



## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** **Thursday, 15th April, 2021**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**, which will be held as a:

**Virtual Meeting on Zoom**  
on **Thursday, 15th April, 2021**  
at **7.00 pm.**

**Georgina Blakemore**  
**Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services**  
**Officer:**

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### **Members:**

Councillors M Sartin (Chairman), R Jennings (Vice-Chairman), R Baldwin, P Bolton, L Burrows, D Dorrell, I Hadley, S Heather, J Lea, S Murray, D Plummer, S Rackham, P Stalker, D Stocker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND  
SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE 18:00**

### **WEBCASTING NOTICE (VIRTUAL MEETINGS)**

**Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.**

**You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.**

**Therefore by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.**

**In the event that technical difficulties interrupt the virtual meeting that cannot be overcome, the Chairman may need to adjourn the meeting.**

**If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564039.**

**1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

This virtual meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to unmute before speaking.

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this virtual meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of subsequent repeated viewing (or other such use by third parties). Therefore, by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured then they should ensure that their video setting is turned off throughout the meeting and set to audio only.

Please be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**4. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 20)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 February 2021.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a pecuniary or a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are requested to pay particular attention to paragraph (11) of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a non-pecuniary interest in any matter before Overview & Scrutiny which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a Member.

Paragraph (11) of the Code of Conduct does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an Overview & Scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

(Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager) To receive questions submitted by members of the public and any requests to address the Committee, in accordance with Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Council's Constitution.

**(a) Public Questions**

Members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee at ordinary meetings of the Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out in the Constitution.

**(b) Requests to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Any member of the public or a representative of another organisation may address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any agenda item (except those dealt with in private session as exempt or confidential business), due to be considered at the meeting.

**7. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN**

(Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager) To consider any matter referred to the Committee for decision in relation to a call-in, in accordance with Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Council's Constitution.

**8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY EPPING FOREST YOUTH COUNCIL (Pages 21 - 32)**

To receive a presentation by the Epping Forest Youth Council on activities completed during this municipal year and activities proposed for the forthcoming year.

The Youth Councillors will also be screening their short promotional film about the MiLife C19 project, which can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/youth-council-launch-new-wellbeing-project/>

**9. LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION (Pages 33 - 34)**

To undertake external scrutiny of local mental health services for young people with Ms Sarah Garner (Assistant Director, Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children & Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Collaborative/Programme Director Joint Commissioning SEND (Essex)) – please see attached report.

**10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2020/21 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 35 - 76)**

To consider the attached first draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report. A final draft copy will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 July 2021 for approval by Council on 29 July 2021.

**11. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN YEAR 3 2020/21 - QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

To review the quarter 4 Corporate performance report (to follow).

**12. CABINET BUSINESS (Pages 77 - 90)**

**Recommendation:**

**That the Committee review the Executive's current programme of Key**

**Decisions to enable the identification of appropriate matters for the overview and scrutiny work programme and the overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken over the period of the plan.**

Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Constitution requires that the Committee review the Executive's programme of Key Decisions (the Cabinet Forward Plan) at each meeting, to enable the identification of appropriate matters for the overview and scrutiny work programme and to provide an opportunity for the overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken over the period of the plan.

The Constitution (Article 14 (Decision Making)) defines a Key Decision as an executive decision which:

- (a) involves expenditure or savings of £250,000 or above which are currently within budget and policy;
- (b) involves expenditure or savings of £100,000 or above which are NOT currently within budget and policy;
- (c) is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards;
- (d) raises new issues of policy;
- (e) increases financial commitments (i.e. revenue and/or capital) in future years over and above existing budgetary approval;
- (f) comprises and includes the publication of draft or final schemes which may require, either directly or in relation to objections to, the approval of a Government Minister; or
- (g) involves the promotion of local legislation.

Wherever possible, Portfolio Holders will attend the Committee to present forthcoming key decisions, to answer questions on the forward plan and to indicate where appropriate work could be carried out by overview and scrutiny on behalf of the Cabinet.

The Executive's current programme of Key Decisions of 1 April 2021 is attached as an Appendix to this report.

**13. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 91 - 96)**

Progress towards the achievement of the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is reviewed at each meeting.

**(a) Current Work Programme**

The current work programme for the Committee is attached as an appendix to this agenda.

**(b) Reserve Programme**

A reserve list of scrutiny topics is developed as required, to ensure that the work flow of overview and scrutiny is continuous. When necessary, the Committee will allocate items from the list appropriately, once resources become available in the work programme, following the completion of any ongoing scrutiny activity.

Members can put forward suggestions for inclusion in the work programme or reserve list through the adopted PICK process. Existing review items will be dealt with first, after which time will be allocated to the items contained in the reserve work plan.

**14. SELECT COMMITTEES - WORK PROGRAMMES (Pages 97 - 104)**

(Select Committee Chairmen) Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Constitution requires that the chairmen of the select committees report to the meeting in regard to progress with the achievement of the current work programme for each select committee and on any recommendations for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The current work programme for each select committee is attached as an appendix to this agenda.

**15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Exclusion

(Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services) To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Background Papers

(Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services) Article 17 - Access to Information, Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential

information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

## EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

**Committee:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee      **Date:** Tuesday, 2 February 2021

**Place:** Virtual Meeting on Zoom      **Time:** 7.00 - 9.40 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors M Sartin (Chairman), R Jennings (Vice-Chairman) R Baldwin, P Bolton, L Burrows, D Dorrell, I Hadley, S Heap, S Heather, J Lea, S Murray, S Rackham, P Stalker, D Stocker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley

**Other Councillors:** Councillors N Avey, R Bassett, S Kane, C McCredie, A Patel, J Philip, B Vaz, C Whitbread, H Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:** Councillors D Plummer and N Bedford

**Officers Present:** G Blakemore (Chief Executive), N Dawe (Chief Operating Officer), Q Durrani (Service Director (Contracts & Technical Services / Commercial & Regulatory)), D Fenton (Service Director (Housing Revenue Account)), C Hartgrove (Interim Chief Financial Officer), P Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer), R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), A Small (Strategic Director Corporate and 151 Officer), L Wade (Service Director (Strategy, Delivery & Performance)), J Warwick (Service Manager (Contracts)) and G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services)

**By Invitation:** R Walker, Group Manager, North Essex Parking Partnership

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### 69. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that this virtual meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### 70. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that Councillor S Heap had been appointed as a substitute for Councillor D Plummer.

### 71. MINUTES

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2020 and 7 January 2021 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

**73. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that no public questions or requests to address the meeting had been received.

**74. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN**

The Committee noted that no executive decisions had been called-in for consideration since the previous meeting.

**75. NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP – SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION**

The Chairman, Councillor M Sartin, introduced the Group Manager, Mr R Walker, who gave a comprehensive overview of its operations. Formed in April 2011 the north part of the partnership comprised Essex County Council (ECC) and six other local authorities – Colchester (lead LA), Braintree, Epping Forest, Harlow, Tendring and Uttlesford. NEPP had been set up to bring the operation out of deficit and reported to the Joint Parking Committee, which was made up of NEPP officers and partnership members. The governance arrangements allowed each authority member a vote plus up to six schemes a year. Kerbside parking management was funded from penalty income from patrols but was not an income generator. Funding also came from resident parking permits, pay and display schemes and sundry income. The operational team and patrols issued some 76,000 penalty charge notices (PCNs) in the year before the coronavirus crisis. NEPP had CCTV patrol cars and enforcement officers monitoring parking infractions, footway parking and obstructive parking. The enforcement process could be challenged by the public. Parking schemes encompassed ECC safety and congestion, new housing schemes, traffic schemes and socially necessary schemes. Most consultations were undertaken in the winter months as maintenance work was targeted for completion in the summer. The scheme process usually took a minimum of 50 weeks to be implemented. A project team was looking at innovation of the scheme process to try and automate it going forwards. NEPP was involved with school safety parking issues, especially near primary schools. A data led team was looking at efficiencies and investing in digital technology. It was developing fixed camera and mobile sites. A 3PR scheme was looking at safe parking at schools, so people parked where it was safe to park and then walked to the school. Parking in future included looking at footway parking, obstructive parking, active travel to get people in / out of town centres, connected, autonomous and new types of vehicles, and electric vehicles and environmental issues.

Councillor R Baldwin asked about single yellow line applications for parking schemes for individual roads that had to garner the support of 75 per cent of residents, which seemed bureaucratic and time consuming, so could this be done by ward? In his Loughton Forest ward he had observed delivery vans not being able to park in loading bays, buses parked on yellow lines, and it was rare to see any parking enforcement in Albion Hill, Loughton. Also, six schemes a year for each LA did not seem adequate. Mr Walker replied that problems differed road-by-road hence, a smaller rather than larger area of focus. Localism helped in the process to come up with the right scheme, but a consultation with all road users could derail an application. As a result of the Covid crisis, the prevalence of deliveries had increased over the last year, and there were now more patrol cars with fewer foot patrols to help staff safety. The Enforcement Team also mapped where it went. NEPP might need to investigate buses parking on yellow lines but they were usually exempt. At the start of the partnership everyone had a long list, so schemes were limited to six



per year, but NEPP now had the money and resources to be able to invest in more schemes.

Councillor S Rackham asked about speeding and the use of cameras, vehicles idling especially outside schools, footway parking near takeaways and electric vehicle charging points when people could not have their own. Mr Walker replied that vehicle activated signs for speeding came under County's remit so he could not advise on this. NEPP's fines for idling were not very high whereas the legislation for the London boroughs to promote cleaner air were more robust. Blue badge and permit parking misuse would also be investigated. NEPP had been lobbying for some time over footway parking, but obstruction and driving onto a footway were matters for the police. Electric vehicle fast charging sites were being looked at but also wanted to be careful not to end up with an excess of charging points when technology moved on. A team at ECC was investigating the potential of using streetlight columns as charging points.

Councillor S Murray praised the user friendly NEPP website but commented that footway parking in urban areas was a growing problem. He asked about the lack of consultation on the red routes installed in Epping Forest, which he hoped would not be there in perpetuity, and how NEPP ensured safety at work for enforcement officers. Mr Walker replied that the red routes had been done in an emergency in May 2020, as the Forest was frequently mobbed by people often travelling a long way. It was a temporary scheme for 18 months. A full consultation process for the whole of the red scheme including waiting and loading bays would need to be undertaken if the scheme was to be extended. Enforcement officers were doing a job, and they all wore a body camera. If they were prevented from issuing a PCN, the advice was to take a photograph and walk away as these could be posted. There had been few Covid incidences, but more officers were in vehicles, which were sanitised regularly.

Councillor D Sunger asked about commuter parking around stations and that he had previously tried to get a controlled parking zone (CPZ) installed. Although almost half the residents had not wanted it, residents were now asking when a re-consultation could happen. Also, members could become involved in congested parking by schools when headteachers contacted them, and did NEPP enforcement officers undertake a purge on areas identified by ward? Mr Walker replied that NEPP would look in more detail at CPZs and area reviews. When normality returned after Covid there was a bidding process in place for schemes. Previously, a scheme would not be looked at again for five years. For parking problems around schools, red routes might be considered. CCTV could be used on a red route and it was starting to trial CCTV at fixed camera sites. One operator could look at four fixed camera sites at a time. There was also legislation that could be used to stop moving traffic going into an area. To apply for a fixed camera to be installed at a site, this could be done either through the headteacher or ward member. Photos would help the case and lobbying by the ward members and public. Councillor M Sartin remarked that even though parking notices had been put up outside a school in her ward, parking problems still persisted.

Councillor S Heap queried if a scheme that had been set up could be removed. Also, had a budget had been put aside to remove the red routes in the Forest that had cost some £96,000 to install, how much had been made and could a PCN be issued to a car parked over a line into the Forest? Mr Walker replied that through the petitions scheme people could submit a report of the details with a diagram, which was assessed under a scoring system. The paint had been the main cost of the red route. Thus far some £40,000 had been made from over 1,000 PCNs being issued in under a year. The issue was not about PCN income, as this was a by-product, but if the aim

of the red routes in the Forest had been achieved, and if they were working in the right way leading up to a consultation. PCNs could be issued to cars parked in the Forest across a red route because it would be a decision on what was reasonable.

Councillor D Wixley said that some residents in his ward wanted junction protection installed, which was a small scheme, but did it count towards one of the six schemes a year allowed per partnership member and what was the application process? Also, the Safer Essex Roads Partnership took up speeding issues, but he did not know how SERP differed to the police. Mr Walker replied that there was delegation from ECC to be able to do a small scheme like junction protection. The Commercial and Technical Services Director, Q Durrani, could be apprised of these, but line painting would need to be done in the summer. Footway parking could be enforced through policy when legislation was in place.

Councillor J M Whitehouse said that informal consultation on parking schemes allowed residents to comment who knew best, but how did one capture that information by the time of the consultation? Mr Walker replied that informal consultation was part of the process of submitting a scheme. The score was based on residents' input and informal consultation, as early comments did bare some weight in helping to improve on the scheme during the early phase so that it developed. Qualitative measures were part of the process with scoring on the website to indicate the level of local support and the TRO (traffic regulation order) policy. Councillor J M Whitehouse questioned the use of residents parking zones (RPZ) when yellow lines could be a good way of dealing with minor traffic issues to do with certain times of the day. There seemed to be a patchwork of CPZs and RPZs so in his opinion there was an argument for rationalising some of them. Mr Walker replied that NEPP used RPZs and they were easy to manage. As single yellow lines applied to everyone, a resident's permit would not allow parking on a yellow line. Two years ago, NEPP brought in a system that digitised RPZs – traffic web. NEPP was going ahead with reviews to look at grouping RPZs. In a larger area possibly, simplification might be better as this had become very complex. Teams monitored all yellow lines, which were mapped, logged and scored, so that lines in need of repainting were rectified during the warmer months of Easter to the end of autumn.

Councillor M Sartin thanked Mr Walker for attending the meeting to give an overview of NEPP's work and answer members' scrutiny questions.

## **76. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE**

This update outlined the work being delivered under two workstreams – attracting, on boarding and retaining the best talent, and creating a culture of engagement wellbeing. The People Team were delivering new automated recruitment processes through iRecruit to recruit, attract and induct candidates, and help retain officer talent. The new careers landing page called “A Place of Opportunity” had been well received by hiring managers. There were various benefits to iRecruit, which included applicants using a CV and supporting statement rather than a lengthy application form.

The report concentrated on employee engagement in response to a question from Councillor S Murray at the Committee's meeting last November. The Service Director (Corporate Services), P Maginnis, reported that 87 per cent of the Council had signed up to the Perkbox initiative. Total savings of £5,000 on shopping discounts had been made by those staff. The Insight engagement platform had been developed by Perkbox and the People Team for employees to receive and answer questionnaires. To date 400 responses have been made by staff comprising nearly 250 feedback comments. The main themes of the initial surveys were on the lack of

(internal) communication; little visibility of senior leaders and new policies to support home working to aid home life balance. All feedback was anonymous and had been presented to employees in January 2021. The Recognition platform launched on 1 December 2020 and let staff nominate others as super stars. Lastly, mental health first aiders numbered 63, which had exceeded a 1:10 ratio target of trained employees.

Councillor M Sartin asked if the Council was having difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. The Service Director (Corporate Services) replied that the turnover was fairly stable. The People Strategy was still ongoing so hopefully this would reduce, but new blood and some turnover was healthy to bring in new ideas. There were some difficulties recruiting specialist staff. The Council was trying to grow its own, as it had a successful apprenticeship scheme and some higher apprentices, but planners were being recruited differently.

Councillor R Baldwin was pleased to see the Council had moved away from using long application forms to recruit by CVs. In relation to EVP (employee value proposition) what kind of values were expected and how were skills evaluated? The Service Director (Corporate Services) replied that the EVP was how the Council attracted people through skills and the recruitment process and test their values and behaviours. These were put on the role profile. It was not just about knowledge and skills, but how candidates did it.

Councillor D Wixley was disappointed over the use of the word on boarding and that it would be better if language was used that everyone understood. Councillor M Sartin replied that the different wording and language were the way HR worked but they were talking to a wider audience. The Service Director (Corporate Services) noted this but on boarding was certainly becoming a more used term in recruitment.

Councillor J H Whitehouse was impressed by the support offered to HR in mental health and would like to take up the invite on a session about Perkbox. She was impressed with the staff induction process but was concerned how staff learnt about the Council and how its decisions were made. There was nothing about scrutiny, which was not adequate, and proposed that four members should discuss this with the People and Democratic Services Teams. Councillor M Sartin was concerned by the staff joining who had not worked for a council before, but this issue could be looked at another time.

Councillor S Murray said language use did matter. Also, councillors could benefit from messages in the report on working collaboratively. He was impressed by the health and wellbeing risk assessment and the high number of staff mental health first aiders and would like information on this training. The Service Director (Corporate Services) offered to provide this for the minutes.

Councillor M Sartin advised members that future reports would be going to Stronger Council Select Committee but any specific business that required a broader audience could come back to Overview and Scrutiny.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the progress of the work being delivered; and
- (2) That that details of the mental health training would be provided in the minutes.

