

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MINUTES

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 20 April 2021
Place: Virtual Meeting on Zoom **Time:** 7.00 - 8.24 pm
Members Present: C Whitbread (Chairman), N Avey, N Bedford, A Patel, J Philip, S Kane and H Whitbread

Other

Councillors: R Baldwin, R Bassett, P Bolton, S Heap, S Heather, J Lea, C McCredie, S Murray, S Neville, C C Pond, C P Pond, M Sartin, D Stocker, D Sunger, B Vaz, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

Apologies:

Officers Present: G Blakemore (Chief Executive), N Dawe (Chief Operating Officer), A Small (Strategic Director Corporate and 151 Officer), S Jevans (Qualis Group Managing Director), N Richardson (Service Director (Planning Services)), J Warwick (Service Manager (Contracts)), H Thorpe (Property Maintenance Operational Assets and Compliance), F Edmonds (Climate Change Officer), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), L Kirman (Democratic Services Officer) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

170. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor R Bassett declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 – 'Delivery of Bakers Lane Leisure Centre', by virtue of being a member of the Qualis Board. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-prejudicial and that he would stay in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

2. Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor R Bassett declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 – 'Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report Q1 2020/21', by virtue of being a member of the Qualis Board. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-prejudicial and that he would stay in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

172. MINUTES

Decision:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 March 2021 be taken as read and would be signed by the Leader as a correct record.

173. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Patel, updated the meeting on council owned assets on Loughton High Road and the Broadway. In December 2019 EFDC purchased the freehold for some properties in Centric Parade and 202 to 226 High Road Loughton, consisting of 18 retail premises, office premises and 9 residential flats. This parade had been hit by the effects of the Covid lockdown and 6 shops had become vacant and 2 had come to an arrangement for lower rental costs during this period. We now had offers for three of the four vacant shops. The premises on the High Road were also being let or were in the process of being let. All this has been achieved during lockdown.

As for the Broadway we have let 6 out of 7 units in the Landmark building, with the remaining unit under offer. In respect of the 68 shops on the Broadway, except for one shop (now under offer) all shops remain occupied. This was a good news story for the council, and he thanked the estates team for finding tenants during this last lockdown period.

The Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor S Kane, updated members on the current problems had by members on their iPads. This was due to a problem that Microsoft was having with Outlook and its connection with Apple products. They were working to resolve this as soon as possible.

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip updated the meeting on the reopening of shops after this latest lockdown. They had made the carparks free for the first week to facilitate the public to get used to using the shops again. Speaking to the public and shopkeepers, officers found that this was much appreciated and made it a successful first week back.

174. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET

The Cabinet noted that no public questions or requests to address the Cabinet had been received for consideration at the meeting.

175. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that the following items of business had been considered at its meeting held on 15 April 2021:

The Committee had received an annual progress report on the work undertaken by the Epping Forest Youth Council supported by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team. Four Youth Councillors gave an informative presentation on the activities of the Youth Council.

Our second presentation covered local mental health services for young people, which complemented the Youth Councillors' work on mental health issues. Ms S Garner, the Assistant Director, Southend, Essex and Thurrock Children and Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Collaborative/Programme Director Joint Commissioning SEND (Essex)), outlined the emotional wellbeing and mental health services available for young people.

The Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 draft Annual Report on the work undertaken by the parent committee and the Select Committees during the past municipal year was discussed. The Committee also reviewed the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2020/21 quarter 4. The report only detailed project and KPI status by exception.

The Cabinet's agenda was reviewed but there were no specific issues identified on any of the items being considered.

An extra meeting of the Committee had been organised for 8 June 2021. This was to allow members the opportunity to pre-scrutinise Cabinet business before its decision deadline of 21 June. This would include Qualis' four-year business plan for 2021-2025, the business case for the transfer of Corporate Asset management service to Qualis and the Pyrles Lane site.

176. DELIVERY OF BAKERS LANE LEISURE CENTRE

The Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the proposed Baker's Lane Leisure Centre. He noted that at the meeting on 21 January 2021, Cabinet agreed that the new leisure centre in Epping was delivered by its incumbent contractor Places Leisure. This included the purchase of all designs and plans from Qualis once planning permission for the new facility was obtained.

