

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report for 2017-2018



Epping Forest District Council

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT: MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/2018

Introduction and Welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to the thirteenth annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Structure of Epping Forest District Council and my second year as Chairman.

This was the third year of our new O&S set up using Select Committees to break down our work by Directorate. This year we re-established the four Select Committees aligned with the Directorate structure.

As always, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees were charged with reviewing Cabinet decisions, the Corporate Strategy, the Council's financial performance and also scrutinising the performance of the public bodies active in the District by inviting reports and presentations from them. Also, for the first time this year we started looking at the Council's Transformation Programme, designed to take the Council into future years

At the beginning of the 2017/18 municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to the setting up of one Task and Finish Panel to review how we were to scrutinise the Transformation Programme.

During the year we received presentations from outside bodies including the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, Barts Health NHS Trust, Transport for London, Epping Forest College and the East of England Ambulance Service.

This past year we have looked at two of our neighbouring NHS hospitals quite closely even though strictly speaking the County Council has jurisdiction in the scrutinising of health services. This was because of the problems reported by the Care Quality Commission and the concerns raised by our residents. With the County's blessing we have had the two NHS Trusts in to update us on their problems and have found them to be working hard towards remedying their situations.

My thanks go to the Chairmen and members of the four Select Committees and the Task and Finish Panel; also, my special thanks go to my Vice-Chairman, Councillor R Brookes for all her help and support through the year.

And of course, I would like to thank all the officers that have worked so hard to keep the Committee members informed and supplied with the background information that they needed to carry out their investigations.

Cllr Mary Sartin
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

What is Scrutiny?

- Scrutiny in local government is the mechanism by which public accountability is exercised.
- The purpose of scrutiny in practice is to examine, question and evaluate in order to achieve improvement.
- The value of scrutiny is in the use of research and questioning techniques to make recommendations based on evidence.
- Scrutiny enables issues of public concerns to be examined.
- At the heart of all the work is consideration of what impact the Cabinet's plans will have on the local community.
- However, the overview and scrutiny function is not meant to be confrontational or seen as deliberately set up to form an opposition to the Cabinet. Rather the two aspects should be regarded as 'different sides of the same coin'. The two should complement each other and work in tandem to contribute to the development of the authority.

Alongside its role to challenge, the scrutiny function has also continued to engage positively with the Cabinet and there continues to be cross party co-operation between members on all panels.

Scrutiny has continued to provide valuable contributions to the Council and the Cabinet remained receptive to ideas put forward by Scrutiny throughout the year.

The rules of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also allow members of the public to have the opportunity to address the Committee on any agenda item.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee coordinated with the Cabinet and pre scrutinised their Forward Plan of Key Decision on a meeting by meeting basis. This acted as a troubleshooting exercise, unearthing problems before they arose. It also gave the Cabinet a chance to ask Overview and Scrutiny to look at any items of work that they thought needed either scrutiny or pre-scrutiny.

The Committee also engaged with external bodies in order to scrutinise parts of their work that encroached on the District and its people. They also received stand alone reports from officers and reports from the Select Committees on the work they carried out during the year.

Select Committees

A lead Officer was appointed to each Select Committee to facilitate its process. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the terms of reference for each of the Committees on the basis of a rolling programme to consider ongoing and cyclical issues. Four Select Committees were established, dealing with:

- i. Communities,
- ii. Governance,
- iii. Neighbourhoods, and
- iv. Resources.

The Select Committees reported regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with the work they were carrying out.

Task and Finish Panels

The Task and Finish reviews are restricted to dealing with activities which are issue based, time limited, non-cyclical and with clearly defined objectives on which they would report, once completed, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

One Task and Finish Panel was established to review the Council's Transformation Programme and to establish what Scrutiny would need to keep an eye on in the next few years.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor M Sartin (Chairman)
Councillor R Brookes (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, R Baldwin, N Bedford, S Kane, Y Knight, J Lea, A Mitchell,
S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, D Stallan, B Surtees, H Whitbread and D Wixley.

The Lead Officer was Derek Macnab, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods.

Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's main functions are to monitor and scrutinise the work of the executive and its forward plan, external bodies linked to the District Council and the Council's financial performance. It is tasked with the consideration of call-ins, policy development, performance monitoring and reviewing corporate strategies including the Transformation Programme.

The Committee's workload over the past year can be broken down as follows:

(a) Scrutinising and monitoring Cabinet work

The Committee has a proactive role in this area through carrying out pre-scrutiny work. This involved considering the Cabinet's Key Decision List (Forward Plan) for the coming months on a meeting by meeting basis.

(b) Call-ins

The Committee received one call-in this year. In September 2017 a valid call-in was received by the Chief Executive, in connection with a Cabinet decision agreed at its meeting on 7 September 2017 (Reference C-015-2017/18). This was in regard to the proposed relocation of the Council's Housing Repairs and Housing Assets Services to the Oakwood Hill Depot, Loughton.

At the request of the lead member for the call-in, this matter was considered at a meeting convened in accordance with the procedure for the 'withdrawal or modification of a call-in' contained in the Council's Constitution.

As a result of this meeting the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed to ensure that an appropriate transport assessment was undertaken with regard to the relocation of Services to the Oakwood Hill Depot, prior to the preparation and submission of any planning application that was required for the provision of increased car parking facilities at the Depot.

This approach was supported by the lead member of the call-in and with that agreement, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had determined that the call-in be treated as withdrawn.

(c) Select Committees work programme monitoring

The Committee received regular updates from the Chairmen of the four Select Committees reporting on the progress made on their current work programme. This allowed the

Committee to monitor their performance and if necessary adjust their work plans to take into account new proposals and urgent items.

(d) Items considered by the committee this year

Over the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received various presentations and considered a range of diverse topics.

Presentations:

(i) Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust – In June 2017 the Committee welcomed three officers from the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) Trust. They were there to respond to the concerns raised by the Committee regarding aspects of its inpatient, outpatient and medical emergency services and other areas which were highlighted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

They noted that the trust was rated as inadequate and focused on their improvement plan for the CQC where they recommended ‘must dos’ and ‘should dos’.

Another area of concern was staffing across the board; not just nurses. They were close to London where staff could earn more money and therefore recruitment and retention was difficult for the PAH.

They have also been working hard on staff engagement and were now having weekly briefings.

(See Case Study for full details)

(ii) Barts Health NHS Trust – in October 2017 the Chairman welcomed officers from Barts Health NHS Trust, who were attending to update Members on their improvement plan from their last visit on 23 February 2016. In attendance were Alan Gurney, Managing Director and Dr Heather Noble, Medical Director both from Whipps Cross Hospital.

