

Corporate Priorities 2019/20

As Members are aware, thanks to the excellent work of the O&S Select Committee Task & Finish group we now have a more streamlined Scrutiny function within the Council.

Along with this, we have a revised set of key performance indicators and work programmes, and a new Corporate Plan performance reporting format, which will contain a greater level of 'real time' information and make scrutiny of performance much easier.

Our priorities for 19/20 are contained within our new Corporate Plan Action Plan, which has a revised set of Key Performance Indicators and a range of Work Programmes. These are grouped under our Core Principles of;

Stronger Communities, Stronger Place and Stronger Council

Stronger Communities:

Engaging with the changing needs of our customers will be a key focus for us as we transform the way that we deliver our services to our residents and we have already embarked on a journey, to ensure that our residents have the digital skills to embrace this change. Our aim is to provide a service with first point resolution for customers, ensuring efficiency and effective customer care.

Our Customer Services Team is working with Citizens Online, to provide a series of Digital Inclusion workshops across the District for local residents and this was launched at the DIZ Smart Place Seminar in April. We are also bringing our own staff up to speed with new ways of working with the public and have a programme of workshops for Members and I very much hope that all members will take advantage of these.

Through our Community and Partnership work, we are continuing to develop local Community Champions who are local volunteers across the district who work to support the most vulnerable in their communities. Linked to this, we are aiming to increase users of the Careline service by 10% to ensure that our elderly residents and those with disabilities are safer in their own homes.

People with other vulnerabilities will be supported by us through initiatives such as our Home Safe and Sanctuary Schemes, which are provided for people subject to domestic abuse and violence, and we are aiming to reduce Homelessness in the district. This is a major issue for the district (and the rest of Essex) with the transfer of families out of London Boroughs, so we will be working to try and reduce the impact of this on our local services through our Homeless and Safeguarding Teams.

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2025 sets out an excellent framework to support our residents of all ages to become or stay healthy throughout their lives, in order to help reduce future pressures on the already depleted NHS services and social care system.

Stronger Place:

Following the completion of the Local Plan Inspection which has taken place over the summer, we will be starting work on the Implementation Plan, which will see the range of development proposals realised across the district. This will include making a start on the roll out of our 11,000 new homes and embarking on a series of economic development proposals to increase the number of jobs available for your young people.

This work will be further enhanced through our Nurturing Growth Economic Development Strategy 2019- 2025. This will be the first Economic Strategy for the District and will help us to attract external funding to support business growth, employment and skills development

across the area. We have already secured £10m which was to boost our rural economy through installation of superfast broadband across our District and have just been advised that we were successful in our bid to DCMS for £2.1m, which is for the roll out of Local Full Fibre Network for all of our GP surgeries and those across West Essex and East Herts. This goes a long way to us achieving our aim of becoming the most business-friendly council in Essex.

We are also continuing to protect our frontline services and making the District an even greater place to live and work, including through our investment in the new leisure centre, shops and cinema in St John's Road, Epping. We anticipate this will be a great draw to the area, helping to shape our most central town and community, boosting our retail and visitor economy.

Our efforts to reduce overall household waste and increase recycling are a further key priority for Stronger Place, and we will be focussing on greater promotion and engagement with our residents to achieve this.

We are additionally in the process of completing work on the 51 homes in the Burton Road housing development and will soon be launching Phase 4 of our building programme using the new Strategic Alliance Framework. This will see 175 affordable homes being built by the Council, Housing Associations and developers on non-council owned sites, including through section 106 agreements.

Stronger Council:

Through our People and IT Strategies, we will be delivering a range of projects to develop the skills and flexibility of the Councils workforce to meet future needs and direction of the Council. This includes provision of bespoke training courses for staff and Members and roll out of Office 365 to enable staff and teams to work in different ways.

Our future accommodation needs continue to be considered, with feasibility studies for a range of options underway and we will consolidate our plans for these, 'in year'. We have already redesigned the way that our leadership team works by bringing Service Directors together on the second floor of the building and plans are underway to reconfigure this area, so that it can accommodate Service Managers and corporate services including HR, PR and Communications and Finance. This will ensure robust management of the Council's finances and wider services.

A further focus for 2019/20 is a complete review of Performance and Project Management within the Council. This is both in terms of monitoring our achievements related to the Corporate Plan and objectives, and in the performance of our staff.

We therefore have a very busy and exciting year ahead of us, with several new Cabinet members and a relatively new wider Leadership Team heading up the transformation and development of the Council and its' services.

I hope that with the establishment of the new Select Committees, we will be able to provide the right level of scrutiny to ensure that our services are the best they can be.

As a Cabinet we are committed to attending and supporting your work. We will also be keen to hear from O&S of any particular areas of the Executive Work programme that you would be interested in undertaking pre-scrutiny for.