To date, all the work Places Leisure had done with Qualis had been on a voluntary basis and in a spirit of partnership as the Council's leisure centres provider. Following the Cabinet decision to have the new centre delivered by Places Leisure it was necessary to make the required amendments to the Contract to reflect this. To progress this project to the next stage and Places Leisure needed the services of specialist consultants and legal advisers. It was standard practice that these costs were covered by the client, in this case the Council, as was the case for the delivery of Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre.

The contract with Places Leisure results in a net annual income of £1.3 million. This had been severely impacted by Covid-19. However, as restrictions ease and user confidence increases it was expected that income levels would rise. It was too early, primarily due to the impact of Covid-19, to agree additional income from the new Centre. It was recommended that a final agreement on additional income to the Council was brought to Cabinet for approval later in the year.

Councillor Philip noted that funding for this work was already in the budget and he noted that recommendation 5 had already carried out the preparatory work for the five sites in Epping; overview had been delegated to the two Portfolio Holders, the Leader and the section 151 officer to look at the repayment to Qualis for their work that had been already completed.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked what the timescale was for progressing this work if planning permission was granted in June. The Contracts Service Manager, Mr Warwick said this would be a phased approach. Once Planning Permission had been granted, they would look to start the procurement exercise as part of the phased development of the Epping sites. The Multi Storey car park at Cottis Lane was the first phase, as soon as this was completed then we would commence construction of the Leisure Centre, so looking at summer 2022 to start construction. The build period likely to be between 18 to 24 months.

Councillor Whitbread commented that this was a great project for our Council, and he was looking forward to working with our partners, Places Leisure, who did a brilliant job in Waltham Abbey. This would be a great benefit to all the local communities around Epping and an asset to our district.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet noted the progress made on delivery of the Epping Leisure Centre at Bakers Lane, Epping;
- (2) The Cabinet delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Technical the authority to agree the Deed of Variation to the contract with Places Leisure for delivery of the new centre, adjustments to the agreement to take account of the sale of current Epping Sports Centre at Hemnal Street to Qualis and the right to continue to use this facility until the new Bakers Lane facility was ready;
- (3) The Cabinet allocated £600,000 from existing Capital Programme provision for the Bakers Lane Leisure Centre, as agreed by Council in February, to progress detailed designs and further site survey work in order to arrive at cost certainty;
- (4) In recognising that Qualis owned a number of regeneration sites in Epping Town and the delivery of the Bakers Lane site was interdependent on Qualis progress; the Cabinet agreed to work with Qualis in a strategic delivery partnership, with Qualis occupying the role of Infrastructure Manager with the responsibility of coordination for the delivery of all five sites in Epping Town and communications across the sites and agree an appropriate day rate retainer fee to reflect this;
- (5) The Cabinet delegated authority to the Section 151 officer to repay to Qualis costs incurred by them in preparing and submitting a planning application and outline design for the Bakers Lane Leisure Centre that is to be used by Places Leisure; the amount to be based on the actual justifiable costs incurred and upon consultation with the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Technical and Portfolio Holder for Finance; and
- (6) That the final form of contract variation covering Management Fee income from the new Centre be brought to a future Cabinet for consideration.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To agree to have a Deed of Variation in the Contract with Places Leisure and approve budget to enable the necessary design and legal processes to enable Places Leisure to take over the scheme from Qualis and continue work at pace for the delivery of the new leisure centre.

The procurement advice received from Anthony Collins Solicitors was that Places Leisure should tender the construction contract through the Find a Tender Service (FTS formerly OJEU) which will mitigate any risk of challenge as well as demonstrate best value for the Council.

Other Options for Action:

It was possible to delay decisions until the outcome of the planning application. However, the slippage in programme would delay delivery of the new leisure centre. Commencement of the construction of the new leisure centre was entirely contingent on the completion of the Multi Storey Car park at Cottis Lane and associated highway works.

177. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER - CONTRACT 102, CONTROLLED DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS

In the absence of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder the Leader of the Council introduced the report on the acceptance of tender for controlled entry systems.