Mr Gurney advised that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertook a focused unannounced inspection in May 2017 of three of the core services at Whipps Cross Hospital, these were surgery, end of life care and outpatients and diagnostic imaging. This visit was a



follow up to the CQC’s previous inspection of Whipps Cross Hospital in July 2016, which at that time, rated Whipps Cross Hospital as inadequate overall. In September 2017 the CQC published their report and the inadequate overall rating for the hospital had improved and the status had moved from inadequate to required improvement, although some areas such as surgery still remained inadequate.

The problems that remained with surgery were due to the age of the buildings and the state of repair; the theatres were old and needed major investment to repair and update them. Mr Gurney reported that Barts Health Trust were reinvesting £1.4 million in the current financial year to completely overhaul and refurbish two of the operating theatres that the CQC were concerned about.

Whipps Cross Hospital continued to focus their efforts on improvement including:

- Taking immediate action to improve surgical services by improving the environment and governance within the service;
- Recruiting more permanent staff;
- Improving the flow through the hospital so that patients do not have to wait too long for treatment and cancellations are kept to a minimum;
- Identifying and learning from incidents which occurred; and
- Ensuring all staff are aware of infection and control guidelines and policies.

There was a need to invest in the future of Whipps Cross and redevelopment was greatly needed. A strategic outline case was with the Trust's regulators for approval. Once approved the next level would be to outline a business case and then options would be looked at for the redevelopment of the site and how the Trust would be able to acquire the funding for this major project.

(iii) Transport for London (TfL) – in January 2018 the Committee welcomed Mark Hart, the Transport for London Community Partnership Specialist (West) who was there to speak to and answer questions from members on their concerns in regards to the operation of local bus services within the Epping Forest District run by TfL.

Mr Hart said that in 2016 bus routes 167, 397 and 549 had been reviewed in preparation for a new contract with a service provider, to be let in March 2017. They reviewed all their services looking at capacity, reliability and, increasingly, costs, as they were also a publically funded organisation. They were now in a tighter financial position as TfL had lost financial support from Essex County Council and their grant from Central Government, which was roughly about £700 million per year. They had to now look at how they did things and to do them smarter. It also meant that they had to look at reducing the services they provided.



There was also a demand for the 167 from school children so they created route 677, especially for school children.

The 167 route would be reviewed again when the contract was due for renewal. Contracts tended to run for 5 years with a further 2 years depending on the performance of the contractor.

Generally, because of the increase in bus journey times there had been a decline in passenger numbers. The current 5 year TfL business plan was looking at reductions in mileage run by the their bus service but then there would be an increase, largely because of increased new housing and a return to growth at the end of that 5 year period.

(iv) Epping Forest College – in February 2018 the Principal of Epping Forest College, Ms Famili, addressed the Committee on the recent unfavourable Ofsted reports and updated the Committee on the latest improvements made by the College.



A full Ofsted re-assessment had been carried out recently; but unfortunately she could not share the results of that with the Committee. However,

their self-assessment had shown they had noticeably improved since last year. They had moved one stage further up on their journey to excellence. They still have challenges and notices of improvement and these would not be removed until the Ofsted report was published and their judgement given.

As an overview she noted the results that they had received so far, which they were extremely pleased about. In July/August last year they had a 5.6% increase on their study programme that took them to just around the national benchmark, before that they were around 8% adrift of that national level. On level 2 they had increased to 12.8%, now 5% above the national benchmark; on level 3 that had increased by 3% to 88%. Significant improvements had been made on GCSE English; they were now 16% above the national benchmark. Over 93% of their learners expressed their enjoyment of studying at Epping Forest College, which was an increase of over 12% from the year before.

All these improvements had been achieved through hard work by members of staff at the college and also having a very supportive and challenging board of governors. They have tackled poor performance by giving support where it was needed and taking immediate action when needed.

(v) East of England Ambulance Service - In April 2018 the Committee received Alan Whitehead the Sector Head of Service Development, Engagement and Improvement from the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. He was there to facilitate the scrutiny of the Ambulance Service Trust in regard to local ambulance services provided across the Epping Forest District. This following the publication of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report in August 2016 and its judgement that the quality of the service provided by the Trust required improvement.



Members had submitted some advanced questions that were sent to him beforehand to enable him to prepare answers for the meeting.

Mr Whitehead thanked the Committee for inviting him to the meeting and noted the 13 questions he had been sent in advance. He proceeded to answer those questions in detail and then went on to answer questions from members at the meeting.

Other Topics Considered:

(i) Over the course of the year the Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan and Key Objectives for the coming year on a regular meeting by meeting basis. At each meeting the Committee looked at the updated list of the coming year's work programmed in for the Cabinet.



(ii) In June 2017 the Committee considered the Council's corporate priorities and programme of key decisions for 2017/18. The committee went through the plan page by page asking questions as appropriate.

(iii) The Leader of the Council, Councillor C Whitbread introduced the key action plan for 2017/18 that arose from the Council's current Corporate Plan. He noted that the report started with Council's finance. He observed that over the last decade the council has been

able to protect front line services, where other councils across the country have struggled to do so.

(iv) The Committee considered the outturn figures (quarter 4) for the corporate plan key objectives for 2016/17. Progress in relation to individual actions and deliverables was reviewed by the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly and outturn basis.

(v) In July 2017 the meeting considered the new Corporate Plan for 2018 to 2023. This new Corporate Plan sought to lay out the journey the Council would take to transform the organisation to be 'ready for the future'. This plan strived to link the key external drivers influencing Council services, with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions.



The Corporate Plan was the Council's highest level strategic document. It set the strategic direction of the organisation for the lifetime of the plan, and as such informed all other plans

produced by the Council.

(vi) At their October 2017 meeting the Committee received the final report of the Transformation Task and Finish Panel they had set up in June. The Panel had three meetings to consider information relating to the programme and their report summarised the work carried out and the recommendations made as a result of the meetings. These recommendations were agreed subject to a couple of minor amendments.

(vii) During the year the Committee reviewed and commented on the Quarterly progress of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2017/18, receiving the quarter 1 progress report at their October meeting.

(viii) Also at each meeting the Committee reviewed the updated version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions asking questions of Cabinet members as appropriate on the current position of any of the items covered by the Forward Plan that they suspected were not achieving as they should.



(ix) In February 2018 the Head of Customer Services, Ms Shaw introduced the first the annual report on the Customer Service Programme.

The Customer Service Programme was redesigned to focus on 4 key projects:

- Civic Offices Reception,
- Corporate Contact Centre (CCC),
- Systems and Digital Development,
- Customer Satisfaction.

(x) Another monitoring report came to the February 2018 meeting. This reported the progress of projects and programmes within the Transformation Programme, known as the Project Dossier.

