendation of the Affordable Housing Review, which was last reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 26 July 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the latest update and considers whether it requires a further update at a later date.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

3.1 During 2010/11 the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of affordable housing within Watford. The final report was agreed at its meeting held on 15 March 2011, which was then forwarded to Cabinet for its consideration on 22 March 2011.

3.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Cabinet's response at its meeting on 26 July 2011 and agreed to follow up a number of recommendations over a period of time. The update reviews were built into the Scrutiny Committee's work programme. It was agreed that recommendation 2 would be reviewed in December 2012 to find out whether there had been any changes to the policy.

3.3 Recommendation 2 stated –

“That Planning officers investigate if there is any way the council can ensure that piecemeal developments where a developer deliberately sub-divides a development into segments below the threshold level can be made subject to the same Section 106 obligations as if it was a single development subject to such obligations.”

3.4 The recommendation, Cabinet’s response and the Scrutiny Committee’s comments were provided to the Head of Planning and the Planning Policy Section Head, who were asked to provide an update. The latest update and the original information are included in Appendix 1.

3.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the latest update and consider whether it wishes to receive a further update at a later date or it considers the recommendation to have been completed.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that there are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Affordable Housing review update

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Affordable Housing Review final report
Overview and Scrutiny Committee minutes 26 July 2011

All reports and minutes are available on the Council’s website –
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

File Reference

None

Review: Affordable Housing
Committee/Task Group: Policy Development Scrutiny Committee
Chair: Councillor Kelly McLeod
Final report published: 15 March 2011
Cabinet/Executive response: Cabinet – 22 March 2011

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update	Officer's ongoing work	Complete?
<p><u>Recommendation 2 –</u></p> <p>That Planning officers investigate if there is any way the council can ensure that piecemeal developments where a developer deliberately sub-divides a development into segments below the threshold level can be made subject to the same Section 106 obligations as if it was a single development subject to such obligations.</p>	<p>Planning colleagues are aware of this issue and it is covered within the existing policy. The issue will be considered as part of the policy emerging from the Core Strategy.</p> <p><i>(Cabinet – 22 March 2011)</i></p>	<p>Further review in December 2012 to see if the policy has yet been changed and if there have been further instances of this happening.</p> <p><i>(Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 26 July 2011)</i></p>	<p>The core strategy HS3 – Affordable Housing policy, has proposed to lower the threshold for affordable housing from 15 to 10 units. The Inspectors report on the Core Strategy is due in November and will determine whether our policy approach is sound or not.</p> <p>However, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be brought in by April 2014. This essentially is a tax that will be applied to certain categories of development that are viable for CIL, and</p>	<p>Continue to monitor instances of piecemeal development within the Borough.</p> <p>Review the impact of the Core Strategy policy HS3 (if found sound and adopted) at a later date.</p> <p>Maintain overview of the introduction of CIL, and future S106 payments.</p>	

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update	Officer's ongoing work	Complete?
			<p>will include housing.</p> <p>All residential development over 100m2 will be liable to pay this levy once the CIL regime is adopted by the Council. This reduces the scope for developers to benefit from this type of piecemeal development.</p> <p>S106 payments will still be applicable in some instances where there are site specific infrastructure requirements.</p> <p><i>(Officer update – October 2012)</i></p>	<p><i>(Officer update – October 2012)</i></p>	

*PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Previous Review Update: Choice Based Lettings

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the recommendations of the Choice Based Lettings Review carried out by Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee in 2010/11.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the latest update and considers whether the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations have been met.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

3.1 At its meeting on 25 July 2012, Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that the final report from Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee on its review of Choice Based Lettings be forwarded to Cabinet as originally requested in February 2011.

3.2 The recommendations and officers' original responses were forwarded to Community Services and officers were asked to provide an update. The Mayor, as Portfolio Holder for Housing was copied into this update request. The officers' response is shown at Appendix 1. This information was included in the report to Cabinet on 17 September 2012.

