



NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING at 7.00 pm on Thursday, 28 July 2022 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Blakemore'.

Georgina Blakemore
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Gary Woodhall / J Leither Tel: (01992) 564243
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE

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. The meeting may also be otherwise filmed by third parties with the Chairman's permission.

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 entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area or otherwise indicate to the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

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

BUSINESS

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking. The Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager will read the following announcement:

“The chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To be announced at the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 34)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on 26 May 2022, as attached.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Announcements

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Council Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

(a) to the Leader of the Council;

(b) to any Portfolio Holder; or

(c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within the Council's rules in Part 4 of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or
- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

The Council's rules provide that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

8. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER & MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 35 - 70)

To receive reports and any announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader of Council (verbal);
- (b) Report of the Place Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (c) Report of the Finance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (d) Report of the Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (e) Report of the Customer Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (f) Report of the Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (g) Report of the Technical Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (h) Report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder (attached);

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

The Council's rules provide for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under the previous item; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non-operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its

inhabitants.

The Council's rules provide that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Service Director.

In accordance with the Council's rules, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further ten minutes at their discretion.

10. MOTIONS

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under the Council's rules.

Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

Reports of the Cabinet

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 71 - 96)

- (a) To receive the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 2021-22 (attached);
- (b) To note the progress report of the Chairman, Councillor H Kane of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 June 2022 (attached); and
- (c) To answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council Rules.

12. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- (a) To receive from Council representatives the reports (attached - if any) on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice; and
- (b) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings.

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: 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):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
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: Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) 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.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Council **Date:** Thursday, 26 May 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 - 8.54 pm

Members Present: Councillors H Kane (Chairman), I Allgood, C Amos, N Avey, R Balcombe, R Baldwin, R Bassett, N Bedford, P Bhanot, P Bolton, R Brookes, L Burrows, E Gabbett, I Hadley, S Heap, S Heather, R Jennings, J Jennings, J Jogia, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, J Lea, J Lucas, T Matthews, J McIvor, L Mead, R Morgan, S Murray, C Nweke, M Owen, A Patel, S Patel, Caroline Pond, C C Pond, R Pugsley, S Rackham, B Rolfe, M Sartin, P Stalker, D Stocker, D Sunger, B Vaz, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, K Williamson, D Wixley and S Yerrell

Members Present (Virtually): Councillors D Plummer and K Rizvi

Apologies: Councillors H Brady, J Leppert, A Lion, C McCredie and J Philip

Officers Present: G Blakemore (Chief Executive), A Small (Section 151 Officer), N Boateng (Service Manager (Legal) & Monitoring Officer), G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and P Seager (Chairman's Officer)

Officers Present (Virtually): A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

2. DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 6 MAY 2022

The Chairman welcomed the newly elected* and re-elected members of the Council at the election held on 5 May 2022 as follows

Councillor	Ward
Elizabeth Gabbett*	Buckhurst Hill East
Smruti Patel*	Buckhurst Hill West
Darshan Sunger	Chigwell Village
Basil Vaz	Chipping Ongar, Greensted ad Marden Ash
Janet Whitehouse	Epping Hemnall
Leslie Burrows	Epping Lindsey and Thornwood Common
Alan Lion	Grange Hill
Ian Allgood*	Loughton Alderton
Christopher Pond	Loughton Broadway
Louise Mead	Loughton Fairmead
Roger Baldwin	Loughton Forest

Stephen Murray	Loughton Roding
Robert Jennings	Loughton St John's
Howard Kauffman	Loughton St Mary's
Ronda Pugsley*	Lower Nazeing
Peter Bolton	North Weald Bassett
Clive Amos*	Theydon Bois
David Stocker	Waltham Abbey Honey Lane
Shane Yerrell*	Waltham Abbey Paternoster
Jodie Lucas*	Waltham Abbey North East

The Chairman presented declaration of acceptance of office certificates to all newly elected and re-elected members.

3. CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL - YEAR OF OFFICE

Councillor H Kane addressed the Council she advised that it had been an absolute honour to serve as Chairman of Council and it had been a privilege to be asked to represent the district as Chairman of the Council for a second year.

Usually, Chairmen reflect on their previous year and mention what they have done, where they have been etc. She advised that she would not follow this pattern, but would start by thanking all Members for rising to the challenges that came our way by adapting to our new ways of working and hoped that the words 'you are on mute' would become a distant memory.

Even though for much of the time we were all working within Covid restrictions she still managed a few firsts that she was proud of.

She was the first Chairman to host Full Council Meetings via Zoom and the first Chairman to work with Officers over Teams but despite the restrictions, she stated that she was very proud to say that nothing was disrupted, and official work continued, even if it wasn't in person.

She was the first Chairman to light the First ever Public Menorah in Epping, the first to attend the first ever Eid Celebrations in Chigwell, and the first to see the completion of the refurbishments in the Civic offices and host the Civic Awards here in our wonderful new community asset - the Conference Suite.

There were so many people in the district doing good things and the Civic Awards were a chance to celebrate the people of Epping Forest District and their achievements, successes and unwavering dedication to the district and to the community.

She had always enjoyed working with the Youth Council and took great pride in them and when she looked around the chamber this evening she could see some familiar faces sitting here now as full Members of the Council and maybe in the not too distant future a former Youth Councillor will be Chairman of Council too.

She stated that she could never finish without thanking all of the officers especially, Tom Carne, Jackie Leither and all of the crew from Democratic Services. We worked very close together, despite the ups and downs, and I am grateful for their advice and support.

But most of all, and for every Chairman the same, she did not know how she could have coped if she did not have Pat Seager by her side, Pat made sure I was

prepared, and confident and safe for my appointments throughout the district and beyond.

She also gave special thanks to her family and her husband, who had been her rock throughout this time, despite walking two paces behind her.

Members, I have been extremely proud to wear this Chain of Office and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for putting your trust and faith in my ability to serve you over the past two years.

Councillor C Whitbread, Councillor J M Whitehouse, Councillor R Brookes, Councillor S Murray, and the Chief Executive, G Blakemore on behalf of the staff, expressed their appreciation for her hard work and dedication throughout her term of office as Chairman and for her service to the Council.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their kind words and stated that in her opening remarks she mentioned a number of firsts and wanted to pay tribute to another first.

Councillor Stephen Murray was recently re-elected for the Loughton Roding Ward and had served the residents of Loughton and the district as a whole as a District Councillor for some 40 years, this was a remarkable achievement, and a target for us all!

She invited Councillor Stephen Murray to join her in the well of the Chamber to receive a memento of this special occasion.

Councillor Stephen Murray joined the Chairman in the well of the Chamber where she presented him with a framed print of the Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The nomination of Councillor M Sartin for the Office of Chairman of the Council having been moved formally by Councillor C Whitbread and seconded by Councillor A Patel was;

RESOLVED:

That Councillor M Sartin be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor M Sartin thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman of the Council and thanked the Council for the honour.

Councillor M Sartin In the Chair

5. PAST CHAIRMAN'S BADGE

The new Chairman, Councillor M Sartin presented Councillor H Kane with a past Chairman's Badge of Office.

6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Council received two nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2022/23.

Councillor D Sunger was proposed, having been formally moved by Councillor C Whitbread and seconded by Councillor L Burrows.

Councillor J H Whitehouse was proposed, having been formally moved by Councillor S Murray and seconded by Councillor C C Pond. It was:

RESOLVED:

That Councillor D Sunger be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuring year.

Councillor D Sunger thereupon made a declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman of the Council and thanked the Council for his appointment.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

8. MINUTES

Councillor C C Pond advised that in his opinion the minutes were correct but wanted it noted that on page 15 of the agenda, minutes of 24 February 2022 he asked a question regarding a sustainable electric bus services which had been promised between Debden Station and the Epping Forest Shopping Park and to date had not received the courtesy of a reply from the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor N Avey apologised to Councillor Pond and stated that he would make sure Councillor Pond received a response to his question.

Councillor C C Pond then referred to page 21 of the agenda where Councillor S Murray requested a report from Councillor R Basset, the Councils representative on the Epping Forest Campus, New City College asking what the capital receipt was that the college authorities had received for the sale of their land assets.

Councillor S Murray advised that he had received a general response from the New City College and that he would share it with Councillor C C Pond.

The Chairman stated that these were not corrections to the minutes just comments around them and asked for members to agree the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 24 February 2022 and 05 April 2022 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman thanked the Council for the honour of being appointed to the post of Chairman for a second time, first being appointed in 2013/14. She gave special thanks to Councillor C Whitbread and Councillor A Patel for proposing and seconding her and for their kind words.

She stated that she was glad to have had her previous experience as Chairman to draw upon but that was not say that she did not approach this role with the knowledge that this year would be a difficult one. There was a heavy workload ahead where the Local Plan had still to be approved and needed final confirmation. There was also the District Boundary Review underway which would affect us all and we were still suffering from the knock-on effects of the covid pandemic. The horrific events in the Ukraine were regrettably yet to fully unfold on the world, and our residents were already feeling the effects in gas, electricity, fuel prices, and general inflation. She was confident that the Council would do its utmost to ease the pain by the efficient management and delivery of the services it was known for.

She stated that her predecessor had the difficulty of the pandemic to deal with and paid tribute to her and thanked her for her efforts, thank you Councillor Helen Kane and also to Councillor Sam Kane for supporting her throughout the last two years. The pandemic meant that she was unable to do many of the traditional events of the Civic calendar and stated that she hoped to be able to reinstate some of those Civic events now that covid problems were easing.

The Chairman stated that taking on this role at short notice meant that she had been unable to do as much forward planning as she would have liked and was a “work in progress” at this time. She advised that she would keep Members in touch with events via the Bulletin, the Chairman’s Diary and announcements at Council meetings.

The Chairman advised that the charities she would be supporting this year were the local hospice, St. Clare’s, who provided such excellent end of life care to the District, both in the Hospice itself but also out in people’s own homes and the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service, who were based in North Weald, and were a life-saving charity covering the District and beyond.

I know I can count on my husband, John, and our family to support me as they did in my first term of office, and I now have a five-year-old grandson, Nathan, who will no doubt give Granny a hand.

Now that we were moving back to some normality it will hopefully will mean “less on zoom - more in the room” as far as meetings are concerned. The discussions and interactions councillors and officers have before and after meetings are important. We get to know and understand each other’s problems and opinions easier outside the rigid bounds of committee and this can only be a good thing.

In conclusion, she look forward to the year ahead and trust that with the support of Members and Officers that we could continue the important work of this Council for our community.

(a) Flowers

The Chairman announced that she intended the flowers from this evening meeting go to the reception area in the Civic Offices in celebration of the Queen’s Jubilee and to be enjoyed by all of the staff and visitors.

(b) Members not seeking Re-election or not Re-elected

The Council noted that David Dorrell, Yolanda Knight, Ann Mitchell, Steven Neville, Chris Roberts and Jo Share-Bernia had not sought re-election on 5 May 2022 and Sue Jones had not been re-elected.

In recognition of service to the Council, Sue Jones 12 years' service as a Member for the Theydon Bois Ward, Y Knight 12 years' service as a Member for the Lower Nazeing Ward and A Mitchell 11 years' service as a member for the Waltham Abbey North East Ward, they would each receive a bronze long service award.

10. REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENT PANEL

Mover: Councillor C Whitbread, (Chairman of the Panel and Leader of the Council)

Councillor C Whitbread reported on the appointments which he had made to the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Outside Organisations carrying out Executive Functions for 2022/23.

Furthermore, he also reported the recommendations of the Appointment Panel in relation to the membership, chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels (non-executive bodies), along with the Outside Organisations carrying out Council, Regulatory or non-Cabinet Functions.

The Council voted on appointments where the number of nominations exceeded the number of places available.

RESOLVED:

(1) That, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the constitution of political groups as set out in Appendix 1, to these minutes be noted;

(2) That details of appointments made by the Leader of the Council, of Cabinet members and Cabinet Committees carrying out Executive functions. as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes be noted;

(3) That the Membership, Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels (non-Executive bodies) as set out at Appendix 3 to these minutes be approved;

(4) That the group representatives for the purposes of notifying substitute members for meetings be noted as follows:

(a) Conservative Group:

- Councillor C Whitbread (Group Leader);
- Councillor N Bedford (Deputy Group Leader);
- Councillor S Kane; and
- Councillor M Sartin;

(b) Green Party Group:

- Councillor S Heap (Group Leader); and
- Councillor E Gabbett (Deputy Group Leader);

(c) Liberal Democrat Group:

- Councillor J M Whitehouse (Group Leader); and
- Councillor J H Whitehouse (Deputy Group Leader); and

(d) Loughton Residents Association Group:

- Councillor C P Pond (Group Leader); and
- Councillor D Wixley (Deputy Group Leader);

(5) That the group representative confirm member appointments to the Proper Officer for the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees for 2022/23 at the first municipal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(6) That appointments to Outside Organisations carrying out Council Regulatory or non-Cabinet functions, as set out at Appendix 4 to these minutes be approved;

(7) That the appointments to be made by the Leader of the Council to Outside Organisations carrying out Executive functions, as set out at Appendix 5, to these minutes be received; and

(8) That Mr Wyn Marshall be re-appointed as a non-voting, co-opted member of the Stronger Communities Select Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year.

11. SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The Council's Constitution required that the scheme of delegations be agreed at the Annual meeting. The current scheme had received no further additions or amendments since the last annual meeting and therefore did not need to be agreed at this meeting.

12. COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2022/23

On 24 February 2022, the Council adopted the calendar of meetings for the municipal year May 2022 to May 2023 as it was required within the Council's Constitution that the programme of ordinary meetings of the Council were approved at the Annual meeting.

RESOLVED:

That during 2022/23 ordinary meetings of the Council be held on the following dates:

28 July 2022;
11 October 2022;
13 December 2022;
28 February 2023;
04 April 2023; and
25 May 2023 (Annual Council Meeting).

13. CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP REPORT

Councillor S Rackham, Chairman of the Constitution Working Group (2021/22)

Councillor S Rackham stated that the report of the Constitution Working Group had two recommendations on page 45 of the agenda and that those recommendations be agreed by Annual Council.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group as set out below be agreed:

- (1) That incorporation of the draft Terms of Reference (pages 45/46 of the agenda) in Article 10 of the Constitution be recommended for approval by Annual Council on 26 May 2022; and
- (2) That pursuant to Recommendation (1) above, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make necessary revisions to the Council's Constitution.

CHAIRMAN

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING – 26 MAY 2022

CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS AND GROUP LEADERS

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 – Notice of Constitution of Political Groups and Group Leaders

To note in accordance with regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the constitution of political groups as follows:

Conservative Group:

Group Leader – Councillor C Whitbread
Deputy Group Leader - Councillor N Bedford

Councillor N Avey	Councillor P Keska	Councillor S Rackham
Councillor R Balcombe	Councillor J Lea	Councillor K Rizvi
Councillor R Bassett	Councillor A Lion	Councillor B Rolfe
Councillor P Bhanot	Councillor J Lucas	Councillor M Sartin
Councillor P Bolton	Councillor T Matthews	Councillor P Stalker
Councillor H Brady	Councillor J McIvor	Councillor D Stocker
Councillor L Burrows	Councillor R Morgan	Councillor D Sunger
Councillor I Hadley	Councillor A Patel	Councillor B Vaz
Councillor S Heather	Councillor S Patel	Councillor H Whitbread
Councillor H Kane	Councillor J Philip	Councillor K Williamson
Councillor S Kane	Councillor R Pugsley	Councillor S Yerrell

Members 35

Green Party Group:

Group Leader - Councillor S Heap
Deputy Group Leader - Councillor E Gabbett

Councillor D Plummer

Members 3

Liberal Democrats Group:

Group Leader – Councillor J M Whitehouse
Deputy Group Leader - Councillor J H Whitehouse

Councillor C Amos
Councillor C McCredie

Members 4

Loughton Residents' Association Group:

Group Leader – Councillor C P Pond

Deputy Group Leader - Councillor D Wixley

Councillor I Allgood
Councillor R Baldwin
Councillor R Brookes
Councillor J Jennings

Councillor R Jennings
Councillor J Jogia
Councillor H Kauffman
Councillor L Mead

Councillor C Nweke
Councillor M Owen
Councillor C C Pond

Members 13

CABINET & CABINET COMMITTEES - LEADER APPOINTMENTS**(a) Deputy Leader**

Deputy Leader	N Bedford

(b) Other Cabinet Members/Allocation of Portfolios

Portfolio	Portfolio Holder
Leader	C Whitbread
Place	N Bedford
Finance	J Philip
Housing & Community	H Whitbread
Wellbeing & Community Partnerships	A Patel
Customer	A Lion
Contracts & Commissioning	N Avey
Technical Services	K Williamson
Internal Resources	S Kane
Reviews & Efficiency	L Burrows

(c) Cabinet Committees (not part of pro rata allocations)

Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee
Housing & Community (Chairman)
Contracts & Commissioning
Place
Wellbeing & Community Partnerships
Finance

Local Plan Cabinet Committee
Place (Chairman)
Contracts & Commissioning
Finance
Leader
Housing & Community
Technical Services

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COMMITTEE ETC. NOMINATIONS 2022/23

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE EAST (19 MEMBERS) (NOT PRO RATA) *						
		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Loughton Residents Association Group	Independent Members
Page 19	Chairman	I Hadley				
	Vice-Chairman	H Brady				
		R Balcombe		C Amos		
		N Bedford		C McCredie		
		P Bolton		J H Whitehouse		
		H Brady		J M Whitehouse		
		L Burrows				
		I Hadley				
		P Keska				
		J Mclvor				
		R Morgan				
		J Philip				
		B Rolfe				
		P Stalker				
		B Vaz				
		C Whitbread				
		H Whitbread				

*Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee East comprises all members for the relevant wards.

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE WEST (14 MEMBERS) (NOT PRO RATA) *

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Loughton Residents Association Group	Independent Members	
Page 20	Chairman	S Heather					
	Vice-Chairman	D Stocker					
		N Avey	D Plummer			J Leppert	
		R Bassett					
		S Heather					
		H Kane					
		S Kane					
		J Lea					
		J Lucas					
		T Matthews					
		R Pugsley					
		M Sartin					
		D Stocker					
		S Yerrell					

*Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee West comprises all members for the relevant wards.