(xi) At their April 2018 meeting they agreed to have a yearly report and presentation from the Epping Forest Youth Council to this Committee on their past years activities and plans for the future.

(xii) The Committee also received a series of reports updating them on the ongoing Transformation Programme and on the closure of any projects that had taken place and had been completed during the year as well as the Transformation Business Plan and on the Corporate Plan for 2018-2023.

(e) Case Study: Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

At their first meeting of the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed three officers from the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) Trust. They were Lance McCarthy (Chief Executive), Stephanie Lawton (Chief Operating Officer) and Nancy Fontaine (Chief Nurse). They were there to respond to the concerns of the Committee in response to the concerns of Care Quality Commission (CQC) regarding aspects of its inpatient, outpatient and medical emergency services and other area of concern.



Mr McCarthy (Chief Executive) started off by referring to the strategic issues that affected the Hospital Trust. He noted that the trust was rated as inadequate and focused on their improvement plan for the CQC where they recommended 'must dos' and 'should dos'. In total they had 38 actions/issues raised. That formed the basis of their quality improvement plan; but they also had over 600 other items that they had to consider and to tackle any of

the underlying issues to prevent them happening again. They have a good framework on these actions and know everyone that would be leading on them. Reporting up to the executive team and then on to the Trust Board on a bi-monthly basis. Also, as part of being in special measures, they have a monthly governance oversight meeting with the CQC and NHS Support.

Ms Fontaine (Chief Nurse) noted that on receipt of the CQC findings they took an extremely serious view and took immediate action on the mortuary situation, where it was deemed to be substandard. The capital programme for the renovation of the mortuary was programmed as a "to do", but was delayed as the finance was needed for something else, but it was never not going to be done. The Human Tissue Authority, the authority responsible, inspected them in December and stated that they had met the required standards. The Trust was now working with partners around Hertfordshire and Essex as well as Community Trusts who commissioned services from them. They have also appointed a specialist consultant clinician for 'end of life'. The CQC had now commented on the compassionate care they now deliver. Although it was not always possible or in their gift to transfer patients to a hospice or preferred place of care that they wished to go to. And, according to their Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STP) partners they were state of the art in that they were leading with their commissioners and Community Trust to get one standard across Hertfordshire and Essex; not an easy thing to do.

The Critical Care Unit came as a shock; there were many areas where they were not performing as well as they should, such as the emergency department, but for Critical Care

they had always met their clinical outcomes and their mortality outcomes and expected deaths care was always rated as among some of the best in the country.

The CQC were concerned about outcomes and delays in getting the patients out of the Critical Care unit. The Critical Care leads were honest about not pushing forward opportunities to be innovative and were probably sitting on their laurels and were now determined that at the next inspection they would be rated as good. It was important to note that all their intensive care patients were safe and they had managed to keep safety at the forefront.



They saw about 109,000 patients a year through their emergency department, and for many of their patients they did not have any other out of hours facilities to go to. That was a long standing issue, outside of GP practices there were not many advanced practitioners working out of hours and at weekends, however they were working to create places for patients to go to throughout their sector.

The other area was around training, access to training and appraisals. They had put in a new system for statutory mandatory training and an appraisal system that was meaningful for all their staff.

Another area of concern was staffing across the board; not just nurses. They were close to London where possible recruits could earn more money and therefore recruitment and retention was difficult for PAH. They had put in lots of innovative approaches to recruiting and retaining staff, especially for nursing and doctors, both nationally and international recruitment. They have had a lot of successes and have received an 'outstanding' for their maternity and gynaecology units and had bucked the national trend and did not have a shortage of midwives having only 4.5 vacancies. For theatres across the hospital they had only one vacancy. These were areas that had been really successful in recruiting due to making sure that staff and patients felt safe.



Finally it was important to recognise that the CQC saw that there was a disconnect between the board and senior management around getting messages down to the staff. They had been working hard on staff engagement and now have weekly briefings. They were focusing on staff experience through listening events and focus groups, to let them know that they were listened to.

SELECT COMMITTEES

1. COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Communities Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor Y Knight (Chairman)

Councillor G Shiell (Vice Chairman)

Councillors R Baldwin, A Beales, R Butler, K Chana, R Gadsby, L Girling, S Heap, L Hughes, S Jones, A Mitchell, D Sunger, B Surtees and H Whitbread

The Lead Officer was Alan Hall, Director of Communities. The Committee also appreciated the Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor S Stavrou, attending the meetings to help them with their deliberations.

Wyn Marshall represented the Tenants and Leaseholder Federation, attending the meetings as a non-voting co-opted member to provide the views of residents and stakeholders.

Terms of Reference

The Communities Select Committee was tasked:

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the services and functions of the Communities Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the services and functions of the Communities Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or a relevant Portfolio Holder, and to report and make recommendations directly to the Committee, the Cabinet or such Portfolio Holder as appropriate;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Communities Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the services and functions of the Communities Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Communities Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;

(iv) HRA Financial Plan 2017/18 - The Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial plan for 2017-18. The Financial Plan set out the forecast income and expenditure for the Council's HRA for the following 30 years, to enable early decisions to be made based on these long term forecasts. Each year, the Financial Plan takes account of the latest budget figures, Council policy, Government policy and Council decisions, and makes assumptions for a range of future income and costs.



It also took account of the Cabinet's decisions following the Stage 1 HRA Financial Options Review undertaken earlier in the year, when it was agreed that the Council should continue with its Council Housebuilding Programme for Phase 4-6 and revert to the Government's Decent Home Standard from the Council's own Modern Home Standard.

(v) Housing Service Standards – Performance Report 2016/17 and Review - Since 2007, the Council has had a range of Housing Service Standards, covering all of the Housing Service's main areas of activity, formulated in consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation.

Last year, when reviewing the Service Standards and the Performance Schedule, the Select Committee requested increased performance and activity information on a number of the Service Standards within the Performance Schedule, which had therefore been included in this year's Schedule.

There were 48 Housing Service Standards that include measurable and measured targets. Of these, 39 (81%) of the targets had been achieved in 2016/17.

(vi) Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 (Outturn) Performance – The Select Committee received reports throughout the previous year on the Key Performance Indicators for 2016/17.



Ten of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Communities Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year, which was considered in the early part of 2017/18 for these indicators was:

- (a) 8 (80%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 1 (10%) indicators did not achieve target; and
- (c) 1 (10%) indicators performed within their tolerated amber margin.

(vii) Corporate Plan Key Action 2016/17 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Position – The Select Committee received reports throughout the previous year on the Council's Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17.

15 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Communities Select Committee. They considered the end of the year position in the early part of 2017/18:

- 8 (53%) of these actions had been achieved at year end; and
- 3 (20%) of the deliverables or actions were not completed by year-end albeit significant progress had been made;
- 3 (20%) of these actions were expected to achieve target in the next 6 months;
- 1 (7%) action (i) (b) 5) became no longer required during Q2.