- 3.3 The recommendations and update were discussed at Cabinet. An extract of the minutes is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the update and Cabinet's responses and consider whether it wishes to follow up the recommendations at a later date or it considers them to have been completed.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 There are no financial implications, as any costs should be met from WBC's contribution to the Countywide partnership scheme, which TRDC administers.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Choice Based Lettings update

Appendix 2 – Extract of the Cabinet minutes 17 September 2012

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Choice Based Lettings Review final report

Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee minutes 3 February 2011

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 25 July 2012

Cabinet 17 September 2012

All reports and minutes are available on the Council's website –

<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

File Reference

None

Review: Choice Based Lettings
Committee/Task Group: Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee
Final report published: 3 February 2011
Chair: Councillor Steve Rackett
Cabinet/Executive or Officer response: Officer response (included in final report) Cabinet 17 September 2012 (see minutes)

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive/Officer response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update – July 2012	Cabinet's response	Further review required / completed
(1) Training courses for long term non-bidders especially relation to IT.	We already contact people in housing need who are not bidding to find out the reasons for this and they can be assisted by staff in the CSC or Housing officers, we also run regular training for support agencies e.g. hostel providers so that they can support their clients. <i>(Officer response)</i>	Housing department to be asked to provide evidence of effective training and follow up.	Practice of contacting non bidders in the higher bands will be incorporated into the new procedures of the Demand Team. This could usefully take place at the same time as a spot check of banding.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive/Officer response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update – July 2012	Cabinet's response	Further review required / completed
(2) Explanations and education for bidders and potential bidders about the banding system.	See above, also a scheme guide is issued when people register. <i>(Officer response)</i>	Housing department to be asked to provide evidence of effective training and follow up.	Provided on Herts Choice Homes website which our website has a link to.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	
(3) Provide information about, and ensure access to the appeals procedure.	Yes this is something we could improve. <i>(Officer response)</i>	Review in 12 months	This is included in the nomination policy. Will be considered as part of reviewing our web pages.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	
(4) A spot check on a sample of applicants to ensure they are in the correct band and provide feedback on results to the scrutiny committee.	Yes this should be in place. <i>(Officer response)</i>	Review in 12 months	This will be incorporated into new procedures and will come under the remit of the Housing Casework Co-ordinator (new post) and also part of the audit plan being developed with internal audit.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive/Officer response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update – July 2012	Cabinet's response	Further review required / completed
(5) Tailored letters should be initiated and also 'follow-ups' for unsuccessful bidders.	We need to take a view on how resource intensive this would be; our overall approach is to move away from letters due to the cost involved. Unsuccessful bidders can access feedback e.g. number of people bidding for the property they were interested in, which band the successful bidder was in etc. <i>(Officer response)</i>	Review in 12 months	Feedback is already available via Herts Choice Homes. Tailored letters will not be possible to resource.	Cabinet did not accept recommendation	
(6) Investigate the schemes on Freeview and Wii pioneered by Kirklees Council.	Freeview is not compatible with the process, only packages that clients would need to pay for, e.g. Sky. <i>(Officer response)</i>	The Committee has information which suggests that users do not need to pay services such as Sky. Scrutiny Officer to follow up with Housing Officers. Review in 12 months	Not progressing at present, not a priority area for the service.	Cabinet did not accept recommendation	

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive/Officer response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update – July 2012	Cabinet's response	Further review required / completed
(7) Council Tax cost to be displayed with house information on property listings.	Yes (<i>Officer response</i>)	Review in 12 months	This has been requested and is with housing providers to arrange. We are working with WCHT on this.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	
(8) Obtain feedback from successful and unsuccessful bidders.	There is a user group which includes people who are still waiting to be re-housed. (<i>Officer response</i>)	Scrutiny Officers to follow up analysis of feedback. Review in 12 months	User group continues.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	
(9) More work to be focused on the benefits of moving from under occupied properties (for example smaller utility bills).	For maximum impact, this work would need to be focused within our RSL partners although we could support any initiatives they bring forward. (<i>Officer response</i>)	The Committee Chair agreed to follow this up and report back to the Committee.	Underoccupation is a priority and we have revised our nomination policy to give additional priority to those underoccupying by one bedroom (on a par with those in larger properties). Intensive focus on casework in the light of welfare reform "bedroom tax"	Cabinet accepted recommendation	

Recommendation	Cabinet/Executive/Officer response/decision	Scrutiny follow-up	Latest update – July 2012	Cabinet's response	Further review required / completed
(10) Staff to be alert to people who may have difficulty in filling in the forms.	This is already part of our daily working practice. (<i>Officer response</i>)		Previous comments apply.	Cabinet accepted recommendation	

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Cabinet

17 September 2012

Present: Mayor Thornhill (Mayor)
Councillor D. Scudder (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors Crout, Sharpe, and Watkin.