*(Post meeting update: Mental health first aid training:*

*A classroom run MHFA First Aider course would be two days but virtually this is over 4 days, this online course qualifies a Mental Health First Aider, giving:*

- An in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing*
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues*
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress*
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening*
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix*

*Format*

- This is an online course delivered through the MHFA England Online Learning Hub*
- Learning takes place through four live training sessions, spread across one/two weeks, with self-learning activities in between.*
- Each session is built around a Mental Health First Aid action plan*
- We limit numbers to 12 people per course so that the instructor can keep people safe and supported while they learn*

*Everyone who completes the course gets:*

- A certificate of attendance to say they are a Mental Health First Aider*
- A manual to refer to whenever they need it*
- A quick reference card for the Mental Health First Aid action plan*
- A workbook including a helpful toolkit to support their own mental health)*

## **77. ELECTIONS PLANNING PROGRESS REPORT**

The report provided an update to the May 2021 elections. The postponed 2020 elections and those due on 6 May 2021 were being planned by the Elections Planning Group at monthly meetings. Despite uncertainty if the May 2021 elections would be going ahead because of the Covid crisis, the Returning Officer, G Blakemore, was still planning on the assumption the elections would happen. The order of counts had been confirmed as Essex County Council on Thursday 6 May followed by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on 7 May. Local elections would be counted on 8 May. Staff resourcing for the elections had been positive. Some of the polling stations might not be available in May. A hangar at North Weald airfield had been booked for the counts, which would be large enough to accommodate social distancing. A detailed project plan and risk assessment in line with LGA guidance were being regularly updated. It was likely there would be an increase in the number of postal votes this year and various measures would need to be in place, such as social distancing at polling stations.

Councillor S Murray was surprised by the order of the count as local elections usually had the highest number of ballots but was going to be counted last. He advised that Murray Hall in Borders Lane (Loughton) was a Covid vaccination centre and was unlikely to be available in May as a polling station venue. The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance, L Wade, acknowledged that Electoral Services were aware of this and looking into the possibility of using a local school.

Councillor D Wixley asked if an increase in postal votes was being anticipated, would Royal Mail give assurances that election post would be given priority? Its delivery services were being disrupted by the Covid crisis and might still be severe in May.

Also, were the postal vote envelopes marked to stand out? The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance replied that this was a national concern that would be closely monitored and led by Central Government discussions.

Councillor J H Whitehouse remarked that her car insurance did not cover liability on an airfield which might apply to many others. If there was an accident, would the Council cover the cost? The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance replied that she was not aware of this but would investigate. Councillor M Sartin said many cars were driven to the airfield for North Weald market.

Councillor D Dorrell observed that a massive increase in postal votes was probable. As postal votes had previously been low, were arrangements being put in place to take into account observation of the postal vote opening by councillors to ensure transparency if the postal vote percentage shifted? The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance advised the Council would need sufficient staff for the postal vote sessions and put in place mitigation measures on risk assessment issues. The Returning Officer advised the Council would definitely be looking at capacity, the potential shifting percentage of postal votes and transparency at the postal vote counts.

Councillor S Rackham asked how the Council would be monitoring postal vote fraud and could postal votes be brought into a polling station on the day? The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance replied that the Council was following all relevant guidance to mitigate the fraud aspect, and this was not an issue unique to this District. Postal votes could be brought into a polling station.

Councillor J Lea wanted reassurance that if there was a problem that the electorate would be aware of how to get postal votes into the Council in plenty of time. The Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance replied that this was handled in conjunction with the election project plan and communications plan.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the update of the Elections Planning process for the elections to be held in May 2021.

**78. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2020/21 – QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

The Committee reviewed the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2020/21 quarter 3 exceptions only, as the Stronger Council Select Committee. reviewed performance reporting. Based on comments made by select committee members, further work had been necessary on the website to remove the 'contact us' email address, which had been replaced by a new general enquiry – a recommendation of the Ombudsman. On the Sheltered Housing Review, the reason for the RAG red status was in relation to the high cost of Wi-fi access in communal areas and its impact on service charges. Disaster recovery was not progressing at the planned rate due to resourcing issues in ICT caused by a restructure with the loss of 17 individuals on the team, but 10 people had now been recruited.

Councillor S Murray referred to the Accommodation Programme and that the refurbishment was on time and in budget, However, he had read that Everything Epping Forest had stated that a report to Cabinet had revealed a £273.000 overspend. Councillor J Philip replied that the Accommodation project was on time and in budget so Everything Epping Forest was incorrect this time. The reason for the red status was to include discussions with partners by year end.

*(Post meeting update: C Hartgrove, Interim Chief Financial Officer clarified that one small point to highlight was a – prima facie – forecast overspend on the Accommodation Project of £273,000 highlighted by Councillor Murray. Members should note that this excluded a commitment to fund up to £327,000 from the District Development Fund, which was revenue funding. Once that was factored in, then the project was forecast to underspend by £54,000 at the quarter 3 stage. The contribution was in the form of a year-end accounting adjustment, so was not obvious from the report and he apologised for that. It was a technical accounting point, forced upon the Council to comply with proper accounting practice).*

Councillor M Sartin commented that hopefully the red status exceptions would move forward.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the quarter 3 Performance report.

**79. DISPOSAL OF HRA ASSETS**

The report related to the disposal of HRA assets and a proposed policy. The Council owned some 12,000 assets which included, properties, garages, land, pathways, unadopted roads, alleyways and grassed areas on residential estates. A standard assessment procedure (SAP) rating was used by the Government for energy efficiency. The Council would be looking at SAP ratings and costs so that if there was a deficit in income over the 30 years of the plan for an asset, the Council was looking to its disposal and to reinvest the capital into other projects in the HRA framework. The Project Director HRA, D Fenton, advised that two small parcels of land sold for £80,000 that the Portfolio Holder had approved had been used to reinvest in its estates. Therefore, the recycling of capital receipts of dwellings and land would be reinvested into the capital programme.

Councillor S Murray remarked that even on small pieces of land it would be quite useful for the Portfolio Holder to have input from ward members in the report on the decision and was this a legal requirement to sell HRA assets? The Project Director HRA, advised that Counsel had been consulted and the policy was asking members to commit to ringfencing income of HRA assets to create and plan places where people wanted to live. The officer was responsible for a decision on land below 80 square metres. The policy would ensure due diligence for land over 80 square metres. Officers could consult ward members and she thought a Portfolio Holder would want to know the views of a ward member and local residents, as it was about creating better places. Councillor J H Whitehouse also thought ward members should be involved and hoped it would take place in future.

Councillor D Wixley's concern was around allotments where the report detailed an allotment "was not necessary and was surplus to requirements" and that the Council had "actively promoted and publicised the availability of other sites and had consulted with the National Allotment Society". He wanted reassurance that every effort would be made before such actions were taken. Also, on land being disposed of and where the Council included maintenance costs, when the land had been sold could it still be maintained adequately? In his ward there was an empty pub site the Council owned that it was leasing out but was often subject to fly-tipping. The Council would not deal with the fly-tipping as he had been advised that this was the responsibility of the leaseholder. The Project Director HRA was aware of how important allotments were with Covid and mental health issues because people really needed to get out and allotments helped people achieve this. The Council could not dispose of an allotment without the permission of the Secretary of State and would

not, because allotments were a much-needed resource, and people could benefit from planters. Fly-tipping was a blight on land, so Councillor Wixley was asked to inform the Project Director of the fly-tipping at the pub site so that she could investigate.

Councillor D Sunger asked if the sites of small pieces of land had been identified? The Project Director HRA replied that the Estate and Land Team had been restructured and was scoping out parcels of land for planting schemes, disposal or to be sold to an occupier, who would be responsible for maintaining it. In terms of HRA land, the Council knew the number of sites it had, and a report would be going to Cabinet for approval.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the new policy on the disposal of small land sites and individual properties with all receipts ringfenced for HRA functions.

**80. CO-OPTION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

At the last meeting of the Stronger Communities Select Committee on 14 January 2021, members agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Mr W Marshall be co-opted to their select committee. Officers had also strongly supported his appointment, as he was currently the Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum and his participation at meetings would ensure that tenants opinions and input would be considered in relation to Housing issues scrutinised by the select committee. It was also important that tenants had a voice at this level especially in relation to the publication of the Social Housing White paper. As Mr Marshall's appointment was close to the end of this municipal year, the Committee recommended his co-option to Council and that this should continue until the end of 2021/22 when it could be reviewed.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That Mr W Marshall be appointed as a non-voting Co-opted member of the Stronger Communities Select Committee until the end of the 2021/22 municipal year; and
- (2) That the appointment be recommended to Council for approval.

**81. LOCAL HIGH STREETS TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

N Dawe, Chief Operating Officer, advised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it was the intention to take the next phase of the development of the high streets to Cabinet before the end of March with work progressing on the next three. Cabinet had already considered Waltham Abbey and Ongar. As the reports came forward, which it was hoped would be near the end of the third lockdown, this would be an opportunity for members to look at the high streets and how scrutiny should play into that scrutiny process. For the time being part of the remit of the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder Advisory Group included the recovery of the District's high streets.

High street shops were not in a position to open up during the third national lockdown therefore, the Committee agreed with the report's recommendation that the

reconvening of the Task and Finish Panel be deferred until after the end of the third national pandemic lockdown.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the reconvening of the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel be deferred until after the ending of the third national Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

## 82. QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

Timing issues with Stronger Council Select Committee had resulted in this Committee reviewing quarter 3. The report set out the 2020/21 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) positions, for both revenue and capital, as at 31 December 2020. In terms of General Fund revenue expenditure, a budget over spend of £313,000 was forecast, with projected net expenditure of £18.122 million against an overall budget provision of £17.809 million. The General Fund revenue position was dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic most notably on:

- Budget pressures – leisure facilities (£2,318,860) from a combined impact of the management fee loss exacerbated by contract payments to the contractor to maintain the availability of the leisure centres; Qualis income (£2,312,071) owing to a major shift in economic assumptions such as property prices and interest rates that had reduced achievable income streams from the Qualis initiative in the year; and car parking (£1,350,528) from a major decline in Council car park usage in 2020/21 especially during the lockdowns.
- Government support – £1.947 million in general un-ringed funding had already been provided with further support through an income loss compensation scheme, which was forecast to rise to £2.177 million by the year end (i.e. combined funding of circa £4.1 million).

Income from planning applications had recovered quicker than expected. The HRA position was less affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. On the General Fund Capital Programme, the Council had incurred capital expenditure of £37.34 million (including £30 million in Qualis Investments) at quarter 3, against an overall budget of £53.43 million. On the HRA, the Council had incurred capital expenditure of £8.825 million by quarter 3, against an overall budget of £25.31 million. The Civic Offices accommodation project was the largest General Fund project in 2020/21 with a core budget of £7.242 million (excluding £900,000 for IT costs). At 31 December 2020, over 60% of the allocated budget had been spent, and the new facility should be available for occupation in March 2021.

Councillor S Heap asked about the Chief Executive Support Services costs for full year budget and other activities and he noted that Qualis' receipts were down but that was understandable in the current Covid crisis. C Hartgrove, Interim Chief Financial Officer, replied that he would provide more information on this after the meeting.

*(Post meeting update: On the Chief Executive Support Services budget of £662,550, this budget contained the costs (salaries and other miscellaneous costs) of the Senior Leadership Team, including the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors. It was the gross cost. The costs of S Jevans (Qualis Managing Director on secondment to Qualis) was recharged to Qualis (including a 3% margin).*



Councillor J Philip, Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, reported that the impact on reserves was not anywhere near as bleak as it could have been, and this was a timely review of where the Council finances were currently for revenue, capital and the HRA.

Councillor S Murray said that if the Council was to have no increase in the budget for 2021/22, what would be the implications of not having an increase in council tax, i.e. 0%?

Councillor J Philip replied that the Stronger Council Select Committee was trying to minimise the impact on residents and actively looking to see what could be done, but the budget was to be reported to Cabinet on 11 February 2021 and advised waiting until then.

Councillor S Heap queried if some of the underspend could be used for laptops for people who wanted them. Councillor J Philip replied that the Council was looking for grants that would be beneficial for the District but there were not any available yet.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the General Fund revenue position at the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2020) for 2020/21, including actions being or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances had been identified, be noted (Appendix A);
- (2) That the General Fund capital position at the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2020) for 2020/21, be noted (Appendix B);
- (3) That the Housing Revenue Account revenue position at the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2020) for 2020/21, including actions being or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances had been identified, be noted; and
- (4) That the Housing Revenue Account capital position at the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2020) for 2020/21, be noted (Appendix C).

**83. CABINET BUSINESS**

Cabinet's Key Decision List updated to the 1 February 2021 was scrutinised by the Committee and the following points were raised.

**(a) Planning and Sustainability Portfolio**

Councillor J Philip queried the last item (Town Centre Regeneration - Ongar, Loughton, Epping and Buckhurst Hill), which should be under the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

**(b) Finance and Economic Development Portfolio**

Councillor S Murray remarked that Loughton High Road and The Broadway shopping centres should be dealt with separately as they would not need the same approach. Councillor J Philip replied that he was aware that these were two distinct areas and would have competing demands.

**(c) Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio**

Councillor S Murray asked if there would be scrutiny undertaken on charging for Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests before a decision was made. Would there also be an assurance for proper scrutiny on the transfer of services to Qualis of the Grounds Maintenance and Fleet Operations Services, and North Weald Airfield Operations before Cabinet made a decision on 20 April 2021? Councillor M Sartin replied that this would be an action for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee April 2021 meeting or the appropriate select committee. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor N Avey, replied that EIR requests came under Q Durrani, Environmental and Technical Services Director. There would need to be a proper look at the business case before the transfer on these service areas to Qualis in April and to provide adequate opportunity to scrutinise. The Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder replied that the business cases would be scrutinised and come before this Committee.

Councillor J H Whitehouse remarked that Qualis had made a presentation to the Local Councils' Liaison Committee on 28 January 2021 and had asked about the scrutiny of the Housing repairs team. The reply was that Qualis as a whole was scrutinised a number of times a year and the opportunity to scrutinise services would be then, which she did not think was adequate. In her opinion the scrutiny process of Qualis needed to be looked at, and how these services could be scrutinised because just looking at Qualis would not be satisfactory. Councillor M Sartin replied that the reality was that everyone was feeling their way on how Qualis would be operating and interact with the Council. Councillor N Avey replied that governance was a key issue as between the subsidiaries and the holding company it was conjecture at the moment.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the Executive's current programme of Key Decisions of 1 February 2021 to enable the identification of appropriate matters for the overview and scrutiny work programme and the overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken over the period of the plan;
- (2) That scrutiny of charging for the EIR requests be undertaken before the Cabinet decision; and
- (3) That there be assurance for proper scrutiny of the transfer of services to Qualis of the Grounds Maintenance and Fleet Operations Services, and the North Weald Airfield by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or appropriate select committee, before a decision was made by Cabinet in April 2021.

**84. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME****(a) Current Work Programme**

Work items 3 (Accommodation Strategy) and 4 (People Strategy) had been removed from the work programme by the Agenda Planning Group on 12 January 2021 so that in future scrutiny would be undertaken by the Stronger Council Select Committee. All three scheduled business items had been considered at this meeting. At the next meeting on 15 April 2021, Epping Forest Youth Council would be presenting its annual report and Ms S Garner from the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group for Young People's Mental Health Services had also accepted

this scrutiny opportunity. Councillor M Sartin commented that the aim of these two presentations was to achieve a crossover interest because of the work the Youth Council had done on the mental health of young people and it would be an opportunity for the youth councillors to ask questions.

Councillor S Murray was pleased by the two presentations being made in April to the Committee but asked what EPUT meant, which was Essex Partnership University Trust.

Councillor J H Whitehouse commented that as planning committee chairmen received training each year, could scrutiny chairmanship training be provided for new appointees when select committee memberships (item 7) were reviewed this June? Councillor M Sartin replied that this issue had been raised at the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen in January 2021. Training had been put on hold in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic but would be coming forward in the new municipal year.

#### **(b) Reserve Programme**

The reserve work programme was noted and that members would be asked to consider moving the Essex County Council (Children's Services) (Scrutiny of External Organisation) item up a level in relation to children and Covid.

#### **Resolved:**

- (1) That the current Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2020/21 be noted; and
- (2) That the current reserve programme be noted.

### **85. SELECT COMMITTEES - WORK PROGRAMME**

#### **(a) Stronger Communities Select Committee**

Councillor D Sunger reported that the Essex Police District Commander would be attending the next meeting of the Select Committee on 30 March 2021, as well as the Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership. An additional meeting had been arranged for 22 April for the remaining business to be considered, which included universal credit and customer and social recovery items. At the last meeting in January 2021, the Councillor advised that he had attended a briefing to update stakeholders and community representatives on the progress of the Whipps Cross development and had considered an update on the Council's response to rough sleeping in the District during the pandemic.

Councillor S Murray asked if the officer would be able to give the parameters that the report on social recovery, post-Covid, would cover? Councillor H Whitbread, Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Services, advised that the Homelessness Team had done a lot of work throughout the Covid crisis. Furthermore, social recovery linked into the Covid recovery work and a wider programme of support via the community hubs for people who needed it the most, post-Covid.

Councillor A Patel added that the Policy Advisory Group had received an overview from the Community and Wellbeing Service Director, J Gould, as social recovery was linked in with health and the report would provide details on the large amount of work being undertaken.

**(b) Stronger Council Select Committee**

Councillor P Bolton reported that the draft budget proposals had been discussed in detail at the last meeting in January 2021 with a recommendation to be approved. On the Accommodation Strategy, the Committee was reassured that there were partners interested in taking up accommodation in the refurbished Civic Offices. The withdrawal of Wi-fi from sheltered housing because it was uneconomical was a concern, but the Select Committee had asked officers to look at this again and report back to see if this could be rectified, as future library closures were a possibility.