(viii) Review of Housing Allocations Scheme – In September 2017 the Committee noted that the Council was legally required to have a Housing Allocations Scheme for determining priorities and the procedure to be followed in selecting a person for accommodation, or nominating a person to be a tenant for accommodation held by another Registered Provider of Social Housing.

Under Government Guidance, authorities were given powers to decide locally how accommodation should be allocated based upon local priorities and were empowered to allocate their accommodation in any way they saw fit, provided schemes were both legal and rational.

The Committee was therefore asked to review the Scheme, in order to consider whether any further changes were required, and to submit a report to the Cabinet on the outcome of its review and any recommended changes. The subsequent recommendations of the Select Committee were approved.

(ix) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2017/18 - Quarterly Progress - The Committee reviewed the Corporate Plan actions relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(x) Key Performance Indicator 2017/18 – Quarterly Progress - The Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(xi) Presentation from Essex Police’s District Commander – In November 2017 the Committee received a presentation from Essex’s Police District Commander, Chief Inspector Lewis Basford, on current policing and crime issues in the District.

The District Commander for the Brentwood and Epping Forest Community Policing Team outlined the current level of policing. This comprised ten police constables and seven support constables for the whole district, who covered community issues and were split into two shifts – early and late. There was a local policing team at Loughton that operated on a 24-hour basis, 7-day coverage and handled 999 emergency calls and 101 calls.



Domestic violence, which included violent crime, was responsible for 34 per cent of all crime, which was why there was a dedicated team that looked at this specific issue.

In light of the current trend of national threats by terrorism, there were on-going training exercises to tackle this hazard. The Police had listened to the public’s reports of ASB by individuals using motorcycles / mopeds and was researching tactics to combat this problem. The work of the Council’s Community Safety Team and their partnership with the Police had helped in the conviction of an individual for human trafficking offences, who was now serving six years in prison.

(xii) Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) – The Epping Forest CSP consisted of a mix of statutory and voluntary sector bodies, including Essex Police, Epping Forest District Council, Essex Fire and Rescue, the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), the National Probation Trust, Trading Standards and Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Other agencies were also invited to attend, including local Town and Parish

Councils, The Corporation of London (Epping Forest), Epping Forest College and representatives from Health.

In January 2017 police radio communications were installed in the Community Safety Team's office, which had increased the effectiveness of the Council's CCTV systems, to communicate directly with Essex Police Force Control Room. This action had achieved a very positive effect in respect of coordinated working and highly effective intelligence sharing between Essex Police and the CST.

(xiii) The Ageing Population Study Action Plan - The Committee noted that the Council had carried out a comprehensive study during 2015/16 of the ageing population in the District, which had generated over 40 recommendations for the Council and various statutory and voluntary sector partners to address. The resulting action plan was launched in October 2016 and this report provided an update on the progress of key areas of work. A consultation of 300 local people aged 55 – 95 from a range of demographics and areas of the District focussed on three main themes which were:



- Health and Wellbeing;
- Living in the Epping Forest District (EFD); and
- Communication and Engagement.

(xiv) Government's Prevent Strategy – The Committee were informed that the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy was developed in 2011 to combat terrorism and terrorist activity in the UK. This had consisted of four main elements of work under the 'Contest' heading, which included:

- *Pursue*: the investigation and disruption of terrorist attacks;
- *Prevent*: work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;
- *Protect*: improving our protective security to stop a terrorist attack; and
- *Prepare*: working to minimise the impact of an attack and to recover as quickly as possible.

'Contest' covered all forms of terrorism and aimed to reduce risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people could go about their lives freely and with confidence. The current threat to Essex was assessed as low, and that did not mean that the Council would neglect 'Prevent', but would need to keep this under review as there was a balance that the CST and Essex Police had to monitor.



(xv) Fire Safety in Council owned Accommodation and Park Homes – In January 2018 the Committee received a report on the Council's fire safety procedures in Council owned accommodation. This was asked for subsequent to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London. Officers were awaiting the outcome of the inquiry and the changes in law or regulations or advice that may affect our procedures.

After reviewing the report the Committee discussed the possibility of installing sprinkler systems into each of the Council's sheltered housing schemes and at Norway House, North Weald and Hemnall House and agreed that a feasibility study should be commissioned.

(xvi) Rationalisation of Sheltered Housing Assets – initial Scoping Report – The Committee received a report on the proposed rationalisation of the Council's sheltered housing assets. The Council had a number of sheltered and grouped housing schemes to



accommodate older people. In both cases, residents currently received a daily well-being check from their Scheme Manager, usually through a home visit, and were also monitored by the Council's Careline Service 24 hours a day.

In recent years, there had been a sharp decline in the popularity of sheltered housing (which was reflected across the country), with older people tending to prefer to remain in their own homes for much longer, until they needed to move directly into independent living, residential or nursing accommodation.

At the same time, the Council had increasing numbers of local people registered on its Housing Register in need of general needs housing who were having to wait long periods of time to be accommodated, usually years, and in the meantime living in deficient existing accommodation. Furthermore, demand for temporary accommodation for homeless households had increased too.

Officers believed that the number of low demand sheltered properties now needed to be reduced through decanting the existing residents at some sheltered housing schemes to other suitable accommodation and then developing the resultant vacant land or buildings to provide accommodation to help meet the housing needs of local people registered on the Housing Register, or homeless households, through the Council's Housebuilding Programme.

(xvii) Annual Review of Protected Characteristics – Home Seekers and Lettings - This annual report reviewed the protected characteristics of home seekers and lettings. The Committee noted that following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty in 2011, public bodies had to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, shaping policy, and delivering services.

Generally the statistics confirmed that the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers housed in Council accommodation was similar to those on the Housing Register.

(xviii) HomeOptions Choice Based lettings Scheme – Progress Report – the Committee received the annual report on the “HomeOption” Choice Based Letting Scheme.

The Committee noted that the scheme was administered by the external Choice Based Lettings Agency ‘Locata Housing Services’ (LHS). Under the scheme, all vacant social rented properties were advertised to applicants on the website and a weekly ‘Property List’ giving details of location, type, rent, service charge, council tax band and landlord of the available accommodation. Applicants applied for a property by “expressing an interest” in up to a maximum of three properties for which they had an assessed need, either in person, by Internet, telephone, text, or email.

At the end of the weekly cycle, the Council analysed the “expressions of interests” received and allocates each property following a prioritisation and selection process in accordance with its own Housing Allocations Scheme.

(xix) HRA Financial Plan 2017/18 – Six Month Review – Also in January the Committee received the six month review report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Financial Plan for 2017/18.