Also present:
Councillors Bell, Dhindsa, Johnson, Meerabux and Mills

21 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCRUTINY REVIEW

Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of Choice Based Lettings during two meetings in October and November 2010. The final report incorporating the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and the responses of officers had been agreed at the meeting held on 3 February 2011. At that meeting Call-in and Performance Scrutiny Committee resolved that the final report should be forwarded to the Portfolio Holder and then on to Cabinet.

Cabinet's responses to the recommendations were contained in the report. Councillor Rackett (Green), who had chaired the Call-in & Performance Committee at the time, had confirmed that he was happy with Cabinet's responses.

Councillor Johnson (Conservative) referred to the issue of appeals and how the 56 day deadline could be extended by an additional 28 days in some cases due to the backlog of cases. The Mayor suggested that he took this up with the Housing Policy Group.

Councillor Bell (Labour) welcomed the responses to the recommendations. He added however, that there was still a need for the Choice Based Lettings scheme to be monitored.

The Mayor said that, whilst it was important to establish issues about which residents were not happy, they also needed to be reminded of the situation prior to the Choice Based Lettings scheme when they had very limited say over house choices.

RESOLVED

that Overview and Scrutiny Committee be informed of Cabinet's responses as follows:

Recommendation 1

Training courses for long term non-bidders especially relation to IT.

Cabinet Response

Accepted. Housing already contact people in housing need who were not bidding to find out the reasons for this and they could be assisted by staff in the CSC or Housing officers. Officers also ran regular training for support agencies e.g. hostel providers so that they could support their clients.

Recommendation 2

Explanations and education for bidders and potential bidders about the banding system.

Cabinet response

Accepted. Details of the scheme was provided on Herts Choice Homes website to which the Council's website had a link.

Recommendation 3

Provide information about and ensure access to the appeals procedure.

Cabinet Response

Accepted. This was included in the nomination policy. It would be considered as part of the review of the Council's web pages.

Recommendation 4

A spot check on a sample of applicants to ensure they were in the correct band and provide feedback on results to the scrutiny committee.

Cabinet Response

Accepted. This would be incorporated into new procedures and would come under the remit of the Housing Casework Co-ordinator and also be part of the audit plan being developed with internal audit.

Recommendation 5

Tailored letters should be initiated and also 'follow-ups' for unsuccessful bidders.

Cabinet Response

Not accepted. Feedback was already available via Herts Choice Homes. Tailored letters would not be possible to resource.

Recommendation 6

Investigate the schemes on Freeview and Wii pioneered by Kirklees Council.

Cabinet Response

Not accepted. Freeview was not compatible with the process, only packages that clients would need to pay for. It was not considered to be a priority for the service at this time.

Recommendation 7

Council Tax cost to be displayed with house information on property listings This had been requested and was with housing providers to arrange. We were working with WCHT on this.

Cabinet Response

Accepted and still in progress. Whilst the Housing Service fully supported inclusion of Council Tax information and had been pursuing this recommendation it was not something that was within their gift to compel.

The Council had received confirmation from Watford Community Housing Trust that they had arranged access to Council Tax information and would be including this on their property adverts - within the next month. Other registered providers were also rolling this out and therefore progress was expected to be made in the near future.

It was the housing providers who put together the adverts and sent them to the Housing Service on extremely tight timescales before publication. Due to the amount of essential information officers had to check in a short space of time, officers did require providers to put forward all the relevant information. There was not the opportunity for the officer to liaise with Council Tax once they knew the exact property addresses coming forward for the advert as this could be a matter of only an hour or two before the information needed to be submitted.

Recommendation 8

Obtain feedback from successful and unsuccessful bidders.

Cabinet Response

Accepted. There was a user group which included people who were still waiting to be rehoused

Recommendation 9

More work to be focussed on the benefits of moving from under occupied properties (for example smaller utility bills).

Cabinet Response

Accepted. Under occupation was a priority and our nomination policy had been revised to give additional priority to those under occupied by one bedroom (on a par with those in larger properties). We were also working with our RSL partners on initiatives they could bring forward to address this.