In order to undertake the repair, planned maintenance and installation of audio-controlled door entry systems to Council-owned properties during the financial year 2021-22 and over the following 4-year period, it was necessary to undertake a procurement exercise based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) taking cost and quality into account to satisfy the requirements of the Council's Procurement Rules.

The tender sum includes the planned Capital Programme of installing new audio-controlled door entry installations to 26 blocks of flats and upgrading the existing audio-controlled door entry installations to 42 blocks of flats over the next 5-year period.

Decision:

The Cabinet agreed:

- (1) That, Openview Security Systems Ltd be awarded a 1-year contract renewable annually for up to a maximum of 4-further years, for the repair, planned maintenance and installation of audio-controlled door entry systems to Council-owned properties in the sum of £1,022,194.64 with an overall weighted price and quality score of 90% being the most economically advantageous tender received;
- (2) That, should it not be possible to enter into contract with Openview Security Systems Ltd, that SCCI Alphatrack Ltd be awarded the contract as the reserve contractor, being the second most economically advantageous tender received, with a Tender Sum of £1,410,280.01;
- (3) That the overall value of the works be limited to the sum included in Housing Revenue Account for maintenance works and the sum within the Capital Programme for the installation and upgrades of audio-controlled door entry systems on an annual basis; and
- (4) That, this contract be designated as a serial contract to facilitate the annual adjustment to the tendered rates in accordance with the BCIS ALLCOS Resource Cost Index of All Construction: Repair and Maintenance Work #7419.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The existing framework agreement for the repair, planned maintenance and installation of audio-controlled door entry systems to Council-owned properties with the current contractor was nearing the end of its term. Therefore, this was a new contract and the results of the tender exercise needs to be approved in accordance with Councils Procurement Rules. Undertaking a competitive tender exercise was not only a requirement of the Councils Procurement Rules, but there was also a requirement under Section 20 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 where works were undertaken on communal areas of Council owned and managed blocks of flats.

To ensure the existing audio-controlled door entry systems installed at around 400-blocks are maintained and remain in full operation to ensure the safety and the security of the communal areas of the Councils sheltered housing schemes and general needs blocks of flats.

To ensure suitably accredited specialist contractors are available to provide an emergency response in the event of a failure of the audio-controlled door entry systems installed in the Councils sheltered housing and general needs blocks of flats.

To upgrade existing audio-controlled door entry systems that are installed with old technology such as key based access, obsolete control systems and with access doors that are beyond economic repair. Futureproofing the design and specification for upgrades and new audio-controlled door entry systems include a video ready design which allows the upgrade from audio-control to video with minimal costs, assisted door opening for physically challenged occupiers and a mobile Cloud based system for the management of access key tokens.

The new framework agreement will be let with a high degree of flexibility incorporated in the contract conditions, this will enable Housing and Property Services and Quality Management to issue Works Orders based on operational requirements to a specialist contractor as and when required.

Other Options for Action:

The main alternative options considered were:

(1) To re-tender the contract on an annual basis. However, this would be time consuming and inefficient. Re-tendering would not guarantee more competitive tenders.

(2) To re-tender the works based on price alone. However, this would not necessarily return a more competitive tender and would not identify or quantify a quality commitment from the lowest tenderer.

(3) To seek quotations for the repair, planned maintenance and installations of audio-controlled door entry systems on an ad-hoc basis by raising individual Works Orders for the work. However, this is very time consuming and is not cost effective as it would not generate the cost savings associated with economies of scale. Also, the volume of the repair and maintenance of existing audio-controlled door entry systems per annum would breach the Council's Procurement Rules C2 (9b) with the works exceeding £25,000 in value during one financial year.

178. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder, Councillor Bedford introduced the report on the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The Council's emerging Local Plan sets out policies in relation to the provision and enhancement of Green and Blue Infrastructure, the protection of the District's ecological assets and achieving high quality design. To support these policies and address the requirement to provide suitable avoidance or mitigation measures to manage any potential impacts of growth on protected sites, including the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Council had developed a Green Infrastructure Strategy ('the Strategy'). The Strategy would ensure that high quality Green and Blue Infrastructure, including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural

Green Space (SANG) and Infrastructure Enhancement Projects, was delivered alongside the growth proposed in the District as part of the emerging Local Plan.