**(c) Stronger Place Select Committee**

Councillor S Heather reported that the Select Committee had received an update on the Local Plan and the Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy but there had been no decision-making process. Income was down from the leisure centres because of the Covid crisis and closures during the lockdowns. On the waste management contract, residential waste had increased but Biffa had done an excellent job collecting it. A demand responsive transport trial along the number 87 bus route seemed to be going satisfactorily but this was being monitored. Also, officers were doing a lot of work on town centre rejuvenation.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee noted the work programmes of the three select committees;

**86. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Committee noted that there was no business which necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**



### **Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 April 2021**

**Portfolio:** Community and Wellbeing (Councillor Holly Whitbread)

**Subject:** Annual review of the work undertaken by Epping Forest Youth Council

**Officer contact for further information:** Vanessa Gayton – Team Manager Culture & Community

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564243)

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#### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives an annual progress report on the work undertaken by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team with the Epping Forest Youth Council.**

#### **Report:**

Epping Forest Youth Council is a high-profile national award-winning Youth Council, comprising 25 young people, representing 9 Epping Forest secondary schools with one independent member. These young people represent the views of their peers and wider school communities. The current cohort are in their first year of office and about to embark on their 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Member support has enabled the Youth Council to continue creating youth friendly projects to engage and benefit our communities.

On Thursday 15 April the Youth Council will make a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee highlighting their excellent work over the past year. They have been meeting weekly on Zoom with the Young Persons Officers, taking part in intensive induction training, team building, consultation work, learning from guest speakers and senior figureheads and creating new projects.

The Youth Council will refer to their key areas of work and their plans for 2021/22:

1. #Your Say survey and report. This was an opportunity for young people to share their experiences during the Covid pandemic and express their concerns about their health and wellbeing, their future regarding their education, and their mental health. The report was presented to Cabinet by members of the Youth Council on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
2. MiLife C19. This project has been devised from the findings of the #Your Say survey. The 10-week schools virtual programme will give young people what they need to build their emotional resilience. The MiLife website <https://www.rbf.org.uk/milife> will incorporate bespoke resources directly relating to Covid 19 and its impact on young people, addressing good mental health and wellbeing by using physical and cultural activities.

Our promotional film has been sent to the 7 district secondary schools and the Youth Council would like to share the film at the end of their presentation. See link below:

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/youth-council-launch-new-wellbeing-project/>

**Reason for decision:**

It was agreed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would receive an annual update on the work undertaken by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team with Epping Forest Youth Council.

**Options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Consultation undertaken:**

A range of consultations are taken with the Youth Councillors about current issues which inform future projects that will benefit young people in our communities, engaging, educating and signposting them to ensure the environment they live in is a healthier, happier place. These will be included in the presentation.

**Resource implications:** There have been no increases in budget required from the council to date. The Youth Council receives core funding £12,000 per annum for day to day support and running costs.

In December 2018 the Cabinet agreed a DDF sum of £15,000 to be allocated to Epping Forest Youth Council, to enable them to deliver a range of targeted projects for young people in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Legal and Governance Implications:** N/A

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** N/A

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Impact Assessments:** Equality Impact Assessment completed

**Risk Management:** N/A

**Equality:** Equality Impact Assessment completed

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Community & Wellbeing Directorate – Community, Culture & Wellbeing service

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A

Title of policy or decision: Epping Forest Youth Council annual report and expenditure of DDF and core funds.

Officer completing the EqIA: Vanessa Gayton: Ext:4559  
Email: [vgayton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:vgayton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Date of completing the assessment: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? No, it is part of an ongoing decision-making process.
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): EFDC core funds and the DD Fund enables the Epping Forest Youth Council to deliver targeted projects which benefit young people and the residents of Epping Forest.</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e. decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p>The projects delivered are designed taking in to account the concerns currently facing young people and the support they require which will impact positively on local people's lives and build stronger communities.</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• service users</li><li>• employees</li><li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li></ul> <p>The decision will affect the wider community, including groups of people where there may be inequalities.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>The Youth Council will continue to work with partners to develop practical solutions to very real problems and concerns and fears facing young people in our communities.</p>

2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? Not immediately, however, this decision will involve future DDF allocations after 2021/22.
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? The allocation of DDF supports the Council's Corporate Plan, by enabling young people to achieve their full potential and building Stronger Communities.



### Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, e.g. service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified? Evidence is gathered from application forms and supporting information. Consultation takes place with partnering organisations. The information identifies that young people wish to have a voice.</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? Young people are consulted with at the biannual Epping Forest Youth Conference and the concerns highlighted are what becomes the focus for Youth Council projects. Youth Councillors consult with their peers within their schools. Consultation is undertaken with other Youth providers to ensure synergy and shared information.</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: N/A</p>

## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes. (The age range applied is 12 – 17 years)	L
Disability	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes no matter what their ability or disability may be.	L
Gender	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people of any gender; all groups can benefit from the outcomes.	L
Gender reassignment	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people of any gender; all groups can benefit from the outcomes.	L

Marriage/civil partnership	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes including those who are married or within civic partnerships.	L
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes.	L
Race	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes irrespective of race.	L

Religion/belief	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes irrespective of religion/belief.	L
Sexual orientation	Positive Epping Forest Youth Council criteria ensures that no unfair restrictions on membership/ participation is acceptable in terms of accessing support. Although projects are designed for young people all groups can benefit from the outcomes, irrespective of sexual orientation.	L

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

**Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts**

**Is this required?**

<b>What are the potential adverse impacts?</b>	<b>What are the mitigating actions?</b>	<b>Date they will be achieved.</b>

**Initialed as original copy by  
Portfolio Holder:**

**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

Signature of person completing the EqIA: *V Gayton*

Date: 26.02.21

**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, e.g. after a consultation has been undertaken.

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## **Report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 April 2021**



**Subject: Local Mental Health Services for Young People - Scrutiny of External Organisation**

**Responsible Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992) 564470**

**Democratic Services: Vivienne Messenger (01992) 564243**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**(1) That the Committee undertake appropriate external scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of local mental health services for Young People across the Epping Forest District.**

1. The Committee has previously requested an opportunity to undertake appropriate external scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of local mental health care services for Young People. This issue is included in the current work programme for the Committee.

2. When the Committee was preparing to undertake external scrutiny of Local Mental Health Services across the District at its meeting on 15 October 2020, the following issue was raised by Members:

(a) how apparent mental health concerns amongst local students could be referred to service providers by primary and secondary schools in the Epping Forest District and how quickly such referrals could expect to be assessed.

3. Ms Stephanie Rea from the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) and the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group who attended that evening, advised that her organisation EPUT does not provide children's mental health services, so the issue above could not be covered at that meeting. However, she did provide the Council with a contact and the Committee determined to undertake external scrutiny of Local Mental Health Services for Young People later in the municipal year.

4. The Youth Council have also been invited to give their annual presentation at this meeting, and the Committee felt that there was a synergy between the two items, given the work previously undertaken by the Youth Council in this area. An invitation has been extended to Ms Sarah Garner, who is the Assistant Director for the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children & Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Collaborative, and she has confirmed her attendance at the meeting.

5. The identification of relevant lines of questioning to be raised with Ms Garner has also been sought from members through the Council Bulletin, and via email. Ms Garner has been notified of the issue previously raised in paragraph 2 above, but if there are any further issues that Members wish to raise then inform the Democratic Services Team prior to the meeting.

6. The Committee should also note that the contract for the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children & Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Collaborative is Essex-wide.

Therefore, Ms Garner will be able to update Members on what is available in West Essex, but not necessarily specifically for Epping Forest, although the District does form part of the West Essex region.

**Resource Implications:**

The recommendations of this report seek to enable scrutiny activity to more effectively meet work programme requirements.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities. Although external organisations are not generally required by legislation to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is hoped that most would be willing to engage constructively with the Council's scrutiny activity when invited to do so.

The review and scrutiny of matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services across Essex is a function reserved to Essex County Council through the auspices of its Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although the County Council has not normally been averse to this authority undertaking appropriate health scrutiny where local concerns exist. As a matter of courtesy, the intentions of the Committee in this regard have been communicated to the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the District.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

The proposed scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of Local Mental Health Services for Young People is included in the current work programme for the Committee.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 April 2021**

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Draft Annual Report**

**Officer contact for further information: V Messenger (01992 564243)**

**Committee Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)**

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### **Recommendations/Decision Required:**

- (1) That the attached first draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report of the work undertaken during the past municipal year, be agreed;
- (2) That the final draft will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 1 July 2021; and
- (3) That the Annual Report will be submitted to Council on 29 July 2021 for approval.

### **Report:**

1. This is the sixteenth report under the new scrutiny regime instituted by the Council in April 2005, incorporating the three Select Committees. The Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel is currently waiting to be reconvened.

2. This report is produced in accordance with Article 6, Overview and Scrutiny Rule 37 of the Constitution that requires an annual report to be submitted to the Council each year.

3. The Committee is asked to consider the attached first draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report. The annual report will incorporate comments made at this meeting.

4. The final draft version of the annual report will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny at the meeting to be held on 1 July 2021 and will be referred to Council for approval on 29 July 2021.

### **Reason for decision:**

Annual report is in accordance with the Constitution Article 6, Overview and Scrutiny Rule 37.

**Options considered and rejected:** N/A

### **Consultation undertaken:**

This is the first draft to consult members at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee above.

**Resource implications:** N/A

**Legal and Governance Implications:** N/A

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** N/A

**Background Papers:** None

**Impact Assessments:** N/A

**Risk Management:** N/A

### **Equality:**

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

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# Overview & Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report



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Report by: V Messenger, EFDC Democratic Services Officer (April 2021)

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## Introduction and welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to the sixteenth annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Epping Forest District Council.

This has been an unprecedented and challenging year. The start of the municipal year saw the Elections in May 2020 suspended by the Government as the emerging Covid-19 pandemic caused a national lockdown in March 2020 – the UK's first. Fortunately, the resumption of Council meetings virtually was facilitated by Government legislation under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. Following the enactment of the Coronavirus Bill in Parliament and after consultation with the Chairman of Council, the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, the Council declared an Emergency under the Constitution – Article 3 (The Executive), Appendix 7 (Action in Designated Emergencies).

The last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in the 2019/20 municipal year was held on 28 January 2020, as the meeting on 17 March had been postponed. However, with the resumption of committee meetings being held virtually on Zoom, this had kept scrutiny members busy throughout the municipal year, as Council business continued at pace. In the interests of transparency, all the scrutiny committees were also webcast by the Corporate Communications team. For the scrutiny committees, virtual meetings started in June with the first virtual meeting in the new municipal year on 22 June 2020 for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the memberships of the select committees were approved.

This is the second year since the select committees were restructured for the start of the 2019/20 municipal year, from May 2019. The three new select committees aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan ambitions for Stronger Communities, Stronger Council and Stronger Place.

The annual report provides information on the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the three select committees. Additional information is given in this report on the time limited Task and Finish Panels set-up during 2019/20 – one that had reached a stage to be able to complete most of its business before the first national Covid lockdown and one that was suspended.

I would like to thank the chairmen and members of the three select committees and the task and finish panels. Also, my special thanks go to my Vice-Chairman, Councillor Bob Jennings for all his help and support throughout this very challenging and unique year.

And of course, I would like to thank all the officers who have worked so hard to keep the members of the scrutiny committees informed and provided with the background information the needed to carry out their investigations.

**CLlr Mary Sartin**  
**Chairman – Overview and Scrutiny**  
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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## What is scrutiny?

- Scrutiny in local government is the mechanism by which public accountability is exercised.
- The purpose of scrutiny in practice is to examine, question and evaluate in order to achieve improvement.
- The value of scrutiny is in the use of research and questioning techniques to make recommendations based on evidence.
- Scrutiny enables issues of public concerns to be examined.
- At the heart of all the work is consideration of what impact the Cabinet's plans will have on the local community.
- However, the overview and scrutiny function is not meant to be confrontational or seen as deliberately set up to form an opposition to the Cabinet. Rather the two aspects should be regarded as 'different sides of the same coin'. The two should complement each other and work in tandem to contribute to the development of the authority.

Alongside its role to challenge, the scrutiny function has also continued to engage positively with the Cabinet, which is why Cabinet members cannot be members of scrutiny committees, and there continues to be cross party co-operation between members on all panels.

Scrutiny has continued to provide valuable contributions to the Council and the Cabinet remained receptive to ideas put forward by Scrutiny throughout the year.

The rules of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also allow members of the public to have the opportunity to address the Committee on any agenda item.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee reviewed the Executive's programme of Key Decisions (the Cabinet Forward Plan) at each meeting to identify appropriate matters for its work programme and for the overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken over the period of the Forward Plan. The Cabinet has also had the opportunity to ask Overview and Scrutiny to look at any items of work that they considered needed either scrutiny or pre-scrutiny.

The Committee has also engaged with external bodies, whose functions related to the Council or were other public bodies that provided services within the District, for the purposes of scrutinising or having an overview of parts of their work that have had an impact on the District and its people.

The Committee also received stand-alone reports from officers and the select committees on work undertaken during the municipal year.

## Select Committees

The select committees were reduced following a restructure from four to three at the start of 2019/20 to align with the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and the three pillars of its corporate ambitions:

- Stronger Communities;
- Stronger Council; and
- Stronger Place.

The terms of reference of the three select committees were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting, which set out a rolling programme of ongoing and cyclical issues for reviewing. A lead officer was appointed to each select committee to help facilitate this process. These select committees continued to grow throughout 2020/21 to identify any related items to scrutinise. The Committee monitored their work as the Chairmen of the select committees regularly reported their progress at each meeting.

## **Task and Finish Panels**

Task and Finish Panels can be set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deal with ad-hoc projects or reviews included in the annual work programme for overview and scrutiny. The Panels are restricted to those activities which are issue-based, time limited and non-cyclical in character and also have clearly defined objectives.

Although no Task and Finish Panels were set up in 2020/21, the Waste Management Task and Finish Panel managed to conclude most of its work as its last meeting was early March 2020. However, the Covid pandemic interrupted the work of the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel, which had only held one meeting in February 2020 before the first national lockdown ensued in mid-March 2020.

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## Agenda Planning Group

The Overview and Scrutiny APG, as it is often referred to, is where the lead scrutiny officer, the Chief Executive, G Blakemore, Strategic Director, A Small, and the Chief Operating Officer, N Dawe, meet with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review which business items will be going forwards to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is not a public committee, but the agendas and minutes can be accessed by members via the Extranet or via the Intranet for staff.

Other relevant officers that attend the APG include the Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance, L Wade, most of the Democratic Services Team led by G Woodhall, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, as well as the Corporate Communications Manager, T Carne, and Legal Services Assistant Solicitor, R Ferreira. All officers who have a report going to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will usually attend as their reports will be reviewed and may require amendments. The decision on whether their reports will go to the next meeting will be taken by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other members of the Group.

The APG leads into the four cycles of the select committees, although extra meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Chairman, such as for Stronger Council (to review the draft budget) or Stronger Communities for additional items during the municipal year. This cyclical scrutiny process normally concludes with the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. However, as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds six meetings each municipal year, there are usually six APG meetings.

The APG will also review select committee or task and finish panel reports that require a decision from the main committee. The work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and select committees are also assessed. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman may consider any matters that need to be raised at the next Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Further information on the Joint Meeting can be found later in this report.

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## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Covid-19** dominated the municipal year and emergency Government legislation under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 was enacted on 1 April 2020. This legislation suspended the 2020 elections until May 2021, but importantly and for the first time in history, allowed council meetings to be held virtually.

### Members for 2020/21:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds six meetings each municipal year. The membership was approved at the first (annual) Council meeting on 21 May 2020, which was held virtually.

Councillor Mary Sartin (Chairman)

Councillor Bob Jennings (Vice-Chairman)

Roger Baldwin  
Peter Bolton  
Les Burrows  
David Dorrell  
Ian Hadley  
Steven Heather  
Jeanne Lea  
Stephen Murray

Dave Plummer  
Sheree Rackham  
Paul Stalker  
D Stocker  
Darshan Sunger  
Janet H Whitehouse  
David Wixley



Cllr Mary Sartin



Cllr Bob Jennings

The lead officer was Georgina Blakemore, Chief Executive.

### Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may within its specific functions:

- review and scrutinise decisions and performance of the Executive and Committees, and Council officers;
- review and scrutinise the performance of the Council's policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- question members of the Executive, the Chief Executive and Service Directors about their decisions and performance;
- make recommendations to the Executive and appropriate Committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- review and scrutinise the performance of other bodies operating in the district and invite appropriate organisations to address the Committee about their activities and performance.

### Committee workload

The **first** meeting each municipal year specifically looks at the year ahead. The Overview and Scrutiny held its first virtual meeting on 22 June 2020, having been delayed by the Covid crisis. At this meeting the Leader of Council presented an overview of the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2020/21 and the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions was reviewed. The Committee also

discussed its work programme and reserve programme, in addition to the select committees' Terms of Reference and work programmes.

Importantly, it considered nominations for the membership appointments of the select committees for the current municipal year and appointed the chairman and vice-chairman of each select committees. Accordingly, the memberships were agreed for the select committees – Stronger Communities, Stronger Council and Stronger Places. In the interests of transparency, all scrutiny committees throughout the municipal year were held virtually on Zoom, which allowed member and public participation. These meetings were also webcast and available for viewing on the Council's website.

#### ► **Scrutinising and monitoring the work of the Cabinet**

The Committee received a presentation from the Leader of Council on the Council's corporate priorities for the municipal year 2020/21 at its first meeting in June. Thereafter, ongoing business throughout the year had involved the review of the Executive's programme of Forward Plan of Key Decisions at each meeting. The Chairman was keen for members to scrutinise Cabinet's work for each of the seven Portfolio Holder areas – The Leader, Finance and Economic Development, Commercial and Regulatory Services, Customer and Corporate Support Services, Planning and Sustainability, Housing and Community, and Environmental and Technical Services. Portfolio Holders were regularly in attendance to answer members queries and provide further information where necessary.