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE SOUTH (25 MEMBERS) (NOT PRO RATA) *

	Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Loughton Residents Association Group	Independent Members	
Chairman	K Williamson					
Vice-Chairman	S Patel					
	P Bhanot	E Gabbett		I Allgood	D Barlow	
	A Lion	S Heap		R Baldwin	S Murray	
	A Patel			R Brookes		
	S Patel			J Jennings		
	S Rackham			R Jennings		
	K Rizvi			J Jogia		
	D Sunger			H Kauffman		
	K Williamson			L Mead		
				C Nweke		
				M Owen		
				C P Pond		
				C C Pond		
				D Wixley		

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*Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee South comprises all members for the relevant wards.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (5 MEMBERS PLUS 2 CO-OPTED PERSONS) *

	Conservative Group (3)	Green Party Group (0*)	Liberal Democrat Group (0*)	Loughton Residents Association Group (1)	Independent Members	
Chairman	The Chairman of the Committee is appointed at first meeting in each municipal year.					
	P Bolton	S Heap		M Owen		
	B Vaz					
	T Matthews					

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The Vice-Chairmanship of the Audit and Governance Committee is assumed by a co-opted person if the Chairman is a Member, and vice versa.

CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP (11 MEMBERS)						
	Conservative Group (7)	Green Party Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (2)	Independent Members	
Chairman	P Bhanot					
	Vice-Chairman	R Bassett				
		P Bhanot	S Heap	J H Whitehouse	C C Pond	
		R Bassett			H Kauffman	
		J Philip				
		R Pugsley				
		J Mclvor				
		S Rackham				
		M Sartin				

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (15 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group (9)	Green Party Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (3)	Independent Members	
Chairman	Chairman	P Keska					
	Vice-Chairman	B Rolfe					
		P Keska	S Heap	J M Whitehouse	R Baldwin		
		S Heather			H Kauffman		
		I Hadley			C C Pond		
		R Morgan					
		H Brady					
		S Patel					
		H Kane					
		T Matthews					
		B Rolfe					
		K Williamson					

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (9 MEMBERS PLUS 9 STAFF SIDE REPRESENTATIVES) *

	Conservative Group (5)	Green Party Group (0)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (2)	Independent Members	
Chairman*						
	S Kane		J H Whitehouse	R Brookes		
	L Burrows			L Mead		
	J Philip					
	A Patel					
	P Stalker					
	R Bassett					

The Chairmanship of the Joint Consultative Committee is rotated between the Staff and Council side each year: if the municipal year ends in an odd number then the Chairman is a Member representative; if the municipal year ends in an even number then the Chairman is a staff representative.

LICENSING COMMITTEE (& LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE) (15 MEMBERS*)

1 outstanding places – Group Leaders to discuss

		Conservative Group (9)	Green Party Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (3)	Independent Members	
Page 25	Chairman	R Morgan					
	Vice-Chairman				J Jennings		
		R Morgan	No nomination	J M Whitehouse	J Jennings		
		M Sartin			L Mead		
		S Heather			C P Pond		
		I Hadley					
		P Keska					
		B Rolfe					
		P Stalker					
		A Lion					
		D Stocker					
		T Matthews					
Licensing Sub-Committee Chairmen (6)		R Morgan M Sartin P Keska		J M Whitehouse	J Jennings C P Pond		

*The Licensing Act 2003 requires that the Licensing Committee comprise no more than 15 members. Licensing Sub-Committees should comprise no more than 3 members.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (15 MEMBERS*)

		Conservative Group (9)	Green Party Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (3)	Independent Members (0)	
Page 26	Chairman	H Kane					
	Vice-Chairman				D Wixley		
		H Kane	E R Gabbett	J H Whitehouse	R Baldwin	S Murray	
		S Heather			R Jennings		
		I Hadley			D Wixley		
		J McIvor					
		J Lea					
		P Bhanot					
		R Bassett					
		R Balcombe					
		S Patel					

****Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was extended to seventeen members for 2021/22, providing an additional seat on the Committee for the Conservative Group and the Loughton Residents Association Group. In order to accommodate a request for independent member representation on the Committee for the year, the Loughton Residents Association Group intends to relinquish its additional seat arising from the extension of membership, in order that this position may be filled by Councillor S. Murray. Membership of the Committee is required to be appointed on a pro rata basis and such deviation requires that no member of the Council voted against this arrangement.***

STANDARDS COMMITTEE (9 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group (5)	Green Party Group (0)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Loughton Residents Association Group (2)	Independent Members	
	Chairman	B Rolfe					
	Vice-Chairman				C P Pond		
		B Rolfe		C Amos	R Jennings		
		N Avey			C P Pond		
		R Morgan					
		H Kane					
		K Williamson					
		H Whitbread					

SENIOR MANAGEMENT SELECTION PANEL (7 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group (4)	Green Party Group (0)	Liberal Democrat Group (0)	Loughton Residents Association Group (2)	Independent Members	
	Chairman	C Whitbread					
	Vice-Chairman	M Sartin					
		C Whitbread		J M Whitehouse	R Jennings		
		M Sartin			C P Pond		
		N Bedford					
		J Philip					

SENIOR MANAGEMENT APPEALS PANEL (7 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group (4)	Green Party Group (0)	Liberal Democrat Group (0)	Loughton Residents Association Group (2)	Independent Members	
	Chairman	S Kane					
	Vice-Chairman	P Stalker					
		P Bolton	S Heap		J Jennings		
		S Kane			C C Pond		
		H Whitbread					
		P Stalker					

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2022/23

1. Council Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Cabinet Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominees
1.	Epping Forest Care and Repair Management Committee (3)	This Committee has been disbanded, therefore no need to appoint in future.
2.	Epping Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau (3 including 1 voting member)	L Mead R Bassett (Voting) S Heather
3.	Campaign to Protect Rural England (Essex Branch) (1 + deputy)	S Heather N Bedford (Dep)
4.	Epping Forest Community Transport Board of Trustees (1)	S Kane
5.	Epping Forest Housing Aid Committee (1)	J Lea
6.	Epping Forest Local Highways Panel (4)	D Wixley A Lion I Hadley H Kane
7.	Epping Forest Local Liaison Group (specific ward representation only)	N Avey (BCEUN) (1) K Williamson (BHW) (1) L Burrows (ELTC) (1) J Whitehouse (EH) (1) C P Pond (LSJ) (1) J Jennings (LSM) (1) R Baldwin (LF) (1) J Philip (TB) (1) T Matthews (WAHB) (1)
8.	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel (1 + Deputy)	Paul Stalker Holly Whitbread (Deputy)
9.	Health Overview, Policy and Scrutiny Committee (1)	Not required for 2022/23. Local member to be appointed by Essex County Council.
10.	Grange Farm Managing Trustees (Term to 31.5.23)	R Morgan M Sartin R Holden (CPC)
11.	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (1 + Deputy)	M Sartin R Bassett (Deputy)

Organisation and Allocation Category	Nominees								
12.	<p>Leisure Centre Liaison Groups (Leisure Centre Customer Forums)</p> <p>The Leisure Contract Manager has advised that two members should be appointed to each Liaison Group/Customer Forum for 2021/22.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="301 427 1501 837"> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 427 780 528">(a) Epping Sports Centre (2)</td> <td data-bbox="780 427 1501 528">Les Burrows Holly Whitbread</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 528 780 629">(b) Ongar Leisure Centre (2)</td> <td data-bbox="780 528 1501 629">N Bedford P Keska</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 629 780 730">(c) Loughton Leisure Centre (2)</td> <td data-bbox="780 629 1501 730">R Brookes S Patel</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 730 780 837">(d) Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool (2)</td> <td data-bbox="780 730 1501 837">J Lea T Matthews</td> </tr> </table>	(a) Epping Sports Centre (2)	Les Burrows Holly Whitbread	(b) Ongar Leisure Centre (2)	N Bedford P Keska	(c) Loughton Leisure Centre (2)	R Brookes S Patel	(d) Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool (2)	J Lea T Matthews
(a) Epping Sports Centre (2)	Les Burrows Holly Whitbread								
(b) Ongar Leisure Centre (2)	N Bedford P Keska								
(c) Loughton Leisure Centre (2)	R Brookes S Patel								
(d) Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool (2)	J Lea T Matthews								
13.	<p>Epping Forest Local Councils Liaison Committee (no restriction)</p> <p>R Bassett H Kane J Lea R Morgan B Rolfe M Sartin D Sunger J H Whitehouse</p>								
14	<p>Outer North-East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1)</p> <p>K Rizvi</p>								
15.	<p>Princess Alexandra Hospital - Partnership Governor (1)</p> <p>P Bolton</p>								
16.	<p>Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="301 1346 1501 1451"> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 1346 780 1413">(a) Management Committee (1)</td> <td data-bbox="780 1346 1501 1413">S Murray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 1413 780 1451">(b) Working Group (1)</td> <td data-bbox="780 1413 1501 1451">Officer appointment</td> </tr> </table>	(a) Management Committee (1)	S Murray	(b) Working Group (1)	Officer appointment				
(a) Management Committee (1)	S Murray								
(b) Working Group (1)	Officer appointment								
17.	<p>Stansted Airport Consultative Committee (1 + deputy)</p> <p>P Stalker M Sartin (Deputy)</p>								
18.	<p>Stansted Airport Community Trust Fund (1)</p> <p>R Morgan</p>								
19.	<p>Town Centre Partnerships</p> <p>The Service Director (Community & Partnerships) has advised as follows with regard to the appointment of members to each Town Centre Partnership for 2022/23.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="301 1794 1501 1995"> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 1794 780 1895">(a) Buckhurst Hill Village Forum (0)</td> <td data-bbox="780 1794 1501 1895">No member appointment required. Representatives of the Council may attend any meeting in a non-voting capacity.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 1895 780 1995">(b) Epping Town Centre Partnership (2)</td> <td data-bbox="780 1895 1501 1995">Holly Whitbread Nigel Avey</td> </tr> </table>	(a) Buckhurst Hill Village Forum (0)	No member appointment required. Representatives of the Council may attend any meeting in a non-voting capacity.	(b) Epping Town Centre Partnership (2)	Holly Whitbread Nigel Avey				
(a) Buckhurst Hill Village Forum (0)	No member appointment required. Representatives of the Council may attend any meeting in a non-voting capacity.								
(b) Epping Town Centre Partnership (2)	Holly Whitbread Nigel Avey								

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominees
	(c) Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership (0)	No member appointment required. Representatives of the Council may attend any meeting in a non-voting capacity.
	(d) Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership (2)	No member appointment required. The Town Centre Partnership was not currently operating.
	(e) Ongar Town Forum Steering Group (0)	No member appointment required. Representatives of the Council may attend any meeting in a non-voting capacity.
	(f) Waltham Abbey Town Partnership (2)	H Kane J Lea
20.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest (1)	H Whitbread
21.	Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Ltd (1)	H Kane
22.	Waltham Abbey Tourist Information Centre (Joint Management Committee) (3)	J Lea D Stocker T Matthews
23.	Leisure Management Contract Monitoring Board (6)	R Brookes N Avey H Kane P Keska R Morgan P Bhanot A Patel J M Whitehouse
24.	Epping Forest College (Board of Governors of New City College and local advisory body for the Epping Forest Campus College) (NEW)	R Bassett S Heap
25.	EFDC Armed Forces Champion	B Rolfe J Lea S Murray

2. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions (Appointments by the Leader)

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative 2020/21
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)	Service Director (Housing & Property Services) (or representative)
2.	National Society for Clean Air (SE Division)	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)
3.	Standing Conference – Investigation of Air Pollution	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative 2020/21
4.	Roding Valley Meadow Local Nature Reserve Working Group	Service Director (Environmental & Technical Services) (or representative)

3. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Executive Functions

This Appendix indicates those organisations where the Council determined on 25 April 1995 that the representatives should be officers.

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative
1.	Essex Water Safety Liaison Committee	Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services) (or representative)
2.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest (see also member appointments schedule)	Service Director (Community & Partnership Services) (or representative)

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2022/23

1. Leader Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category		Appointee
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing - Executive Board (1 + Deputy)	Housing & Community Portfolio Holder (Deputy Leader of Council)
2.	Civil Enforcement of Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London - Adjudication Joint Committee (1)	Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder
3.	Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership (1 + Deputy)	Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder (Deputy P Stalker)
4.	East of England Local Government Association (1)	Leader of the Council
5.	Six Authorities Liaison Group (formerly Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire Border Liaison Group) (3 + Deputies)	R Bassett M Sartin J Lea (Deputy S Heather)
6.	Epping Forest District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) The LSP Manager has advised as follows with regard to the appointment of members to each of the following LSP bodies for 2019/20.	
	(a) LSP Board ('One' Partnership) (1)	Leader of the Council
	(b) Health & Wellbeing Board (2)	Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder Housing & Community Portfolio Holder
	(c) Economic Board (1)	Finance Portfolio Holder
	(d) Tourism Board (1)	
7.	Essex Partnership for Flood Management (1)	Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder
8.	Essex Waste Partnership - Inter-Authority Member Working Group (1 + Deputy)	Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder (Deputy Technical Services Portfolio Holder)
9.	Harlow-Stansted Gateway Transportation Board (1 + Deputy)	Technical Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder)
10.	Local Government Association - General Assembly (1 + Deputy)	Leader of the Council (Deputy – Deputy Leader of the Council)
11.	North Essex Parking Partnership (1 + Deputy)	Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder Technical Services Portfolio Holder

12.	Off-Street Car Parking Contract Monitoring Board (2)	Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder Technical Services Portfolio Holder
13.	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (2)	Leader of the Council Housing & Community Portfolio Holder
14.	Waste Management Partnership Board (2)	Finance Portfolio Holder Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder
15.	West Essex Alliance (1 + Deputy)	Leader of the Council Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder
16.	Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board (2 + 1 Deputy)	Leader of the Council Place Portfolio Holder (Deputy Housing & Community Portfolio Holder)
17.	Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Board	Leader of the Council (Deputy Housing & Community Portfolio Holder) Technical Services Portfolio Holder (Deputy Finance Portfolio Holder) Place Portfolio Holder

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Place Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Bedford

Recommending:

That the report of the Place Portfolio Holder be noted.

1 Local Plan progress update

The Council was notified 06 May 2022 that a new Planning Inspector, Jonathan Bore MRTPI, has been appointed to complete the District's Plan Examination. The most recent update (16 June 2022, published on the Plan Examination website), is consistent with earlier correspondence, expressing the Inspector's aim of helping the Council to bring the Plan to an adoptable state as soon as possible.

The Inspector outlines that changes are required to the text of the submitted Local Plan and the Main Modifications (published and consulted upon in 2021) in order to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Inspector's note sets out a number of Actions for the Council and requires a new schedule of Main Modifications to be produced and consulted upon. The Inspector's Actions include:

- Main Modifications required as a result of changes to the Use Classes Order
- Additional work to satisfy the Inspector that a five-year housing land supply will be available on the adoption of the Plan
- Main Modifications required in relation the reference to non-statutory documents such documents such as the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Strategic Masterplans
- Main Modifications necessary to streamline Policies DM2 and DM22 in respect of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and air quality issues
- Additional questions on a small number of specific site allocations.

The Policy and Implementation Team is directing resources immediately to be able to respond on all of the Inspector's Actions as swiftly as possible and upon agreement to a new schedule of Main Modifications, to undertake the required consultation in order to be able to move towards the conclusion of the Examination and the final adoption of the Plan.

2 Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Local Planning Authorities are required to facilitate Neighbourhood Planning and constructively engage with communities throughout the process.

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was considered at Cabinet on 18 July 2022 with agreement sought that the draft Plan, with proposed amendments from the Inspector, meets the basic conditions and for it to therefore progress to a local referendum.

3 Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT)

The HGGT Work Programme aims to deliver the overarching objective of coordinating and enabling delivery of 16,000 homes by 2033, along with associated infrastructure, delivering the Garden Town Vision, principles and guidance that has been agreed by the 5 partner councils. 3,900 of these homes are allocated within Epping Forest District, making up over a third of the District's allocated housing.

The key priorities for the Garden Town for 2021/22 are:

- Delivering the Garden Town Vision of quality, beautiful and sustainable places
- Enabling the Infrastructure Foundations for Growth
- Maximising and Accelerating Delivery with a focus on outcomes by 2025
- Ensuring our Governance is Fit for the Future

EFDC officers continue to liaise with key stakeholders across the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities and relevant site promoters. This is undertaken in the context of wider Garden Town activities. Key updates in terms of the Garden Town are:

- Endorsement of HGGT Transport Strategy by EFDC Cabinet to be a material planning consideration (Jan 2022)
- Noting of the of the HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) by EFDC Cabinet as evidence base (Jan 2022)
- Approval of the Stort Crossings planning applications and Cabinet decision to make associated Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) by East Herts District Council/ Harlow District Council (HDC) (Feb 2022)
- Successful Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) PropTech bid for HGGT Quality of Life Mapping and Monitoring project. The partnership has been awarded £228,800 to deliver social value mapping across the Garden Town, through digital and non-digital engagement on quality of life and wellbeing.
- Successful DLUHC Pathfinders bid for Latton Priory Design Code project. EFDC have been awarded £120,000 funding to produce an authority-led design code for the Latton Priory Masterplan Area. The design code will be produced by the EFDC Implementation Team with collaboration and specialist input as required, over the course of 12 months. Content will focus on key aspects of the HGGT Vision, including modal shift, green infrastructure and socio-economic wellbeing. In line with the National Model Design Code, there will be significant community and local stakeholder engagement to promote provably popular design and to ensure a wide range of stakeholder input in shaping the new community. It is intended that the resulting design code will secure design quality on future applications for the masterplan area as well as providing a benchmark for quality and coding process for other EFDC and HGGT masterplans.
- Successful Homes England Capital Funding bid for two transport-related projects: Newhall & Enterprise Zone Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) Hub (£290,000) and New Garden Community STC Connectors project (£145,000).

