

## **Report to Council**

**Date of meeting: 30 July 2020**



**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council**

**Chairman: Cllr Mary Sartin**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from June to July 2020 be noted.**

### **Report:**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 June 2020**

1. At the meeting on Thursday 22 June 2020, the Leader gave a verbal report on the Council's Corporate Priorities for this municipal year.
2. The Committee also agreed the Membership, Chairmanships, and Vice-Chairmanships for the three established Select Committees, now in their second year: Stronger Council; Stronger Communities and Stronger Places. Other business considered by the Committee included the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions; as well as the Overview & Scrutiny and Select Committee Work Programmes for 2020. It was agreed that the response and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic should be added to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme as a standing item.

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 July 2020**

3. At the meeting on Thursday 16 July 2020, the Committee received a presentation from the Epping Forest Youth Council on the activities that they had undertaken during the previous twelve months and intended to undertake in the next twelve months. They were currently undertaking a post Covid-19 survey of young people on how their health and wellbeing had been affected by the pandemic.
4. The Committee was highly impressed by the work of the Youth Council and acknowledged that they were one of the best Youth Councils in operation in the region, as recognised by the numerous awards that their work had won. The Leader of Council requested that the Youth Council share with a future Cabinet meeting the results of their current survey, in order to help shape the future of the District for young people in a post-Covid world.
5. The Committee then received a short presentation on the new People Strategy of the Council. The ambition of the new Strategy was to have the right people with the right skills who were highly motivated and high performing. A key aspect of the new Strategy was also the renewed emphasis on the health and wellbeing of staff, with a key target to have 10% of the workforce trained to deal with mental health and wellbeing issues by the Autumn.

6. The Committee then considered the Customer Services Annual Report, which included the Customer Service Strategy, Customer Satisfaction, the Customer Contact Centre, the Digital Inclusion Programme, interaction with Members, Partnership Working, Digital Payments, and Communications and Public Relations. The Committee raised a concern about the Council potentially providing services via digital means only, and felt that Council Offices and telephone support should remain as an option for residents to use. The Committee also felt uneasy about the use of the term 'Customer' and felt that the use of the term 'Resident' would be better, as residents and businesses throughout the District had no option but to use the services provided by the Council.

7. The Committee received two reports on the Council's performance; the first covering the period January to March 2020 which was the last quarter of the 2019/20 municipal year, and the second covering the period April to June 2020 which was the first quarter of the 2020/21 municipal year. The second report in particular highlighted the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the Council's services, especially when compared against the Service plans previously agreed before the pandemic. It was acknowledged that further issues relating to the pandemic could arise, especially in respect of the possible pressure on housing and homelessness services when the current furloughing and mortgage protection schemes ended.

8. The Waste Management Task & Finish Panel presented its final report to the Committee, which had been held over from the postponed meeting in March. The Committee welcomed the recommendation to not implement a third wheeled bin for all properties throughout the District and were keen to emphasise that any wide-ranging changes to the current service provision should be subject to extensive public consultation. The new style of high street litter bin was welcomed, but some concerns were raised about the current provision of street cleansing throughout the District. However, the Committee agreed the recommendations of the Task & Finish Panel and requested that it reconvene later in the municipal year when more information became available following further Government waste strategy consultations and royal assent for the Environment Bill 2020.

9. Other business considered by the Committee included: the Cabinet's Programme of Key Decisions, as well as the Overview & Scrutiny and Select Committee Work Programmes for 2020/21. When discussing the agenda for the forthcoming Cabinet meeting, it was confirmed that the Council did not intend to replace the Leisure Centre at Loughton.