

Report to the Council

Committee: Full Council
Date: 20 February 2024
Subject: Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ray Balcombe and Councillor Ken Williamson (Parking)

Recommending:

The report of the Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements Portfolio Holder be noted.

Leisure Management:

New Epping Leisure Centre

Work is progressing well for the construction of the Epping Leisure Centre. The contractor, Pellikaan, has taken formal possession of the site and are preparing the site for the upcoming works and installing the site set up. Once this has been completed, Pellikaan will commence the main construction works.

Pellikaan is a considerate constructor under the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS), which helps support respecting the community, caring for the environment and valuing the workforce. As part of this, Pellikaan will issue a series of newsletters to residents to keep them informed of the progress and the first newsletter was issued early January.

A special assembly was given to students at Epping Primary School to learn about and contribute to the creation of a time capsule that is to be buried under the new Epping Leisure Centre.

Health & Wellbeing

Over the coming months, Places Leisure have several Health and Wellbeing interventions launching across the Council's leisure facilities, these include:

- Fall Prevention – initial 12-week intervention programme at Loughton (due to start April 24)
- Parkinson's 'shout and move' project – 12-month intervention programme (due to start March 24)
- Menopause through Movement – 12-week intervention programme at Loughton and Epping (due to start March 24)

Places Leisure 'Big Colleague Survey'

Places Leisure have conducted a survey with employees across the four leisure centres and had a 71% completion rate. The main headlines are; 75% of employees feel it's a great place to work because management have a clear view of where the company is going and how to get there. Management show appreciation to employee's good work and employees are paid fairly.

From a customer view, 70% of the respondents rate the service provided across the four leisure centres as excellent.

Procurement and Contracts:

The Procurement and Contract Development Team have been involved in several Council projects, in particular the Waste Tender processes for the Operations Hub and Contract Hire of Specialist Vehicles, starting the Procurement processes for In-cab Software Systems and Dry/Mixed Recycling Collections, and providing support with other related projects involved in the wider Waste Project.

The team also recently conducted and awarded a tender for Rural Regeneration Consultancy and are also in the process of assessing Procurement options for the Council's Microsoft Licenses Renewal. Work has also started on the tender process for the Council's Arboricultural Services Contract with a view to appointing a contractor from July 2024.

From a contract perspective, the team have also reviewed the agreement for a new Finance System and created a Service Level Agreement between EFDC and the new Museum Trust, which is in the process of being finalised. The Team Manager for Procurement and Contract Development has led on a project to review, amend, and complete two Service Level Agreements between EFDC and Qualis, and work is ongoing on further agreements. He is also involved in a project looking at collaborating with Essex CC regarding the recruiting of temporary workers, and the team have reviewed the Collaboration Agreement with a view to signing off soon.

Parking:

EV Charging

The Council has installed 14 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in EFDC operated off-street car parks across five sites. Chargers are installed and managed by the Council's partner, InstaVolt, at no cost to the Council and in return generates an income through ground rent. The Epping Forest district area has the highest number of electric vehicles (battery only) on road in Essex, so the installation of chargers has met local demand, and the chargers are well-used. Following the installation of chargers, Epping Forest District Council is now one of the top 3 authorities all Essex in terms of EV chargers.

The installation of chargers has also resulted in greenhouse gas savings across the district, which supports the Council's journey towards a carbon-neutral District by 2030.

New Off-Street Enforcement Contract

The Council will enter a new contract for off-street parking enforcement services from 1st April 2024, as the existing contract expires on 31st March 2024. Following a procurement exercise, Cabinet agreed that the contract is awarded to Marston Holdings Ltd., who is the Council's incumbent contractor. The new contract will generate savings to the Council due to reduced deployed hours following the closure of the Cottis Lane and Bakers Lane car parks.

Under the new contract, the contractor has committed to supporting the local community and delivering social value improvements. The contractor will support three community organisations based in the Epping Forest district with monetary donations throughout the life of the contract (5 years minimum). EFDC officers will work with the contractor to identify these organisations.

Service Improvement:

Review of Contact Centre performance underway

The Council is currently undertaking a review of the Contact Centre performance. A survey has been conducted with neighbouring Local Authorities to benchmark EFDC's performance against its peers. A full report, including key findings and recommendations, will be presented to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 5 March.