4 Climate Change

Climate Change Action Plan

Following consultation that took place between 12 October and 26 November 2021, followed by agreement at Overview & Scrutiny on 31 March 2022, the updated Climate Change Action Plan was approved at Cabinet on 11 April 2022.

Tree planting

Volunteers from the local community, Limes Farm Community Group, Councillors, Parish Council, St Winifred's Church, Limes Farm Primary and Junior Schools and Officers from across the Council came together at the Limes Farm Estate to plant 501 trees in Chigwell.

Further trees were planted in March at Jessel Green and Rochford Green, Loughton.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Finance Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted.

Finance

Budgetary Position and Outturn for 2021/22

The Accounts are now closed for the Financial Year 2021/22 and the draft Accounts have been published on the Council's website ahead of their statutory Audit.

Last year represented a challenging Financial Year with multiple risks facing the Council. Not least the tail end of the Covid pandemic, still creating shortfalls in the Council's main income sources, including Council Tax, Business Rates, Commercial income, etc. For reasons previously highlighted, the Council's Balances Brought Forward from 2020/21 were lower than had been expected and the planned use of £1.35 million of these balances to ease Covid related shortfalls would have potentially caused a real financial issue. Added to this, the potential for financial claims against the Council presented additional cause for concern. As I reported throughout the year the response was to manage spending to mitigate this risk and thereby avoid the need to use Balances to the extent expected.

I am pleased to say that through the efforts of Cabinet colleagues and our officers, this approach has been successful and the final call on General Fund Balances was entirely offset with a final, small, contribution to balances £53,000. Subject to Audit, we start 2022/23 with Balances marginally above our targeted minimum level of £4 million.

This is especially good news since we have entered 2022/23 with a completely new set of financial challenges involving the rapid and unexpected resurgence of inflation, after an absence of more than two decades.

All members will be aware of the impact that this is having on themselves, and their residents and the Council is far from immune from these pressures. From wages to energy costs, to the higher price of fuel and higher demands from contractors, the Council's budgets are being squeezed from all angles. This represents a new and real challenge to the Council's finances. In addition, the squeeze on residents and businesses creates new demand for services and potentially reduces income streams. The Council will need to adjust to these, further adding to the budgetary challenges.

The risk that inflationary pressures creates on the Budget has been flagged as one of the highest financial risks facing the Council right now, and my response will be similar to that

successfully adopted last year, i.e., restraint in spending, maximising income collection and the continued efforts to drive out inefficiency from the Council's processes.

Audit

As I reported to the last meeting of Council, the Audit of the Council's financial accounts for 2020/21 was not completed by the 30th September 2021 deadline. This is an issue repeated across the majority of councils and is associated with a lack of capacity within the Auditing firms that undertake this work. Our officers have been working closely with Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), being the body who originally let the Audit contract and our Auditors (Deloitte). We have agreed a way forward and I am pleased to say that the Auditors are now on-site working through 2020/21's Accounts and with the expectation of following straight on to 2021/22's. Together with the new Chair of Audit and Governance Committee, (Cllr Bolton), I will continue to keep members updated on progress.

Qualis

The financial performance of Qualis continues to be regularly reported to the Cabinet and Stronger Council. The results from the second quarter of their 3rd year of trading were presented to Cabinet on 6th June and Stronger Council on 21st July. The report shows that Qualis made an overall loss during the year to date for reasons consistent with those previously reported. Essentially, a combination of Qualis continuing to carry costs associated with the development at Roundhills, Waltham Abbey, (which cannot be taken to the Balance Sheet until Planning consent is obtained), together with ongoing difficulties in finding suitable regeneration sites to acquire within the district. With these exceptions, performance is broadly in line with the Business Plan expectations.

Council Tax Energy Payments

The recent work since the last report to Council has seen the distribution of £150 Council Tax Energy Payments to qualifying residents. The first phase of payments was made automatically to those who paid by Direct Debit. This has resulted in £3.2m being paid to over 21,000 households. This phase was completed by the end of June and Members should not underestimate the amount of manual intervention required to complete this process as fraud and verification requirements form part of this.

The current phase involves processing the applications of those who do not pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit. The Council sent out 10,500 letters to those eligible for the £150 payment so their bank details could be provided. At the time of writing the Council has received around 3,500 completed applications received on-line or through assistance at the Community Hub. All these applications are going through the verification and anti-fraud checks. Those that successfully complete this process will be sent their payments on 15th July. All non-successful applications will have to be revisited individually and manually and will receive payments after the 15th July as their applications are validated subsequently.

However as publicised previously those who do not return an application will in any case have £150 credited to their Council Tax account which some of those identified as eligible may already have preferred to happen.

Revenues and Benefits Service at the Waltham Abbey Hub

In addition to the Community Hub based at the Civic Offices in Epping, the Revenues and Benefits service have joined our partners at the Waltham Abbey Community Hub co-ordinated by Citizens Advice and based at the Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre on the Ninefields Estate. Currently, the Hub opens every Tuesday from 10.00am to 2.30pm

There are only 4 Partners involved currently which are:-

Epping Forest DC – Revenues and Benefits
 Citizens Advice
 DWP
 Community Mental Health (this is under NHS EPUT)

Whilst this is primarily intended to support the people living in the Waltham Abbey area, there is free car parking available for customers to use if they live further away or have the need to drive.

Revenues Collection Performance at the end of Q1 2022/23

The figures below the comparative position at the end of each month for the last 4 years. The 2019 figures show a pre-Covid comparison.

Business Rates

30 April 2022	10.74%	31 May 2022	21.56%	30 June 2022	28.95%
30 April 2021	9.67%	31 May 2021	20.92%	30 June 2021	20.25%
30 April 2020	7.31%	31 May 2020	13.41%	30 June 2020	20.69%
30 April 2019	10.01%	31 May 2019	20.65%	30 June 2019	28.41%

*due to the end of Extended Retail Rate Relief, which increased the collectable debit by £8m

Council Tax

30 April 2022	10.09%	31 May 2022	18.70%	30 June 2022	26.97%
30 April 2021	10.02%	31 May 2021	18.01%	30 June 2021	26.69%
30 April 2020	9.42%	31 May 2020	17.26%	30 June 2020	25.26%
30 April 2019	10.45%	31 May 2019	18.92%	30 June 2019	27.22%

The Q1 collection figures look to be restoring to a position that resembles pre-pandemic levels. This year may yet prove to be a very challenging collection environment as the cost-of-living crisis affects both business and residents' ability to pay. Consequently, a close eye will be kept on these key income streams.

Benefit Claim Performance

The turnaround times of processing Benefits claims by the Team is better than the national average which ensures our residents receive the support they need quicker than is seen in many other areas.

Q1 22/23	New claims	EFDC 10.9 days	Nationally 19 days
	Changes of Circumstances	EFDC 6.4 days	Nationally 8 days

Caseload count comparison

	Number of live claims	
Year	2021	2022
April	6976	6603
May	6955	6576
June	6923	6524

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Finance Portfolio (Economic Development)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted.

Shared Prosperity Fund Update:

The UK Government has created a new funding stream (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) over the next three years from money it would previously have paid into the EU's Structural Funds. The UK Government has chosen to use this funding to further its Levelling Up agenda. Every Council will get an allocation to administer and Epping Forest District Council will receive £1 million in total phased over the next three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25). The core objective of the fund is to ensure 'by 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top-performing and other areas closing'.

Proposed interventions must tie in with three broad investment themes, defined by Government including, Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills (spending in this area can only be made in Year 3). At the time of writing, officers are still working on the investment plan for the bid which must be submitted by the 1st of August 2022. Officers have engaged with three local MPs and Cabinet to get a steer on an approach for the fund. Extensive consultation has also been carried out with Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities to explore areas for joint working, and with local town/parish councils and business networking groups to understand their priorities for the fund. Internally meetings have been with officers around the council from housing and communities to understand how this fund can enhance and add value to existing council programmes. As a result of these conversations projects and interventions proposed are scoped around these key local themes:

- Supporting rural communities.
- Investment in deprived areas and communities.
- Establishing pathways to work.
- Business support.
- Education and digital skills.

Following submission, the UK Government will review the investment plan to ensure it is compliant, and if successful, the council can expect to receive funding by October 2022.

Economic Development Programme:

The Economic Development Team has been focused on ensuring the timely submission of the council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. However, there are other wider ongoing programmes the team has completed since the last Portfolio Holder report or is currently delivering.

- A subsidised membership package to the FSB has so far seen the sign-up of 196 businesses in the district.
- Working with Colbea the council has launched a 'Low Carbon sustainability training' programme to support local businesses in improving their carbon footprint, whilst benefiting from potential cost savings.
- The Economic Development Team continues to support the shop local 'LoyalFree' app which it is seeking to continue to support via the Shared Prosperity Fund. The team has been working on a strategy to improve the take up of the app across the district. There are currently 121 businesses signed up to the app.
- Officers are finalising a report which details the feedback of businesses interviewed via a survey conducted earlier in the year (February/March 2022). This survey identified key challenges local businesses were facing as government support covering Covid19 restrictions was removed.
- A new inward investment website 'Invest Epping Forest' is being finalised. The purpose of the website will be to encourage businesses to relocate to the area, whilst also signposting local businesses to support provided in the area through the economic development team and other relevant agencies.

Business E-Newsletter/Database:

The council's monthly business e-newsletter 'Business Matters' has now been successfully running for over a year, as a fundamental mechanism for providing key information to local business inboxes on local grants, the latest financial support, training, investment opportunities, advice and guidance and the work of the District Council. The latest June edition has recently been published to 2102 business recipients.

General Economic Briefing:

Unemployment in the area was 2,425 as of May 2022. Unemployment has fallen every month this year so far, however it still remains significantly above pre pandemic rates.

Visitor Economy:

The tourism website continues to perform at levels approaching those pre-pandemic even though the most popular what's-on section has not regained the number of events previously seen across the district during the summer. During May, traditionally seen as the start of the 'holiday' season, the site had 6,833 users with 12,597 pages viewed. This was slightly up on the comparable 2019 figures. The most popular pages viewed show a continued interest in the staycation market with general district information, directions/parking, and accommodation searches maintaining the prominence they gained during the pandemic. This is in line with the growing interest in our area being reported by Visit Essex and may be fuelled in part by the marketing campaigns they are targeting at the midlands, Liverpool and north of England. Work is currently being carried out to upgrade the website to bring it in line with other tourism sites across the country and enable full features to be smartphone friendly. Data shows that smart devices are now the most popular way of accessing the site.

On the 27th of June, the first meeting of the Epping Forest Visitor Board was held since the beginning of Covid. This was a face-to-face event hosted by the Royal Gunpowder Mills. The general view of the areas and attractions represented was that the full offer to visitors was being resumed where possible but that lack of staff, in particular volunteers, was hampering a full return. Staffing issues have also been raised in other engagements with District businesses as well as being a major concern in the district's hospitality industry. The very real opportunities brought by the strengthening staycation market, driven by continued uncertainty and disruption around foreign travel and concerns over inflation, are acknowledged with revived interest in cross-border working to build and market an appealing and comprehensive holiday destination in our sub region.

Work underway during the pandemic, which projected longer-term benefits for the visitor and hospitality industry, included the town centre improvements, investment in footfall monitoring with Huq, the establishment of the LoyalFree app for traders, and free membership deals for local businesses to join the Federation of Small Businesses and Visit Essex. LoyalFree and the free membership schemes have been widely taken up by visitor-facing businesses. Continuing to maintain and build upon this level of support is also reflected in proposals for grant spending under the forthcoming Prosperity Fund.

Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ):

The latest DIZ Smart Place Seminar 'How Can Digital Help Save the Planet?' took place on 13th May featuring guest speakers and presentations from Microsoft, CGI, Jacobs and Mobile UK, the industry body for the four main Mobile Network operators (MNOs). Over 80 individuals from local, national and international organisations registered to attend the event which looked at key issues around digital and sustainability including the value of data in addressing climate change, the future of working from home, how 5G connectivity can support efforts to reduce carbon emissions and how digital can drive out sustainable outcomes. There was also a hugely insightful Q&A session and a set of workshops to explore what collective efforts might be agreed to address climate change. The Executive Report from the event has now been published and distributed and can be downloaded from the DIZ website at <https://diz.org.uk/diz-resources/>

The DIZ has been working with a number of organisations to shape its approach to the emergence of 5G technology. With outline plans to deliver a further Smart Place Seminar later in the year on the subject of what 5G can do, the DIZ has developed a set of co-branded guidance documents that explore 5G's impact on various key issues. The guides cover subjects such as healthcare and the emergency services, climate change and the environment, our high streets and working from home. These are supplemented by a co-branded toolkit for local authorities and a briefing note for elected members and planning authorities which it is hoped will be launched at the seminar. The DIZ is also working with UK5G to explore how it can enhance its communications and messaging around 5G. This piece of work is due to complete by September and again, it is hoped that outputs from this can be tied into the seminar.

The DIZ is also exploring with the Connected Places Catapult (CPC) the delivery of a CPC Connections Café in September which will look to bring a number of key local large employers and businesses together with a range of local SMEs to explore how they can collaborate and work together in order to maximise benefit for the area. It will look, in particular at how this eco-system might develop better digital innovation and support efforts to address climate sustainability.

The DIZ has been recognised as a Finalist in the Public / Public Partnership category of the LGC Awards 2022 and in early-June the DIZ Programme Manager and a colleague from the NHS attended the final Judging Panel for the awards to present the case for DIZ to win the award. On 20th July the Awards Ceremony will take place in Central London where the category winners will be announced.

You can follow the DIZ on social media via Twitter:

@DizMatters <https://twitter.com/DizMatters>

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Finance Portfolio (Asset Management)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted.

Epping Forest Shopping Park

I am pleased to report that the roof repairs are progressing well and should be completed shortly.

Work around the reconfiguration of the car park is being considered by officers in light of the congestion caused at peak times particularly around the Christmas period.

Brooker Road Industrial Estate Waltham Abbey

New lease completions are due on 141/142 & 144 Brooker Road and are currently in the hands of our solicitors.

188 Brooker Road is under offer to EFDC subject to surveys and other conditions of its offer being cleared as part of the due diligence process.

Civic Offices 2nd floor let

Positive news in that our tenant is ahead of their target with approximately 20% of the floor space already let and continues to work with the EFDC concierge regarding further commercial opportunities within the Civic.

Cartersfield Road, Waltham Abbey

The redevelopment programme is gathering momentum with site Investigations carried out last month. EFDC are liaising with tenants to secure vacant possession to coincide with the projected start on site in Q4 2022.

Unit 4 Orbital Business Park, Waltham Abbey

EFDC has taken possession of the unit following the former tenant going into liquidation. The property will require refurbishment for reletting, anticipated in Q3 2022.

Landmark House, Loughton

I am pleased to report reported that the final unit at the Landmark has been let, Unit A, to a local gym operator. This matter is now with solicitors and we are awaiting fit-out plans.

Public conveniences

Officers are reviewing the provision of the 5 super loo toilet units across the District as they are not being well used.

An option being explored is a Community Toilet Scheme whereby local businesses open up their facilities to the public in return for a fee from the Council.

Any business interested in the scheme would be formally vetted and facilities inspected before acceptance and then on an on-going basis.

North Weald Airfield

The Airfields event programme is recovering after being adversely affected by the pandemic over the past 2 years which is good news.

The Essex Carp Show took place at the Airfield for the first time at the end of March and proved extremely popular.

The Wings & Wheels Remote Control Model Spectacular took place at the end of last month and was well attended over the 2 days.

On July 17th the Airfield will welcome back the Damn Yankees American Car Show after an absence of 2 years.

North Weald Flying Services are planning a new 2 day ground show and fly in on August 28th and 29th when we can expect an array of visiting aircraft, classic cars & military vehicles.

Aviation continues to be very busy with the flight training schools continuing to flourish.

NPAS have recently had one of their Met helicopters back from Lippitts Hill due to maintenance at that location, however, this appears to have passed without causing any issues to neighbours some of whom were informed directly.

The market continues to be extremely busy with trader and customer numbers being high.

The HMRC Inland Border Facility is extremely quiet and it is likely that an announcement about its future will be made soon.

I am pleased to report that the final version of the Master Plan is being reviewed and all going well should be presented to Cabinet as soon as the Local Plan is adopted.

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Wellbeing & Community Partnership
Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Patel

Recommending:

That the report of the Wellbeing & Community Partnership Portfolio Holder be noted.

RideLondon - Cycling Activation Programme & Community Engagement

A comprehensive programme of cycling events was organised for residents of all ages in the lead up to the RideLondon weekend including an adult all-day ride to the Olympic Park, led women's rides, family group rides and bike maintenance workshops hosted at Epping and Ongar Fire Stations. Residents are able to continue with their new-found interest in cycling by engaging with the Council's yearlong Cycling4Health programme which provides weekly rides across the district catering for all abilities and also includes bike hire for those without their own cycles.

To complement the RideLondon Activation Toolkit distributed to all primary schools in the district prior to the event, CCW worked with local clubs and cycling providers to offer BMX and Mountain Biking sessions for schools located along the RideLondon route. Four schools took up this offer, with one school applying to the Active Essex Capacity Grant to cover costs. During half term, inclusive cycling sessions were provided for children with special educational needs and disabilities in partnership with Trailnet. This gave children the opportunity to try specially adapted bikes.

The RideLondon weekend itself saw a real community buzz over Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 May. Ahead of the two-day cycling festival, CCW approached community groups to invite them to be part of the fan-zone area. A total of 12 community stalls were sited opposite the Civic Offices on Saturday including; Epping Forest Re-use, St. Clare's Hospice, Trailnet and Canalability. Partners from the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex Police were also present alongside the Council's own Community Champions who were on hand to promote CCW's wider services and activities. Fun bikes which people could peddle to make fruit smoothies proved popular, as did the pavement art for children. Feedback from the public was resoundingly positive over the weekend with one resident emailing CCW to say "What a wonderful day we had in Epping High Street (Saturday). Weather perfect, shops, cafes and pubs buzzing. The atmosphere was amazing and joyful. The organisation was unbelievably good."