Recommendation 10

Staff to be alert to people who may have difficulty in filling in the forms.

Cabinet Response

Accepted. This was already part of the Service's daily working practice

PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2012
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group – Cabinet Response

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group's report was submitted to Cabinet on 8 October 2012 as an appendix to the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework report. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting are attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.2 Members are asked to review Cabinet's resolutions and consider whether they require any further review of the Task Group's recommendations at a later date. The recommendations and their corresponding Cabinet resolution are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 that Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews Cabinet's resolutions and considers whether the Task Group's recommendations need to be reviewed at a later date.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Following approval by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2012, the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group's final report was forwarded to the Head of Community Services.
- 3.2 The Task Group's report was included as an appendix to the Head of Community Services' report to Cabinet, which sought approval of the draft Commissioning Framework.

- 3.3 Cabinet discussed the officer's report and the Task Group's recommendations. Councillor Aron, Chair of the Task Group was also present, representing the Task Group.
- 3.4 Appendix 1 to this report sets out the Task Group's recommendations and Cabinet's corresponding resolution. An extract of Cabinet's minutes is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review Cabinet's resolutions and consider whether the Task Group's recommendations have been met or need to be reviewed at a later date.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that it is anticipated that the financial support for commissioning will be contained within the Council's budget envelope for 2013/2014 when approved.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

4.3 **Potential Risks**

- 4.3.1 None identified

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Task Group's recommendations and Cabinet's corresponding resolutions

Appendix 2 – Extract of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 October 2012

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 7 March 2012

Minutes of Cabinet dated 20 March 2012

File Reference

None

Review	Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework
Committee/Task Group	Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group
Chair	Councillor Jeanette Aron
Final report published	19 September 2012
Response	Cabinet 8 October 2012

Recommendation		Response	Further review?
1.	The Small Grants Fund should be continued.	Cabinet agrees the continuation of the Small Grants Fund. <i>(resolution 3 – Cabinet minutes)</i>	
2.	The total Small Grant Fund should be £50,000.	Agreed for 2013/14 – subject to annual budget review and budget approval process <i>(resolution 6 of Cabinet minutes refers to 2013/14 budget)</i>	
3.	The limit for individual small grants should be £2,000.	Cabinet delegates responsibility to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group to approve the eligibility criteria for the Small Grants Fund. <i>(resolution 4 – Cabinet minutes)</i>	
4.	Application criteria should include projects and 'invest to save' initiatives.		
5.	The process for Small Grant applications should encourage match funding.		

Recommendation	Response	Further review?
<p>6. The priorities in the draft Commissioning Framework document as detailed below are supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector • Enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre • Advice Services • Arts and Culture • Community Centres • Sport 	<p>Cabinet agrees the service commissioning priorities as identified in 3.4 of the Cabinet response.</p> <p><i>(resolution 2 – Cabinet minutes)</i></p>	

Cabinet

8th October 2012

Present: Mayor Dorothy Thornhill (Chair)
Councillor D. Scudder (Vice Chair)
Councillors Crout, Sharpe and Watkin.

Also present: Councillors Aron, Bell, Khan and Meerabux.

29 **VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK
2013 -2016**

The current three-year Voluntary and Community Sector [VCS] grant funding programme ceased on March 31st 2013. Cabinet received a report of the Head of Community Services setting out the case for a new VCS Commissioning Framework and changing to a commissioning approach as opposed to an open grant application process. It also identified the priorities for commissioning services with the limited funds available.

The Mayor opened the discussion by saying that this had been a thorough and extensive piece of work for which she commended all the officers involved. She added that, despite the fact that grant funding was not a statutory function the Council had chosen to support the voluntary sector and actually frozen the grants' budget for a number of years.

The Head of Community Services highlighted the key points of the report and set the context. She said that the strong relationship that the Council had with the voluntary sector had to be recognised and the fact that they were in the best place to deliver some services.

The proposals had been considered by a Scrutiny Task Group and its report and recommendations were attached as an appendix to the main report. A public consultation exercise had taken place and a summary of the key issues raised was also attached. The report also included the priorities being recommended for approval, details of the services to be commissioned, proposals regarding the small grants' fund and the position with regard to the use of Council owned property by VCS organisations.

