

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 3 November 2015

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council

**Contact for further information: Councillor R Morgan
(Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

Democratic Services Officer: M Jenkins



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for October 2015 be noted.

Report:

1. At our meeting on Tuesday 20 October 2015, we received a presentation from Brian Page, Deputy Principal of Epping Forest College and Stuart Markham, Director of Fusion Project Management Limited, regarding the work of Epping Forest College and its financial situation. Mr Page explained that the college had expanded its courses recently and were working in close partnership with external organisations to widen the educational experiences of its students.
2. The Committee learnt that despite large scale cuts to colleges from 2014-16, Epping Forest College was financially stable and had had a surplus since 2010/11. The college was amongst the highest performing in Essex.
3. The meeting was then opened to questions from all Members present. Mr Markham was asked about the future of the college site as it was likely that some land would be sold in due course. He advised that no commitment had been made on any land sales but there would be a public consultation and any future development would be subject to planning consent.
4. The Committee endorsed the revisions to the Overview and Scrutiny sections of the Constitution as part of the overall review being undertaken by the Constitution Working Group.
5. We received a presentation from the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel, which concerned their final report and recommendations. The report was presented by Councillor A Patel and was accompanied by Youth Councillor Jaymey McIvor.
6. The Youth Engagement Review was undertaken between April and September 2015, during which they received evidence from council officers, Youth Council Members and from Essex County Council. The Panel had been particularly interested in the targeted work undertaken with young people who had been identified by local schools as having a range of problems. However, we were disappointed to learn that the County Council did not deliver any youth work in the district due to recent budget cuts. We were advised that there was a sum of £16,500 per annum for youth initiatives in the district, provided by the County Council.
7. The Panel had recommended to us that the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained at £12,000 per annum and that the Cabinet be asked for a CSB Growth of £8,000 per annum for an enabling fund to support the Youth Council's access to projects. In addition it was recommended that this Council pursue devolution of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from the county to the District Council. A further bid will be made to the Cabinet for another CSB Growth of £25,000 per annum for targeted work by Community Services and Safety. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support these recommendations.

8. The Committee reviewed the quarterly progress made on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 and we support making training presentations on Overview and Scrutiny available in advance of the meetings. We also support ensuring that Committee recommendations are followed up to ensure that action is taken and will be considering regular progress reporting.

9. We noted progress on the scrutiny work programmes. The Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee advised that their meeting of 17 December 2015 would be devoted entirely to the Waste Management Contract. The meeting would be held in the Council Chamber and would also be webcast.

10. We discussed a PICK Form submitted by Councillor S Neville which concerned supporting the principle of moving to a default 20mph limit in the district which was felt would reduce accidents and improve public health generally. We felt that this request should ideally be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee with an invite extended to an officer of Essex County Council to attend. However we do acknowledge that the District Council's remit in this area is quite limited.

11. Finally, we reviewed the Cabinet's Forward Plan but had no specific items that we wanted to consider further.