CCW staff were in Ongar High Street on Sunday delivering the same activities which were equally well received by the community. Staff also supported residents at the Norway House Homeless Hostel to host a joint RideLondon / Queens Platinum Jubilee party. One of the residents DJ'd and party games were provided for the children. The residents enjoyed a buffet and engaged with arts and crafts.

CCW are investigating how funding opportunities such as the Big Bike Revival and Essex Cycle Grant might allow us to create a RideLondon legacy moving forwards.

Refresh of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Work is underway to review and refresh the current Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-28. The Strategy is overseen by the multi-agency Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board and priority objectives are collaboratively agreed and delivered on through a whole system, partnership approach. On behalf of the Board, CCW has led on the facilitation of a comprehensive consultation exercise to help inform the refreshed Strategy. Alongside an online public consultation platform, focus groups have been held with numerous local community groups, GPs, the Youth Council and Council staff. A Stakeholder Consultation Conference event was hosted at the Civic offices on 7th June with 55 representatives from over 20 organisations in attendance. The refresh of the district's Health & Wellbeing Strategy is in line with Essex County Council's refresh of the Joint Essex Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the emerging 10-year West Essex Health & Care Strategy (formally known as the One Health & Care Partnership).

It is anticipated that the new Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy will be launched in the Autumn with four refreshed multi-agency action groups, which will be themed in line with the Robert Wood Johnson model around the wider determinants of health, being established in line with this.

Health & Wellbeing Initiatives: Finalists in National Housing Heroes Awards 2022

The Community & Culture Team was named as a Finalist in two categories at the recent prestigious national Housing Heroes Awards 2022 held in Manchester in June. Working in collaboration with colleagues from the Council's Estates and Land Management team, initiatives have been established to improve the health and wellbeing of tenants and the wider community on key estates. There were 350 entries for the 2022 awards. The two categories the team was a Finalist in were; Team of the Year (1001-15000 homes) and Best Company Health & Wellbeing Initiative which highlighted the More than Bricks and Mortar Project alongside the Start Well, Be Well and Age Well as aspects of the district's Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Community Champions

Building on the success of being awarded "Team of the Year" at the Civic Awards ceremony in March, the Council's 26 Community Champions have been hard at work. Numerous events and celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee were organised in communities across the district. With a little support from CCW, Champions have recently held picnics and fetes, afternoon teas for sheltered housing residents, staged old fashioned games, run quizzes and supported tree planting days. All activities have been heralded as a great success and are well promoted on the Champion's social media platforms.

Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance

Supported by CCW, the Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance (EFDA) completed a Dementia Friendly Communities Annual Assessment in May 2022 and has been awarded the status of 'Working to become a Dementia Friendly Community'. Partnership working co-ordinated by CCW staff continues to encompass a whole range of activities, advice sessions and Dementia awareness training. The Museum successfully achieved Dementia Friendly Venue Status in October 2021 and so work is now underway to achieve the same accreditation for The Limes Centre in Chigwell.

MiLife C19 - Adolescent Mental Health Resource

Building on the success of the MiLife C19 adolescent mental health project CCW, in partnership with the Red Balloon Foundation, has updated the MiLife website and online resources. The award-winning educational resources, which originated from work of the Epping Forest Youth Council, will now also be promoted to schools outside the Epping Forest district in order to reach a wider audience and generate revenue income for the Council. The project will be renamed MiLife Blue and will support a trauma informed response to young people dealing with mental health issues. This will sit alongside the inaugural award winning MiLife Green resource which relates to more general mental health awareness.

Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC)

The EFYC induction training programme for newly elected Youth Councillors continues and will include; mentoring, diversity & equality, team building, communication skills and the role and qualities of a good Youth Councillor. To date the new cohort of Youth Councillors has contributed to consultations on the district's Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Quality of Life Mapping Project.

Youth Councillors have been pleased to welcome the Leader of Council, Cllr Chris Whitbread, to their schools and have joined the Leader and their Head Teachers to discuss youth democracy.

Southend Youth Councillors will be visiting Epping Forest on 26 July and the EFYC will host a youth debate in the Chamber as part of the day.

The Youth Council has received the first instalment of its Jack Petchey Award Funding for this year. The EFYC receives £1,800 annually with a top up grant of up to £1,200 for project work and educational visits.

#Consequences and Stop & Think Roadshows for local teenagers

The #Consequences Roadshow has been delivered in 6 of the district's secondary schools in this academic year with 1720 pupils attending this educational community safety awareness and wellbeing event. The Stop & Think roadshow has been delivered in 4 secondary schools with 1265 students participating.

Adult Disability Buddy Up Project

Utilising funding of £100K secured via the West Essex Health Inequalities Committee, CCW is leading on a project across West Essex to support the health and wellbeing of adults with disabilities. There have been 14 direct referrals into the "Buddy Up" project to date, with the majority coming from the Epping Forest district. The project is being supported further by the Epping North Primary Care Network of GP practices (PCN) who have identified adults with Learning Disabilities with a BMI of over 35 as a target group.

Epping Forest District Museum

The Museum's education service continues to be in high demand with schools. In total in the financial year 2021/22 the service engaged with 10,000 children - the most successful year to date of the heritage education programme. Early signs are that this trend will continue for 22/23 clearly highlighting the value schools place on the Museum's heritage education offer.

The Museum is currently displaying the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition. Since opening on 21st May, over 1,700 people

have visited the exhibition with over £600 in donations given and £800 of sales generated in the Museum shop.

The Museum has submitted a Stage 1 application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project to work in partnership with the Lea Valley Regional Park and English Heritage to preserve important heritage in the Abbey Gardens in Waltham Abbey as well as improve interpretation on the subject of the Abbey Church. The project would be extremely high profile for the district, increasing tourism to the area and protecting major heritage within the district.

The Museum has recently been approached to acquire two Early Medieval gold coins- known as *tremisses*- found by a metal detectorist near Chipping Ongar, Essex, an important and significant addition to the Museum collection. To date, the Museum has been successful in securing £3,750 from the V&A Purchase Fund to go towards the purchase of the items along with commitment from Waltham Abbey Historical Society, Ongar Town Council and other individual donors to the value of £1,575. There are two further funding bids awaiting decision from the Headley Trust and Essex Heritage Trust for the remaining amounts in order to secure the items.

The Museum continues at pace with its “Review and Reimagine Project” to assess and digitise its photograph collection. To date 1000 photographs of the 7000 strong collection have been scanned. 12 volunteers have been recruited to help identify locations, people and scenes in the photographs to enhance the information available on the collection.

New Style “What`s On” Brochure Launched

CCW are delighted to be piloting a new style brochure for the months of July, August and September promoting its activities, programmes, events and community initiatives for all ages in one publication. Details about everything from volunteering opportunities for adults through to the school holiday programme for children and young people is now easily accessible in the “What`s on in Epping Forest” booklet available online via the Council`s website or in hard copy from the Civic Offices or Epping Forest District Museum.

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Customer Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted.

Customer Services

Community Hub

Customer usage of the Epping Community Hub continues to increase since opening in September 2021. From September to December 2021, we had 194 visits. From January to June 2022, we have seen 656 visitors. Examples of services most in demand relate to DWP, Peabody plus EFDC Homelessness, Revenues and Benefits. There were a mix of appointments and walk-ins with the majority being walk-ins. Customer feedback is very positive with 95% rating the support offered as excellent/good. We are working in collaboration with partners to continue promoting this facility to our residents and the services on offer. To find out when each organisation is at the hub visit the [Epping Community Hub webpage](#)

Customer Contact Centre

The contact centre has been impacted by the waste issues at BIFFA caused by a variety of reasons including staff shortages filled by new and temporary staff and vehicle breakdowns. Discussions with BIFFA and the waste management team are continuing to resolve these issues. Call centre agents have received praise from residents on their customer experience when calling the contact centre. As the new Portfolio Holder, I have spent some time in the shoes of our call centre agents, call shadowing to get a better insight into the customer experience as well as our employees challenging front line role. I would recommend this to all members.

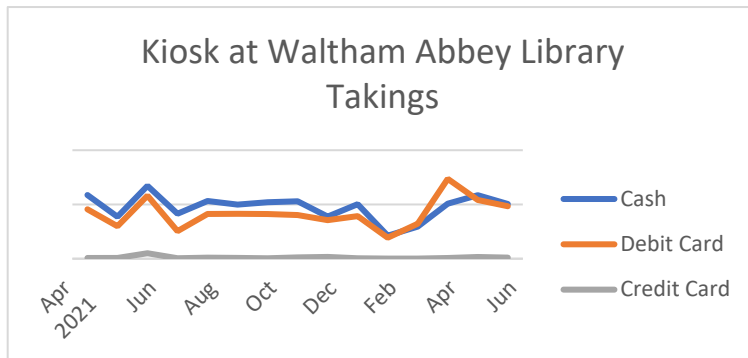
Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are reported to Stronger Council in line with quarterly timelines.

Cash Payments

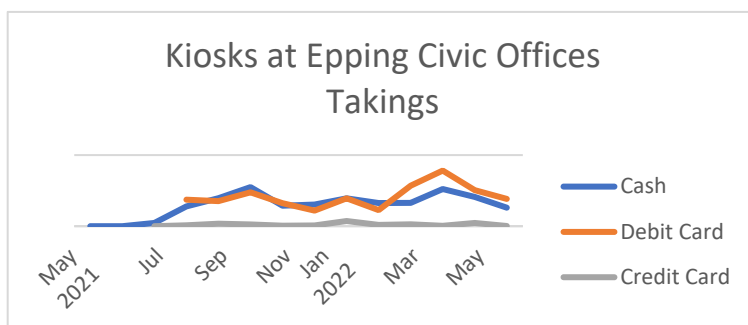
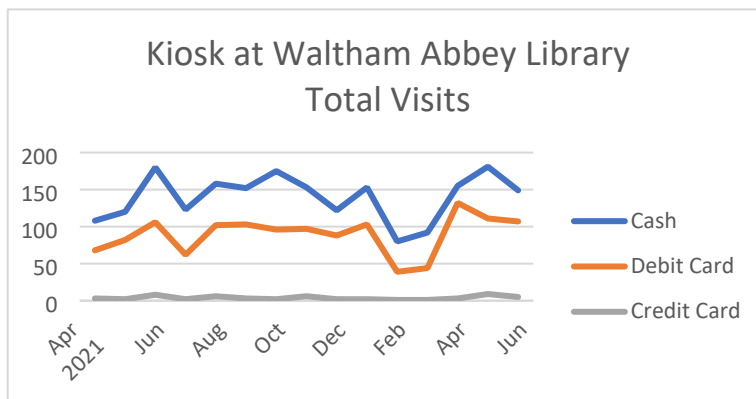
Proposals for alternative solutions for cash payers have now been finalised and were reported and agreed by Stronger Communities Select Committee on 12th July.

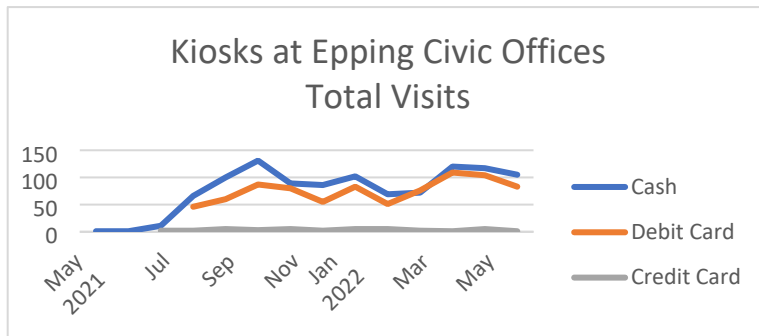
Customer billing for the new financial year in April increased contact at the Debden Cash Office although numbers dropped considerably between April and June.

A similar increase was also observed at the kiosks, with Waltham Abbey library in particular seeing a significant increase in both takings and transactions from April to June after a particularly quiet January to March.



The total value of debit card transactions exceeded cash transactions for the first time since before the Covid closure, however more individual transactions continue to use cash.





Digital strategy – Customer stream

As a reminder our aim is to make digital the preferred choice for customers to interact with us as they do in their everyday lives. Earlier on in the year we conducted an exercise find out why our customers needed to call us rather than use our online services. The results told us that:

- 23% could not find information on the website
- 21% required an in-depth discussion with officers
- 19% were chasing lack of response to calls/emails
- 15% did not know they could self-serve
- 12% found form too complicated to complete
- 10% had no access to the internet or no digital skills

The category of ‘could not find information on our website’ will be addressed by our website improvements work (see below).

For those service areas with the highest call volumes for chasing a lack of response or their callers did not know they could self-serve, they have been tasked with implementing actions to improve.

These actions include ensuring all Officers manage customer expectations on what will happen and response timelines, addressing issues with calls not being responded to and ensuring that the option to self-serve is promoted on outgoing communications. We will measure improvements by repeating this exercise later in the year to determine any changes as well as capturing feedback on improvements from the service areas.

Customer consultation sessions have been held both face to face and virtually.

Exploring the category ‘could not find information on our website’ in detail. Key messages in addition to not being able to find the information were that they find some of our forms difficult to complete and that the inconsistent look and feel throughout causes issues with trust. The search function is being fixed as a priority.

There are learnings from other Local Authorities who have undergone digital transformation. We are following in Essex County’s footsteps by developing a set of guiding principles which will be known as our ‘content strategy’ to provide consistency for Officers when writing website content. The ultimate aim being it is easy to read and accessible, in particular via mobile phones which are our residents prefer.

The intention now is to take the waste section as an example and develop improved content through reviewing and improving the front-end customer experience and back-office process. The new content strategy principles will be applied, and a mocked up improved waste section developed. Residents who expressed an interest in working

with us to improve our digital experience will be invited to test the new content for feedback. The required outcome is that we achieve our objective of providing residents with a digital experience that they can use with ease, trust it is us they are dealing with and access via any device.

Longer term, we are exploring the feasibility of using Drupal <https://www.drupal.org/industries/government> a publicly owned asset that delivers a better digital experience for residents, improves service outcomes and reduces cost through a shared pool of resources, research and expertise. The platform is built and maintained by a community of developers, content designers and digital leaders from local councils across the UK. Local Authorities currently using it quote they have seen customer focussed content and design that allows residents to access services and complete their business in a faster more efficient manner.

Digital inclusion

From 14th July we are offering digital coaching support in our Community Hub at the Civic through our partners Voluntary Action Epping Forest and West Essex Community Action Network. The initiative will provide customers the opportunity to drop-in and receive one to one digital coaching and support to complete online forms, utilise online services and acquire basic computer skills. Our hub partner DWP in particular has identified a need for support with some of their customers.

This test model will serve as the first phase in a multi phased plan to roll-out digital coaching support across the district with Waltham Abbey, Limes Farm and Ninefields which have been identified as areas in need of support in subsequent phases.

Members Digital Journey

Following collaboration with ECC and EFDC Democratic Services and ICT Managers, all dual-hatted Members can now view both their ECC and EFDC emails on their ECC Laptops. Members have welcomed this opportunity which provides the benefit of easier access to emails in one place.

During the Members email account failure in May, the Members portal was updated to provide Members access to their emails via <https://outlook.office.com/mail/> The benefit being that Members can access their email anytime, anywhere using a web browser without their iPad or the Outlook app.

A series of "How to Guides" were also uploaded to the Members Portal to assist in resetting account passwords and to provide guidance on how to register for and utilise the Member Contact Form.

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/members-portal/>

We continue to review our current systems and processes, at this time we are looking at reviewing the Member Contact form, Member Portal and Members Dashboard based on feedback received and will keep you update as this work progresses.

Member Services continue to offer IT Coaching to new and existing Members so if you feel you would benefit from a 1-2-1 session with either Lisa Bannister-Wood or Louis Walton please reach out via MemberServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Please continue to raise tickets for any ICT issues so that we can address these as quickly as possible cc via Membercontact@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Avey

Recommending:

The report of the Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management:

As part of the Great British Spring Clean 2022 that took place between the 25 March-10 April 2022 in which we had 5 litter picks during that period in Thornwood Common, Matching Tye, Roydon, Sheering and The Limes. A total of 72 bags of litter were collected.

This year, to date we have had 16 applications for support and equipment with litter picks from volunteers and 15 of those have been completed. The remaining one is due to take place shortly.

In addition to this we are very grateful and appreciative that there are many other voluntary organisations and town/parishes that carry out litter picks throughout the year.

Litter picking brings together individuals, community organisations, businesses, and councils to make a difference to the environment on their doorsteps. Feedback shows a significant increase in the number of people litter picking in the great outdoors to help their mental wellbeing, following the additional pressures triggered by the pandemic.

Missed collections update:

As you aware we are suffering from ongoing missed collections at present, we have been working closely and in daily conversations with Biffa to resolve these issues as swiftly as possible. Below are the main reasons why we are experiencing this at the present time.

Summary of Current Biffa Issues:

- National shortage of staff – Drivers, Dustmen/women and Supervisors/Managers and retention of staff post recruitment. Drivers are being approached and offered more money to work on HGVs etc elsewhere. Waste collectors and drivers are being abused and threatened by members of the public and walking off the job.
- Local Knowledge – The knock-on effect of these issues is that there are not regular crews doing regular rounds and consequently local knowledge of “Assisted Collections” for example has been lost and these properties have in some instances been missed.
- Fleet Management – Vehicles breaking down and vehicle maintenance impacting on the rounds. Hire Vehicles are being used but these are not equipped with CCTV cameras so this impacts on the missed collection/BNO process. There is a national shortage of new and hire vehicles as well as long lead in time for new parts and new vehicles.
- Access Issues – some roads throughout the District have access issues due to parked cars and in addition new drivers are having difficulties manoeuvring narrower/restricted streets.

Leisure Management:

Contract Performance

Leisure centre usage trends have started well this financial year, with good performances across the four centres. Swimming is still very strong with high numbers of attendance; however gym membership is slightly down on forecast. Management fees for FY22-23 revert to fixed monthly fees as operational risk reverts to Places Leisure. Open book accounting will continue on a quarterly basis, instead of monthly.

Energy Saving Initiatives

Working in partnership with our leisure contractor Places Leisure, EFDC are exploring energy saving initiatives at our leisure facilities to reduce operating costs and reduce carbon emissions. The initiatives include LED lighting conversions, pool covers, variable speed drives and BMS and is estimated to cost £140,000. Funding to implement these initiatives are being explored.

Procurement and Contracts:

Insurance Tender

The Procurement and Contracts Team have been conducting a re-tender of the Council's Insurance requirements, which has now been awarded and came into effect on 01/07/2022.

For the Council's main Insurance tender, the annual premium was reduced from £719,536.88 per annum to £569,485.28 per annum, which over the maximum five-year contract could see savings of £750,258. By advertising the tender with the option of individual lots or a package deal, we were able to assess the market and get the best deal possible. After assessing the bids, a decision was made to award the lots individually, with 9 of the 12 lots being awarded to Zurich Insurance, 2 to Risk Management Partners and 1 to Maven Public Sector.

For the Leaseholder element of the Insurance, the lowest cost and highest quality bid came from Protector Insurance, but still led to an increase in premium from £81,089.57 per annum to £188,672.91 per annum. The increased premium is due to a number of reasons, in particular the rising cost of construction materials due to inflation and supply shortages. This element of the insurance is recharged to Leaseholders, and they have been informed of the outcome of the tender.

Procurement Checklist

The Procurement and Contract Development Team created a new Checklist to help colleagues who run Procurement processes on behalf of EFDC, and from 01 April it has been mandatory that a checklist is completed before a tender goes ahead. The aim of the checklist is to ensure that buyers are considering all relevant factors before proceeding with a Procurement process, such as ensuring budget are in place, checking for collaboration opportunities (within EFDC and with other Councils) and ensuring all departments that will be impacted have been consulted prior to going ahead.

The checklist has received positive feedback since coming into effect and the document will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is capturing all the relevant information.

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Technical Services Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor K Williamson

Recommending:

That the report of the Technical Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Regulatory & Technical Services:

Licensing

Her Majesty, The Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

As part of Her Majesty, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, an expectation was placed on local authorities to encourage street parties and other events by promoting them through their communication channels and by facilitating any necessary road closures etc.

To make the process as simple and accessible for residents, the following changes were implemented.

- Waive the £194 fee for community/charitable events. This is in line with the previous decision on 29th July 2014 and in respect of VE Day celebrations.
- Reduce the 6-week application period to 4.
- The Councils Licensing Team to undertake consultation with Essex Highways. The applicant is responsible for notifying neighbours, businesses, Town Parish Council and anyone who will be affected by the road closure (previously this was the applicant's responsibility).
- Remove the need for risk assessments and substitute with guidance and advice.
- Remove the requirement for public liability insurance. There is no requirement from central government to have public liability insurance and many councils do not insist on this.

Guidance notes specific to Her Majesty, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations were drafted and sent out to residents along with the relevant application form. Guidance was also published on the Councils website and wider engagement undertaken via Corporate Communications.

In total the Councils Licensing Team processed 47 applications and issued 45 road closure notices (some were withdrawn as no longer required). The team also worked with and provided guidance to many event organisers including schools, resident's associations, and Town/Parish Councils etc. where road closures were not required.

Review/Appeal - Gardeners Arms, 103 York Hill, Loughton, IG10 1RX

The Community Resilience Team applied for the review of the premises licence following a history of noise complaints, issuing of a Community Protection Notice and Noise Abatement

Notice. The review sought to add several conditions to the premises licence including restrictions on the use of the external areas.

Statutory consultation was undertaken by way of public notices being placed at the premises and with the responsible authorities. In addition, and in accordance with Council policy, ward Councillors, Town Council, and residents living within a 150-metre radius were written to and notified directly.

During the consultation period, representations in support of the review were received from Councillor Chris Pond, Loughton Town Council, Loughton Residents Association Plans Group and 15 local residents.

A further 23 representations in support of the premises along with an on-line petition in support of the premises were also received.

The matter was determined by the Councils Licensing Sub-Committee on 19th April and following submissions from the Community Resilience Team, legal representation acting on behalf of the premises and local residents, the Committee determined to impose the conditions requested and to add the following restriction:

- Customers are not permitted to take drinks outside the pub or to consume alcohol in any external area save for a maximum of 30 people seated at tables within the horseshoe area only and tables and chairs shall be removed from other outdoor areas.

The premises licence holder has lodged an appeal against the Councils decision. The appeal will be determined by the Magistrates Court, and we are currently waiting for the matter to be listed.

As an appeal has been lodged, the Councils decision remains on obedience until the appeal has been determined and the Courts have given their decision on whether the Councils decision was appropriate. Those who made a representation have been advised accordingly i.e., there are currently no restrictions on numbers using external areas at this time.

It is our intention to fully defend the appeal. Should the Courts rule in favour of the Council, we will be seeking legal costs incurred in defending the decision. However, should the Courts determine the Councils decision unreasonable, costs may be awarded against us. These costs would be payable in addition to our own.

Hearing - Shish Meze 18 Market Place, Abridge, RM4 1UA

During the consultation period for a new premises licence in respect of the above, the Councils Licensing Team received 19 representations from residents, the parish council, Essex Police and the Councils Community Resilience Team opposing the application.

At a Licensing Sub-Committee hearing on 5th July, Essex Police and the Community Resilience Team confirmed their withdrawal following the agreement of conditions with the applicant. The application was granted subject to the conditions agreed and additional conditions imposed by the Licensing Sub-Committee.

Taxi Tariff

Following concerns expressed by the licensed taxi trade, the Councils Licensing Team will be undertaking a review of taxi fares applied to customers using a Hackney carriage within the district. Under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, any charge made by a Hackney carriage, must not exceed the table of fares published by the licensing authority, irrespective of how that journey was arranged (from a rank or street, being hailed or pre-booking the journey).

Before any published fares can be increased the Council must undertake consultation with the trade and public consultation by way of placing a public notice in a local newspaper.

The current fee tariff has not been reviewed for the last 8 years and was scheduled to be reviewed as part of the wider taxi policy review later this year. However, due to the

unprecedented fuel increases, it has been necessary to bring that review forward to support our licensed taxi trade.

We are currently benchmarking our fares with neighbouring Councils. Once the proposal is finalised and we have undertaken the statutory consultation, we will seek formal adoption of the proposed fees. The setting of fees is a function of the Executive and therefore cannot be undertaken by a regulatory committee or full Council.

Legal advice has been taken on this matter to see if an emergency surcharge can be applied as an interim solution. Unfortunately, we have been advised that the legislation provides no mechanism for an emergency fuel surcharge and therefore this is not possible.

Pavement Licensing – proposal to be extended permanently from 2022

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill proposes to make the regime for pavement licences issued under the Business and Planning Act permanent.

Pavement licensing was introduced in 2020 through emergency legislation in response to the COVID pandemic. Its intent was a simplified and fast track route for pubs, restaurants, and cafes to obtain a temporary permission to place furniture including outdoor tables and seating on the highway, allowing them to increase their outdoor capacity safely, quickly and at a low cost.

The regime was extended in 2021 and is currently due to expire on 30th September 2022 however, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill proposes to make pavement licensing a permanent fixture subject to the following amendments:

- Amend the fee councils can charge applicants, increasing it from £100 to £350 for premises which already hold a pavement licence, and £500 for new applicants.
- Extend the public consultation period and council determination period from 7 days to 14 days.
- Extend the maximum duration of pavement licences from 1 year to 2 years. The length of a licence is however at the discretion of the local authority.
- Provide that pavement Licences can also be amended by the local authority with the consent of the licence holder if it is considered that the conditions on the licence are not being met.
- Prohibit a local authority from granting a tables and chairs licence under the old regime (Highways Act 1980) if a pavement permit is capable of being granted under this legislation.
- Insert a new Enforcement schedule providing powers to the local authority to remove furniture if a premise is not abiding by its pavement licence conditions and hours.

One of the current benefits of the existing procedure is that once a pavement licence is issued, the premises automatically benefits from planning permission for the furniture for the duration of the licence. There is no proposal to change this.

Any licence with a current expiry date of 30th September 2022 (or earlier) will still expire and a renewal application will be required if the premises wishes to continue providing tables and chairs outside. Licences without an expiry date will automatically expire 2 years after the Bill is enacted.

The Bill is currently at Committee stage in the House of Commons having had its 1st and 2nd reading.

Taxi Driver – Licence Revocation

A taxi driver has had his licence revoked due to an ongoing investigation for drink driving offences. The driver was involved in a road traffic collision whilst carrying a fare onboard,

passengers received minor injuries. Police attended the scene and whilst the taxi driver was not at fault, an alcohol roadside sample of 91 which is three times the legal limit of 35.

Essex Police notified the Council and the driver's licence was revoked with immediate effect on the grounds of public safety. The driver has the right of appeal against the Council's decision.

Crooked Billet, Nazeing, EN9 2LD – Application for a new premises licence

Application for a new premises licence has been submitted in respect of the above premises. The public house previously held a premises licence for a number of years however, that licence lapsed following the passing of the licence holder. Under the Licensing Act a premises licence will automatically lapse if the licence holder dies. The Act does allow for the transfer of the licence however, this must be done within 28 days of the licence holder's death.

Unfortunately, we were not informed of the licence holder's passing and it only came to light when our Police Licensing colleagues informed us of a new manager at the premises. The premises were contacted, and it was established that the licence holder was deceased and regrettably the 28-day period in which the licence could be transferred had already passed and the premises was operating without a licence.

We have assisted the premises where possible and provided guidance on how to apply for a new premises licence and the use of Temporary Event Notices as an interim measure. The premises can continue to offer food and soft drinks, but no alcohol. A new application has now been submitted and the consultation is due to end on 14th July.

Under the Act, where no representations are received tacit consent applies and the licence is automatically deemed granted. However, in this instance the new applicant has sought later hours, and this has resulted in several representations from local residents. Where representations are received and not withdrawn the matter must be referred to the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee to be determined. Assuming this is the case, it is likely that the hearing will take place mid-August. In the interim there is no temporary authorisation that can be applied, and the premises cannot sell alcohol.

Community Resilience Team

EFDC Policing Team & ASB Team

Epping Market – Monday patrols are to continue for a further 10-week period beyond June based on the fact that it appears that the high visibility presence is acting as a suitable deterrent. The team have been deploying overt and covert tactics with zero reported thefts during June.

Operation Photon – this is the partnership aspect of an investigation into an organised crime group. This is ongoing and involves regular contact with EFDC and other police partners to build intelligence. During June this consisted of a licensing check at a venue in Epping linked to the OCG as well as intelligence-led stop checks. There is collaborative working across Environmental Health, Licensing and Planning teams for this tasking.

Limes Farm, Chigwell – tasking in relation to rise in perception of ASB and crime in the area. Great Eastern Path – following concerns raised by Cllr, additional patrols and other problem-solving measures have been put in place to combat crime and ASB including use of CCTV equipment.

Epping Fire Station Open Day, the team provided support to fire colleagues which involved engaging with local adults and children in attendance.

Officers attended the annual PFCC hub conference gave a presentation on the Epping Forest hub. The group, Youth Unity visited Limes Primary school following concerns around exploitation and grooming.

ASB Awareness Week commences w/c 18th July. Areas to be visited are Shelly Ongar, Hill House Waltham Abbey, Limes Farm Chigwell, Debden Broadway.

Enviro Enforcement

Prosecution for 5 x breach of CPN fine and costs £3900

Gardeners Arms, further to the Licensing update above, the team are continuing to investigate where required.

Orchard Gardens, Waltham Abbey, the esident pleaded guilty to breaches of a Community Protection Notice on 1st June. He was fined £130 and for costs of £3,900. We are now applying for forfeiture of the seized animals, the application for forfeiture has been listed at Basildon Magistrate Court on 22/07/2022

Sheesh, Chigwell, there is a Court hearing on 4th August for breach of a noise abatement notice section 80. Formal action for non-compliance of Community Protection Notice.

In a joint initiative the team are working with Police and other Council teams to carry out vehicle Stop & Check Waste Licence enforcement for unlicensed waste carriers, business premises waste compliance visits and further taxi licencing compliance.

The graffiti project for Centre Drive path with the Community Payback Team is delayed due to uncertainties on land ownership between TFL and private ownership.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding work remains busy with 22 new cases, The senior officer is now monitoring Qualis referrals (agreed after discussion at last Corporate Safeguarding Group) and this is having a positive impact as referrals have increased.

CCTV

Requests for CCTV have increased by 28% this past month a total of 35 for June. The team are working with Kent/Essex Police regarding the introduction of DAMS (Digital Asset Management System). At present a mapping process is being conducted to see where possible time and money savings could be achieved with the use of DAMS. This is in part with the Essex Region CCTV Group of which EFDC play a lead role.

Upgrade projects in line with the CCTV forecast strategy have seen the successful implementation of systems in High Road Loughton, Ongar car parks, Townhead depot and Springfields Waltham Abbey. All were completed on time.

Procurement for North Weald Airfield CCTV improvement works are being prepared and expected to be tendered for in the Autumn.

Environmental Protection and Drainage Team

In the warm sunny climate, the team have responded to reduced flooding calls but have seen an increase in pollution and odour complaints. Environmental pollution of watercourses may occur from misconnections or private sewage systems and with less rain and dilution, odour nuisance can occur. The team continues to respond to planning applications across flood risk and contaminated land as well as giving input into flood mitigation schemes.

The private water supply charging scheme is approaching the end of the first year in recovering 50% of sampling costs and in October will recover full costs from site owners. A new charging scheme for Environmental Information Regulation requests for property and contaminated land searches was implemented at the start of June and has been used successfully.

Highway Rangers

The rangers continue to work on reported issues from both Essex County Council and those reported by Members and residents. Recent jobs completed include installing several new

finger posts, hedge cutting and pavement clearances, offensive graffiti clearances and the installation of a new bollard scheme at Langley Green in Nazeing. Many reports that are made to the team are rejected as they are works that the rangers cannot work on such as defective streetlights, potholes or private hedges which remain the responsibility of Essex Highways

Fleet Operations

The driver training programme is ongoing, internal driving test and licence checks are being carried out for Council staff. A new apprentice is in place, one day a week with potential to increase to full time placement subject to examination results in July.

A new ramp and tyre replacement equipment are to be installed imminently that will increase capacity for external servicing and repairs. The team are now increasing in repairs to MOT failures and servicing and repairs offered to members of the public.

The team attained accreditation in June for the Motor Ombudsman Accreditation of compliance/audit, RAC accreditation in process for “approved repairer” status. OR codes now used to promote the business and assist customers in online MOT bookings.

Grounds Maintenance

teams have been busy over the spring and early summer months with mowing operations to ensure our public spaces and highway verges are maintained in good order. Obstacles in the grass areas are sprayed around to reduce mechanical cutting and the spring flowering bulb areas around the district have now been cut in line with good horticultural practice. Hand mowing and general grounds maintenance of communal back gardens and sheltered housing sites continues as does the monitoring and upkeep of the Council owned play areas.

The longer days and warm weather have encouraged the growth of shrubs and hedgerows, and these will be targeted to minimise their encroachment onto public footways and the highway. The green waste generated from this work is taken for recycling at a local Biogen centre where green waste is turned into an environmentally friendly soil improver.

The spring flowering bedding schemes provided by our nursery team have now been replaced with a variety of summer flowering plants including geraniums, nicotiana and impatiens. This year they have been designed with a red, white, and blue theme to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee and provide eye-catching displays in our towns and villages right through to the autumn. The summer bedding designs have been well received by residents along with much praise for the efforts of the team.

The planned replacement of the Grounds fleet of trucks is now completed. These modern and more fuel-efficient vehicles are being brought into service and include 4 electric vans that support the Council's initiative to reduce its carbon footprint.

Countrycare

The woodlands have all been visited with multiple visits to Chigwell Row Wood, Linder's Field and Roughtally's Wood. New interpretation signs were erected on some of the sites to make them welcoming, footpath signs and bridges have been repaired after vandalism, two chestnut-palling fences were erected at Linder's Field to make safe the ponds, toad hotels and bee hotels were dug, and bat boxes hung. After a private donation four ash trees were planted at Tree Top Meadow.

At Bobbingworth a new hard-standing path to create a circular walk was finished and the edges planted up where the ground had been disturbed. This was funded by a grant from Essex County Council.

On one of the Nature Reserves Barn Owls bred and the chicks were ringed to monitor their future locations, on another a Tawny Owl chick was spotted in a tree. Butterfly surveys started in April and will continue over the summer. The team now has volunteers taking over this role which is welcome and since March the volunteer numbers have continued to be strong. The Special Roadside Verges are in the process of having their annual surveys.

Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Internal Resources Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Kane

Recommending:

The report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder be noted.

Parking

- **New Car Park Tariffs**

New off-street car parking tariffs were implemented successfully on Monday 4th April 2022. The tariff implementation project was delivered on time and on budget, with a project saving of £32,700 generated through Value Engineering. The new tariffs are generating more income to the Council and the increase in income is currently being reviewed.

- **InstaVolt Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

Two rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations have been installed successfully in Oakwood Hill East Car Park. The partnership with InstaVolt for the installation of EV charging stations has generated additional income to the Council from rent and also fees income, as car park occupancy levels have increased as a result.

InstaVolt have offered to provide two rapid EV charging stations in Burton Road Car Park (Debden) as a second site and this proposal is being explored.

- **Permits in Cornmill Car Park and Oakwood Hill East Car Park**

EFDC will be introducing business, residents and visitor permits in Cornmill Car Park (Waltham Abbey), and business permits in Oakwood Hill East Car Park (Debden). The introduction of these permits will generate additional income to the Council as there is local demand and sufficient capacity for the proposed permits in the car parks. The Traffic Regulation Order is anticipated to be operational from Monday 8th August.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council
Date: 28 July 2022
Subject: Internal Resources Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder be noted.

1 Corporate Communications

Since our last update, Corporate Communications has continued to distribute a wide variety of service support and customer information via a range of platforms. Reach continued to expand.

Social Media - Followers

January 2022

- Facebook 4,231
- Instagram 2,104
- LinkedIn 2,400
- Twitter 9,672

June 2022

- Facebook 4,408
- Instagram 2,214
- LinkedIn 2,616
- Twitter 9,827

Average reach per month

- Facebook: 16,176
- Instagram: 1,790

Reach - The number of people who have been exposed to a post or advert. This doesn't necessarily mean that all these people have read the post; they could have scrolled past it. Reach indicates that the content appeared in the user's social feed at least once.

Average impressions per month

- LinkedIn: 9,732
- Twitter: 38,500

Impressions - The number of times social media browsers have been showed your post. Impressions are different than reach as it doesn't count people who engage with your content, just those who are exposed to it.

District Matter subscribers:

- January: 58
- June: 89

EFDC mailing list on Mailchimp subscribers:

- January: 987
- June: 1,292

Media Releases

Jan to June 2022: 140

Media releases are distributed through Mailchimp and published as news items to the website

**Website eppingforestdc.gov.uk
January to June 2022**

- Visits 538,681 visits
- Page views 1,539,632
- Unique visitors 484,684

Visits - a series of page requests in no more than 30 minutes from the same uniquely identified visitor.

Page views – the number of times a page has been viewed.

Unique visitors – the total number of visitors to the website. (Some visitors may be counted more than once if they use multiple browsers or devices)

Most popular pages

- Planning search 337,203 21.9%
- Council Tax portal 191,417 12.4%
- Homepage 68,079 4.4%
- Check your bin collection 22,406 1.5%
- Planning and building 0.6% 11,823

Webcasts January to June

Eighty-one meetings were webcast in the first 6 months of the year. Webcasts were viewed 8,978 times, including 1,685 live views. Archived views also included meetings held previously but viewed in the last 6 months.

Top 5 watched webcasts:

- Council 26 May 2022 – 485 views including 64 live.
- Licensing Sub Committee 19 April 2022 – 307 views including 33 live.

- Area Planning Sub-Committee South 5 January 2022 – 276 views including 50 live.
- Area Planning Sub-Committee East 6 April 2022 – 265 views including 55 live.
- Appeal by Next Plc & Trinity Hall 19 May 2022 – 242 views including 126 live – the highest number of live views

The election timetable dominated the early spring schedules as a third of residents went to the polls. Other events such as the Civic Awards were scheduled around the six weeks or so of heightened electoral sensitivity (previously known as the purdah period).

Corp Comms provided significant support to a range of external agencies and events including Ride London, and the Platinum Jubilee. The arrival of refugees from the Ukraine involved extensive communications including the urgent production of welcome packs for sponsor families (in English) and refugees (in Ukrainian and Russian).

The Boundary Commission review of ward boundaries received support via the website, news releases, social media and the webcast of a special presentation to assist in the latest round of consultation. Further webcasting services were provided for the successful defence of the Next PLC planning appeal, the Essex Fire and Police Commissioner 'Town Hall' event and the Youth Council.

Corp Comms continued to support Census 2021 with distribution of the first high level information release by the Office of National Statistics.

Findings from the digital strategy consultation are feeding through to improvements in the search functions of the website. In particular, officers continue to improve 'meta-data', background information that supports and improves search for customers on the website and through external search engines such as Google.

The Council is currently updating daily refuse and recycling collection information to the website. Corp Communications has identified this area as a candidate for experimentation with Drupal, an alternative to the current web content management system used by the Council.

More information on Drupal is to be found in the report of the Customer Services portfolio holder.

Media liaison included national tabloid and local radio in addition to local newspapers, newsletters and online news services.

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Report to Council

Date of meeting: 28 July 2022

Chairman: Councillor H Kane

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for the meeting in June 2022 be noted.

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 June 2022

1. The Leader presented an overview of the Council's corporate priorities for 2022/23 at the Committee's first meeting in the new municipal year. Fundamental to the Council was how its services were delivered and how it transformed to deliver services and look forwards, as the Council's ambitions would change as the year progressed.

Key priorities highlighted included:

- maintaining sound finances as the cost of living and interest rates were rising.
- maintaining low council tax and essential services for residents.
- working with its partners across a range of services.
- continued support for three Essex Police constables.
- Qualis was running council house repairs and developing sites in Epping etc.
- Adoption of the Local Plan was key to investment and about creating jobs and homes.
- Recovery following the Covid pandemic with a community hub in the refurbished Civic Offices and hybrid working for staff, but communications needed to be in place.
- On devolution, the Council must liaise with its partners in the health services and in local government across all areas to search out those of common interest.

2. The Committee appointed the select committee memberships for 2022/23, in addition to approving the positions of chairmen and vice-chairmen. This year Stronger Council and Stronger Place select committees would comprise 11 members except Stronger Communities, which it was agreed would comprise 12 to accommodate an independent member for 2022/23.

3. The new Chairman advised that the scrutiny committees' work programmes would be discussed at the forthcoming Joint Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen on 28 June. Consideration would be given to the year ahead and the role of scrutiny in assisting the work of the Council.

4. The Housing Revenue Account Service Director, D Fenton, provided an update on the types of rents charged on the Council's tenanted properties. This was in response to a member's question from a previous meeting. The Committee was advised about the two types of rent, social rent and affordable rent, and that these were governed by the Rent Standard, which was set by the Social Housing Regulator.

5. Other business included scrutiny of the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions of 1 June. The Committee also reviewed the final draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2021–22 Annual Report, which would be submitted to Council for approval on 28 July 2022 and include some minor amendments.

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A stylized illustration of a forest scene. The background is a light blue sky with green rays of light filtering through the trees. The trees are tall and thin, with green foliage. In the foreground, two deer are silhouetted against the forest. One is a larger stag with antlers, and the other is a smaller fawn. The ground is a dark green silhouette.

 Epping Forest District Council

Overview & Scrutiny

2021 – 22

Annual Report

© Epping Forest District Council 2022

Report by: V Messenger, EFDC Democratic Services Officer (June 2022)



Chairman's welcome and introduction

May I welcome members of Epping Forest District Council and introduce this seventeenth annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Government's legislation of 4 April 2020 on the flexibility of local authority regulations that had allowed virtual meetings to take place during the Covid pandemic in 2020/21, ended on 7 May 2021. The 2021 elections including those suspended in 2020 were held on 6 May and physical meetings returned, spearheaded by Annual Council on 21 May 2021. Physical meetings restarted in the newly refurbished Civic Offices for all primary committees, including Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the select committees. Initially meetings were held in the Conference Suite on the first floor until the Chamber became available in August 2021.

This annual report highlights the work undertaken by the Council's scrutiny committees – Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the three select committees, Stronger Communities, Stronger Council and Stronger Place that are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan ambitions. In December 2021, the Local High Streets Task and Finish was reconvened following its suspension in spring 2020 with the onset of the Covid crisis and lockdowns that ensued.

May I take this opportunity to thank the chairmen and members of the select committees and the task and finish panel in addition to, my special thanks for my Vice-Chairman, Councillor Bob Jennings for all his help and support throughout another challenging year, as we returned to physical meetings while Covid was still endemic.

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 their help in providing any background information that members needed to carry out their investigations.

Cllr Mary Sartin

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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What is scrutiny

- ▶ Scrutiny in local government is the mechanism by which public accountability is exercised.
- ▶ In practice the purpose of scrutiny is to examine, question and evaluate in order to achieve improvement.
- ▶ Value of scrutiny is to use 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 Cabinet's plans will have on the local community.
- ▶ Overview and scrutiny functions are 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 the scrutiny committees throughout the year. The Constitution also allows members of the public to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any agenda item.

Scrutiny committees

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The main scrutiny committee has sole responsibility to discharge the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2000, as defined in the Constitution under [Article 6 – Overview and Scrutiny](#). All the scrutiny committees have a Terms of Reference. Their work programmes are continually updated throughout the year to reflect the progress of their ongoing scrutiny on Council business of the Executive including services areas, strategies, policies, and external scrutiny when appropriate.

The Committee regularly reviews the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions to identify suitable matters for its work programme and for the overview of specific decisions being proposed. The Cabinet can equally ask Overview and Scrutiny to pre-scrutinise any of its business. Other ongoing work items include the Council's Covid response/recovery and group company structure business.

Select Committees

Restructured into three select committees at the start of 2019/20 municipal year, they are mainly aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and the three pillars of its corporate ambitions:

- Stronger Communities
- Stronger Council
- Stronger Place

Their Terms of Reference are agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting in the municipal year, which sets out a rolling programme of ongoing and cyclical issues specific to their corporate alignments. A lead officer of the Executive Leadership Team, appointed to each select committee, helps to facilitate this and co-ordinates member-led scrutiny throughout the year.

Task and Finish Panels

These panels can be set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deal with ad-hoc projects or reviews that are 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.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – year highlights

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held eight meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the first (annual) Council meeting on 25 May 2021. The first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on 3 June 2021 in the Conference Suite at the newly refurbished Civic Offices. Meetings resumed in the Council chamber from September.

2021-22 Membership

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mary Sartin

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bob Jennings

Councillors:

Roger Baldwin
Pranav Bhanot
Peter Bolton
Ian Hadley
Steven Heather
Jeane Lea
Alan Lion

Councillors:

Tim Matthews
Stephen Murray
Dave Plummer
Sheree Rackham
Paul Stalker
Janet H Whitehouse
Ken Williamson
David Wixley



Cllr Mary Sartin



Cllr Bob Jennings

External scrutiny highlights

Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust Senior Executive Team accepted an invite and Lance McCarthy (Chief Executive), Stephanie Lawton (Chief Operating Officer), Michael Meredith (Director of Strategy) and Jill Hogan (Communications (New Hospital)) attended the meeting on 7 December 2021. Two presentations were received on the new hospital development and the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) report.



M Meredith outlined the new hospital development that was one of eight, national 'pathfinder projects' in the Government's new hospital programme. Extensive engagement had been carried out with staff, patient groups, stakeholders and through workshops. The Design brief was completed.

PAHT had high ambitions on the strategies produced on net zero carbon, facilities management, procurement, modern methods of construction, communications and engagement and digital.

Photo credit © Gilling Dod Architects and BDP

Courtesy of: Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust (image for illustrative purposes only and subject to change).

The PAHT Senior Executive Team answered many detailed questions on the new hospital development. It was in the final stages of completing the land purchase so that planning and works

preparation could be progressed. Further engagement on its website would be undertaken with the public and community groups on the final designs as well as briefing councillors in the district and finalising the transport strategy.

An overview of the CQC report was presented by L McCarthy. The inspection, carried out in July and August 2021, was based around five domains – were services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. The impact of Covid had been significant on everyone. There had been a 19% increase in demand for care on the emergency services between April 2020 and now, so there was enormous pressure on staff to care for patients and use of PPE equipment to keep people safe. There was a separate emergency department for Covid patients to reduce infections, so having two emergency footprints was an additional strain on services. The CQC report detailed 18 must do's and 11 should do's but otherwise remained good on most services. The actions the PAHT must do were outlined in the presentation, which was attached to the minutes for information, and covered – themes of good practice, consistent themes for improvement, actions taken and work underway, and the next 12 months. Members' questions covered a whole range of issues, and it was timely that they had had this opportunity to receive answers directly.

West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Dr Rob Gerlis (Chairman), Peter Wightman (Managing Director) and Ian Tompkins (Corporate Services Director), attended the meeting on 27 January 2022.



Health & Care Partnership

During a presentation, the Committee heard that the Health and Care Bill published July 2021, set out proposals to reform the delivery and organisation of health services in England.

From 1 April 2022, Epping Forest District would become part of the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) along with other district and county authorities, all NHS Trusts in the area, the voluntary sector and Healthwatch. The ICS comprised two statutory parts – an Integrated Care Board, NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex, responsible for NHS functions and budgets; and the Integrated Care Partnership that brought together a wider set of system partners to develop a plan to address the broader health, public health and social care needs of the local population. The Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS would have three of these 'places' – two in Herts and one for West Essex. The West Essex 'place' was known as the One Health & Care Partnership. The Community and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor A Patel, Housing Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H Whitbread, represented the Council on the Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Board. During a detailed question and answer session, members asked about a range of health issues including: ICS' recruitment strategy; health equity work as there had been low uptake of the Covid vaccination especially in Waltham Abbey; public transport issues in rural areas accessing medical services; substance abuse; greater use of community hubs and pharmacies to promote wider access to health services; how these changes might improve socioeconomic inequalities; how Section 106 monies were utilised; and what councillors could do to help.

Epping Forest Youth Council annual report of activities

Youth Councillors – Sonny Bazzoni (Epping St John's School), Martin Prinsloo (Davenant Foundation), Daniel Turner (Debden Park High School) and Finlay Wallbanks (The Ongar Academy) presented the highlights of their work over the past year.



This centred on the following activities:

- ▶ **MiLife C19** – this 10-week schools virtual programme has given young people what they need to build their emotional resilience through a range of teacher led workshops. The website <https://www.rbf.org.uk/milife> incorporates bespoke resources directly relating to Covid 19 and its impact on young people, addressing good mental health and wellbeing. This also includes a variety of physical and cultural activities.

- ▶ **Youth Conference** – on 19 November 2021 the Epping Forest Youth Council hosted its bi-annual Youth Conference. The full day event saw 67 young people from five of the District’s secondary schools attend the Civic Offices for a day focussed on climate change issues and youth democracy.
- ▶ **Youth Elections** – Youth Councillors had been instrumental in recruiting potential candidates in their schools for the Youth Elections in February / March 2022.
- ▶ **Youth Activities Map 2022** – extensive research had been carried out to update the map. It was an excellent interactive resource and could be searched by address, place or by category. New youth projects can be added to the map, simply by completing the online form on the website at: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/community/youth-projects/>
- ▶ **Awards** – 8 Youth Councillors received achievement awards from the Council Chairman, Cllr H Kane, at this year’s Civic Awards in March and 6 Youth Councillors received the Jack Petchey Achievement Award for their outstanding work.

Pre-scrutiny highlights

Pre-scrutiny of Cabinet decisions took a leap forward for all the scrutiny committees this year. The regular review of the Cabinet Forward Plan was an important function of the Committee.

Qualis Four-Year Business Plan

Councillor J Philip (Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) clarified that Qualis has been set-up by the Council to be successful and to do the business it wanted Qualis to do although it was a separate development and property management company. Introduced by A Small (Strategic Director and 151 Officer), the Committee pre-scrutinised the Qualis Four-Year Business Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25, prior to Cabinet’s decision on 12 July.



It was a requirement of the Shareholder agreement that Qualis produced and presented each year to the Council, a one year and a four-year Business Plan for the Council to consider and sign-off. Details of future service transfers and a template for such business case transfers featured in the business plan. Councillor J Philip encouraged members to be positive about Qualis and look at what Qualis was expecting to undertake. He fully expected the one year and four-year Business Plan to be updated, as there might be changes along the way.

Sale of the Pyrles Lane site, Loughton, to Qualis

Qualis Commercial Development Director, S Rutter, outlined the redevelopment proposal, which was a Local Plan site and was at the pre-application stage in June 2021 with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme was to comprise 33 houses, which was increased to 37 sometime after the meeting, with a suitable access road. Members questioned the parking provision, the percentage of affordable housing, and that the carbon footprint should be kept as low as possible. There were also concerns that the water supply to the GROW community garden was not cut off but preserved and any damage caused by construction traffic would be rectified.

Town Centre Regeneration

At 8 June 2021 meeting, Portfolio Holder Councillor J Philip introduced the Town Centre Regeneration reports for Loughton Broadway, Loughton High Road, Buckhurst Hill and Epping high streets. The District had more than one key town centre and they were all very different. A consultant, Mr P Messenger, was commissioned to produce detailed reports in the first half of 2021. He was appointed the Council’s Town Centre Project Manager and had looked at these as retail centres. Each one had its own characteristics.



Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill



The reports provided a starting point of a localist approach. The Council instigated short term measures to deal with current challenges, as high streets reopened. It also proposed medium-term and long-term strategies to develop over time further initiatives and was one stakeholder in the partnerships. The Committee's pre-scrutiny highlighted many issues and concerns, including accessibility for people with disabilities. Consideration should be given to improvements that could be made which might be obstacles for people with disabilities.

View the minutes here [Overview and Scrutiny 8 June](#)

Climate change and sustainable transport update

The Committee considered progress on the climate change and sustainable travel agendas in October 2021. A public consultation on the draft Climate Change Action Plan took place from October to November, and a member briefing was also held. F Edmonds' (Climate Change Officer) update outlined a proposal to plant around 2,300 trees in Jessel Green (Loughton) to enhance the local environment, funded by a £65,000 grant from the Forestry Commission's Local Authorities Treescapes Fund. Members were concerned that the open aspect of the green might be compromised. They queried how officers would reduce the number of trees that might die, which could be achieved through only using hardy trees with a survival rate of 75%. The Portfolio Holder Decision on this was later called-in by five councillors (see overleaf). Other initiatives included the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme which would help to raise the energy efficiency of lower income and low energy performance homes with a focus on energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings of E, F or G. Split into three phases, the first had been completed in August 2021 with nine properties upgraded. It was also reported that a carbon literacy toolkit had been trialled with some Service Managers that would be used to teach staff the basics of climate change science.

S Lloyd-Jones (Sustainable Transport Officer) outlined progress on electric vehicle charging (EVC) points in the District's car parks and an increase in the provision of on-site charging at the Civic Offices to accommodate the EFDC and Qualis fleet conversion to EV. A campaign was underway to understand incentives and barriers to the adoption of EV by minicabs and taxis. The use of streetlamps was not favoured by Essex County Council but at least 36% of local homes did not have access to viable off-street parking, which would seriously impede EV adoption within the next 18 months. General local commuting was still low as a result of hybrid / working from home and other major users like the elderly, who were still being cautious because of Covid. An EV bus would be trialled in November and December between the Broadway and the Epping Forest Retail Park in Loughton. Demand responsive travel (DRT) would be piloted in the District to Epping Green and Harlow. Work was ongoing as there was a demand from school pupils who needed to reach schools in Epping, Loughton and Chigwell. Members raised some interesting points, such as using Council-owned lamp posts for EVC, and that priority should be given to housing residents where it was not possible to charge at properties. The trial of E-on's vehicle to grid method at the Civic Offices could be a way to expand the system and there was a definite need for it by taxis and road fleets of small electric vans. Also, as disabled drivers might find it difficult to access EVC points, S Lloyd-Jones was looking into how different kits performed to national standards.

Climate Change Action Plan consultation update

The Climate Change Officer updated the Committee on 31 March 2022. The draft action plan had been approved by Cabinet and a public consultation was held last autumn. The methods, a summary of the responses received and changes to the Climate Change Action Plan were detailed in the report. The consultation survey included general questions around individual and community behaviours to understand the level of engagement with climate change in the District and to inform a behaviour change strategy for the future. The survey asked other questions related to

businesses, travel and the Climate Change Action Plan itself. The Epping Forest Youth Council also participated in the consultation and provided valuable input.

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy

N Polaine (HGGT Director) and I Braddick (HGGT Lead) attended the meeting on 18 November. I Braddick introduced the report with a short presentation outlining the reasons and ambitions crucial to the endorsement of the HGGT Transport Strategy. It had been developed to meet the ambitions for sustainable movement set out within the HGGT vision, against the backdrop of the challenges of future travel demand linked to planned growth as set out in the Council's emerging Local Plan. The Council had declared a climate emergency in 2019. With transport now the largest contributor to UK greenhouse gas emissions, the HGGT transport strategy supported the highest commitment across the Garden Town Authorities to become carbon-neutral by 2030. Key to this was making it easier to choose to travel sustainably, by providing reliable and high quality sustainable and active travel routes, and by creating connected communities and safe, enjoyable streets that offered local facilities and travel options for everyday activities. The Committee pre-scrutinised the strategy, as Cabinet's decision was due on 25 January 2022.

Epping Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy

Vicki Willis (Principal Planning Officer) introduced the detailed report concerned with the potential impact of residential development on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in relation to additional visitors using the Forest for recreational purposes. The Council had a legal duty as a 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations to protect such internationally important sites, which could be best achieved using measures put in place at the Local Plan level. The Partnership Agreement was jointly developed by the Council with other competent authorities, Natural England and the Corporation of London as the delivery body. It would replace the 'Interim Approach to Managing Recreational Pressure on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation' adopted by the Council in October 2018. The document outlined the updated SAMM Strategy for Epping Forest and the governance arrangements to ensure that financial contributions that had been / would be collected from developments were spent in accordance with the purposes for which they had been secured and that proper monitoring of spending would be put in place. Following a number of questions raised by members, the Chairman asked if the Committee's recommendations could be taken into account by the Cabinet at its meeting on 11 April 2022.

Terms of Reference revised – Stronger Place Select Committee

Last autumn the select committee reviewed and proposed updates to its Terms of Reference. As this was within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members considered and approved at the meeting on 12 October 2021, the proposed changes the select committee had drafted. It was recommended that the other select committees review their Terms of Reference by the last meeting in this municipal year, so the Overview and Scrutiny could approve any amendments at the first meeting in the new municipal year, going forward.

Other pre-scrutiny highlights undertaken at meetings during the year, included:

Qualis 2020/21 Q2 monitoring report (8 June 2021)	Covid-19 update (12 October 2021)	Corporate Plan quarterly performance reports (regular item)
Trees - new policy on the Council's approach to trees impacting on the safety of its assets (3 June 2021)	Cabinet Forward Plan Key Discision Lists (regular item)	Local High Streets Task & Finish Panel (initial meetings held in December 2021 and March 2022)

Call-in – tree planting ➡

An informal but productive meeting was held on 1 November 2021 with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and officers, regarding the call-in by Councillor C C Pond and four other councillors of the Housing Services Portfolio Holder Decision PFH-004-2021/22 (Jessel Green tree planting following a successful grant bid). Although the councillors who called-in the PFH decision supported tree planting in Loughton, they were opposed to planting all the 2,300 trees of unspecified species on Jessel Green, as this would detract from the openness of this public



open space. A useful site visit took place on 25 November 2021 after the informal meeting, which resulted in the agreement that the allocation of the 2,300 trees should be shared between three sites – Jessel Green and Rochford Green in Loughton and Limes Farm in Chigwell. A revised PFH decision was approved, which identified additional tree planting sites in Debden and Chigwell. Also, approved was the future Housing Revenue Account budget provision for tree maintenance from 2025/26, the costs for which were expected to be approximately £5,000 per annum.

Public scrutiny questions ➡

Public scrutiny in action saw a resident submit two questions to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in time for 1 July 2021 committee meeting. This was in respect of the Qualis Finance Report. The minutes (see pages 2 – 3) can be viewed at the weblink below [Overview and Scrutiny 1 July 2021](#)

Agendas and minutes ➡

Overview and Scrutiny Committee agendas and minutes can be accessed on the website at: <https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=395&Year=0>

Joint Meeting of Overview Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

The joint meeting is held six-monthly. It provides the scrutiny chairmen and vice-chairmen with an opportunity to discuss any issues raised with the Executive Leadership Team and the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager. The joint meetings were held on 22 July 2021 and 20 January 2022. Discussion items raised included:

- ▶ Alignment of select committees' Terms of Reference with the Corporate Plan
- ▶ Attaining an equitable balance between the scrutiny committees' work programmes
- ▶ Role of the select committee chairmen reporting fuller progress report against their work programmes at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ▶ External scrutiny options with suggestions
- ▶ Overview and scrutiny training – current and future requirements
- ▶ Local High Street Task and Finish Panel

Agendas and minutes ➡

Joint meeting agendas and minutes can be accessed on the Intranet at: <https://eppingforestintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=770&Year=0>

Task and Finish Panels

Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel

The panel had been suspended with the onset of the Covid crisis after its first meeting in February 2020. During the Covid pandemic, high street economic development initiatives were led by Councillor John Philip, Finance, Qualis and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.



Loughton High Road



Epping High Street

The panel was reconvened on 20 December 2021. Town centre regeneration in the District was being coordinated by the Economic Development Team, J Houston (Economic Development Specialist) and P Messenger (Town Centres Manager). They updated members at the meeting on progress made on the District's high streets. Members were seeking a further panel meeting but asked officers to draft a refreshed Terms of Reference with a new post-Covid timeframe.

Agendas and minutes



► **Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel** agenda and minutes can be viewed at this weblink: <https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=819&Year=0>

Waste Management Task and Finish Panel

The Task and Finish Panel managed to conclude the bulk of its work as its last meeting was early March 2020 before the first Covid lockdown. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2020, a recommendation was made to reconvene the panel when there was any new information arising from the Environment Bill, which was re-introduced to Parliament on 30 January 2020 following the general election in December 2019, and /or any new legislation introduced by the Government.

Stronger Communities Select Committee

The Stronger Communities Select Committee held five meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 3 June 2021. The first meeting was held on 15 June 2021 in the Conference Suite at the newly refurbished Civic Offices. Meetings resumed in the Council chamber from September.

Members for 2021/22:

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Jeane Lea

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Raymond Balcombe

Councillors:

Heather Brady

Ian Hadley

Stephen Murray

Chidi Nweke

Dave Plummer

Sheree Rackham

Janet H Whitehouse

Ken Williamson

David Wixley



Councillor Jeane Lea



Councillor Raymond Balcombe

Chairman's foreword

"The Police we fund do a marvellous job and in September last year we reviewed the six-month report on their work in the District. This was followed in March by the District Commander's presentation updating members on general policing issues and answering many questions. In September last year, members reviewed the consultation process and governance structure of the Allocations Scheme Review, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review, Tenancy Policy review and Overarching Housing Strategy. In January the committee reviewed the HRA Business Plan, which will be used to provide us with a reasonable cashflow projection for the next 30 years."

The select committee encompassed the corporate aims and objectives for stronger communities – people live longer, healthier and independent lives; adults and children are supported in times of need; and people and communities achieve their potential. Most of the work programmes were not cyclical apart from quarterly Customer Services updates, and the six-monthly update of the Council-funded Police officers' work.

Council-funded Police officers 6-month report

The six-month update detailing the range of work and highlighting operations the Council's funded Police team had been involved in was reviewed by the select committee in September 2021. The most significant work had been partnership working, responding to a county lines drugs supply in Waltham Abbey. When needed, the policing team had supported Council officers from Environmental Health, Community Resilience, Planning Enforcement and on joint visits at licenced and business premises suspected of committing COVID legislation breaches. Anti-social behaviour, distraction thefts, burglaries, frauds involving vulnerable victims were also targeted.



Chief Inspector Paul Ballard, Interim District Commander for Epping Forest and Brentwood, had been seconded to this position for some 5/6 months because Chief Inspector Ant Alcock was on secondment to the Major Investigation Team. At the 22 March meeting, he advised that over the last 12 months performance had been good, although the data had yet again been impacted by Covid. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) had reduced by 51%, although this was probably due to Covid breaches being reported as ASB under Covid Legislation. Furthermore, there had been a 4% increase for all crimes, although this had been attributed to Covid and the impact of how crimes were recorded. Crime was down in Epping Forest for robbery by 11%, personal robbery by 14% and residential robbery by 24%. There had been increases of 17% in violence against person offences and 13% in violence with injury, but work was continuing work in this area. Further work was ongoing to improve public engagement in the District. Members asked a range of questions covering domestic violence, rural crime, speed checks, road cameras, organised car crime and community engagement in the District, as well as about the Safer Essex Road Partnership. The minutes can be viewed here [Stronger Communities Select Committee 22 March](#)

Customer Services Updates

Reported quarterly by the Service Director or Service Manager of Customer Services, these updates gave members the opportunity to hear 'what our customers were telling us'. At the 22 March meeting, there had been an increase in the footfall to the Civic Offices Community Hub for the quarter. Two new starters had joined the Customer Contact Centre in February and were undergoing training. The core vision of the Customer Service Strategy 2022/23 was to use digital methods to deliver the services our customers wanted, but it was also recognised that other people might still require additional support either by phone or face to face. To gauge feedback on our customers' digital habits, online engagement surveys had been carried out to help shape the strategy. Early indications showed our customers were well connected digitally, as 90% did shopping and/or banking online. There was a strong appetite amongst partners and voluntary organisations to adopt a collaborative approach to digital inclusion and the Council's role would be to facilitate this working group. Feedback showed the Council's website design was good and was presented in plain English. Some issues were reported on finding information using the search facility and online forms could benefit from a more consistent look and feel. The service plan included a website improvements project. Customer Services was also aiming to run a mystery shopper exercise in quarter 1 to obtain further feedback on our customer experience using an external consultancy.

Pre-scrutiny highlights

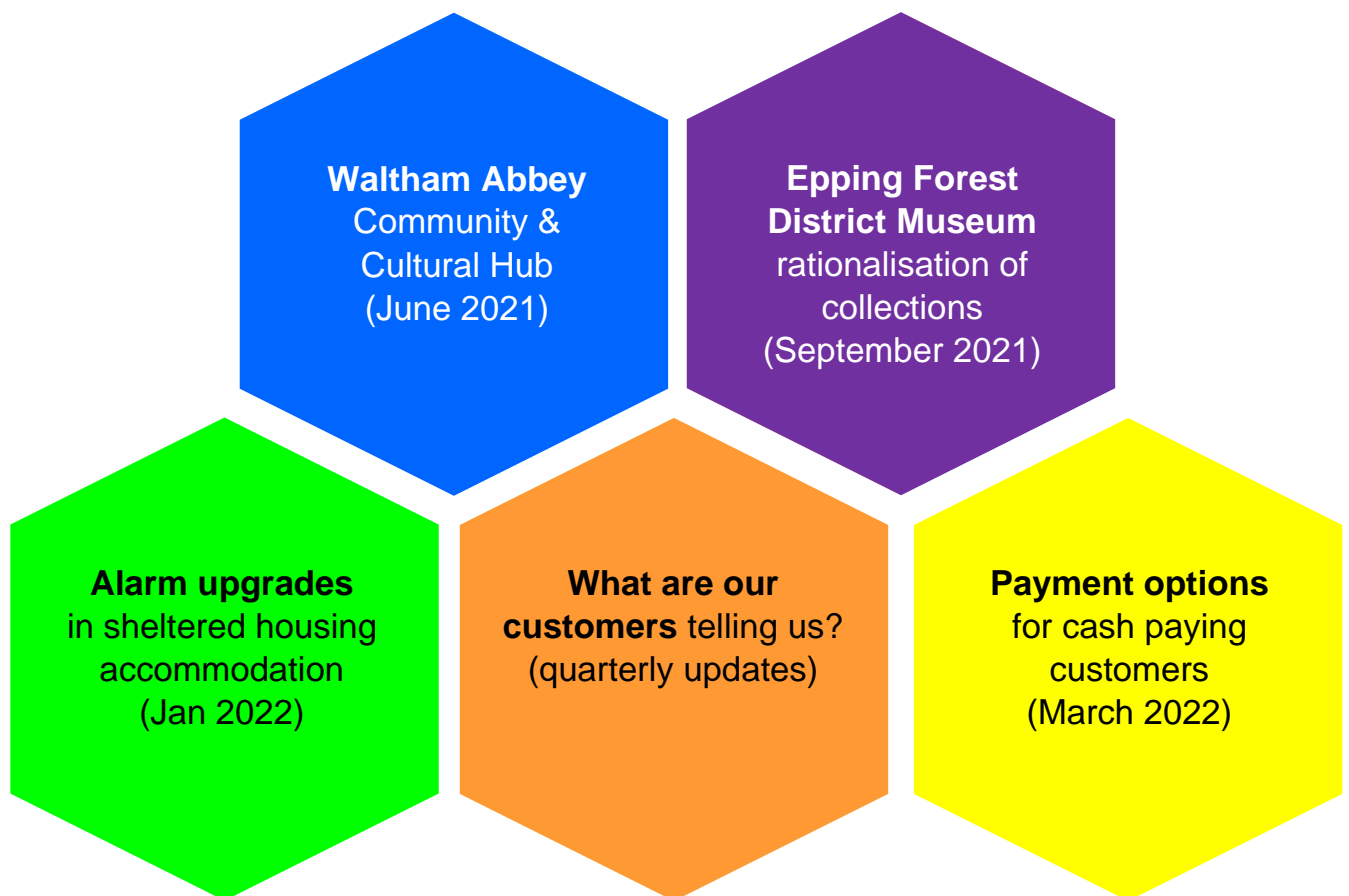
Review of the 'Big 4' Housing Strategies and Policies

On 21 September 2021, the select committee reviewed the Allocations Scheme Review, Tenancy Policy Review, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review and Overarching Housing Strategy. The Community and Wellbeing Director, J Gould, set out the proposed changes, the recommendations and the next steps for the stage 2 consultations. The draft policies were pre-scrutinised on 1 March 2022 prior to decisions by Cabinet on 7 March. The **Allocation Scheme Review** would determine the priorities and the procedure to be followed by the Council, as a Local Housing Authority (LHA), when selecting a household to be offered a tenancy of Council owned accommodation or to be nominated for an offer of housing from another registered provider with stock in the District. A review was required every five years and was due for renewal in April 2022 along with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Tenancy Policy and the Overarching Housing Strategy. The revised **Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2022-2027** and the evidence base that supported the strategy, which included the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review and the Public Consultation Outcome Report, was reviewed. The **Tenancy Policy Review** set out the matters to which the Council in relation to its own stock and the registered providers of social housing within its District were to have regard to when formulating their tenancy policies. The current Tenancy Policy was due for review by July 2022. The select committee's questions can be viewed here: [Stronger Communities Select Committee 1 March](#)

HRA Business Plan

In January 2022, the Council's HRA business plan was reviewed and would provide a reasonable cashflow projection over the next 30 years. It was based on evidential data from its current systems and projections for economic assumptions in the social housing sector. Officers had taken both a safe and prudent approach when developing the business plan, with a balance between borrowing, developing, and improving the housing stock. The report set out the context, background and what the decent home standards were, in conjunction with factors that would affect the plan including the Council's house building programme, major works, a stock and condition survey and a sector risk profile. The Housing Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H Whitbread, advised that it was a very detailed and complex report that provided regeneration. The Council's housing building programme would ensure that the more deprived areas of the community were invested in, and that it improved the health of those residents. The Cabinet decision was taken on 7 February.

Other work programme highlights undertaken at meetings during the year, included:



Agendas and minutes



Stronger Communities Select Committee agendas and minutes can be viewed at this weblink:
<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=809&Year=0>

Stronger Council Select Committee

The Stronger Council Select Committee held six meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 3 June 2021. The first meeting was held on 20 July 2021 in the Conference Suite at the newly refurbished Civic Offices. Meetings resumed in the Council chamber from September.

Members for 2021/22:

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Peter Bolton

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Tim Matthews

Councillors:

Richard Bassett

Pranav Bhanot

Heather Brady

Rose Brookes

Jayna Jogia

Helen Kane

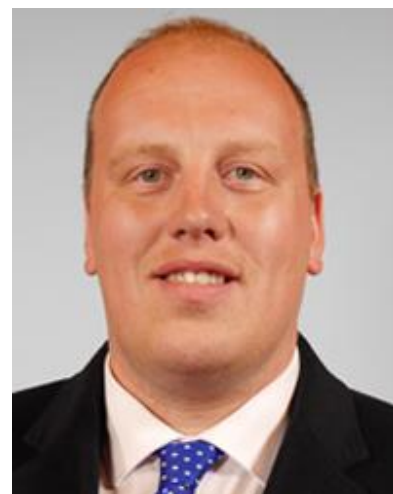
Richard Morgan

Steven Neville

Jon M Whitehouse



Councillor Peter Bolton



Councillor Tim Matthews

Chairman's foreword

"Our review of the Beyond the Pandemic employee survey during April-May 2021 in July, was used to help reshape the Council's future ways of working. The review of the four different elections in 2021 showed the successful 'one team' effort by those staffing the counts, and we reviewed the Accommodation Project closure report on the Civic Offices refurbishment, which the Chairman officially opened on 1 October."

The select committee had an overview of the Corporate aims and objectives for a stronger Council – democratic engagement; the People Strategy and a culture of innovation through improved workforce skills and performance through innovation and technology; and financial independence with low council tax. Therefore, much of the scrutiny work was of a cyclical nature, as the select committee reviewed the following on a quarterly basis:

- ▶ Corporate Plan Key Action Plan
- ▶ Budget Monitoring Reports
- ▶ Financial planning
- ▶ People Strategy

Pre-scrutiny highlights

Accommodation Project Closure Report

This project had set out to refurbish the Civic Building and 323 House, with the Conder building to be demolished and the rear of the Civic Offices site redeveloped for residential use in line with the Local Plan and crucial to the economic development aspirations for the District. In November 2021, M Hassall, Interim Service Manager / ICT Manager, reported on how the project had performed against its original objectives and the lessons learnt. It was on time and on budget. Members thought the Chamber should be updated / spruced up. The Civic Offices officially opened on 1 October 2021. Councillor Helen Kane, Chairman of Council, Leader of Council, Councillor Chris Whitbread, and the Rt Hon Dame Eleanor Laing MP attended the event, along with other councillors and staff.

Our Ways of Working 2021-2022 Beyond the Pandemic

This employee survey was carried out from April and May 2021. In July 2021, J Budden, People Culture and Wellbeing Service Manager, reported that officers had not only provided business as usual in support of Epping Forest residents but assisted with other essential work on Project Shield and high street recovery projects. Staff had helped the Civic Offices refurbishment to finish on time and on budget. They achieved improved productivity and digitisation for residents and had also vastly improved employee engagement and wellbeing. During the Covid pandemic most employees had been working remotely and were no longer reliant on a fixed desk, in a fixed building, working fixed hours. When completing this survey, employees were encouraged to challenge their thinking, giving them the opportunity to give valuable feedback and insight to help inform plans for beyond the pandemic and help reshape the Council's future ways of working for them and the organisation.



Review of Elections 2021

In September 2021, the select committee reviewed the planning processes and implementation of the 2021 elections held on 6 May. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, 21 wards of the District Council and 14 of the District's town and parish councils were postponed from their original date of May 2020 owing to the Covid pandemic. The Government decided to hold these elections in May 2021, and they were combined with the elections already scheduled for this date for Essex County Council. Covid restrictions were still in place during the 2021 elections, which necessitated certain changes to the arrangements for operating polling stations with 'one-way' systems being used for larger stations or a 'one-in-one-out' system for the smaller stations. The operation of the Count was also impacted by a requirement to ensure that the Count staff were socially distanced from each other whilst counting. In addition, with four elections being held simultaneously, the Count could not be completed in one session. G Blakemore, Returning Officer, reported that the planning, management and delivery of all relevant processes for these elections was effective, especially given the circumstances under which the 2021 elections had been held. The management and delivery of these elections had been reviewed by the Elections Planning Group, chaired by the Returning Officer. The select committee was also informed that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England intended to undertake a full review of the Council's size in terms of the number of Councillors and ward boundaries, which would culminate in all-out District Council elections in May 2024. The Council was overdue a review as the last such exercise had taken place in 1998. Members raised a number of questions about queues at very busy polling stations, the coldness of the hangar where the count was held, but there was overall support for the superb effort of staff and outside volunteers during the elections. As new legislation on election law was coming, the select committee requested a future report on the consequences of voter ID, how it would affect the Council and any financial implications.



Draft Budget 2022/23

£ Cabinet's draft Budget proposals for 2022/23 were considered on 18 January 2021. The Interim Chief Financial Officer, C Hartgrove, introduced the report. It included the revenue and capital proposals for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, a schedule of suggested Fees and Charges for the forthcoming financial year, and an updated Medium-Term Financial Plan covering the financial years 2022/23 through to 2026/27 that reflected both the impact of the draft Budget proposals as well as the latest intelligence available. Members were advised that the medium-term financial position was broadly unchanged since it was last presented in October 2021. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23 of 21 December 2021 was generally as expected and provided further assurance to the underlying financial sustainability in this draft Budget. However, the annual Settlement for 2022/23 had yet to be announced by the Government and a challenge was still anticipated in 2024/25 and 2025/26, as a consequence of the forthcoming new Waste Management Contract. Members questions included a query on the recent high rise in gas and electric prices and if the figures shown were current. C Hartgrove replied these were the figures he was given, but he would cross check them in the coming week.

The Strategic Director and 151 Officer, A Small, advised that inflation was one of the greatest risks facing the Council. There was doubt about energy prices and also about wage settlements. The Council had received a one-year Government settlement for the year ahead but had expected a three-year settlement to give some certainty. The government still intended to implement a 'fairer funding' change to the way it distributed grant settlements, but the Council did not know how that would impact upon it. The situation could have been worse. It justified having a council tax increase after many years and was the right time to build up the Council's balances. It was a sound budget.

Learning and Development Programme 2021/22

P Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)) introduced the report on the Learning and Development programme at 3 March meeting. The new learning management system had various virtual courses online for staff to complete. These ranged from the short 'Skill Pill' sessions to the wider leadership programme to the apprenticeship programme. The Council was also expanding the role of the mental health first aiders to also being dementia friends. The select committee asked how staff training needs were identified as most were working from home and they were informed that this was picked up in various ways by their managers, their requirements and the skills they needed. Managers would look at their corporate needs and identify needs via inductions for new starters etc. Some training was still carried out face to face. The report listed the current organisational training priorities, such as the development of the management spine, getting team management qualifications, developing new skills around agile working, upskilling our apprentices, and understanding the impact of Covid on our staff with training on mental health issues.

Employee Induction / Onboarding and Litmos Learning Management System

Also, on 3 March, the Service Director (Corporate Services) introduced the report on Litmos, which would give new officers an understanding into how the Council worked and what the role of a councillor was etc. by generally giving them an insight into the political world of our organisation. This had now been built into the Council's onboarding process and was now part of its new Litmos system and the onboarding of new starters. The Council would be able to develop its own courses and host videos, policies and links. The Service Director reported that it was far more flexible and up to date than the previous system. Its functionality would help develop all employees. The new system would also allow members access to it, enabling them to have access to courses, such as members safety. Member Services could be trained to administer this part of the system and enable members to access the training.

People Strategy Overview (2022)

The Committee reviewed the People Strategy on 28 April 2022. Regarding the Common Operating Model, consultation and recruitment were still underway to finalise the restructure process for the remaining teams/positions in the Legal Team and Housing Asset and Property Team service review. As the current People Strategy ended in 2022, an overview of successes delivered within the current People Strategy over its three-year term would be produced and would be launched as part of the new 2023-25 People Strategy. iTrent had redesigned the Employee Self Service (ESS) module. The new design included summary cards on the main dashboard for quick access to information, such as payslips, a new organisational chart view, improved response to the size of device being used and improved accessibility ensuring it was compliant with the latest web content accessibility guidelines. iTrent – iRecruit phase 2 facilitated letter templates for provisional offers of employment and reference requests with contract templates would follow shortly. The exit interview questionnaire had also been launched. The onboarding portal within iTrent – iRecruit phase 3 was expected to launch in mid-2022 along with the Register of Interests questionnaire, which had been delayed. The eLearning system on Litmos continued to be built. A new series of Skill Pills was being run for employees between June and December 2022. These 60 to 90-minute sessions were accessible to all employees and covered a variety of topics to support digital skills. The apprenticeship programme continued to be a great success. A new Mental Health First Aid training cohort started in April 2022 and would bring the total number to over 90. Currently 91% of employees had signed up to Perkbox to access the employee benefits and tools on offer. Our third Workbuzz survey opened on 1 March 2022 when employees told us what was working well and made suggestions for improvements and managers had received data from the December 2021

survey. Employees were more agile and creative in their ways of working, thinking and leadership, embedding the changes that Our Ways of Working and the Accommodation Project had started, to empower employees to evolve the culture of the Council.

Corporate Performance Reporting

Throughout the year the Committee had reviewed on a quarterly basis, the Corporate Performance Report in relation to progress on the project delivery of the key corporate projects and the key performance indicators (KPIs) of the corporate workstreams. The progress of projects was tracked using the RAG status for risk (as shown opposite).

Green	Project on track to achieve milestones.
Amber	Project at risk of missing milestones.
Red	Project has missed milestones / project has serious issues.
Blue	Project complete/on-hold.
↔	Project status is unchanged since previous report.
↑	Project status has improved since previous report.
↓	Project status has declined since previous report.

Furthermore, following a review of the agreed list of priority projects by the Project Management Office in consultation with the Executive Management Team, the Committee considered a refreshed list of priority projects at the meeting on 28 April 2022. The list of projects detailed in the Corporate Performance Transition Report on the Committee’s future reporting expectations were agreed by its members. The Committee also asked for a complete list of all projects being undertaken as they might wish to look at other projects not on that list.

Other pre-scrutiny highlights undertaken at meetings during the year, included:

Capital Programme Update 2022/23 to 2026/27 (November 2021)	Medium Term Financial Plan (November 2021)	Qualis Budget Monitoring Report (September 2021)
Presentation from Council’s Level 2 Apprentices (September 2021)	Equality Policy (September 2021)	Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report Q4 2020/21 (March 2022)

Agendas and minutes

Stronger Council Select Committee agendas and minutes can be viewed at this weblink:
<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=810&Year=0>

Stronger Place Select Committee

The Stronger Place Select Committee held five meetings this municipal year. The membership was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 3 June 2021. The first meeting was held on 22 June 2021 in the Conference Suite at the newly refurbished Civic Offices. Meetings resumed in the Council chamber from September.

Members for 2021/22:

CHAIRMAN
Councillor Alan Lion



Councillor A Lion

VICE-CHAIRMAN
Councillor Richard Morgan



Councillor Richard Morgan

Councillors:
Raymond Balcombe
Richard Bassett
Ian Hadley
Simon Heap
Steven Heather
Judy Jennings
Cherry McCredie
Michael Owen
Jo Share-Bernia

Chairman's foreword

"At the beginning of the new council year, with input from members of the committee, the Terms of Reference was reviewed and simplified to improve understanding. A work programme was developed with direct input by members. These were ratified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Comments taken into consideration were to ensure all information and proposals presented were written papers and there was enough time to scrutinise proposals and incorporate comments and changes before presentation to Cabinet.

Proposals scrutinised:

- Options for the new name for the Civic Offices Hub
- Pre-scrutiny of the waste and recycling collection service/street cleansing contract. This was in relation to the forthcoming review of the waste management contract. Generally, it was felt the contractor had performed well. As a cost saving measure, there was a proposal for the introduction of charges for additional, repaired and replacement bins. A breakdown of the costs for collecting fly-tipping and litter was requested. Before a charging regime was considered a more effective cost breakdown was needed. A full business case with accurate costing was requested.
- Epping Forest car parking tariffs were considered. Comments were made on increased costs and the potential impact on high streets.
- Essex County Council Highways - in November, select committee members questioned Essex County Councillor Lee Scott, Highways and Transport Portfolio Holder, on a range of highway maintenance issues."

The select committee covered the Corporate aims and objectives for a stronger place – delivering effective core services that people want; a District with planned development; and an environment where new and existing businesses thrive. Its definition encompassed Epping Forest District as a physical Place and to scrutinise the direction, policies and projects of the executive that affect the spatial and infrastructure requirements of the District. Scrutiny of the work programme included:

- ▶ Local Plan updates
- ▶ Council housebuilding
- ▶ Economic growth, skills and employment
- ▶ District-wide Waste Management provision
- ▶ Leisure Management Contract updates

Pre-scrutiny highlights

Branding of the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices

The Customer Services Director, Rob Pavey, outlined the proposed designs and names for the re-branding of the ground floor of the Civic Offices on 29 September 2021. This reflected the new community and collaborative purpose of the space and promoted the area as a new destination where EFDC services would work collaboratively with partners to provide wraparound solutions for residents and wider community activity. It was not a proposal to rename the Civic Offices but was for the ground floor area. The refurbishment of the Civic Offices had provided an opportunity to review how the building was used. The building had a reduced footprint for staff and the top floor was occupied on a commercial basis. The Service Director explained about the flow through of these ground floor areas and how the proximity and integration of the ground floor activity lent itself to a common brand. Members had been involved over the summer in the proposed designs and two branding options were presented – the Civic Hub and the Civic. The select committee recommended 'The Civic Hub' to Cabinet for consideration.

Essex Highways Update

Cllr Lee Scott, Essex County Council Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, attended the meeting on 4 November 2021 and gave a brief overview of his remit which covered potholes, buses, transport, coastal erosion, cycling, walking and footpaths. He outlined his desire to meet with District and Parish Councils to gain an understanding of the issues across the County and suggested that a key issue for the County was flooding. The select committee was advised that he could be emailed directly, or through the Chairman, to address any issues. He reminded Members that there was a limited budget, so if something was dangerous it would be fixed, but this could not be guaranteed for other issues. Members asked a range of questions which can be viewed here [Stronger Place Select Committee 4 November 2021](#)

Review of off-street parking tariffs

Also, at the same meeting in November, J Warwick (Acting Service Director) introduced the report on the tariffs for off-street car parks and advised members that the tariffs had not increased since 2015. The review aimed to ensure tariffs were set at a sustainable level to support the operation of car parks and to assist with budget pressures. Cost benefit analysis and consultation with officers and members had been carried out to inform on the proposed changes to off street parking charges, permits and seasons tickets. The car park payment machines would continue to accept cash and cards. The select committee welcomed the two hours free parking on Sundays but raised queries on the electric vehicle charging points in car parks and the increased fee for up to thirty minutes parking that could impact on businesses and revitalising the high streets. As members were concerned about the reduction in parking allocation at the Civic Offices, they were advised that a variety of options would be developed.

Additional waste container costs

In January 2022, the Acting Service Director, J Warwick, advised about the proposal for residents to be charged for: the assessment, issuing and delivery of additional garden waste bins; the assessment, issuing and delivery of larger waste bins; replacement bin cost when the bin had been lost; and that repairs to bins would be the preferential option and remain free of charge. This

proposal had been referred to the select committee by the Waste Management Partnership Board and its recommendations would be submitted to Cabinet for approval. Details of the questions raised by members can be viewed here [Stronger Place Select Committee 13 January 2022](#)

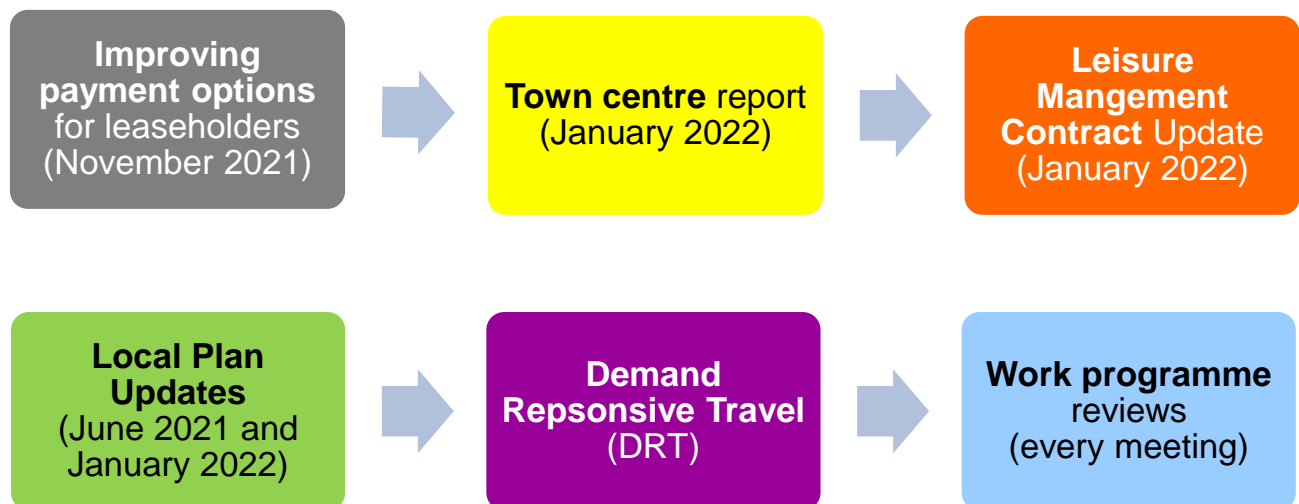
Enforcement Review

Also at the 13 January meeting, Councillor L Burrows, Portfolio Holder, introduced this review and highlighted the potential costs of £250,000 for the implementation of a system for environmental health and technical enforcement. Key aspects included developing enforcement of parking at important junctions, footpaths and areas outside schools in partnership with the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and the County Council. Planning enforcement was outside the remit of this review. The focus was on actions that were, in the main, immediate and low cost, and included outline plans for improved technology, which could be brought forward in two stage. The select committee was advised that there were many aspects to enforcement activity and recourse to legal action was used as the last resort.

Transport Strategy and Sustainable Transport

On 15 March, the Committee considered a strategic overview and status update. The Council was working to maximise use of its own land and assets to provide EV charging. Rapid 120kWh chargers would be supplied by Instavolt at Oakwood East car park in Loughton shortly. Instavolt's business model would generate site rental and profit share for the Council and did not involve upfront costs. Grant funding was being sought to convert empty garages on the Ninefields estate in Waltham Abbey to fast or overnight charging spaces. Over the next 2-3 years fast or overnight charging should be installed at a number of other car parks at leisure centres. EV charging would be built into major new developments. This would begin with the Epping Qualis developments, the multi-storey car park followed by major housing developments across the District. Thirty vehicles of the Council's fleet had switched to electric or plug-in hybrid models, as EV charging was available at all Council sites. The website had also been updated and information was live under the Parking and Travel menu option <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/parking-and-travel/electric-vehicles/>

Other work programme highlights included



Agendas and minutes ➔

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Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 16 June 2022

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny 2021–22 Annual Report

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

Committee Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decision Required:

- (1) That the attached final draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2021–22 Annual Report, which highlights scrutiny business undertaken during this municipal year, be agreed;
- (2) That the Annual Report will be submitted to Council on 28 July 2022 for approval.

Report:

1. This is the seventeenth report under the new scrutiny regime instituted by the Council in April 2005, which incorporates the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the three Select Committees and the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel.
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 considered the draft version of the Overview and Scrutiny 2021–22 Annual Report on 31 March 2022 and any comments have been included.
4. The final draft version, subject to approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be referred to Council for approval at the meeting on 28 July 2022.

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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