The Head of Community Services drew Members' attention specifically to the officer recommendation in the report on domestic abuse commissioning and the following correction to Appendix E:

The paragraph:

"This is achieved with volunteer counsellors providing this year 2815 hours of their time which would have a value of £147245. 196 women accessed specialist legal services and volunteers provided 5,399 hours of support"

to be changed to

“This is achieved through the provision of a Domestic Abuse Specialist post with 20 years experience funded by Watford Borough Council, she co-facilitates with a part time specialist counsellor who is funded from the Women’s Centre reserves at the moment”

The Head of Community Services explained that, whilst domestic abuse was not a commissioning responsibility of the District Council, it was clear from the Equality Impact Analysis that there would be a disproportionate impact on this group. Officers were therefore recommending that funding support continued for 12 months to mitigate the impact whilst the County and the local Community Safety Partnership considered local service needs and priorities.

In response to a point made by Councillor Bell, the Head of Community Services stressed that domestic violence had not been included in the priority list but that the funding would continue for a year to allow time for other funding streams to be identified.

Councillor Bell responded that it was important to reassure women who currently accessed the Women’s Centre for support. He welcomed the fact that the Women’s Centre was expected to remain as part of the Charter Place development.

The Mayor said that the Council would do what it could to ensure that the facility remained available.

Councillor Watkin commented that the small grants fund was excellent and provided small groups with the opportunity to start new initiatives.

The Mayor advised Cabinet that she wished to look again at the small grants issue prior to budget setting as she wanted to ensure that funds were available to assist groups who were working towards sustainability. The amount could not be increased and how it was allocated needed further consideration.

Councillor Crout commented on the need for flexibility and to demonstrate that the Council would help if it was able to do so.

Councillor Meerabux asked about the position with the County and expressed concern that some vulnerable groups could be left wanting.

The Mayor responded that the whole concept of commissioning was accepted as the way forward – including by Herts County Council. The Head of Community Services endorsed this view and added that many organisations were now moving in this direction.

In response to a point made by Councillor Aron (Chair of the Voluntary & Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group) regarding the small grants fund, the Mayor proposed that the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Service be requested to look at the criteria for the allocation of small grants with a view to holding back some of the

funds for those groups suffering from the effects of the recession. She added that the funds could very quickly be used up if it was open to all to apply.

The Head of Community Services drew Members' attention to the suggestions for the small grants' fund as detailed in the report and advised that the allocation of the £50k fund was a matter for Cabinet.

Councillor Aron commented that she hoped that groups would also be able to access match-funding.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet:

1. agrees amendments to the draft commissioning framework [2013 - 2016] as identified in this report.
2. agrees the service commissioning priorities as identified in 3.4.of the report.
3. agrees the continuation of the Small Grants Fund
4. delegates responsibility to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the Voluntary & Community Sector Commissioning Framework Task Group to approve the eligibility criteria for the Small Grants Fund.
5. delegates responsibility to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to finalise the wording of the Commissioning Framework prior to publication
6. delegates responsibility to the Head of Community Services to implement the commissioning process for the service priorities identified in 3.8 of the report to ensure services are in place from April 1st 2013, subject to Council approval of the Budget for 2013/14.

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Selection of topics and issues for scrutiny by councillors or officers

The selection of useful and viable topics and issues is vital to the successful and effective operation of scrutiny.

It is proposed that from June 2011 scrutiny topics be selected from a rolling programme open throughout the year. This will require scrutiny to promote and advertise its willingness to accept new projects and for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to more actively manage the programme on an ongoing basis.

1. Sources

The following are sources of ideas for the work programme:

- Performance indicators, both national and internal.
- Views of Cabinet and Leadership Team especially in relation to policy subjects.
- The Council's surveys, such as the annual residents' survey.
- The Complaints Report which is compiled annually by the Customer Service Centre.
- Service complaints more widely; although individual cases will not be taken up if a large volume of complaints is received about a single issue then it may be appropriate to pursue the topic.
- Reports of external inspections of services.
- The views of the Council's partners.
- Issues picked up by ward councillors in their locality.
- The Council's Forward Plan

2. Criteria

To qualify for consideration the topic must meet the following criteria:

- Affect a group or community of people. Scrutiny will not normally look at individual service complaints.
- Relate to a service, event or issue in which Watford Borough Council has a significant stake.
- Not be an issue that Scrutiny has covered during the last year.