The HRA Financial Plan set out the anticipated HRA income and expenditure over the next 30 years.

The Cabinet had asked the Communities Select Committee to review updates to the HRA Financial Plan twice each year. In addition, senior Housing and Finance officers also formally review the Financial Plan in July and January each year too.

(xx) Youth Council Annual Report – at their last meeting of the year in March 2017, five members of the Youth Council gave an illustrated talk on the work and projects they carried out during the year and their request for £8,000 DDF. There was also a recommendation from officers that the Youth Council be allowed to reduce their twice yearly presentations to the Select Committee down to just one a year, which was agreed by the Committee, with a further recommendation that their presentation be given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee direct.

The Youth Council thanked the Council for granting them the £5,000 project money for 2017/18 which enabled them to carry out a drugs project to raise the awareness of the dangers of using ‘gateway drugs’. They had also devised an online survey asking young people about their awareness of drug use in their area. To date the survey had been completed by 2884 young people.



In 2017 they held a Youth Conference at the Civic Offices with the aim of promoting Local Democracy Week. They had over 70 delegates representing ten secondary schools from around the District.

(xxi) MiLife (Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing) Report - Working with staff from the Council’s Community, Health & Wellbeing Team, Youth Councillors formulated and co-designed a project, which they named ‘MiLife’, to address the issue of mental health via a programme to be delivered in schools.

The objective of the MiLife project was to support children and young people to help them understand mental health, dispel stigma, and to equip them with tools to develop personal resilience. It would also help them find information to wider support services.

Since the roll out in 2016, over 6,000 Epping Forest young people had taken part in the Adolescent MiLife Programme to date.

(xxii) Communities Directorate Business Plan for 2018-19 – also at their last meeting of the year the Committee was taken through the proposed Business Plan for the coming year by the Director and Portfolio Holders.

Case Study: EFDC Safeguarding Work

In June 2017 the Committee received a report on the range of Safeguarding work carried out by the Council over the last three years that the safeguarding team had been in place.



The team was established in May 2014, following initial DDF funding for a fixed period of 2 years and a subsequent Cabinet decision to make the posts permanent.

Over the last three years there has been a gradual increase in the number of safeguarding concerns raised on behalf of children, families and adults with needs for care and support. Since 2014, the amount of referrals received in the safeguarding team had reached over 600 (involving a

total of 842 children and adults), ranging from neglect of children, to adults suffering from the effects of hoarding and poor mental health.

A training programme for staff had been provided across the Council and has enabled staff to become more proficient at identifying signs of abuse and neglect and more confident in referring cases. Hence, the Council had been able to be more proactive in addressing concerns and making effective referrals to our statutory and voluntary sector partners, in order to provide the support needed in each case.

Apart from the core training delivered to frontline staff and Elected Members, we have also devised specific models of training for delivery to the Council's trades people, as part of their 'Tool Box Talk' sessions and have assisted these staff in their ability to report concerns, by providing a report card, which they can use to tick key things that they have identified in households.

Poor mental health was prominent in many of the safeguarding cases dealt with on a regular basis by the Council and this could impact on children, neighbours and wider families. Neglect was another key concern across the district and forms part of most safeguarding cases referred. A significant amount of time was expended by Council staff in collating information to be forwarded to Social Care and proving local cases, as often referrals were met with resistance if care services have previously or are currently involved with, the family.

We now also have a Suicide Protocol and Procedures to help support staff in dealing with an increasing number of incidents, especially those working in Benefit's and Council Tax teams. This has also been circulated widely across the Council and special staff briefings have been provided.

Staff have also dealt with a number of cases dealing with such issues as Modern Slavery and Child Sexual Exploitation, which required swift and effective working with the Police.

Since the time the Council first established a dedicated safeguarding resource as part of the Community Safety Team, there has been approximately 80% more safeguarding cases identified each year, and this was due to the provision of training and awareness rising amongst staff across the Council.



2. GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

The Governance Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor N Avey (Chairman)

Councillor G Chambers (Vice Chairman)

Councillors N Bedford, R Bassett, L Hughes, S Jones, S Kane, H Kaufman, M McEwen, L Mead, B Rolfe, D Stallan, B Surtees and D Wixley

The Lead Officer was Nigel Richardson, Assistant Director Governance, Development Management.

Terms of Reference

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the services and functions of the Governance Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the services and functions of the Governance Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or a relevant Portfolio Holder, and to report and make recommendations directly to the Committee, the Cabinet or such Portfolio Holder as appropriate;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Governance Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;
8. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Governance Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
9. To recommend the establishment of task and finish panels to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary, in order to undertake any activity within these terms of reference.
10. Transformation Projects relevant to this Committee:

Details of relevant new transformation projects to be submitted to the relevant SC for scrutiny.

11. Transformation Projects closure and benefits reports:

That any Directorate appropriate project closure and benefits realisation reports to be submitted to this SC for information.

The Panel scrutinised a number of issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Building Control Presentation – In July 2017 the Building Control Manager gave a presentation to Members regarding the Council's Building Control Services and how this differed from Planning Development Control.

The Committee noted that Building Control was a set of standards for the design, construction and alterations to buildings to ensure the health and safety of people in or about those buildings. It also applied to the conservation of fuel and minimising the carbon footprint of the building throughout its lifetime.



Building Control applies mainly to all new buildings, below is a list of some of the things this may cover:

- Extensions;
- Material alterations for example installation of heating or cooling system;
- Replacing a roof, windows or door replacement;
- Removal of loadbearing walls; and
- Rewiring or extending domestic electrical work.

(ii) Governance Directorate Business Plan 2017/18 - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the relevant Portfolio Holders attend the first meeting of each Select Committee to present their Business Plans, which were developed on a Directorate basis. This would enable each Committee to undertake a more in-depth scrutiny role regarding the numerous services which made up each Select Committee.

The Business Plan covers a diverse range of services including Development Management, Governance, Legal Services, Audit and Corporate Fraud.

(iii) Consultation Register 2016/17 and 2017/18 - The Consultation Officer presented a report to the Committee which set out a list summarising the main consultation exercises carried out in 2016 to 2017 and some exercises planned for 2017 to the end of March 2018.



The Consultation Register was a list of the most recent exercises which were carried out on behalf of the Council or by the Council in the last financial year.

Some consultation was undertaken every year, such as the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which was a requirement of the legislation amending state benefits. Also the Travel Plan Survey which gauged the various methods of travelling to the workplace

to encourage more sustainable travel amongst the work force.

A great deal of smaller local consultation took place as a routine part of day to day business which was not in the report. Such consultation tended to be undertaken in-house and at a cost of postage and officer time only, such as Housing Estate Maintenance issues. Estate

maintenance surveys tend to be very small and targeted at small groups of tenants or residents.