This report sets out the changes proposed to be made to the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet for the purposes of consultation on 15 April 2020. The consultation was undertaken in June and July 2020.

Councillor Philip had a couple of questions. One came from one of his residents to which he had made councillor Bedford aware of. The second question came from the Chairman of the Theydon Bois Parish Council that they were surprised to learn that the Woodland Trust had not been included in the consultation and asked that they have sight of the proposal before it was approved. Councillor Bedford said that he would send a full response to the resident's question sent to Councillor Philip. This was about a walking route from Debden to Theydon Bois which a lot of councillors and officers had walked and making it more accessible to everyone. As for the comment on the Woodland Trust, the strategy did mention that it would have ongoing consultation with partners, including the Woodland Trust, and he would ask officers to look into this. Councillor Philip asked if a recommendation could be altered to take this into account by adding, at the end of recommendation 1, "subject to review with the Woodland Trust". This was agreed.

Councillor Heap said that it had been a hard read and asked who was in the Quality Review Panel and did any of them write the report. And, there was mention of charging residents of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois, but Chigwell was not included, and asked why should we be taxed living here in an urban environment. Councillor Bedford said the quality review panel was an independent body giving independent advice. As for Loughton and Buckhurst Hill they contribute to it as it was done by distance from the SAC, so those closest to the SAC would contribute more. Mr N Richardson confirmed that was the case and that Chigwell was that bit further away.

Councillor Chris Pond said that this report was better than its first version and had been done reasonably well. He assumed that this would be part of the documents we would submit as part of the Local Plan. He agreed with Councillor Bedford that we did need to help people access and enjoy our countryside but was surprised to hear that the Woodland Trust had not been consulted. In considering the Woodland Trust site of the Theydon Bois woods (on page 175 of the supplementary agenda), he noted that it was to the east of the built up area, but he considered a better way into the area would be to make use of the Loughton Shores linking up with the woods by reinstating a bridge or subway linking up the two areas. Councillor Bedford agreed and asked Councillor Pond to supply a more detailed plan on what he had just said, they would consider it, as it sounded to him to be an ideal way to link the two areas together.

Councillor Wixley said that he had discussed this route at the last council meeting before lockdown and had asked Councillor Bedford to accompany him to walk this route. His offer was still there. On this route there was unfortunately a precarious footbridge that had partially fallen away. He then noted that the Loughton Shores mentioned were owned by Essex County Council so we may need to negotiate with them as well.

Councillor Wixley carried on to say that page 170 of the supplementary agenda mentioned two cricket clubs saying the one to the north was not as indicated the Loughton Cricket Club. That was not correct, it should be South Loughton Cricket Club, and this should be corrected. The other thing he wanted to bring up was in reference to improvements to Roding Valley Recreation Ground, and he indicated

that he may have an interest here as he chaired the recreation Committee on this for the Town Council, responsible for this section of the recreation ground. He wanted to know if this support included financial support, as they had a number of projects there, they would like to get on with but could not at present. He would like to know if financial support was available and when it would be available. SANGs had been mentioned and wondered that when they were chosen, if Jessel Green could receive protection as a Trust Status, which he knew had been applied for. As for Blue infrastructure, there was no reference made to the Environmental Agency who are responsible for cleaning up the brooks.

Councillor Bedford noted his comments and wondered if Country Care could be asked to fix the broken bridge mentioned. The name of the Cricket Club can be amended on the report. He was not in a position to comment on town council financial support. The Rodding Valley Recreation Ground was part of the improvement body for the SANG area. Councillor Wixley noted that the footpath with the broken footbridge was probably the responsibility of ECC and Country Care would have to talk to them.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse said that there was a lot to like in this, he noted that there was also an athletics club that used the Rodding Valley Recreation Ground. The South Epping SANG, the diagram was not specific and need to be clear about what they were to be used for. And also, it was not well explained why the Town Centre developments in Epping did not have provision for a green space. Clarity on this would be helpful. Councillor Bedford noted the athletics club mentioned. The South Epping site was not site specific and was not coming until 2028 and we would look at it in the future. And, Epping was right next to the forest and it would be getting a new leisure centre. But your comments would be taken on board.