- Not be a planning or licensing issue, or any other matter dealt with by another council committee.
- To match one or more of the Council's current priorities.
- To be feasible and able to be completed within the timescale projected for the work.
- There must be availability within the relevant department/service to support the review.
- Be a topic that members wish to scrutinise.

Suggestions for topics to be scrutinised – evaluation table

A Member/Officer suggesting a topic for scrutiny must complete this table as fully as possible. Completed tables will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny for consideration.

Proposer: Councillor/Officer		Rabi Martins
<p>Topic recommended for scrutiny:</p> <p><i>Please include as much detail as is available about the specific issues and areas which should be included/excluded from the review. Should the focus be on past performance, future policy or both?</i></p>	<p>Management of Disabled Parking Bays and Parking by Blue Badge Holders</p> <p>Two problems have been brought to my attention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The council does not enforce Disabled Parking Bays Thus they are merely advisory and do not serve the purpose they are intended for, namely to assist people with physical disability who are only able to walk a limited distance without assistance 2. Under our current rules any person with a Blue Badge is able to Park at any Parking Bay for an unlimited period without payment. Thus in some areas premium parking spaces are blocked for hours on end. 	
<p>Why have you recommended this topic for scrutiny?</p>	<p>Some of my constituents have a Disabled Parking Bay marked outside their house because one of the occupants of the property has severe mobility problems However on numerous occasions they find that other vehicles with a general parking permit have occupied he slot This causes them extreme hardship The problem occurs because these bays are not for the exclusive use of people with Blue Badges Thus anyone with a Parking Permit for the area is able to Park there – and they frequently do</p>	

<p>What are the specific outcomes you wish to see from the review?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and amendment of the system for Disabled Parking Bays 2. Introduction of system for Enforcing Disabled Parking Bays 3. Review of use / abuse of the Blue Badge System and introduction of appropriate measures to combat identified problems
<p>Does the proposed item meet the following criteria?</p>	
<p>It must affect a group or community of people</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p> <p>Yes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Affects individuals who require a Parking Space outside their property because of their personal circumstances 2. Affects general public, particularly in some shopping areas because blue badge holders block Parking Spaces
<p>It must relate to a service, event or issue in which the council has a significant stake</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Give details</i></p> <p>Operation of the CPZ Scheme</p>
<p>It must not have been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months</p> <p><i>There will be exceptions to this arising from notified changing circumstances. Scrutiny will also maintain an interest in the progress of recommendations and issues arising from past reports.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Please confirm</i></p> <p>Meets this criteria</p>

It must not be an issue, such as planning or licensing, which is dealt with by another council committee	Meets this criteria <i>Please confirm</i>
Does the topic meet the council's priorities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the health of the town and enhance its heritage 2. Enhance the town's 'clean & green' environment 3. Enhance the town's sustainability 4. Enhance the town's economic prosperity and potential 5. Supporting individuals and the community 6. Securing an efficient, effective, value for money council 7. Influence and partnership delivery <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please confirm which ones</i></p> <p>4 and 5</p>
Are you aware of any limitations of time or other constraints which need to be taken into account? <i>Factors to consider are forthcoming milestones, demands on the relevant service area and member availability</i>	NO <i>Include details</i>
	<i>Include details</i>

Does the topic involve a Council partner or other outside body?	CPZ Enforcement Contractor
Please complete the 'sign off' section at the end of this document	

<p>The following section to be completed by Democratic Services</p>	
<p>Consultation with relevant Heads of Service <i>(this section to be completed by Democratic Services)</i></p>	<p><i>It is important to ensure that the relevant service can support a review by providing the necessary documents and attending meetings as necessary. The Head of Service's comments should be obtained before the request to hold a review is put to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</i></p>
<p>Has the relevant Head of Service been consulted?</p> <p>Is this a topic which the service department(s) is able to support.</p> <p>When was the last time this service was the subject of a scrutiny review?</p>	<p><i>Yes/no (if no, please give reason)</i></p> <p><i>Include HoS comments here</i></p> <p><i>Include date if known</i></p>

Sign off			
Councillor/Officer	Date	Head of Service	date
Cllr Rabi Martins	12th Nov 2012		