(iv) Corporate Plan 2018 -2023 – The Select Committee were advised that The new Corporate Plan will run from 2018 to 2023, and seeks to lay out the journey the Council will take to transform the organisation to be 'Ready for the Future'. The plan seeks to link the key external drivers influencing Council services, with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions.



The success of the new Corporate Plan would be assessed through the achievement of a set of benefits, focussed on what the Council achieves for customers. These benefits in turn were evidenced through a set of performance measures.

(v) Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance – the Select Committee received a report on the Key Performance Indicators 2016/17, Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance Report for the last year.

Of the five of the Key Performance Indicators that fell within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility, the overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators, was as follows:

- (a) 3 (60%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 2 (40%) indicators did not achieve target; and
- (c) 0 (0%) indicators performed within its tolerated amber margin.

(vi) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Quarter 4 (outturn) Position – The Select Committee received a report on the outturn position of the quarter 4 for the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17.

The Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document setting out its priorities over the five year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities or Corporate Aims were supported by Key Objectives.

The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years.

Eight actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Governance Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- (a) 7 (86%) of these actions have been achieved at year end;
- (b) 1 (14%) of these actions are expected to achieve target in the next 6 months; and
- (c) 0 (0%) of these actions are behind schedule.

(vii) Joint Meeting of the Development Management Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen – Through the year the Select Committee received regular reports on the joint meetings held by the Development Management Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. These meetings brought together the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Council's various Planning Sub-Committees and the District Development Management Committee to discuss various aspects of their Committee's work, planning policy issues and any mutual problems they could work out.

(viii) Equality Objectives 2016-2020 – 6 Monthly Review and Annual Report – In October 2017 the Senior Project Improvement Officer introduced the report on the Equality Objectives 2016-2020 and 2018-2023 giving a six monthly review and a combined annual report.



The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the current action plan for the Equality Objectives 2016-20 and the approach to enable the Council to set some new Objectives for 2018-2023 alongside the corporate plan for 2018-23. The proposed actions were to be completed over the coming months and a new set of draft objectives presented back to Management Board for implementation in April 2018.

(ix) Review of the Local and Parliamentary Elections 2017 – Also in October the Select Committee received a report regarding the County Council and Parliamentary Elections held in May and June 2017 from the Returning Officer.

The year held no respite for the Elections Team in the amount of work they had to carry out, as whilst they were involved in the County Council Elections, an unexpected snap General Election was announced on the 18 April 2017 to be held on the 8 June 2017. This in turn created a very heavy workload for the Elections Team and the Council.

The Returning Officer stated with the two elections so close together duplication of on-line registration was high as the Governments publicity information created confusion.

(See Case Study for full details)

(x) Key Performance Indicators – Quarterly Progress – The Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(xi) Corporate Plan Action Plan Quarterly Progress – The Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(xii) Boundary Commission for England – 2018 Review Revised proposals for the Eastern Region – the Select Committee was informed that as part of the next stage of the 2018 Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) intended to publish their Revised proposals for new constituency boundaries on Tuesday 17 October 2017. They would consult on these proposals for eight weeks. This would be the last consultation during this review of constituencies, and the last chance to contribute views to the Commission on the best pattern of constituencies to recommend to Parliament.

When BCE consulted on initial proposals last year, they relied heavily on local authorities to assist in publicising the consultation, so BCE could engage with as many citizens as possible. BCE would be working with the Local Government Association and preparing a partner pack full of resources. Unlike last year's consultation, BCE would not be hosting public hearings across the country - there was no provision to allow this in governing



legislation. All the information people needed to see and to contribute to the review was on the BCE website.

(xiii) Parliamentary Boundary Review – At their December 2017 meeting the Select Committee received a report on the Parliamentary Boundary Review which was being carried out in England. They were advised that the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) had been tasked to carry out a review of constituencies and final reports were to be submitted to Parliament in September 2018. The brief from Parliament was to reduce the number of constituencies and therefore MPs in England from 650 to 600. Epping Forest District Council have been asked, as an independent and impartial body, to consider where the boundaries of the new constituencies in England should be, ensuring that every new constituency had approximately the same number of electors, with no fewer than 71,031 and no higher than 78,507.

(xiv) Submission to Decision on Planning Development Proposals – The Select Committee had been asked to look at the 8 week deadline for planning applications and if they had been asked to be withdrawn and then re-submitted a few weeks later so that the 8 week deadline would start again.

The Committee were advised that there were 1,714 planning application decisions issued over the last year and it was noted that 40 of these had been withdrawn by the applicant with no resubmission made, 24 had been refused planning permission and 32 had been withdrawn and then a revised/new planning application had been submitted which represented just over 1.4% of the total. Therefore the instances of applications getting near to the 8 week deadline, withdrawn and then resubmitted were very low.

(xv) Review of the Operation of the Council's Petition Scheme – In February 2018 the Committee reviewed the Council's Petition Scheme which had originally been adopted in 2010 in accordance with the requirements of Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. However, the duty on local authorities to operate a petitions scheme was abolished by the introduction of the Localism Act 2011.



Members were advised via the Council Bulletin in December 2017 that a periodic review of the operation of the Council's Petition Scheme would be undertaken in the new year and were asked if they had any comments or observations that they would like to contribute to the review of the Scheme and to inform the Democratic Services Manager by 2 January 2018, unfortunately there were no comments from Members.

The Select Committee expressed concerns that they felt the Council's Petition scheme was not prominent enough on the website and that the instructions on how to submit a petition should be made clearer to members of the public.

Case Study: Local and Parliamentary Elections 2017 Review

In October 2017 the Governance Select Committee received a report regarding the County Council and Parliamentary Elections held in May and June 2017 from the Returning Officer.

Members were asked to consider a review of the management of those elections and to recommend to the Returning Officer any changes to the procedure for future elections.

The Returning Officer advised that in his opinion, the processes put into place for these two elections were the most effective they had been since he became the Returning Officer.

The year had given no respite for the Elections Team in the amount of work they had to carry out, as whilst they were involved in the County Council Elections, an unexpected snap General Election was announced on the 18 April 2017 to be held on the 8 June 2017. This in turn created a very heavy workload for the Elections Team and the Council. There were also three by-elections that year in Chigwell, Epping and Ongar and a further one arranged for the Lower Sheering ward in October 2017.



The Returning Officer expressed his personal thanks to everyone across the Council who got involved in the Elections to make it run as smoothly and efficiently as it did. He also gave his thanks to the Police and Chief Inspector Lewis Basford for a very visible police presence at the General Election polling stations and maintaining the security of the election process.

The Returning Officer stated that with the two elections so close together duplication of on-line registration was high as the Governments publicity information created confusion.