#### ► **Call-in requests**

The Committee received two call-ins. The first call-in was because of the report (C-017-2020/21) to Cabinet on 14 September 2020 that approved New City College (formerly Epping Forest College) be granted a "variation to the covenants further to previous removal of restrictive covenants, in order to facilitate the College's plans for the site". At the November 2020 meeting, the Committee discussed the call-in as the College site was subject to restrictive covenants in favour of the Council in relation to the use of the property for education. These were agreed to be released in 2019, but since this time, in order to facilitate further College plans, two variations to the covenants were required. The first involved transfer of land to the residential developer to facilitate housing development. The second involved transfer of development land from the residential developer back to the College and removal of the restriction that said land could only be used for residential purposes. This was to facilitate the College's proposed wellness centre. The Committee resolved that the recommendation be referred to Cabinet, and on 3 December, the Executive reaffirmed the decision taken at their meeting held on 14 September 2020 on the release of the restrictive covenants for the College.

The second call-in was over the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder Decision of 11 December 2020 regarding PLS-003 (2020/21) on the adoption of the Interim Air Quality Mitigation Strategy. An extra meeting was organised to hear the call-in on 7 January 2021, when J Maurici QC, the Council's appointed Counsel, and the Council's air quality consultants from AECOM, Drs J Riley and H Venfield, were also in attendance. A robust debate ensued but the Committee voted to confirm the decision of the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder.

#### ► **High street and local economic recovery**

The Council's Covid-19 response and recovery was added to the Committee's work programme as a standing item at its first meeting on 22 June. This was an important addition so that members could review the progress being made throughout the pandemic and the three national lockdowns triggered by the Covid crisis that impacted on everyone in an unprecedented and major emergency from mid-March and continued into the next municipal year. However, the newly created Portfolio Advisory Group for Covid-19 Recovery, under the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor A Patel, took the lead in high street and local economic recovery. Although the work somewhat aligned with the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel, the Committee agreed not to



continue with the work of the Task and Finish Panel, which allowed officers to concentrate their focus on the PAG workload, but reconvene it once the pandemic was firmly in the recovery phase. Therefore, no meetings of the Task and Finish Panel were held for this municipal year.

### ► Waste Management

The final report of the Waste Management Task and Finish Panel was presented by the Chairman, Councillor L Burrows, for members to review at the 16 July meeting that had been carried forward from the postponed meeting of 17 March 2020. Seven recommendations of the Task and Finish Panel were highlighted, which included the possibility of a third wheeled bin for households within the District, the future collection of food and garden waste, the provision of the Street Cleansing service, new high street refuse bins, and the possibility of further changes to the Service as a result of the Environment Bill 2020 and further Resource and Waste Strategy. The Environment Bill 2020 set out how the Government planned to protect and improve the natural environment in the UK.

The Committee's approval of the seven recommendations were detailed in full in the minutes of its 16 July meeting and were available to view on the Council's website at the link below:  
<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=395&MId=10549&Ver=4>

An additional recommendation made was to reconvene of the Waste Management Task and Finish Panel when any new information arising from the Environment Bill and any new legislation was introduced by the Government. However, although the Environment Bill was introduced into Parliament on 15 October 2019 and was re-introduced to Parliament on 30 January 2020 following the general election in December 2019, the Covid crisis was delaying its progress.

### ► Customer Services

Its initiatives and performance over the previous municipal year were reviewed by the Committee on 16 July 2020. The Annual Report for 2019/20 included an update on the following topics within the Programme:

- the Customer Service Strategy;
- customer satisfaction;
- the corporate Contact Centre;
- the Digital Inclusion Programme;
- Members;
- partnership working;
- digital payments; and
- communications and public relations.

Furthermore, Customer Services' future direction for 2020/21, particularly its Strategy in its response and support for residents during the Covid crisis and how the public contacted the Council with the closure of the Civic Offices in mid-March, was also reviewed. However, the Strategy was just the start of the process to put people at the heart of everything it did, and it was anticipated that this would evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the Council's residents. Customer Services was also aware that the Council would not be able to channel shift everyone to digital contact under the Digital Inclusion Programme, as individuals had different needs. As Cllrs M Sartin and S Rackham highlighted at the meeting on 16 July, the ability and/or preference of some people to use technology also declined, especially as they got older.

### ► People Strategy

A new People Strategy was presented to the Committee in July 2020 by the Service Director for Business Services, P Maginnis. The Service Director highlighted the road map for the candidate journey from the video, with its seven steps: Pre-attraction; recruitment; onboarding; learning; performance and talent management; communication; and leaving the organisation. The Ambition of the Strategy was to have the right people with the right skills who were highly motivated and high

performing, and to transform the service provided by the People Team. The Strategy would build on the work undertaken during the life of the previous People Strategy, and had six main themes:

- attracting and retaining our best candidates;
- developing our Leaders;
- supporting the Council to evolve and embrace change;
- developing the skills and behaviours of our employees to make EFDC
- a great place to work;
- creating a culture of engagement and wellbeing; and
- creating a culture of collaboration, innovation and creativity to enable our employees to fulfil their potential.

In July 2020 the Council had a target of 10% of staff being mental health aware and first aid trained by 2021. By February 2021, mental health first aiders numbered 63, which had exceeded this target of trained employees. Subsequent updates provided to the Committee at the meetings held on 15 October, 19 November 2020, and 2 February 2021 highlighted:

- The Council's Apprenticeship Programme and more apprentices were employed than was required under its public sector duty.
- A new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), known as Perkbox, had been launched on 1 September 2020 and by February 2021 87% of staff had signed up. Plus, Perkbox Medical with 24/7 access to online GPs and a free learning platform hosted by Magpie.
- The Insight engagement platform, developed by Perkbox and the People Team, had enabled employees to receive and answer questionnaires from January 2021.
- The Recognition platform launched on 1 December 2020 let staff nominate others as super stars.
- New automated recruitment processes through iRecruit to recruit, attract and induct candidates, and help retain officer talent with a new career landing page called "A Place of Opportunity".

Although future updates would only be reported to the Stronger Council Select Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could seek periodic reviews.

### ► **Corporate Plan Key Action Plan**

The Key Action Plan provided a mechanism for reporting on the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and key programmes of work and highlighted the Council's overall performance against agreed Corporate objectives. Year 2 of the Action Plan covered 2019/20 and represented the second reporting cycle for the Council's Corporate Plan (2018-23). Performance Measures for year 2 had been streamlined to improve the focus on how Corporate Objectives were being met and quarter 4 was reviewed by the Committee on 16 July.

The performance of Year 3 (2020/21) quarters 1 and 2 by exception (only) in relation to the 16 KPIs and work programmes within the Corporate Plan were reviewed by the Committee in November 2020. The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Director summarised the key points in the report, which included an internal officer governance structure that had been established to focus on the delivery of the Corporate programmes aligned to the Stronger ambition objectives. This would strengthen governance and internal decision-making, as the programmes would be led by a director enabling corporate performance management to be aligned with individual performance management. All projects would be aligned under one of the three Stronger select agendas. There were three exceptions under the Corporate plan programmes scope and performance measuring report. These concerned the telecare offering project, the ICT restructure delayed by Covid-19, and the Local Plan due to Inspector's capacity to digest main modifications' (MMs) submissions.

The exceptions only for quarter 3 performance were reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny at the meeting on 2 February 2021. Based on comments made by select committee members, further work

had been necessary on the website to remove the 'contact us' email address, which had been replaced by a new general enquiry – a recommendation of the Ombudsman. On the Sheltered Housing Review, the reason for the RAG red status was in relation to the high cost of Wi-fi access in communal areas and its impact on service charges. Disaster recovery was not progressing at the planned rate due to resourcing issues in ICT caused by a restructure with the loss of 17 individuals on the team, but 10 people had now been recruited.

### The quarter 4 performance review

#### ► Service Plan objectives

The objectives for quarter 1 and progress were reviewed on 16 July 2020. The Committee was advised that although services had been maintained and an outstanding effort had gone into ensuring these were in operation throughout, the impact of the additional demand on their BAU activities or supporting other services had resulted in an impact on quarter 1, 2020 objectives. In addition, further impact to objectives had been as a result of emergency legislation to stop certain activities or as a result of lockdown and shielding.

#### ► Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Reports 2019/20

The governance framework for Qualis was agreed by Cabinet on February 2020 and the requirement that Qualis should report to Epping Forest District Council on its performance on a quarterly basis. In view of the first quarter being a period of basic set-up activities following company registration in October 2019, the report covered both quarters one and two (Cabinet Report C-022-2020/21). The monitoring report for quarter 3 for the period 1 May to 31 July 2020, was pre-scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny on 15 October 2020 before Cabinet met on 19 October 2020. In quarter 3 Qualis completed the loan funding transaction, progressed planning work on the Epping Development sites and prepared for the transfer of Housing Maintenance at the end of September 2020. With the impact of Covid-19 on all Council activities, Qualis has performed in line with expectations during quarter 3. Key asset acquisitions and service transfers would take place during quarter 4 and monitoring reports would look different from that point forward.

#### ► Disposal of HRA Assets

The Committee was more pro-active in the pre-scrutiny of Cabinet decisions. The report related to the disposal of HRA assets and a proposed policy. The Council owned some 12,000 assets which included, properties, garages, land, pathways, unadopted roads, alleyways and grassed areas on residential estates. A standard assessment procedure (SAP) rating was used by the Government for energy efficiency. The Council would be looking at SAP ratings and costs so that if there was a deficit in income over the 30 years of the plan for an asset, the Council was looking to its disposal and to reinvest the capital into other projects in the HRA framework. The Project Director HRA, D Fenton, advised that two small parcels of land sold for £80,000 that the Portfolio Holder had approved had been used to reinvest in its estates. Therefore, the recycling of capital receipts of dwellings and land would be reinvested into the capital programme. To ensure that the sale of land or assets met the highest standards of Governance, a policy has been written to set out the framework in which these disposals would take place.

#### ► Accommodation Strategy

Progress reviews were undertaken by the Committee in October and November 2020 when the Service Manager for Strategy, Delivery and Performance reported that the refurbishment works of the Civic Offices were developing well and discussions had progressed on the Travel Plan with the appointment of a Sustainable Transport Officer. The Strategy for the space had been focused on introducing new ways of working and learning how individuals had been working from home. In terms of both partner and commercial space, there had been some positive interest. The Customer Journey for residents was also being developed. By mid-October works had continued forwards and had reached a critical stage of the project, in confirming the design and the fixtures and fittings. When

refurbished, the loop system would also be as extensive as possible. The contract was within budget, and a positive variance of £91,806 was being forecast. A Members briefing had been held on 16 November 2020 where plans, layouts and more information around the delivery of the programme had been shared. However, members were informed at the February 2021 meeting that in future the Stronger Council Select Committee would monitor these updates, which would likely reduce as the refurbishment of the Civic Offices was approaching completion.

#### ► **Elections Planning Progress Report**

The report provided an update to the May 2021 elections. The postponed 2020 elections and those due on 6 May 2021 were being planned by the Elections Planning Group at monthly meetings. Despite uncertainty if the May 2021 elections would be going ahead because of the Covid crisis, the Returning Officer, G Blakemore, was still planning on the assumption the elections would happen. The order of counts had been confirmed as Essex County Council on Thursday 6 May followed by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on 7 May. Local elections would be counted on 8 May. Staff resourcing for the elections had been positive. Some of the polling stations might not be available in May. A hangar at North Weald airfield had been booked for the counts, which would be large enough to accommodate social distancing. A detailed project plan and risk assessment in line with LGA guidance were being regularly updated. It was likely there would be an increase in the number of postal votes this year and various measures would need to be in place, such as social distancing at polling stations.

Shortly after this meeting, the Government announced the elections would go ahead on 6 May 2021 but with guidelines on the precautions to Covid that would be required to mitigate its risk, such as social distancing and use of PPE and adequate sanitising etc. This report instigated a number of questions from members on 2 February 2021 with concerns about an increase in postal votes and unavailability of polling stations. Electoral Services was aware of these concerns and that some polling station venues were being used as Covid vaccination centres or were in schools, which could pose a problem in light of the Government's recent guidance on not using schools, if possible. The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director also reported that staff resourcing for the elections had been positive.

#### ► **Co-option of Independent Member to Stronger Communities Select Committee**

At the last meeting of the Stronger Communities Select Committee on 14 January 2021, members agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Mr W Marshall be co-opted to their select committee. Officers had also strongly supported his appointment, as he was currently the Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum and his participation at meetings would ensure that tenants opinions and input would be considered in relation to Housing issues scrutinised by the select committee. It was also important that tenants had a voice at this level especially in relation to the publication of the Social Housing White paper. As Mr Marshall's appointment was close to the end of this municipal year, the Committee recommended his co-option to Council for approval and that this should continue until the end of 2021/22 when it could be reviewed.

#### ► **Budget Monitoring Reports**

The Budget Monitoring Reports for quarters 2 in November 2020 and quarter 3 in February 2021 were reviewed by the Committee instead of the Stronger Council Select Committee because the timings of the select committees' meetings were slightly out of sync for these financial reports. It was hoped that timing issues would improve in 2021/22.

#### ► **Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme**

The Overview and Scrutiny Agenda Planning Group on 12 January 2021 agreed to remove the monitoring of both the Accommodation Strategy and the People Strategy from its work programme so that future updates would be undertaken by the Stronger Council Select Committee.

Also, at the Agenda Planning Group on 21 January, it was queried if Qualis' group company structure needed to be a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, all the scrutiny committees would have the opportunity to review their work programmes, and this should be revisited in the new municipal year. The transfer of Council services to Qualis was also added to the work programme including scrutiny of charging for Environmental Information Requests (EIRs) at the Committee's 2 February 2021 meeting, which would be items for the next municipal year 2021/21.

### ► Select Committees' work programme monitoring

The work programmes of the three scrutiny committees were also reviewed at every meeting. The select committee Chairmen each gave a summary of matters covered and progress made against their work programme in the meeting leading up to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny meeting. This allowed the main scrutiny committee to monitor their performance and, if necessary, make adjustments to the work programme to take account of new proposals and urgent items. Further information on the select committees is given later in this Annual Report.

## External Scrutiny

External scrutiny of outside bodies was an integral part of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and scrutinise their performance especially for those operating in the district and invite appropriate organisations to address the Committee about their activities and performance.

### ► Epping Forest Youth Council Annual Reports – 2019/20 and 2020/21

The presentation from the Youth Council on its work during 2019/20 was postponed by the first Covid national lockdown and took place on 16 July 2020. Five youth councillors presented the highlights which covered the:



- 'We are safe' project and a letter of thanks had been received from Buckingham Palace;
- Epping Forest Youth Activities map that had been updated and expanded;
- Health and Wellbeing Youth Conference;
- undertaking surveys on local youth issues in the District's schools;
- Youth Council's social media activities;
- external funding secured for youth projects from the Jack Petchey Foundation, the Safer Communities Fund and the High Sherriff of Essex;
- receipt of several awards, certificates and letters of recognition;
- production of a two-minute film in April 2020 on how Covid-19 had affected young people within the District; and the
- undertaking of a post-Covid-19 survey of young people on their mental health and wellbeing.

The highlights of the Youth Council's work in 2020/21 to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 April 2021 kicked off with the Youth Council elections. A few elections were held in some secondary schools but by mid-March the first national lockdown had begun because of Covid-19, which impacted on the outcome of the April 2020 elections. Therefore all 29 candidates were offered a seat on the Youth Council for a two-year term until 2022 – 25 remain in office.

May saw youth councillors filming their experiences at home during the lockdown as the schools were closed. A short film streamed on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDCA2w4UmXY> To find out how others were feeling in the District, the #Your Say Survey began in the summer. It was an opportunity for young people to share their experiences during the pandemic, express their concerns about their health and wellbeing including their mental health, and their future regarding their education.



At the Leader's invitation, youth councillors attended Cabinet in October 2020 to summarise the findings of the #Your Say Youth survey. Furthermore, their report on the Health and Wellbeing of Young People in the Epping Forest district during Covid-19 was well received by members. This revealed that of the 383 young people who responded to the survey 74% were coping well with the first lockdown, but 33% were struggling and feeling stressed by schoolwork. Young people experienced social isolation and 28% missed the contact with friends, extended family and daily school life.

Lack of contact with their grandparents instigated the Keep your Granny safe poster campaign.



A key project for the Youth Councillors in 2020/21 was the MiLife C19 Health and Wellbeing project. Launched in the District's secondary schools in December, it focused on supporting students, year 9 upwards, with their mental and physical health to build personal resilience and confidence in order to tackle the challenges Covid-19 was presenting. Youth councillors were working in partnership with the Red Balloon Foundation that had previously created the award winning MiLife programme with the Youth Council several years ago. MiLife C19 was an extension of this and new online resources would be made available on the MiLife website <https://www.rbf.org.uk/milife> The project was multi-faceted and included cultural and physical activities to support the wellbeing sessions, which were being conducted by the Council's Community Culture and Wellbeing team. The decision had been made to deliver the project virtually during March and April 2021, and beyond if required. It could also be delivered in person when safe to do so. Please see the launch video at the link below: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/youth-council-launch-new-wellbeing-project/>

### ► Local Mental Health Services

The Associate Director of West Essex Mental Health Services, Ms S Rea, from the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT), focussed her presentation to address specific questions members had raised before the meeting on 15 October 2020 and gave a wider overview of EPUT's services within the District. This encompassed:

- the impact of Covid-19 on mental health;
- EPUT's response during Covid especially for older people and those with dementia;
- funding for local mental health services;
- the mental health and wellbeing of students aged 18 plus;
- services for older people and all age dementia;
- EPUT Services in Epping Forest for the adult community; and
- working in collaboration.

