

Committee:	Scrutiny	Agenda Item
Date:	6 October 2009	4
Title:	Lead Officer's report	
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Summary

- 1 This report updates Members on matters that are not otherwise on this Agenda and other items of interest.

Recommendations

- 2 That the report is noted.

Background Papers

- 3 None.

Situation/Update

Scrutiny training event

- 4 The Scrutiny training event held on 7 July 2009 was well received by both Members and Officers. Verbal feedback has indicated that those attending would like another training event to be held in order that some matters can be considered in greater detail, and for further opportunity to consider the effectiveness of scrutiny at this council.

Feedback on previous matters arising

- 5 SC13 (2008/09) reports with financial implications – *The Chairman of this committee required confirmation that committee chairmen are briefed on matters with financial implications.* All reports with financial implications are now cleared by the Chief Financial Officer. Committee chairmen are also briefed prior to committee meetings.
- 6 SC17 (2008/09) housing policy land disposal – *The Chairman of this committee asked to be provided with written clarification on the value of housing land that was transferred for social housing.* The Acting Director of Development has since corresponded with the Chairman and indicated that land is generally transferred at nil value.
- 7 SC4 (2009/10) review of fees and charges – *this scrutiny review resulted in a number of recommendations being made to other committees.* These recommendations are being covered by the ongoing review of pest control, the transfer of amenities to Saffron

Walden Town Council, and a proposed report to the Finance & Administration Committee.

Scrutiny landscape

- 8 Areas the Scrutiny Committee could potentially incorporate into its workplan are set out in terms of reference and specific functions (pages 49-50 of the Councillors Handbook). However, local authorities now have powers to scrutinise a considerable range of areas that impact on the community, including health, crime and disorder and Local Area Agreements. This council continues to prioritise task and finish type scrutiny reviews which result in recommendations for improvement being made to other committees. This approach has been considered proportionate and appropriate given the capacity Members and Officers have for involvement in wider scrutiny work. It is likely however that outside bodies will increasingly expect councils to carry out joint scrutiny activity and scrutiny of external bodies, both of which should be Member led.

Annual Report

- 9 The committee should report annually to Full Council on its workings and make recommendations for the future if appropriate. The committee's Lead Officer will therefore shortly be drafting a report for the committee's Chairman. Members are invited to offer up any views and or recommendations they may have.