Postal voting had increased in popularity, there were 9,274 postal packs sent out for the County Council elections of which 5,300 packs were returned and counted. There were 8,305 postal packs sent out for the UKPGE which included 192 sent to overseas electors. A total of 123 postal applications were rejected, due to problems arising by the voter failing to enter their date of birth correctly and not due to fraudulent activity. This would be addressed by revisiting the layout of the form and making minor adjustments.

The Committee were advised that the regulations around votes being rejected had changed and the Council were now required to advise voters if their vote had been rejected and the reason why. The 123 voters had been written to and asked if they would like to refresh their postal vote application.

The Returning Officer advised that despite the assurances from the Royal Mail that a full postal sweep would be completed on the evening of the 8 June, there were only 3 packets returned by Royal Mail at the count, a further 45 late packets arrived at the Council's Civic Offices on the Friday and Monday after the election.

The Returning Officer stated that staffing levels for the polling stations, verification and counts were adequate. However staffing for the UKPGE in June was more problematic with many staff being on holiday. The Returning Officer decided to put some staff on standby which EFDC had to pay for as the Government would not.

The Returning Officer reported that some schools were reluctant to close and be used as polling stations. They were also asking for polling staff to have a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. He advised that his powers as a Returning Officer could require that schools be opened to use as a polling station for any election.



Members expressed concerns over voters being able to vote more than once in different districts and asked if there were any checks implemented to stop this.

The Returning Officer advised that there were no checks available to control people voting multiple times and stated that this would be a very difficult procedure to put into place. Voters can just turn up at a polling station give their name and address and providing they were on the register and not already marked off they would be given a ballot paper.

The Returning Officer asked Members for their views on holding a Candidates and Agents meeting prior to an election. He advised that they were not very well attended and consequently one was not set up for the May County election. He asked Members if they thought a meeting should be held or the information sent by email.

Members recommended to the Returning Officer that there should be no Candidates/Agents meeting before the election in 2018 but that it could be reviewed after the election if so required.



3. RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Resources Select Committee consisted of the following Members:

Councillor S Kane then A Patel (Chairman)*

Councillor A Patel then D Sunger (Vice Chairman)*

Councillors R Bassett, N Bedford, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, R Jennings, P Keska, J Lea, A Mitchell, C Roberts, D Roberts, P Stalker and J M Whitehouse

The Lead Officer was Peter Maddock, Assistant Director Resources (Accountancy).

** With the appointment of Councillor S Kane to the Cabinet halfway through the year Councillor A Patel was appointed Chairman in his place and D Sunger as Vice-Chairman.*

Terms of Reference

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Resources Directorate;
2. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
3. To undertake quarterly performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Resources Directorate, through review of progress against adopted key performance indicators and other appropriate measures;
4. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Resources Directorate requiring in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To respond to applicable consultations as appropriate;

Finance

7. To consider the draft directorate budgets for each year, and to evaluate and rank proposals for enhancing or reducing services where necessary, whilst ensuring consistency between policy objectives and financial demands;
8. To review key areas of income and expenditure for each directorate on a quarterly basis throughout the year;

Information and Communications Technology

9. To monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems;

Value For Money

10. To consider the Council's comparative value for money 'performance', and to recommend as required to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet

Committee, in respect of areas where further detailed investigation may be required;

Human Resources

11. To monitor and review areas of concern or significance that comes under Human Resources.

Transformation Programme

12. Transformation Projects relevant to this Committee:
Details of relevant new transformation projects to be submitted to the relevant SC for scrutiny.

13. Transformation Projects closure and benefits reports:
That any Directorate appropriate project closure and benefits realisation reports to be submitted to this SC for information.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

- (i) **Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Position** – At their first meeting of the year the Select Committee received a report on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 and the outturn position for quarter 4. They noted that The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 was the Council's highest level strategic document. It sets the strategic direction for the authority for the five year lifetime of the Plan. It focuses on a number of key areas that the Council needed to focus on during that time and helps to prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money. These key areas are known as the Corporate Aims and were supported by a set of Key Objectives which represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals to achieve the Corporate Aims. The Key Objectives were in turn, delivered via an annual Key Action Plan.



13 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Resources Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- 10 (77%) of these actions had been achieved; and
- 3 (23%) of these actions had not been achieved.

(ii) **Resources Business Plan for 2017/18** - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the relevant Portfolio Holders attend the first meeting of each Select Committee to present their Business Plans, which were developed on a Directorate basis. This would enable each Committee to undertake a more in-depth scrutiny role regarding the numerous services which made up each Select Committee.

This was undertaken at the Committee's July 2017 meeting where the relevant Portfolio Holders gave an outline of the work they have planned for the year ahead.

(iii) **Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023** – The Committee received a report on the proposed new Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2023. The new plan sought to lay out the journey the Council

would take to transform the organisation to be 'ready for the future'. This plan sought to link the key external drivers influencing the council's services with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions. This was the first draft going to all the Select Committees and the main O&S Committee for feedback. Members were asked to consider and comment on the document.

(iv) Provisional Capital Outturn Report 2016/17 – The Principal Accountant introduced the report on the Council's Provisional Capital Outturn for 2016/17. The report set out the Council's capital programme for 2016/17, in terms of expenditure and financing, and compared the provisional outturn figures with the revised estimates. The revised estimates, which were based on the Capital Programme, represent those adopted by the Council on 21 February 2017.

The Committee noted that:

- The Council's total investment on capital schemes and capital funded schemes in 2016/17 was £36,957,000 compared to a revised estimate of £43,077,000, representing an underspend of 14%.
- It was noted that the construction of the new depot at Oakwood Hill was completed last summer and has been operational since September 2016. However, there had been a number of snagging disputes, as well as an ongoing issue in relation to the off-site monitoring of the alarm system.
- Within the Resources Directorate, the largest underspend was on the planned maintenance programme as many of the schemes planned at the civic offices had been delayed awaiting the outcome of the Accommodation Review.
- Under the Housing Revenue Account there was an underspend on the Council's house-building programme which had requested a carry forward.
- The second largest underspend of £769,000 was experienced on the heating, rewiring and water tank works on existing properties.

(v) Provisional Revenue Outturn 2016/17 – The Principal Accountant introduced the report on the Council's overall summary of the revenue outturn for the financial year 2016/17. The Committee noted that the General Fund saw £288,000 more than estimated being used from the opening balance. Total net expenditure on the General Fund was £14.039 million, some £787,000 higher than the original estimate and £71,000 higher than the revised estimate. Expenditure from the District Development Fund and Invest to Save Reserve was £1.643 million less than estimated.



The position on the Housing Revenue Account was £157,000 better than anticipated.