Councillor McCredie noted that Country Care was now back at work and could help with repairing the bridge.

Councillor Heap suggested that the Council borrowed the £1million needed, but was told by Councillor Philip that the council did not need to borrow the money. We had a structure for a levy on developments occurring in those areas as part of the Local Plan. It was not an additional tax burden on the residents of those areas.

Councillor Lea thought that the money from the developers would eventually come down to the residents via the house prices for local people. Councillor Philip replied that the overall contribution per dwelling would not significantly affect the purchase price to a future resident.

Decision:

(1) The Cabinet agreed the Green Infrastructure Strategy as a material planning consideration for the preparation of Strategic Masterplans, Concept Frameworks, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management and implementation related purposes within the District; for submission to the Local Plan Inspector; and used to inform the Council's update to the Habitats Regulations Assessment to support the emerging Local Plan, subject to review with the Woodland Trust;

(2) The Cabinet agreed that contributions would be sought from residential developments in the parishes of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois towards site specific projects to mitigate the impact of recreational pressure on Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation in the sum of £716 per dwelling;

(3) The Cabinet agreed the Green Infrastructure Strategy as a framework for guiding partnership working and investment in green and blue infrastructure as part of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency; and

(4) The Cabinet agreed that the Planning Services Director, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder be authorised to make minor amendments to the Green Infrastructure Strategy, including any mapping and links and the addition of a glossary, prior to publication.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

- To give the Strategy planning weight by endorsing it as a material consideration in the planning process This would ensure that development proposals would achieve the Council's ambitions for the provision of Green and Blue Infrastructure, and that clear parameters were established for the development of masterplans and concept frameworks, the provision of pre-application advice, the assessment of planning applications and any other development management and implementation related purposes within the District.
- To comply with the Council's general obligations as a competent authority under the Habitats Directive [article 6(3)] and the Species and Habitats Regulations 2018 [Regulation 9(1)].
- To respond to the Local Plan Inspector's Advice dated 2 August 2019 (ED98) following the hearing sessions of the Local Plan examination in relation to mitigating the effects of recreational pressure upon the Epping Forest SAC.

Other Options for Action:

Not to agree the Strategy and endorse it as a material consideration in the planning process would mean that there would be no mechanism to support the delivery of development proposals and achieve the vision and objectives set out in the Council's emerging Local Plan, or the application of the policies within it. In addition, there would be no overarching framework in place to achieve the implementation of important initiatives intended to support the Council's response to the Climate Crisis.

179. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the Climate Change Strategy.

The draft Climate Change Action Plan states the steps to be taken to deliver on the Climate Emergency that was declared on 19 September 2019 with the motion to do everything within the Council's power to make Epping Forest District Council area carbon neutral by 2030. The plan aligned with the corporate objectives of keeping the district moving sustainably and enabling residents to access new opportunities for employment, to reduce the carbon footprint across the district and within our council.

This report provided members with a summary of the objectives and purpose of the Climate Change Action Plan. The intention was that following public consultation and any updates arising, that the final action plan would return to the Cabinet to endorse the adoption of the plan.

The Climate Change Action Plan examined the main sources of carbon emissions both within the Councils' own operations and across the District. It outlined direct

action the Council were taking to reduce emissions of its own activities. As well as steps that could be taken to facilitate and influence emissions reductions in the wider District, enabling the area to become carbon neutral by 2030. The plan would be regularly updated to account for further developments in national legislation, regulation, technology, and policy. Where activities and monitoring were to be confirmed these would be updated following consultation feedback.

Councillor Philip was glad to see the council was moving forward with this and it would be improved with the consultation within the district. That could be more interactive as Covid restrictions opened up.

Councillor Patel was also glad to see this and asked how we would be consulting with our residents? He was told that it would be through the normal channels, online and sent out to Town and Parish councils. It would be similar to the sustainability consultation process and we would also be consulting with the Youth Council and members of the general public. There would also be a special meeting of the Local Councils Liaison Committee. Councillor Patel said that we needed better ways to consult with our residents now we had Covid and should also bring in Junior Schools into this.

