

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 30 July 2019

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council



Chairman: Cllr M. Sartin

Democratic Services: Rebecca Perrin (01992 564532).
Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from 4 June 2019 to the present be noted.

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 June 2019

1. At the meeting on Tuesday 4 June 2019, the Leader gave a verbal report on the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2019/20.
2. The Committee also agreed the Membership, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Terms of Reference and Work Programmes for the newly established Select Committees; Stronger Council; Stronger Communities and Stronger Places.
3. Other business considered by the Committee included the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions; the Work Programme for 2019/20 and the agreement of the minutes for the final meetings of Governance, Resources, Communities and Neighbourhoods Select Committees.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 July 2019

4. The Committee noted, with some disappointment, that the Principal of Epping Forest and Redbridge Colleges had declined an invitation to attend the Committee on 3 September 2019, as she felt that it was not appropriate for the College to report to the Council in this way. She had offered to meet with Members on an informal basis, either at the College or the Civic Offices, to explain the improvements being made since the College's merger with New City College.
5. In the light of this response, the Committee agreed that the proposed external scrutiny of Epping Forest College should be removed from the work programme for 2019/20, and that the Service Director for Communities & Partnerships should contact the new Principal to arrange a Briefing for Members. It was felt that the venue for this Briefing should be left to the Principal to decide. The Chief Executive had also suggested that an Officer meeting with the Chief Executive of New City College could take place before the proposed Briefing with Members, and the Committee felt that this would be useful.

6. The Committee agreed the Terms of Reference and work programme for a new Task & Finish Panel on Waste Management to run during 2019/20, with the addition of Bottle Deposit Schemes to the Panel's remit. Nine Councillors were appointed to the Panel, with Cllr Burrows and Cllr Rackham appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. The current work programme envisaged the Panel reporting back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2020.

7. The Committee also considered the Statutory Guidance on Overview & Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, recently issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The Committee was advised that it largely complied with the Guidance already, but there might be some issues to consider. The Committee agreed that the Guidance should be considered at the next Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, and any proposed changes to the Overview & Scrutiny rules within Article 6 of the Constitution could then be referred to the Constitution Working Group for consideration.

8. The Committee considered a Member request for a 'Spotlight' Scrutiny review on air pollution from Vehicle Emissions. After a lively debate, the Committee concluded that the emerging Local Plan was already considering the wider issue of Air Quality, and the Stronger Place Select Committee already had sustainable transport under the Green Agenda item on its work programme. Therefore, the request was denied as the Committee felt that this issue should be discussed at the upcoming meetings of the Stronger Place Select Committee.

9. The Committee reviewed the Quarter 1 performance of the Action Plan for Year 2 of the Corporate Plan 2018 – 23, and noted some revisions to the report following its publication. The Committee commented that the new format was easier to understand than in previous years.

10. Other business considered by the Committee included: the Cabinet's Programme of Key Decisions; the Overview & Scrutiny and Select Committee Work Programmes for 2019/20; some minor revisions to the memberships of the Stronger Council and Stronger Place Select Committees; and the agreement of the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 for submission to the Council on 30 July 2019.