The ramifications on mental health from the Covid pandemic was being addressed by supporting those people already using the services. The Trust was also examining how to develop the Crisis Team using funding from Essex County Council, for example the Crisis Café in Harlow. There was a pilot scheme for young people aged 18–25, which it intended to continue and supported any initiative that reinforced the view mental health was an issue that could affect anyone. The Trust always campaigned on World Mental Day to raise local awareness of mental health issues.

### ► UK Innovation Corridor

Director, Dr J McGill, and Independent Business Chairman, Dr A Limb, accepted the invitation to attend on 19 November 2020. Their overview clarified the work of UK Innovation Corridor and its benefit to the Epping Forest District. Its geographical area extended from north east London to Cambridge and Peterborough, and from Stevenage eastwards to beyond Stansted Airport. The local authorities that formed the Innovation Core included Epping Forest (a founder member), Broxbourne,

East Hertfordshire, Harlow and Uttlesford district councils. It had changed its name to the UK Innovation Corridor as this evidenced the importance of 'innovation' to match the scale of its ambitions, and no one else had claimed the name. It was an important asset for the UK, and by raising its profile was a corridor to the world.

The Innovation Corridor was a leading sci-tech region and collective corridor to England as a whole. It had become the UK's most productive region and was home to 2.1 million jobs. A fifth of those people were employed in the 'knowledge economy' – ICT, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering, transport and logistics. The main sectors for Epping Forest were construction, business services, public admin and health, but lower employment in the information, financial services, communications and R&D sectors.

How did the Innovation Corridor support the Council? It was a voice to Advocate, Broker and Coordinate – an ABC. It was a non-statutory, like-minded group and coalition of the willing that gave it a bigger voice to lobby national and London government and private investors for districts' ambitions, such as Harlow and Gilston and the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ). It lobbied for infrastructure, rail, road and digital, and promoted the local economy but there were areas of deprivation. It helped to promote investment opportunities, such as those for the North Weald Airfield Masterplan.

Members questions centred on work that had been done to promote skills and its support in this area. There was more collaboration with colleges as the Innovation Corridor had signed the Regional Skills Concordat to get investments into colleges to retrain the older workforce and provide for the younger workforce. It recognised that economic growth could widen social inequality and during the first Covid lockdown had devised a suggested policy document on "Covid-19: A recovery where no-one gets left behind", which had been circulated to members after the meeting.

#### ► **North Essex Parking Partnership**

The Group Manager, Mr R Walker, gave a comprehensive overview of its operations. Formed in April 2011 the north part of the partnership comprised Essex County Council (ECC) and six other local authorities – Colchester (lead LA), Braintree, Epping Forest, Harlow, Tendring and Uttlesford. NEPP had been set up to bring the operation out of deficit and reported to the Joint Parking Committee, which was made up of NEPP officers and partnership members. The governance arrangements allowed each authority member a vote plus up to six schemes a year. Kerbside parking management was funded from penalty income from patrols but was not an income generator. Funding also came from resident parking permits, pay and display schemes and sundry income. The operational team and patrols issued some 76,000 penalty charge notices (PCNs) in the year before the coronavirus crisis. NEPP had CCTV patrol cars and enforcement officers monitoring parking infractions, footway parking and obstructive parking. The enforcement process could be challenged by the public. Parking schemes encompassed ECC safety and congestion, new housing schemes, traffic schemes and socially necessary schemes. Most consultations were undertaken in the winter months as maintenance work was targeted for completion in the summer. The scheme process usually took a minimum of 50 weeks to be implemented. A project team was looking at innovation of the scheme process to try and automate it going forwards. NEPP was involved with school safety parking issues, especially near primary schools. A data led team was looking at efficiencies and investing in digital technology. It was developing fixed camera and mobile sites. A 3PR scheme was looking at safe parking at schools, so people parked where it was safe to park and then walked to the school. Parking in future included looking at footway parking, obstructive parking, active travel to get people in / out of town centres, connected, autonomous and new types of vehicles, and electric vehicles and environmental issues.

Members questions covered the red routes painted on the roads in Epping Forest in May 2020 and that a full consultation on these would be held, yellow line applications for parking schemes, delivery vans not being able to park in loading bays, speeding on roads, safety of Enforcement officers, controlled parking zones, residents parking zones, idling vehicles and fines for drivers on enforcement issues.

► **Young People’s Mental Health Services**

The Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group for Young People’s Mental Health Services. Ms S Garner gave a short presentation and answered questions from members and Epping Forest youth councillors at the meeting on 14 April 2021. The Youth Council’s work on the MiLife C19 Health and Wellbeing project supporting young people in the District during the Covid crisis, achieved a crossover interest in relation to the mental health of young people. Ms Garner explained that.....

Questions covered.....

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## Joint Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

The joint meeting is held twice a year and is an opportunity for the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the scrutiny committees to come together and discuss mutual issues. The meetings are not webcast as this is more a discussion committee to inform, be informed and provide feedback to the Senior Leadership Team (lead scrutiny officers), the Service Director Strategy, Delivery and Performance and the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager.

Here members can voice their opinions and concerns on how something can be improved, or needs to be acted upon etc. Officers can likewise raise any issue that they believe will be beneficial to the running of the scrutiny committees.

This year joint meetings were held on 25 August 2020 and 11 January 2021.

Topics that arose from the joint meetings included:

► **Independent scrutiny members** regarding their co-option to scrutiny committees. The select committees could invite a co-opted member to join, as a non-voting member, subject to a proposal being made to Overview and Scrutiny that Council also had to approve. In addition, independent, non-voting scrutiny members could act as expert witnesses.

► **Informal advance chairman's pre-meetings** would facilitate additional scrutiny by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a select committee prior to the agenda being published. Democratic Services select committee officers have been asked to organise an informal advance Chairman's pre-meeting with the relevant lead officer to discuss forthcoming work programme items to gauge member input.

► **Meetings timings** needed to be looked at and good governance arrangements instated, as the scheduling of committees in the annual Calendar of Meetings was important in relation to the scrutiny committee cycles.

► **Pre-scrutiny of Cabinet business** was also integral to the scrutiny process. Members supported more pre-scrutiny going forwards. The scheduling of scrutiny meetings should also sync with Cabinet meetings.

► **Scrutiny driven by members** would be greatly improved if officers' reports did not use 'to note' in the (decision) recommendation. Therefore, members emphasised that better use of wording in recommendations would give members the opportunity to scrutinise all reports going to the scrutiny committees.

► **Scrutiny items and reports** for the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be assessed at the Agenda Planning Group to see if they could be scrutinised more effectively by a select committee. It was for the chairmen of the select committees to provide feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on business items that had been scrutinised.

► **Training** for members of the scrutiny committees, especially chairmen and vice-chairmen, was another concern as this had been deferred because of the cancellation of the 2020 elections. An influx of newly elected councillors was anticipated after the elections in 2021. Therefore, members agreed at the meeting in January 2021 that training on scrutiny must be provided in the next municipal year, but the scope of the course would be finalised nearer the time. It was hoped that a trainer used by the Local Government Association could be booked.

Members were hopeful that their reciprocal dialogue with the lead scrutiny officers at these joint meetings would work towards improving scrutiny processes within the Council in the 2021/22 new municipal year.

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## Stronger Communities Select Committee

### Members for 2020/21:

The Stronger Community Select Committee held five meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 22 June 2020, which was held virtually.

Councillor Darshan Sunger (Chairman)

Councillor Jaymey McIvor (Vice-Chairman)

Amy Beales  
I Hadley  
J Lea  
A Mitchell  
D Plummer  
S Rackham  
J Share-Bernia  
J H Whitehouse  
D Wixley



Councillor Darshan  
Sunger



Councillor Jaymey  
McIvor

The lead officer was Nick Dawe, Chief Operating Officer.

### Terms of Reference

Core areas of responsibility were:

(1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:

◆ **Customer Excellence** – delivering services that put the customer at the heart of everything we do

◆ **Behaviours and Insights** – future-proofing the Council's service provision by understanding customer needs and expectations over the next ten years and beyond; and

◆ **Partnerships** – working with public, private and third sector partners to deliver and develop services to our community, businesses and visitors to the district including shared and cross-border working.

(2) To monitor levels of customer satisfaction and provides scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement. This will also include matters of concern that are identified by the select committee in its review of Corporate Key Performance Indicators.

The **scrutiny role** incorporates the following:

- to engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- to develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;
- to consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- to look outwards and show community leadership;
- to consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- to establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- to undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- to monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- to engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

### **Committee workload**

As the last meeting in the municipal year 2019/20 in April 2020 had been postponed, outstanding work items carried over into the 2020/21 municipal year. At each meeting members had the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference and the work programme.

#### **1st virtual meeting – 21 July 2020**

► **Grow Community Garden** based in Loughton gave a presentation of its work with the support of Councillor D Wixley. The Project Co-ordinator, Heidi Chow, introduced members to this inclusive community garden that brought people together in a safe and supportive outdoor space to grow organic vegetables. The project started in 2016 after Loughton Town Council had offered a piece of land to Grow Community. Having successfully applied for grants from the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, essential equipment was purchased, and the project progressed with help from their volunteers to clear the overgrown land, plan out the site and steadily plant various vegetables. People of all ages volunteered, and two sessions were run weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The community garden was open all year round. Under normal circumstances this project was organised on a drop-in basis and all volunteers were provided with lunch and refreshments, but during Covid social distancing restrictions were in place and volunteers were asked to bring in their own food and drink.

► **Impact of Covid-19 on the District's housing communities** was highlighted in a report by the HRA Project Director, D Fenton. The emergence of Covid-19 and the first lockdown had led to an understandable level of concern and worry for the residents of the Council, and the number of applicants applying for Universal Credit had risen. There had been a significant increase in telephone calls, up by over 100% in March 2020. The report provided an overview of the measures being taken to support residents whilst also working to protect the rental income, therefore providing some certainty for the HRA account.

► **Customer Services quarter 1 update** had focussed on the low staffing levels in the Customer Services team through staff sickness, staff leavers and a delay in recruiting new staff, which had seen other staff drafted in to help out. The Service Director (Customer Services), R Pavey, reported that complaints had fallen as all managers now received training to diffuse situations to prevent them escalating into an official complaint. Behavioural training and training to improve customer services skills of these staff would help improve the Council's customer strategy.

► **Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028** was outlined in the annual presentation made by Public Health Improvement Officer, F Ferrari. The Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Board was made up of representatives from Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council Public Health, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and a wide range of health providers and third sector organisations. To improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, three multi-agency action groups had been established by last summer – the Start Well Action Group (pre-birth to 19 years), the Be Well Action Group (19 – 65 years) and the Age Well Action Group (65+). The key priorities of the strategy were to improve the mental health of residents, increase physical activity, tackle loneliness and social isolation, and increase safe and independent living at home.

## 2nd virtual meeting – 15 September 2020

► **Council-funded Police Officers' bi-annual report** highlighted the Council's continued funding to employ an additional Essex Police Sergeant and two Police Constables to supplement existing local policing resources. The Service Manager Community Resilience, C Wiggins, advised members that the team had an initial 3-year contract, which had been extended for a further two years. The team was tasked in-line with District Community Safety Partnership priorities which were identified through the Annual Strategic Assessment and aligned with the priorities set by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. As well as working to those priorities, the team could be requested, via a tasking process, to support any Council department where there was an identified threat, harm or risk to staff. Joint tasking had been implemented on a fortnightly basis, in line with police tasking in which current tasks and new requests were reviewed. When not deployed on tasks, the team was assigned patrols in areas identified through risk terrain mapping which focussed on areas of high-risk and high-harm crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). District crime levels were affected by Covid, but the team remained fully operational and 2020 had continued to be a challenging period. The Community Resilience Team temporarily relocated to Ongar Police Station while the Civic Offices were being refurbished. The last quarter had seen Essex Police situate Community Safety Engagement Officers (CSEO) across the County. The Epping Forest CSEO was embedded with the Community Resilience Team. The CSEO was tasked to work within the Community Safety Hub taking a lead on problem solving, working with partners and the community to reduce crime, ASB and protect people from harm within the District.

► **Customer Services quarter 2 update** for 2020/21 showed an increase in customer frustration had occurred as changes in services had not been communicated to them, and service areas had been reminded of the need to do this. The Service Manager (Customer Services), S Lewis, reported that 35% of residents had indicated that they preferred to pay cash and did not wish to switch to alternative payment methods. As a result, the cash office at The Broadway, Loughton, reopened in August 2020 for two days a week, but a longer-term solution would be developed. The special waste collection service had been well received and was considered to be good value by residents. Also, the reporting of potholes and requests for pavement maintenance were popular topics via the Council's social media channels, even though these were the responsibility of Essex County Council. Unfortunately, the Council's Customer Strategy had not been launched as planned to external customers due to the Covid pandemic continuing. Phase I of the Strategy was to 'fix the basics' which included a customer services health check to be undertaken by service areas. It was felt that this should be mandatory for service areas to complete. Phase II was 'customer shoes' and a training pilot with Impact Factory would be launched next month to deliver customer services training to staff. Phase III was to embrace new technology and priorities were being reviewed by the ICT team. Finally, there were a number of events planned for National Customer Service week from 5 October 2020, and a number of key messages would be communicated to staff over the coming months.

► **Corporate programme delivery** to illustrate the alignment between the select committee and the Council's corporate programmes was outlined in a report by the Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director, L Wade. An officer structure had been established to focus on the delivery of the corporate programmes in line with the Council's Stronger Ambitions' objectives. The select committee had three of the Council's corporate programmes aligned to it – the Community

Health and Wellbeing Programme, Customer Excellence Programme and Community Data / Insights Programme.

The Council's focus was also on the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as its corporate programmes. As the Council's recovery planning and response evolved, so too would the projects as there were interdependencies across the corporate programmes. Councillor S Kane, Customer and Support Services Portfolio Holder, provided members with some further understanding of the Community Data / Insights Programme.

### 3rd virtual meeting – 14 January 2021

► **Operational changes at the Broadway Housing Office** would ensure best use of resources and delivery of a customer centric service. Housing Management was restructured in February 2020 into Income Recovery, Neighbourhoods (tenancy management and enforcement, and ASB), and Estates and Land Management. During the first lockdown, all three Housing offices at the Civic Offices, Limes Farm and The Broadway were closed. The Broadway reopened on 10 August 2020 but only the cash office on Mondays and Tuesdays and utilised by the Estate and Land Management Team on Wednesdays to Fridays but closed to the public. The HRA Service Director, D Fenton outlined the following proposal that after the Civic Office refurbishment, the Income Recovery Team would reposition itself alongside the Estate and Land Team at The Broadway Office which would be reinvented as a drop-in hub on Mondays and Tuesdays alongside the cash office, and offer residents the opportunity to engage with a range of services such as the Rehousing Team, Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Citizens Advice Bureau and Peabody Trust. The drop-in hub could also be used to provide digital upskilling by Digital Buddies to the District's 21,000 residents who currently did not use social media.

► **Rough sleeping update** encompassed the Council's response to rough sleeping in the District during the Covid pandemic and the additional funding that had been secured to support the service. The Community and Wellbeing Service Director, J Gould, reported on the progress made in housing the 27 rough sleepers identified between April and December 2020. The Government had made a commitment to continue Rough Sleeper Initiative Grant funding and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme into 2021/22, which the council would try to secure a share of this future funding.

► **Whipps Cross Hospital development programme** briefing had been attended by the Chairman, Councillor D Sunger. The briefing had updated key stakeholders and community representatives on development progress thus far although nothing substantial had arisen since the presentation given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously in 2017.

► **Digital Inclusion** update on the current work and future direction of further projects aimed to tackle the real challenge that Covid had created, which was to reduce digital exclusion, particularly with the difficulty of face to face services. The Customer Services Director advised members that it had re-energised its digital buddy network. There were twenty-nine buddies who were willing to give their time to support residents. Working in collaboration with other service areas and external partners some initial activities started included digital buddy support

► **Customer Services quarter 3 update** covered 'what our customers were telling us' and that customer satisfaction had reached 80%. Although residents had reported missed waste collections and bin deliveries to the Council, these were being addressed. Call volumes for quarter 3 were consistent with previous quarters. First point resolution was at 45% and call causation codes had been reintroduced to identify the reasons for contact and whether they could be dealt with at first contact. Large numbers of call transfers were still required to Qualis and the Planning department, and this would be monitored. The webcasting equipment was being upgraded for hybrid meetings and the Corporate Communications team was also looking into creating a community platform. The Customer strategy was launched on the website and Internal Audit had completed a satisfactory audit of the Customer Services Transformation plans.



► **Co-option of a non-member to the select committee** was agreed and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's approval was sought for the co-option of an independent member, Mr Wyn Marshall, who was Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum. This was also strongly supported by officers as it would ensure that tenants opinions and input would be considered in relation to Housing issues scrutinised by this select committee. Subsequently the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 February 2021 recommended this co-option to Council for approval and, as Mr Marshall's appointment would be close to the end of this municipal year, also recommended to Council that this appointment should continue until the end of 2021/22 when it could be reviewed. Council approved Mr Marshall's co-option as an independent non-member of the Select Committee on 25 February 2021.

#### 4th virtual meeting – 30 March 2021

► **Essex Police District Commander** Chief Inspector A Alcock made his annual presentation and reported on the work the Police had covered over the last year, especially in relation to the Covid pandemic and three national lockdowns that had followed, in addition to policing in the Epping Forest District.

► **Community Safety Partnership Annual Strategic Assessment, Annual Report and Partnership Plan** were presented by C Wiggins, Service Manager Community Resilience. Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) were required to complete an annual Strategic Assessment which was used to direct and guide their activities, under the requirements as responsible authorities, of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The District worked closely with Essex Police analysts to produce this document, which this year was a common template for all two-tier local authority areas. The aim of the Epping Forest Strategic Assessment was to determine the strategic priorities for the financial year 2020-21. Community Safety work encompassed ASB, disorder and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. The report included statistical data and analysis of crime types. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions impacted on crime committed and reported in 2020 and caused crime types to experience unprecedented significantly reduced or increased levels. As restrictions changed, crime levels had continually readjusted. The CSP Plan was a new addition of the Partnership and provided information at a glance on the planned delivery of Epping Forest CSP going forward. Community projects and initiatives in 2020 had included:

- Crucial Crew – an educational programme for year 6 pupils on community safety was launched digitally on the Council's website;
- J9 domestic abuse initiative – the aim was to raise awareness of domestic abuse and assist victims to seek the help they desperately needed. Started by the Council, training was now available all over the County;
- Training delivered virtually on child sexual exploitation, gangs, county lines, modern slavery/ human trafficking and hate crime;
- Cross border meetings were held every four weeks between the Council, Essex Police and the Metropolitan Police;
- Enforcement issues from the pandemic included 'mansion/house parties' as clubs, pubs and bars were not open, the misuse of Epping Forest especially at High Beach, and joint enforcement undertaken by the Corporation of London, Essex Police, North Essex Parking Partnership and the Council.

The timescales of the Annual Report were extended to account for the unprecedented impact of Covid on the CSP and wider agencies over the last 18 months. Violence, vulnerability and serious acquisitive crime were the strategic priorities for 2019/20 and would continue to be in 2020/21. A dynamic daily briefing and tasking structure was adopted in the District which had the ability to directly respond to areas of concern and address local issues. This ensured a relevant, justified and cost-effective use of resources. Historically, Halloween and bonfire night had caused challenges to the District in relation to youths being anti-social and committing criminal acts. In 2020 the Council worked closely with Essex Police to produce a plan around enforcement and engagement. The Horizons Project (Phoenix Futures) supported clients who were identified as suffering from Significant Multiple Disadvantage- substance issue, offending behaviour and homelessness.

▶ **Council-funded Police Officers' bi-annual report** was presented by C Wiggins, Service Manager Community Resilience and covered the period September 2020 to March 2021. In addition to the earlier report in September 2020, the Essex Police team in the District accepted and completed 50 tasking requests in 2020 in spite of the challenges presented by Covid-19 (2019 had 52). These tasks included amongst others: a cross border operation with the Metropolitan Police to deal with serious crime in the south of the District; supporting Council officers visiting licensing and business premises over possible Covid legislation breaches; also supporting Planning Enforcement and Community Resilience officers where there was a risk to staff; targeted patrols in response to persistent ASB; and the recovery of stolen vehicles.

#### 5th virtual meeting – 22 April 2021

- ▶ **Customer Services quarter 4 update** covered What are our customers telling us?
- ▶ **Universal Credit** and its impact on our customers and services was reviewed by members in the 6 monthly update report from the Customer Services Director, R Pavey.
- ▶ Customer Service Strategy 6 monthly report was provided by the Service Manager (Customer Services), S Lewis.
- ▶ **Social recovery** progress was reported by J Gould, Community and Wellbeing Project Director.

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## Stronger Council Select Committee

### Members for 2020/21:

The Stronger Council Select Committee held four meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 22 June 2020, which was held virtually.

Councillor Peter Bolton (Chairman)

Councillor David Stocker (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr R Bassett  
Cllr H Brady  
Cllr R Brookes  
Cllr D Dorrell  
Cllr H Kane  
Cllr S Neville  
Cllr M Owen  
Cllr S Rackham  
Cllr Jon M Whitehouse



Councillor Peter Bolton



Councillor David Stocker

The lead officer was Andrew Small, Strategic Director and 151 Officer.

### Terms of Reference

Core areas of responsibility were:

(1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:

◆ **People Strategy**

◆ **Accommodation Strategy**

◆ **Digital Enablement**

(2) To monitor the Corporate Plan Action Plan performance report and provide scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement. The Stronger Council Select Committee in its review of Corporate Key Performance Indicators can task other Select Committees to review service performance and develop proposals for improvement.

The scrutiny role incorporates the following:

- to engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- to develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;

- to consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- to look outwards and show community leadership;
- to consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- to establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- to undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- to monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- to engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

## Committee workload

As the last meeting in the municipal year 2019/20 in April 2020 had been postponed, outstanding work items carried over into the 2020/21 municipal year. At each meeting members had the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference and the work programme.

► **Corporate Plan 2019-20 corporate performance** progress was regularly scrutinised throughout the year. The Corporate Plan Action Plan provided a mechanism for reporting to Members on the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and key programmes of work and highlighted the Council's overall performance against agreed corporate objectives. The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director, L Wade, reported in July 2020 that in quarter 4 the Covid crisis had impacted on the corporate objectives. The corporate programmes and the service objectives were being reviewed, but most importantly was the Covid recovery activities and the financial impacts and the prioritisation around these, taking into account the capacity of resources available and the funding needed to deliver these. KPIs for subsequent quarters were detailed below under Corporate performance reporting.

► **Corporate performance reporting** to do with the scope of the corporate programme of work and associated benefits in 2020/21 within the report would be used to baseline Corporate performance management on a quarterly basis in future. At the meeting on 13 October 2020, the exceptions highlighted in red included: the Telecare offering project due to delay in cessation of service following withdrawal of the County tender; the ICT restructure due to a delay in completion of restructure; the Local Plan due to delays in the review of the main modifications document as a result of the Inspector's limited capacity to review. Going forwards, members agreed that all programmes and projects be reported back to the select committee, not just exceptions. KPIs for quarters 1 and 2 were reported within the Corporate programme governance report at the meeting on 13 October. At the meeting on 14 January 2021, the Committee robustly scrutinised the report on the progress of project delivery page by page against the quarter 3 milestones and KPIs within this report

► **Corporate programme governance** showing the internal governance to manage and deliver the programme of work aligned to the Stronger Council ambitions in 2020/21 was detailed in a report by the Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director at the October 2020 meeting. An internal officer governance structure had been established to focus on the delivery of the Corporate programmes aligned to the Stronger ambition objectives.

► **People Strategy updates** were regularly reported throughout the year by the Business Services Director, P Maginnis. By July 2020 a new people's strategy had been introduced which aimed to build a people team that could deliver the strategy and have the right people with the right skills who were highly motivated and high performing. The strategy was broken down into themes:

1. Attracting, on boarding and retaining the best talent;
2. Develop our leadership;
3. Embracing change to support the Council's evolution;

4. Creating a culture of engagement and wellbeing;
5. Developing our skills and behaviours to make the Council a great place to work;
6. Achieving organisational goals through a high performing and flexible workforce.

At the core was transforming the People Team to become an enabler for the organisation. The Strategy set out the ambition for our workforce – the right people with the right skills, highly motivated high performing and business efficient.

► **Accommodation Review updates** were regularly reported throughout the year by the Strategy, Delivery and Performance Services Director, L Wade. Refurbishment of the Civic Offices was underway and continued to stay on budget and on time. The contractors, ISG, operated on a 'Covid' free environment with all the appropriate policies and guidelines in place. As staff were working remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic, this had enabled the contractor to minimise all health and safety related risks. By October 2020, the accommodation programme was progressing and was at a critical stage of the project, in confirming the design. The accommodation Programme Board continued to meet on a monthly basis to oversee the delivery of the programme and covered the following workstreams:

1. Refurbishment works
2. Infrastructure and Technology
3. Travel Plan
4. Furniture, fixtures and fittings
5. Change and Ways of Working
6. Partners and Commercial opportunities
7. Customer Service Workstream

There were also several opportunities which were managed in line with the accommodation programme looking at reducing our storage footprint, cost reduction and efficiency by outsourcing printing and posting services.

By January 2021 deliveries of orders for fixture and fittings were taking place. Minor amendments had been made to the ground floor space to enable a large PACE room to be available impacting on the consultation space. Requirements for the desk and car park system were now complete and configuration of the IT system that would manage this had now commenced. One of the "Travel to the Civic" options for employees and residents was by demand responsive travel (DRT). This was launched in January 2021 and there had already been a positive take up for the service with residents which it was hoped could be extended to employee usage. Individual sessions had been taking place with teams and there had been a big focus on decluttering. A "scan it, scrap it, store it, stop it" campaign, ensured staff only retained what was necessary and also recognised that files could be retained in digital form. Talks continued with partners on commercialisation of the Civic Offices second floor and using the touchdown space in the community hub. The refurbishment continued to be within the agreed budget and a positive variance of £106,066 was forecasted.

► **Budget Monitoring Reports (General Fund)** were monitored on a quarterly basis by the select committee. The quarter 1 report presented by the interim Chief Finance Officer, Christopher Hartgrove was for the first four month's (till the end July 2020) and reported on the first four months of the pandemic and the financial impact of that. The full position was summarised in appendix A of the committee report.

### 1st virtual meeting – 14 July 2020

► **ICT Strategy quarter 1 update** by the Business Services Director outlined a 12-theme structure that ranged from the restructure of the service to supporting the customer strategy, members and the accommodation programme. It was wide ranging in the areas it covered. Covid had an impact on the delivery of some of the work as they had focused on enabling staff to work from home. The team were making progress on their own restructure. The ICT reporting tool, HOTH, went live in

July. They were also supporting the accommodation project particularly the procurement of the audio-visual equipment, the disaster recovery system and the new housing system.

► **Finance update** on the financial position of the Council in July 2020 showed that things were moving quickly in terms of the cost of Covid, and its impact on Council finances was being monitored closely, although up to July, £1.36 million in Government grant support had been provided to the Council. The Strategic Director, Andrew Small, was pleased to announce that the final accounts for 2018/19 had been signed off on 18 June 2020 and they were now finalising the accounts for 2019/20. The Government had recognised that because of the impact of the Covid outbreak there had been less capacity for local government to complete the normal end of year tasks and had given councils an extended timetable for closing the end of year accounts.

► **Revenue and Capital Outturn 2019-2020** was reported to the select committee by the Interim Chief Finance Officer, Christopher Hartgrove. It was a good news story for 2019-20, as the Council had ended the year with an overall positive revenue variance on General Fund service budgets of £908,000, whereas the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA) recorded a negative revenue variance of £285,000, for which Covid had played a part. The minimum contingency balance requirements adopted by the Council had been met at year-end on both the General Fund and the HRA.

► **Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy** was introduced by the Customer Service Manager, S Lewis. This policy set out the Council's approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour by service users and members of the public. The Council had a duty to safeguard its employees from unacceptable behaviour which might otherwise cause it to breach legislation unless appropriate action was taken. The policy was to protect Council staff whilst dealing with unacceptable behaviour both internally and externally by customers.

► **Service Plan objectives quarter 1** report referenced the capacity and Covid-19 restriction impact on each service and the subsequent impact on the delivery of the quarter 1 Service Plan objectives. The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director provided an overview of the services areas, of the activities they had been involved in and also the impact that Covid had on the work that would otherwise have been completed, had it not been for this emergency.

### 2nd virtual meeting – 13 October 2020

Ongoing cyclical scrutiny of the Accommodation Strategy, People Strategy, and quarterly reviews of the Corporate Plan Action Plan KPIs were as detailed above.

### 3rd virtual meeting – 19 January 2021

► **Draft Budget proposals 2021/22** were detailed in the report by the 151 Officer and Strategic Director, A Small, and the Interim Chief Finance Officer. This was an opportunity for members to pre-scrutinise the proposals which would be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 11 February 2021. Covid-19 had, and would continue to have, a huge impact on many areas of the Council's income and expenditure. This was making the preparation of robust budgets exceptionally challenging. Therefore, many significant assumptions had to be made at this stage, such as for Leisure and Car Parking in the short term, impact on Council tax and rents in the medium term, and how the high streets would recover, the survival of businesses and other longer term impacts on the community and economy. The report reflected the emerging budget proposals (appendix a) and the outline budget for the Housing Revenue Account. The HRA was in a stable position compared to the general fund where there had been a small deficit as the Government had announced the Local Government Settlement for 2021/22 in December 2020.

### 4th virtual meeting – 13 April 2021

Ongoing cyclical scrutiny of the Accommodation Strategy, People Strategy, and quarterly reviews of the Corporate Plan Action Plan KPIs – **to be completed**.

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

## Stronger Place Select Committee

### Members for 2020/21:

The Stronger Council Select Committee held four meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 22 June 2020, which was held virtually.

Councillor Steven Heather (Chairman)

Councillor Richard Morgan (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Richard Bassett  
Cllr Les Burrows  
Cllr Ian Hadley  
Cllr Simon Heap  
Cllr Judy Jennings  
Cllr Sue Jones  
Cllr Howard Kauffman  
Cllr Cherry McCredie  
Cllr Jaymey McIvor



Councillor Steven  
Heather



Councillor Richard  
Morgan

### ► Change of Chairman

Although Councillor R Bassett was elected Chairman at the beginning of the municipal year, he resigned in the autumn, following his appointment as a Council member to the Qualis Board. At the select committee meeting on 19 November 2020, Vice-Chairman Councillor S Heather was elected to be the Chairman, while Councillor R Morgan was elected to be Vice-Chairman.

The lead officer was Nick Dawe, Chief Operating Officer.

### Terms of Reference

Core areas of responsibility were:

(1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:

- ◆ Local Plan delivery
- ◆ St John's Road
- ◆ North Weald (including master planning)
- ◆ Council Housebuilding
- ◆ Economic growth, skills and employment

- (2) To have overview of the performance of the Waste Management Contract and Leisure Management Contract and provide scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement; and
- (3) To have overview of the green agenda helping to inform policy and future proofing the place.

The scrutiny role incorporates the following:

- to engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- to develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;
- to consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- to look outwards and show community leadership;
- to consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- to establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- to undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- to monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- to engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

### Committee workload

As the last meeting in the municipal year 2019/20 in March 2020 had been postponed, outstanding work items carried over into the 2020/21 municipal year. At each meeting members had the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference and the work programme.

► **Covid-19 – Place** – on **Business Support grants** the Customer Services Director, R Pavey, reported at the 9 July meeting that the Government had been keen for the quick distribution of the small business support grant and retail, leisure and hospitality grant, subject to the mandatory requirements, which amounted to £29 million - £30 million for the Epping Forest District. The Council had distributed 90 per cent of the grant within two weeks to businesses in the Epping Forest District.

**Safer spaces** – the Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy and Implementation), A Blom-Cooper, reported that safer spaces had been set up in response to Covid-19 to support the reopening of the high streets and to support active travel. Essex County Council (ECC) had been awarded up to £1.9 million to support this scheme. The Council had submitted bids for Epping and Waltham Abbey but only one bid was forwarded to Central Government but ECC had received less than half of the total value of the bids as many of the ECC schemes put forward had not met the criteria. The scheme supported social distancing restrictions by extending pavements etc. The Business and Planning Bill was going through Parliament, which would licence tables and chairs on pavements. Many meetings were being organised with business leaders in the District to identify where improvements could be made. Meetings had been held with the Federation of Small Businesses, Town Centre Partnerships and also with tourism attractions to ensure the Council was reaching out as efficiently as possible.

**General economic measures and support, and local economic business recovery** – J Houston, Partnerships and Economic Development Specialist, reported that the Council's economic strategy, agreed before Covid had showed the District was well placed to cope with an economic contraction, but the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on every economic sector could not have been predicted.

**Digital platform** – the Council had managed to bring in some £20 million of investment on the digital infrastructure, which would enable 99 per cent connectivity across the District by the end of next year so that GP surgeries could benefit from ultrafast broadband.



**Covid-19 recovery update** in September 2020 highlighted to members that there were three phases to the Covid-19 pandemic – the Council’s initial response, restoration and the longer-term recovery. The continued national coronavirus resurgence that was also being seen in the Epping Forest District, might cause the Council to move back to a response phase if asked to by the Public Health lead at Essex County Council. The Strategic Director’s (A Small) report set out the Council’s response to the initial outbreak in March 2020 that was largely supportive of those shielding and its impact on business and relief. The Council was reorganised to focus on its Covid-19 response. As a consequence, a much better infrastructure was in place with better support lined up. Although the restoration was at the end of June / beginning of July, Council services, as well as the hospitality and high street business sectors, were moving to a more restricted phase to facilitate safe access for individuals in high streets. Community wellbeing was being monitored. The ongoing progress and longer-term outlook for local high streets of the schemes was regularly being monitored by Cabinet.

► **Economic Development: Growth/skills/employment programme** – was updated verbally on 29 September 2020 by the Chief Operating Officer, N Dawe, as officers were mostly focussing their time on providing detailed updates on project briefs for the Cabinet meeting in early October. Dynamic plans were being prepared for the high street areas including Loughton, and for other economic recovery issues, such as building on the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) initiative and having a better digital communications platform.

This item would be picked up at the next Stronger Place Select Committee meeting in January 2021 when members could look forward to receiving the Cabinet reports.

► **Planning Development and Improvement programme – North Weald Airfield masterplan** with new employment opportunities was a requirement in the emerging Local Plan. The Planning Services Director, N Richardson, reported in July 2020 that the appointed consultants, Turner and Townsend and RPS Group, had been instructed to undertake survey work, and a viability report was being prepared. The masterplan was for non-residential use. As a designated employment area, this would create new jobs as part of the Council’s Covid-19 recovery plan in the long term. At various stages as the masterplan progressed, the proposals would go through the Quality Review Panel. Therefore, the masterplan would be in place for the site before the submission of planning applications, and all the NWA development proposals must be in accordance with the masterplan.

**Local Plan implementation** progress updates were reported quarterly to the select committee by the Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy & Implementation), A Blom-Cooper. In July 2020 updates were received on the strategic masterplans, concept frameworks, other sites within the emerging Local Plan and the schemes that would be going before the Quality Review Panels. The consultation on the draft Green Infrastructure Plan ended in mid-July 2020 and the final version was approved by Cabinet in October 2020.

At 29 September 2020 meeting it was reported that officers continued to progress work on the Main Modifications (MMs) and the third tranche of MMs had been submitted to the Inspector in early June 2020. As completion of the MMs was scheduled for the end of September, the consultation was expected in October 2020. Further information submitted to the Inspector included the revised mapping in relation to changes of the Local Plan and the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. The Council submitted further information last week and the sustainability appraisal was also due to go to the Inspector. An updated Habitats Regulations Assessment and Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy was being finalised to take account of initial comments received from Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest that would be part of the MM consultation later this year. The Council was expecting the Inspector’s timetable next week. However, the schedule for the main plan documentation was some 300 pages, and other documents were also over 300 pages. The **White Paper ‘Planning for the Future’** was published by the Government on 6 August 2020. A report on the Council’s proposed response would be considered by Cabinet on 19 October 2020. It would significantly change the current planning system for both the nature and content of Local Plans, and the operation of the development management process. If implemented, the White Paper would introduce new planning legislation into the system to streamline the plan making process.

The update at the meeting on 12 January 2021 on the Local Plan and the Interim Air Quality Mitigation Strategy (AQMS) was provided by Councillor N Bedford, Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder (PFH). The PFH's decision had been the subject of a call-in but the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to confirm the PFH's decision in December at an extra meeting on 7 January 2021. The PFH clarified that several mitigation measures including the potential for a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) from 2025 had been included as part of the AQMS. No charges or decisions on the form of CAZ had been agreed. He outlined that the adoption of the AQMS was a way to enable the Council to determine planning applications that had been held in abeyance since June 2018. The Interim Assistant Director, Planning Policy and Implementation, A Blom-Cooper, advised members of the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on further permitted development rights** was open for comment until 28 January 2021. These proposals would give a new national permitted development right for a change of use from commercial, business and service use class to residential use. It would go significantly beyond existing rights, allowing for restaurants, indoor sports, and creches to benefit from the change use to residential under permitted development rights for the first time and would have implications for High Streets including those in conservation areas. Other proposals included: a streamlined planning application process for public service infrastructure projects; and a simplification and consolidation of existing permitted development rights.

### ► District Sustainability programme

**Travel and Climate Change officers** and were appointed respectively in June and September 2020. There was a lot of work to be undertaken around the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), air quality issues including the draft Mitigation Strategy, as well as building on the post-Covid-19 recovery and safer spaces project.

**Sustainability guidance** was supported by several policies of the emerging Local Plan. It followed EFDC's climate emergency declaration in September 2019 to become carbon zero by 2030, as data from 2017 showed that on road vehicles and residential housing contributed to some 80 per cent of all carbon emissions across the District. At the September 2020 meeting, the Planning Policy Implementation Team Projects Officer, M Anil, recounted that the draft guidance also expanded on the work done for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) and aligned with other key documents, such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy. The select committee pre-scrutinised this document that was split into two sections environmental sustainability and socioeconomic sustainability. Its purpose was to support planning proposal considerations and provide practical and technical guidance on how relevant sustainability indicators and policies in the Local Plan would be applied to new residential and non-residential developments across the District. A suite of three sustainability documents covered Major Developments (10+ units), Minor Developments (1-9 units) and Extensions and Refurbishments. The Major Developments document was similar to HGGT, but there were changes to case studies, reference to specific policies and documents, air quality and its impact on the Epping Forest special area of conservation (SAC) as well as socio-economic sustainability, which was key for EFDC. Whilst the HGGT document focused on integration of new development with existing communities, key goals for EFDC were community resilience and social equity, especially in terms of access to facilities, health and wellbeing, public health etc. A Members Workshop was held in August, and the draft sustainability guidance would be submitted to Cabinet in October 2020 for approval for more formal public consultation. The six-week public consultation should be completed in November 2020. The final guidance draft for endorsement for material planning consideration (1) and the sustainability guidance for Extensions and Refurbishments (3) would be submitted to Cabinet by early 2021.

**Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** – a three-month trial had been approved by Cabinet with funding in December 2020. The Contracts and Technical Services Director advised the select committee that the DRT scheme was launched on 2 January 2021 in partnership with Epping Forest Community Transport and ran along the old bus route 87. This service had passengers primarily from the NHS on every journey. People were able to register an expression of interest in the service through an on-line form and there had been interest from residents in the rural areas along the route. Covid restrictions had limited the number of passengers on the vehicle and this could present a



viability challenge for the service. Usage data would be collected and a report on the outcome of the trial would be reported to Cabinet.

► **Town Centre Development** – the Interim Qualis Board and the group of companies had been established. Select Committee member, Councillor H Kauffman was also a non-executive director, as were Councillors N Avey and J Philip. The transfer to the permanent Board was scheduled to take place between September and October 2020. Qualis Commercial was involved with the development of Council owned land. In April 2020, Cabinet approved the transfer of the land ownership into Qualis Commercial for the five **Epping Town sites** and the Roundhills site. Qualis Management expected the delivery of the Council's repairs service, and work on the Epping Town Council sites to go live in September 2020. Qualis Commercial and the Design Team were working to develop the strategic options for the five Epping Town sites, which included St John's Road, Bakers Lane and Cottis Lane car parks, land by the Civic Offices and Epping Sports Centre. The Planning performance agreement that set out the approach through the pre-planning stages up to the submission of a full planning application had been agreed. To ensure stakeholder engagement throughout the planning process, a detailed communications plan would be established, to include consultation through the Commonplace online community platform. A detailed appraisal process would be followed to assess the suitability of each site to achieve a policy compliant scheme.

► **Community Health and Wellbeing Programme** – the Sheltered Housing Review provided a progress report on the Council's sheltered housing. Ark had been commissioned to undertake a review of the Council's 12 sheltered housing schemes. As life expectancy increased, the demographic of an ageing population changed in relation to the needs for health, social care and housing. By building a comprehensive picture of performance and sustainability, as well as taking into consideration the likely future demand for accommodation, the review achieved a clear direction for accommodation to make best use of the stock to meet residents' needs.

**Review of service charges** – an update on the was presented to the select committee on 29 September 2020. The HRA Service Director explained that these charges were for additional tenant services, such as maintenance of lifts and cleaning etc, which were charged separately to the rent, and were taking place across the District. However, this had become challenging as some costs had risen above the rate of CPI. A recent cost analysis had revealed that the Council was in deficit to around £600,000 for 2019/20 through the under recovery of service charges. A report to Cabinet in July 2020 had recommended a review of these service charges. Housing now had a comprehensive list of these additional services and the service charges. Also, the regulations clearly stated that social housing providers needed to charge for services in a fair and consistent way that could be accounted for. This equated to charging the actual cost for the services broken down to each individual property. A final report on the options available to the Council would go to Cabinet in December 2020.

► **Council Housebuilding programme quarterly progress reports** were made by the HRA Service Director, D Fenton. Phases 1 to 4 had largely been located on garage sites where there had been anti-social behaviour and they were not economically viable to continue with. At the 9 July meeting on phase 2 of the housebuilding programme for 51 properties, six units been delayed due to a gas supply problem but were completed and handed over on 19 March 2020. On phase 3, the original start had been delayed with the discovery of asbestos, there was a service utility delay by the contractor of some four weeks behind schedule, and there was the potential for further delays caused by Covid-19 restrictions. Handover of 14 properties in phase 4.1 was forecast for June 2021. Phase 4.2 for 22 properties and phase 4.3 for 21 properties had gone out to tender. Properties in phase 4.4 had undergone a detailed design review to potentially increase affordable units by 12 to a total of 27. A detailed review to identify future development sites for phase 5 had almost finished and engagement by officers with members to address local issues at these sites would be organised including a Members Briefing.

The select committee was informed at the meeting on 29 September 2020 that phases 3 and 4 of the Housebuilding programme had either been completed, were on-site and were currently being procured, as well as its approach to phase 5. Future housing delivery within phase 4 stood at

84 units up to 2021/22, subject to the necessary planning consents. The Council's retained consultant (Metaplan) was reviewing two additional sites. One was a partnership arrangement with St John the Baptist Church, Epping, that comprised 9-10 residential units for key workers and a community building, subject to planning consent. The other was an opportunity to purchase some land at below market value in Waltham Abbey to provide up to 10 affordable units, subject to planning consent.

'**More than bricks and mortar**' the Council's proposed scheme had moved by September to the development stage following Cabinet approval in July 2020. In phase 5, a different approach was being taken in terms of what local members and local residents wanted. This would include additional environmental options and how the area could be improved for the community. The scheme proposed that additional income raised in the first four years was ringfenced to pay for estate improvements, which would help achieve its mission to 'create great places where people wanted to live'.

### 1st virtual meeting – 9 July 2020

► **Environmental enhancements and tree planting initiatives** update was given by the Contracts and Technical Services Director, Q Durrani. The report listed the types of work that the Council's Countrycare Team was involved with. This covered over 3,600 Veteran Trees (trees over 300 years old), plus over 1,200 'notable' trees that weren't old enough to be classed as veteran yet. The Council also managed around 15,000 public realm trees on open spaces and the public highway, but this did not include woodland. A further 119 semimature trees had been planted in safe locations in Chigwell Row and Epping. Tree planting was being organised for the Loughton Recreation area and the Thornwood Nature Reserve this financial year. The Green Infrastructure Strategy would help to plan and facilitate the integration and expansion of tree planting in the District. Volunteers did a lot of work as did Tree Wardens, who monitored the health of trees. The Essex Forest Project to plant 375,000 trees by 2025 including flood alleviation tree planting schemes was likely to form part of this strategy, as well as the 'Green Arc'. This was an initiative where London met the countryside (from Thames Chase through to the Lee Valley area) with the aim to plant a million trees. There would also be more tree planting opportunities in the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANG) being delivered alongside the proposed growth in the District.

### 2nd virtual meeting – 29 September 2020

► **Corporate programme governance** was reported to members by the Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director, L Wade. This enabled the select committees to undertake and deliver their programmes to be scrutinised, and better aligned the Stronger ambition objectives to the relevant select committee. There would be additional projects coming along and those aligned to the Covid-19 recovery. Thus, Stronger Place had a clear project brief which would be used for the performance management accounting that went to Stronger Council. This internal governance would allow management to focus the work alignment of the individual employee, which was on the road map of the people programme. The opportunity to add additional areas of scrutiny within the work programme delivery was also an option open to members. There were six corporate programmes for Stronger Place – economic development, District sustainability, community health and wellbeing, town centre development, planning development and improvement and council housebuilding.

### 3rd virtual meeting – 12 January 2021

► **Leisure Management Contract** – an update by the Contract and Technical Services Director apprised the select committee on the challenges associated with the Leisure Contract through the Covid restrictions and leisure centre closures. He advised on the revenue pressure associated with the loss of income and payments to the contractor to ensure the viability of the leisure centres and support the Council's commitment to health and well-being.

► **Waste Management Contract** – an update by the Contract and Technical Services Director informed members that Biffa, the waste contractor, had managed the operations effectively through

the Covid pandemic and had addressed operational issues, maintained safe working practices for its staff and used its commercial wing to support the waste collection service. Waste and recycling had increased, and the larger volumes of cardboard had increased the number of trips. The Service Director advised that additional costs linked to the pandemic had been claimed. He also reminded the select committee that the contract was a 10-year contract with the potential to extend for a further 10 years and there would be changes to the contract in due course. The Committee congratulated Biffa on delivering an effective waste and recycling collection service through the pandemic and acknowledged the issues relating to increased cardboard and packaging.

**4th virtual meeting – 29 March 2021**

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**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**THE KEY DECISION LIST**

**INCLUDING PROPOSED PRIVATE DECISIONS**

**(01 April 2021)**

## **The Key Decision List including Proposed Private Decisions**

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a notice in respect of each Key Decision that it proposes to make, at least 28 days before that decision is made. There is also a similar requirement to advertise those decisions, whether they are Key Decisions or not, which it is proposed to be made in private with the public and press excluded from the meeting. This Key Decision List, including those decisions proposed to be made in private, constitute that notice. Copies of the Key Decision List are available for inspection at the Council's Civic Offices, as well as on the Council's website in the 'Your Council' section.

Any background paper listed can be obtained by contacting the relevant Officer in the first instance, or failing that the Democratic Services Officer listed below.

### **Key Decisions**

The Council's Constitution defines key decisions as:

- (i) Any decision within budget and policy that involves expenditure/savings of £250,000 or more in the current municipal year;
- (ii) Any decision not within budget and policy that involves expenditure/savings of £100,000 or more in the current municipal year;
- (iii) Any decision that raises new issues of policy;
- (iv) Any decision that increases the Council's financial commitments in future years, over and above existing budgetary approval;
- (v) Any decision that involves the publication of draft or final schemes, which may require either directly, or in relation to objections to, the approval of a Government minister;
- (vi) Any decision that involves the passage of local legislation; and
- (vii) Any decision that affects two or more wards, and has a discernible effect on the quality or quantity of services provided to people living or working in that area.

Borrowing or lending decisions undertaken under delegated authority by the Chief Financial Officer are not defined as a key decision.

The Council has also agreed the following additional requirements in relation to key decisions:

- (a) Key decisions cannot be made by officers;
- (b) Key decisions not within budget and policy can only be made by the Council;

- (c) Key decisions within budget and policy but involving expenditure/savings in excess of £1million can only be made by the Cabinet and/or Council;
- (d) Key decisions within budget and policy but involving expenditure/savings between £250,000 and £1million can be made by the relevant Portfolio Holder;
- (e) Portfolio Holders can only make key decisions affecting their wards if the decision is based upon a recommendation by a Service Director or as one of a range of options recommended by a Service Director.

### **Private Decisions**

Any decisions that are proposed to be taken in private will be reported as such. The paragraph number quoted relates to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and their definitions are as follows:

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- (1) Information relating to any individual.
  - (2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
  - (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
  - (4) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
  - (5) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
  - (6) Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
    - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
    - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
  - (7) Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

## **Corporate Aims & Key Objectives 2019/20**

### **Stronger Communities**

- (1) People live longer, healthier and independent lives:
  - (a) supporting healthy lifestyles; and
  - (b) promoting independence for older people and people with disabilities;
- (2) Adults and Children are supported in times of need:
  - (a) safeguarding and supporting people in vulnerable situations; and
- (3) People and Communities achieve their potential:
  - (a) enabling Communities to support themselves;
  - (b) Providing culture and leisure opportunities; and
  - (c) Keeping the District safe.

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### **Stronger Place**

- (1) Delivering effective core services that people want:
  - (a) Keeping the District clean and green; and
  - (b) Improving the District housing offer;
- (2) A District with planned development:
  - (a) Planning development opportunities; and
  - (b) Ensuring infrastructure supports growth; and
- (3) An environment where new and existing businesses thrive:



- (a) Supporting business enterprise and attracting investment;
- (b) People develop skills to maximise their employment potential; and
- (c) Promoting retail, tourism and the visitor economy.

#### Stronger Council

- (1) Customer satisfaction:
  - (a) Engaging with the changing needs of our customers;
- (2) Democratic engagement:
  - (a) Robust local democracy and governance;
- (3) A culture of innovation:
  - (a) Enhancing skills and flexibility of our workforce; and
  - (b) Improving performance through innovation and new technology; and
- (4) Financial independence with low Council Tax:
  - (a) Efficient use of our financial resources, buildings and assets; and
  - (b) Working with commercial partners to add value for our customers.

