



**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

8 January 2020

**LEAD MEMBER:** Councillor Grenville Chamberlain, Chairman, Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Councillor Brian Milnes, Vice Chairman, Scrutiny and Overview Committee

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## **Update from Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

### **Purpose**

1. This report is to inform Cabinet of the discussions and recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting of 17 December 2019, which Cabinet may wish to consider in its decision making.

### **Update on Universal Credit implications for rent collection**

2. The committee considered an update which it had requested at its November committee meeting, on the impact of Universal Credit (UC) on rent collection and the steps being taken to mitigate this.
3. Scrutiny and Overview Committee members noted the challenges posed by Universal Credit, highlighting that Disability Cambridgeshire was seeing problems caused by UC for people with disabilities. Members asked whether the Council could do anything further to help support these people.
4. Committee members thanked officers for their thorough approach to mitigating the risks of Universal Credit.

### **Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme update**

5. The committee considered an update on the HRA Capital programme, noting that this had been re-profiled in line with the expected timing and levels of spend.
6. The committee:
  - a. Noted the outturn position of a £2.742 million underspend for the HRA Capital Programme and that of this, £1.124 million was proposed for reprofiling into future years.
  - b. Noted that borrowing of around £10 million was likely to be required during 2021/22 in order to finance the updated Capital Programme.
  - c. Noted that following the abolition of the HRA debt cap, a local debt cap of £250 million rising to £300 million, has been calculated.

- d. Recommended to Full Council the revised HRA capital programme for the period 2019/2020 to 2024/2025, to reflect amendments to and the reprofiling of expenditure.

## **Update on Shared Planning Service**

7. The committee considered an update on the progress of the shared planning service project. The committee noted the activities, performance and key risks faced by the service.
8. Committee members highlighted the importance of officers answering customers' emails and telephone calls and noted that procedures were being put in place to ensure this.
9. The committee requested standard deviations be provided with future performance data.
10. The committee thanked officers for the comprehensive report, which it felt indicated significant progress in the restructuring of the planning team and likely improvement of the service.

## **An Economic Action Plan and new Business Support Service for South Cambridgeshire**

11. The committee considered and commented on the draft Greater Cambridge Economic Action Plan and agreed that subject to the incorporation of some amendments that were suggested, such as the updating of housing numbers and the inclusion of a glossary, the draft Action Plan be submitted to Cabinet for approval.
12. The committee reviewed and commented on the proposal to create a new Business Support Team to deliver business support and engagement. The main query from the committee regarding this was how success would be measured.

## **Proposed Scrutiny Review**

13. The committee considered and endorsed the proposal to invite the Centre for Public Scrutiny to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function. The review will take place between January-April 2020.

## **Report Author:**

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