

Report to full Council: 22 November 2017

From the Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee met last on Monday 18 September 2017. There were three main agenda items:

1. The Gold Standard for Homelessness Services - Diagnostic Peer Review;

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets presented in this report which provided an update on the DCLG Gold Standard Peer Review Assessment. Participation of the Gold Standard Process is considered to be a key process to support the continuous improvement of the homelessness/housing services at the Council. The Council passed the first stage with an overall score of 67%.

As part of the process a number of key recommendations were identified for the council to consider and implement prior to pursuing the further challenges which concerned the website, reception and interview facilities, homelessness case files and the overall quality of the housing options.

The Committee agreed to support the option whereby the Council will consider and implement actions from the improvement plan prior to pursuing the challenges.

2. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets submitted a report based on The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 which was predicted to be enacted in April 2018.

As the full details of the legislative changes were not known it was confided sensible for the Scrutiny Committee to retain this item on the work programme and to examine it again when appropriate.

The Committee agreed that this item be retained on the work programme and that clarification be sought from the DCLG on the implications for Local Authorities of The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

3. Draft Economic Development Strategy

A meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Sub Group was held on 19 July to inform the first draft of the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2018 – 2023. The draft EDS, subject to revision by this Committee will be used as a basis for consultation with partner organisations, local businesses and wider community.

Overall it was agreed that the aspirations expressed in the draft strategy should be accompanied by targeted outcomes, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, that the housing assessment was in line with the Borough Strategy and that reference be made in the document to the major changes which would occur during the life of the strategy 2018-2023 such as the impact of Brexit and HS2. Members also requested there should be reference to work with the rural communities and more detail on SMEs (Small and Medium enterprises).

Mark Olszewski

Chair of Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee