

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.