

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 28 February 2023

Chairman: Councillor H Kane

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for January 2023 be noted.**

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 31 January 2023

1. The Chairman introduced Qualis Group Managing Director, S Jevans, and the Managing Director of Qualis Management, B Johnson, who gave a presentation. This encompassed the property management and housing repairs service Qualis provided on behalf of the Council. Questions from the Committee covered a range of queries including the types of repairs done and why some repairs needed approval. Councillors also reported that residents contacted them about problems they experienced and delays on repairs being completed. Qualis Management assured the Committee it did prioritise its service around the vulnerability of a Council tenant and did not just focus on productivity, as customer satisfaction was also important.
2. Members reviewed the quarter 3 corporate performance report which included a project status summary, key milestones and RAG status for those projects identified as a 'priority project' within the portfolio, in addition to all KPIs regardless of status. Service Directors answered questions on the performance of the Housing Asset and Management System and the Waste Management Contract. Scrutiny of the KPI quarterly reporting data covered Customer Services, Community Health and Wellbeing, Leisure Management Contract, and delays in determining minor planning applications.
3. The select committee chairmen reported on their separate work programmes from the January meetings. The Stronger Communities Select Committee meeting had been cancelled but two meetings were scheduled for March. Councillor J Lea remarked that a lot of items had been completed but she wanted the select committee to scrutinise a housing association. Councillor J McIvor reported that the Stronger Council Select Committee had received an interesting presentation on the onboarding/induction process and was updated on the developments of the Wellbeing Hub, which set a high standard for other local authorities. Members also pre-scrutinised the Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2023/24. The Stronger Place Select Committee had reviewed an update on parking, the Off Street Civic Parking Enforcement Policy, and the Air Quality Action Plan. Councillor R Balcombe added that progress of the Local Plan and sustainable transport were due on 7 March. Members also wished to know when the Climate Change Action Plan would be scrutinised and wanted to add scrutiny of Planning to their work programme.
4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed progress against its work programme and noted that pre-scrutiny of the business case for the transfer of MOT and Fleet was on hold and no longer on the Cabinet's Key Decision List. Also, the Epping Forest District Museum's operating model would be scheduled for the next municipal year.
5. Cabinet members were asked questions on the Key Decision List of 3 January 2023 about progress on the Local Government Council Size and Boundary Review and on pay strategy.