Councillor Neville was glad to see this extensive document. It was still a work in progress, but at present we lacked ways to monitor our progress; e.g. such as number of the public using busses or homes being refitted, or monitoring pollutants etc. He noted that we did not have indications of our carbon emissions as yet and asked when we would. He was told that officers were working with consultants to look at those emissions this month.

Councillor Chris Pond thought that litter pollution was a particular problem during lock down and noted that the period of a six week consultation was on the low side but would watch this with great interest. Councillor Bedford said that they would look to see if they could extend the period.

Councillor Wixley referred to electric vehicle charging points and the infrastructure mentioned in the report. He noted that we were working with Essex Highways to provide on street charging points but equally vital was to have discussions with the utility companies; had any taken place? Councillor Bedford said that this would be down to the County as it was their highways. We were looking at banks of charging points in our car parks. We needed to be reasonable about what we could provide and where. We would try and get in as many charging points as we could, but we had to consider public safety and network capacity.

Councillor Philip noted that in Theydon Bois they had the worst power supply in the region and had concerns about the supply network and charging points could cause problems.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet agreed that the Draft Climate Change Action Plan be approved for public consultation for a six-week period in June 2021; and
- (2) Agreed that the Planning Services Director, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder be authorised to make minor amendments to the Draft Climate Change Action Plan.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure that members are kept up to date on the progress of the draft Climate Change Action Plan

Other Options for Action:

Not to agree the draft Climate Change Action Plan can be published for a 6-week consultation, which would mean that a delay in providing a plan to address the declared Climate Emergency.

180. QUALIS QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT - Q1 2020/21

The Commercial and Regulatory Service Portfolio Holder, Councillor Patel introduced the quarterly Qualis monitoring report. He noted that the Governance framework for Qualis, as agreed by Cabinet in February 2020, set the requirement that Qualis should report to Epping Forest District Council on its performance on a quarterly basis. This report had also gone to the Stronger Council Select Committee on 13 April for their information and comments.

This report presented the Qualis first Quarter's monitoring report for the Qualis trading year 2020/21 and covered the period from 1 November to 31 January 2021.

With Housing Maintenance services having transferred to Qualis in Quarter 4 (end of September 2020) of the previous trading year, this quarter represented the first whole quarter of both service delivery activity, commercial investment and regeneration work.

Qualis had also requested permission from EFDC as its shareholder to change their financial year end date to the end of September and we had agreed to this request. Therefore, to accommodate this their next quarter's report would only cover two months, February and March 2021.

Councillor Philip welcomed the changes to their financial year as it would help us in our budget preparation and hopefully, they would now start making a positive impact on our budget.

Councillor Wixley was interested in the Pyrles Lane site mentioned in the report; what was being proposed for this site? He was told that these were just preparatory and investigatory works on the site.

Councillor Wixley asked what the work was for. He was told to find out if there were any hidden problems for future development.

Councillor Wixley noted that Housing Repairs had been transferred to Qualis – could we have a consumer satisfaction survey carried on their work. Councillor H Whitbread answered that there had been no specific research done on this; but in general, from customer feedback received, it had been good. Councillor Patel added that Qualis would monitor the satisfaction of residents in line with how the council used to monitor this. S Jevans said that they did measure customer satisfaction. The last recorded month was a 95% satisfaction and they also had a customer insight officer dedicated to following up complaints. This would be shown on our KPIs. Councillor C Whitbread asked if these results went to any Select Committees for review. Officers were not sure if it did. Councillor C Whitbread said that it needed to be seen by a relevant Select Committee, particularly around the areas of Housing as this was an important part of what we did.

Councillor Murray noted that with more and more services being transferred to Qualis he would like to see performance report going to the relevant Select Committee. Councillor C Whitbread said that he too was keen to see this maintained and he was sure that Councillor H Whitbread and relevant officer would pick up on this.

Decision:

The Cabinet discussed and commented on the Qualis quarter 1(2020/21) monitoring report.

181. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet.

182. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet noted that there was no business for consideration which would necessitate the exclusion of the public and press from the virtual meeting.

CHAIRMAN