**Cabinet Membership 2019/20**

Chris Whitbread	Leader of the Council
John Philip	Finance & Economic Development
Aniket Patel	Commercial & Regulatory Services
Sam Kane	Customer & Corporate Support Services
Nigel Bedford	Planning & Sustainability
Holly Whitbread	Housing & Community
Nigel Avey	Environmental & Technical Services

**Contact Officer**

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**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - LEADER**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
LGA Peer review - Position Statement	Draft Position Statement for the LGA Peer review.	No	20 April 2022	Cabinet		Georgina Blakemore 01992 56 4233	
Peoples Strategy - Ongoing	To establish the Council's new Common Operating Model as part of the People Strategy.  To consider further details for the next stage of the Common Operating Model.	Yes		Cabinet		Georgina Blakemore 01992 564233	PID P170 - Peoples Strategy Common Operating Model - Management Structure
Qualis Four Year Business Plan	To agree the Qualis four-year business plan for 2021-2025.	Yes	21 June 2021	Cabinet (following O&S Committee, the Full Council in July)		Sacha Jevans	
Civic Accommodation	To agree lease/license charges for Community Partners co-locating within the Civic Offices.	Yes	13 September 2021	Cabinet		Georgina Blakemore 01992 56 4233	

**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
Implementatio n of the Local Plan - Ongoing	Quarterly update report on progress. To become a delivery report once Plan agreed by the Inspector.	Yes		Cabinet		Alison Blom-Cooper 01992 564066	
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Green Infrastructure Strategy (for endorsement as a material planning consideration following consultation on the draft strategy).	Yes	20 April 2021	Cabinet (following Place Select Cttee. on 29 March)		Alison Blom-Cooper 01992 56 4066	
HGGT Transport Strategy	To approve and endorse the HGGT Transport Strategy for Publication. To be a wider project update and delivery model linking in with partners.	Yes	Later in the year	Cabinet		David Burt, Anna Rowell	

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ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Town Centre Regeneration - Loughton, Epping & Buckhurst Hill		Yes	21 June 2021	Cabinet		Nick Dawe 01992 56 4000 (2541)	

**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
Charging for EIR	To consider charging for Environmental Information Regulation requests. May become part of Service Charging Review in Autumn 22/23.	Yes	Later in year.	Cabinet		Mandy Thompson 01992 564705	
Transfer of Services to Qualis	To consider the business case for the transfer of MOT, Fleet and Grounds maintenance.	Yes	13 September 2021	Cabinet (following O&S Cttee.)		Qasim Durrani, Andrew Small 01992 56 4055,	
Epping Leisure Centre	To consider plans for the delivery of a new Epping Leisure Centre and details of process of the Contract Variation with Places Leisure.	Yes	20 April 2021	Cabinet		James Warwick, Qasim Durrani 01992 56 4055/4350,	

**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - HOUSING AND COMMUNITY**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
Review of Tenancy Strategy - update on Changes	Ongoing Updates.	No	Ongoing	Cabinet		Deborah Fenton 01992 56 4221	
Older persons services	Upgrade of Communal Areas.	Yes		Cabinet		Deborah Fenton 07988860412	
Acceptance of Tender - Contract 102, Controlled Door Entry Systems	In order to undertake planned installation, upgrade and maintenance repairs of controlled door entry systems to council owned properties.	Yes	20 April 2021	Cabinet		Dean Epton 01992 56 4166	
New Fees and Charges	Report requiring a decision regarding charging for non-statutory services.	Yes		Cabinet		Deborah Fenton 01992 56 4221	
Proposed Change to Service Charges RTB Receipts - New Policy	Policy outlining who we allocate right to buy receipts.	Yes		Cabinet		Deborah Fenton 01992 56 4221	
Waltham Abbey Community and Cultural Centre	<p>To approve the final business case for the project that combines Epping Forest District Museum (39-41 Sun Street) with Waltham Abbey Library (37 Sun Street) to create a vibrant multi-purpose community and visitor attraction and resource.</p> <p>To note that this project is key in regenerating Waltham Abbey alongside the High Street improvement plan and other projects and</p>	Yes	12 July 2021	Cabinet		Jennifer Gould 01992 564073	

	developments currently being reviewed.						
Allocations Policy	Current allocations policy due to expire March 2022. A revised Policy will need to be drafted, consulted on and be taken through governance structure ahead of agreement by Cabinet ready for implementation of new policy in April 2022.	Yes	07 March 2022	Cabinet		Jennifer Gould 01992 564073	
Tenancy Policy	Current tenancy policy due to expire March 2022. A revised Policy will need to be drafted, consulted on and be taken through governance structure ahead of agreement by Cabinet ready for implementation of new policy in April 2022.	Yes	07 March 2022	Cabinet		Jennifer Gould 01992 564073	
Housing Strategy	EFDC's current Housing Strategy reaches end of life in March 2022. A revised strategy will need to be taken through governance structure ahead of formal adoption in March 2022.	Yes	07 March 2022	Cabinet		Jennifer Gould, Deborah Fenton 01992 564073/564221,	
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	EFDC's current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy reaches end of life in March 2022. A revised strategy will need to be taken through governance structure ahead of formal adoption in March 2022.	Yes	07 March 2022	Cabinet		Jennifer Gould 01992 564073	

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**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - CUSTOMER AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
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**WORK PROGRAMME - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**

**PORTFOLIO - COMMERCIAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER</b>	<b>PRIVATE DECISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
Qualis Monitoring - Ongoing Quarterly	Financial reporting plan update.	Yes		Cabinet		Andrew Small 01992 564278	
Transfer of Services to Qualis	To consider the business case for the transfer of Corporate Asset management service to Qualis.	Yes	21 June 2021	Cabinet (following O&S Committee)		Andrew Small 01992 56 4278	
North Weald Airfield Masterplan	To report back on the interest to develop the identified Masterplanning area on North Weald Airfield. Item to be taken to a Cabinet workshop for discussion.	Yes	12 July 2021	Cabinet		Nick Dawe 01992 56 4000 (2541)	

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2020/21

**Chairman: Councillor M. Sartin**

#	ITEM	REPORT DEADLINE	PROGRESS/COMMENTS
1.	Cabinet Business	Ongoing	To review the Executive's programme of Key Decisions at each meeting, to identify appropriate matters for the work programme and provide an opportunity for the overview of specific decisions.  To consider any call-ins, as and when they arise.
2.	Group Company Structure	Ongoing ♦  Added to work programme by Agenda Planning Group (29-Oct-20)	To review progress regarding the establishment and operation of the Council's Group Company Structure at each meeting of the Committee.  ♦ NB: At O&S Agenda Planning Group 21.01.21, it was queried if Qualis needed to be a standing item but as all the scrutiny committees would have the opportunity to review their work programmes, this could be revisited in the new municipal year.
3.	Accommodation Strategy	Ongoing  Removed from work programme by Agenda Planning Group (12-Jan-21)	To review progress regarding the implementation of the Council's Accommodation Strategy at each meeting of the Committee.  Future updates to be undertaken by Stronger Council Select Committee.
4.	People Strategy	Ongoing  Removed from the work programme by Agenda Planning Group (12-Jan-21)	To review progress regarding the implementation of the Council's People Strategy at each meeting of the Committee.  Future updates to be undertaken by Stronger Council Select Committee.

5.	Covid-19 Response & Recovery	Ongoing Added to Work Programme by OSC (22-Jun-20)	To review progress of the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan.
6.	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21	22 June 2019	To agree the work programmes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each of the select committees for 2020/21.  (First meeting of each municipal year)
7.	Select Committee Memberships	22 June 2020	To consider nominations for membership of and appoint the Chairman & Vice-Chairman for each Select Committee.  (First meeting of each municipal year)
8.	Corporate Priorities 2020/21	22 June 2020	Leader of Council to present the Council's corporate priorities for 2020/21 to the Committee.  (First meeting of each municipal year)
9.	Customer Services	16 July 2020  (Annual Report)	Service Director (Customer Services) to report on customer service initiatives and performance, including compliments and complaints and call-handling.
10.	Epping Forest Youth Council	16 July 2020	Annual Report from Youth Council on completed and proposed activities.  <b>Carried forward from the postponed meeting on 17 March 2020.</b>
11.	Waste Management Task & Finish Panel Review – Final Report	16 July 2020	To consider the options recommended by the Task & Finish Panel for the Waste Management Review.  <b>Carried forward from the postponed meeting on 17 March 2020.</b>
12.	Corporate Plan Year 2 – Q4 Performance Review	16 July 2020	To review Q4 performance by exception in relation to the Key Performance Indicators & Work Programmes within the Corporate Plan.

13.	Local High Streets – Viability & Regeneration	16 July 2020  (Carried forward from the Reserve Work Programme for 2018/19)	Proposed Task and Finish Panel agreed by the Committee on 19 November 2019.  Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Task and Finish Panel agreed on 28 January 2020.  Original Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 24 February 2020 (meeting held)</li> <li>- 19 March 2020 (meeting postponed)</li> <li>- 15 April 2020 (meeting postponed)</li> <li>- 14 May 2020 (meeting postponed)</li> </ul> ⇒ Report back to Overview & Scrutiny in June 2020.  To consider whether the Terms of Reference are still relevant following the Covid-19 lockdown, and the future of this Task & Finish Panel.
14.	Local Mental Health Services – Scrutiny of External Organisation	15 October 2020  (Carried forward from Reserve Work Programme for 2018/19)	To review the provision of local mental health services. Scope/focus of scrutiny activity and appropriate lines of questioning to be agreed.  Approach made to West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.  Briefing to be provided to frontline staff on 16 July 2019 by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. All members invited to attend briefing. Possibility of further session for members to be investigated.  <b>Carried forward from the postponed meeting on 17 March 2020.</b>
15.	Corporate Plan Year 3 – Q1 & Q2 Performance Review	19 November 2020  (Deferred by OSC on 15-Oct-20)	To review Q1 & Q2 performance by exception in relation to the Key Performance Indicators & Work Programmes within the Corporate Plan.
16.	UK Innovation Corridor – Scrutiny of External Organisation	19 November 2020	Formerly the London – Stansted – Cambridge Consortium. Approach to be made.

17.	Corporate Plan Year 3 – Q3 Performance Review	2 February 2021	To review Q3 performance by exception in relation to the Key Performance Indicators & Work Programmes within the Corporate Plan.
20.	North Essex Parking Partnership – Scrutiny of external organisation	2 February 2021	Approach to be made and accepted.
21.	Elections Planning Progress Report	2 February 2021	To provide update on planning for the Elections scheduled to be held in May 2021.
18.	Epping Forest Youth Council	15 April 2021	Annual Report from the Epping Forest Youth Council on completed and proposed activities.
22.	Young People’s Mental Health Services – Scrutiny of External Organisation	15 April 2021	To review the provision of local mental health services for young people (under 18 years old). Scope/focus of scrutiny activity and appropriate lines of questioning to be agreed.  Ms Sarah Garner, CCG Young People’s Health Services to attend.
19.	Corporate Plan Year 3 – Q4 Performance Review	15 April 2021	To review Q4 performance by exception in relation to the Key Performance Indicators & Work Programmes within the Corporate Plan.
23	Environmental Information Requests	TBC	Pre-scrutiny of Cabinet Decision on charging for EIRs.

## RESERVE PROGRAMME ITEMS

ITEM	REPORT DEADLINE/PRIORITY	PROGRESS/COMMENTS
Essex County Council (Children's Services) (Scrutiny of External Organisation)	Carried forward from reserve work programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19.  Re: Agenda Planning Group (12-Jan-21)	Recommendation arising from Children's Services Task and Finish Panel requires the Committee to meet with Essex County Council in respect of children's services on an annual basis. The Director of Children's Commissioning attended the meeting in April 2016. To be considered further at a later date. Scope/focus of scrutiny activity and appropriate lines of questioning to be agreed if/when added to ongoing work programme;  Members to consider moving this item up a level in relation to children and Covid in the municipal year 2021/22.
Epping Forest Sixth-Form Consortium (Scrutiny of External Organisation)	Carried forward from reserve work programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19.  Placed back on Reserve Work Programme by OSC on 22-Jun-20.	(PICK submission) To review the progress of the Sixth Form Consortium established in September 2015.  Scope/focus of scrutiny activity and appropriate lines of questioning to be agreed if/when added to ongoing work programme;

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## Stronger Communities Select Committee

### Work Programme 2020/21

**Chairman: Cllr D Sunger**

**Stronger Communities Corporate Programme Alignment focuses on corporate objectives and Customer Excellence and partnerships**

No.	Item	Deadline	Progress and Comments	Owner (Officer)	Programme of Meetings
1.	Presentation from the Loughton based group GROW Community Garden who help people who are socially isolated.	21 Jul 2020	COMPLETED	Cllr D. Wixley	<del>21 July 2020</del> <del>15 September 2020</del> 14 January 2021
2.	Impact of Covid-19 on EFDC's Housing Communities	21 Jul 2020	COMPLETED	D. Fenton	<del>30 March 2021</del> 22 April 2021
3.	"What are our customers telling us?"	21 Jul 2020	COMPLETED (a) Quarter 1 report	S. Lewis/ R. Pavey	
		15 Sept 2020	COMPLETED (b) Quarter 2 Report		
		14 Jan 2021	COMPLETED (c) Quarter 3 Report		
		22 Apr - 2021	(d) Quarter 4 Report		
4	Health and Wellbeing Strategy – To consider outcomes for the district.	21 Jul 2020	COMPLETED	F. Ferrari/ G. Wallis	
5.	Universal Credit and its impact on our customers and services	15 Sept 2020	COMPLETED Initial findings and recommended actions from the officer working group	R. Pavey	

		22 April 2021	6 Monthly update report	R. Pavey	
6.	Customer Service Strategy	15 Sept 2020	COMPLETED Update on key objectives	R. Pavey	
		22 April 2021	6 Monthly Report		
7.	Digital Inclusion	14 Jan 2021	COMPLETED		
8.	Rough Sleepers	14 Jan 2021	COMPLETED		
9.	Loughton Broadway Report	14 Jan 2021	COMPLETED	R Smith/ D. Fenton	
10.	Health and Wellbeing	14 Jan 2021	COMPLETED Verbal update on the Whipps Cross Hospital Development Programme (meeting attended on behalf of EFDC)	Cllr D. Sunger	
11.	Presentation from the District Police Commander	30 Mar 2021	COMPLETED Annual Report	C. Wiggins	
12.	Community Safety Partnership annual report and review of the district Strategic Intelligence Assessment	30 Mar 2021	COMPLETED Annual Report	C. Wiggins	
13.	Social Recovery	22 April 2021		J. Gould	
14.	Six-month report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers	15 Sept 2020	COMPLETED	C. Wiggins	
		30 March 2021	COMPLETED		
15.	Data insight led review of customer service outlets	Report to deferred until the next municipal year.	Options and recommendations for short, medium and long-term options		

16.	Service reviews as a result of performance concerns	TBC		L. Wade	
17.	EFDC Museum Collections	TBC	To consider the high-level action Plan for the programme of work over 3 years, sent out in the Corporate performance Reporting Q3 and requested at O&S on 19.11.20.	J. Gould / L. Wade	
18.	Waltham Abbey Community & Cultural Hub (Feasibility on Epping Forest culture and community hub)	June 2021	Detailed proposal to be considered	J. Gould	

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**Stronger Council Select Committee  
Work Programme 2020/21  
Chairman: Councillor P Bolton**

No.	Item	Deadline	Progress and Comments	Programme of Meetings	Lead Officers
1.	Corporate Plan Action Plan (KPI's by exception) – performance scrutiny	<del>Corporate Action Plan KPI's, Q1 Apr, May, Jun – 14 July 2020 meeting</del> <del>Q2 Jul, Aug, Sept – 13 Oct 2020 meeting</del> <del>Q3 Oct, Nov, Dec – 19 Jan 2021 meeting</del> Q4 Jan, Feb, Mar – 13 Apr 2021 meeting  Live system reporting – by exception. No pre- distributed reports, projection of live data on the night.		<del>14 July 2020</del> <del>13 October 2020</del> <del>19 January 2021</del> 13 April 2021	Louise Wade
2.	People Strategy	<del>14 July and 13 October 2020 –</del> 19 January 2021 & 13 April 2021 Project reporting, issues focussed.			Paula Maginnis  Jo Budden
3.	Digital Enablement	Prioritisation of Council Technology strategy. Outcome focussed 19 January 2021			Paula Maginnis Maryvonne Hassall

4.	Accommodation	<del>14 July and 13 October 2020 – 19 January 2021</del> Project reporting, issues focussed			Louise Wade  Victoria Wright
5.	Financial Issues Paper	<del>14 July 2020</del> Scrutiny of MTFS 20/21 onwards	Revenue and Capital Outturn report went to October 2020 meeting.		Andrew Small Christopher Hartgrove
6.	Draft budget scrutiny	<del>2021/22 budget setting 19 January 2021</del>	Budget Monitoring Report went to October 2020 meeting		Andrew Small
7.	Asset Management Strategy	Council asset strategy (new)	Approved by the Cabinet 13/06/19 and referred to Council 30/07/19 for adoption.		Andrew Small
8.	<del>Review of Polling Places, Polling Districts &amp; Polling Stations</del>	<del>July 2020</del>			Gary Woodhall
9.	<del>Review of Local Elections 2019</del>	<del>October 2020</del>			

**Stronger Place Select Committee  
Work Programme 2020/21  
Chairman: Cllr S Heather**

**Stronger Place Corporate Programme Alignment focuses on corporate objectives and our response to Covid-19 recovery.**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Progress and Comments</b>	<b>Owner (Officer)</b>	<b>Programme of Meetings</b>
1.	Covid-19 – Place	July 2020	COMPLETED - To include reference to: (a) Business support – grant (b) Safer spaces (c) General economic measures and support (d) Local economic business recovery		9 July 2020 29 Sept 2020 12 Jan 2021 29 March 2021
		September 2020	COMPLETED (a) Covid-19 recovery update (b) Safer place (c) Current statistics		
		January 2021	(a) Covid-19 recovery update		
2.	Economic Development: Growth/skills/employment programme	September 2020	DEFERRED to January 2021 (a) Local economic business recovery and resources		
		January 2021	(a) Local economic business recovery and resources (b) Economic improvements (c) Town centre regeneration (d) Digital enablement and gateway		
3.	North Weald Airfield Masterplan Local Plan – update (previously)	July 2020	COMPLETED - To include: (a) Progress / update		
		July 2020	(a) Local Plan progress report including Garden Town and Latton Priory (b) Green Infrastructure consultation update		
	Planning Development and Improvement programme	September 2020	COMPLETED (a) Local Plan Progress report		
		January	COMPLETED (a) Local Plan progress report (b) Green Infrastructure Strategy (c) North Weald Airfield Masterplan progress report		

4.	Climate Change (previously)	July 2020	COMPLETED (a) Climate Change and Sustainable Travel update including recruitment (b) Update on tree planting initiatives		
	District Sustainability programme	September 2020	COMPLETED (a) Draft Sustainability Guidance for the District and Harlow Garden Gilston Town		
5.	Epping Town sites (previously)	July 2020	COMPLETED - Progress / update		
	Town Centre Development	September 2020	(a) Progress Report (re. Council as the landowner)		
		January 2021	COMPLETED (a) Leisure Management Contract - performance and progress update (b) Waste Management Contract - performance and progress update		
6.	Sheltered Housing Review (previously)	July 2020	COMPLETED - Report and update		
	Community Health and Wellbeing Programme	September 2020	COMPLETED - (a) Service charges review		
		March 2021	(b) Sheltered Housing	Deb Fenton	
7.	Council Housebuilding programme	July 2020	COMPLETED - Provide plan for 2020/21		
		September 2020	COMPLETED - (a) Council housebuilding progress report (and link to creating Great Places programme)		
		January 2021	Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26		