(vi) Risk Management Standards Assessment and Insurance Renewals - The Risk Management and Insurance Officer, introduced his report on the guidance provided by the Council's insurer, Zurich Municipal. The Committee noted that on the 8th February 2017 a Public Sector Risk Consultant from the Council's insurer visited to carry out a Risk Management Standards Assessment in three specified areas. The areas being assessed were, Property (General), Combined Liability and Motor.



The Property review looked at non-residential properties which included the Civic Offices, Oakwood Hill Depot, North Weald Airfield and other operational buildings; and the combined Liability element reviewed areas that could result in Employers' or Public

Liability insurance claims, such as inspections of estates, car parks, open spaces and staff training.

The Motor element looked at how the Council operates the fleet and also the grey fleet, which is an employee driving their own vehicle for Council business.

Since the review the council has instigated a Fire Risk Assessment at the Civic Offices. The report had just been received so officers had not been able to review the report.

(vii) Sick Absence Report Quarters 3 and 4 – The Committee received the report on the Council's absence figures for Quarter 3 and 4 for 2016/17. It included absence figures by Directorate, the number of employees who have met the trigger level, those who have more than 4 weeks absence and the reasons for absence. The Committee noted that the figures had improved for this last year and were on target for this year as well.



The Council's target for sickness absence for 2016/2017 was an average of 7.5 days per employee. The current outturn figure for the two quarters was an average of 3.73 days, which was below the target of 3.86 days. The overall outturn figure for the year was an average of 6.71 days, which was 0.79 days lower than the target.

The previous report to this committee flagged up mental health absences, officers had now put in processes to help and it was reducing. The Council was now part of a trust the "Mindful Employer" helping us to put in strategies to help staff.

Roughly two thirds of staff did not have any time off sick.

(viii) Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 – Outturn Quarter 4 Performance – The Committee noted the report for the quarter 4 outturn performance figures for the Key Performance Indicators for 2016/17.

The overall position for all 37 KPIs at the end of the year was as follows:

- (a) 28 (75%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 9 (25%) indicators did not achieve target; although
- (c) 3 (8 %) of these KPIs performed within its tolerated amber margin.

9 of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Resources Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators was as follows:

- (a) 8 (89%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 1 (11% indicators did not achieve target; and
- (c) 0 (0%) indicators performed within its tolerated amber margin.

(ix) Universal Credit – In October 2017 the Committee received an informative report on the Governments Universal Credit Scheme. This was to inform all members on the rollout of Universal Credit and the impact it would have on the work of the Council.

Universal Credit would replace the following benefits that people now received: Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child

Tax Credit and Housing Benefit. A single payment would be made on a monthly basis to cover both living expenses and housing costs.

(See Case Study for full details)

(x) Quarterly Financial Monitoring Report – The Committee received quarterly Financial Monitoring reports providing a comparison between the original estimate for the quarterly periods and the actual expenditure or income as applicable.

(xi) Financial Issues Paper – this report provided a framework for the Budget 2018/19 and updated Members on a number of financial issues that would affect this Authority in the short to medium term.

In broad terms the following represented the greatest areas of current financial uncertainty and risk to the Authority

- Central Government Funding
- Business Rates Retention
- Welfare Reform
- New Homes Bonus
- Development Opportunities
- Transformation
- Waste and Leisure Contracts
- Miscellaneous, including recession and pay awards



The report went on to outline in general terms the state of the Council's finances and the problems (potential or otherwise) facing it. The report touched on the recent elections and what Brexit might mean for us. It outlined the state of the General Fund, detailing the CSB, and the DDF. It updated members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the current position on Central Government funding, and the existing position on business rate retention scheme. The report also noted that the reduction in New Homes Bonus for 2017/18 was far

greater than had been anticipated and outlined the upcoming development opportunities in the district.

(xii) Draft Technology Strategy 2018 – 2023 – The Committee received a presentation on the Council's draft Technology Strategy for 2018-2023.

They were preparing for April next year when Transformation starts and part of this was that they were losing their training room and would be using the Council Chamber instead. They were also preparing for a possible decamp from this building. The Condor building had spare capacity and could be used to house more staff although the Airfield and Hemnall Street may prove problematic.

To support this they would be asking the Cabinet to purchase 550 new laptops for everyone. They were also looking at the internet set up and working closely with BT.



It was reported that more intensive use would be made of the new building at the Civic Office complex. Outside of office accommodation, ICT were proposing the following changes to their accommodation requirements:

- Low cost Multipurpose refit of Council Chamber to allow easier use for Training, including ICT Training.
- Release of current ICT Training Room to provide capacity for other uses.
- Migration to cloud based servers to release server room accommodation.

(xiii) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2017/18 – Quarterly Progress – The Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's Corporate Action Plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(xiv) Key Performance Indicators 2017/18 Quarterly Performance - The Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's Corporate Action Plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(xv) Fees and Charges – In October 2017 the Committee received a report on fees and charges that Council levies and what scope, if any, there was to increase particular charges.

The meeting on consideration of the report agreed that they would not like to see the bulky household waste charges go up and would like to see the concession for pensioners reinstated.



(xvi) Sickness Absence – In December 2017 the Committee received the six monthly update of the Council's absence figures for quarters 1 and 2 for 2017/18. They noted that the current outturn figure for the two quarters was an average of 3.39 days which was slightly above the target of 3.22 days.

There had been a slight increase in the number of long term absence from Q4 of last year to Q1 of this. However, there had been a significant rise in long term cases in Q2, the highest it has been in this 5 year period. The rise has been mainly in mental health issues and cancer cases. For mental health issues we have the help of an occupational health service called 'Mindful Employer' that can be directly contacted by staff members. Line managers have also been trained to give help and support.

(xvii) Draft General Fund, CSB, DDF & ITS Lists and Savings Updates – This was the first draft of the Continuing Services Budget (CSB), the District Development Fund (DDF) and the Invest to Save (ITS) schedules for 2018/19.

There were a number of areas where further work was required before figures to be included within the budget could be finalised. Clearly the emphasis in this budget cycle would again need to be on CSB savings rather than growth but there were some areas where growth was inevitable. The figures generally need to be viewed in the context of this being quite early in the budget preparation process and would clearly need to be revisited.

(xviii) Resources Directorate Business Plan for 2018/19 – at their last meeting of the year the Committee received a presentation from the relevant Portfolio Holders on their Business Plans for 2018/19.

(xix) Transformation Programme – also at their last meeting for the year the Committee received several reports on the transformation programme projects, project closures and a list of high and medium complexity projects. They also received a report on the future of how the corporate specifications would be presented to the various Select Committees in the new year.

Case Study – Universal Credit

At their October 2017 meeting the Assistant Director Benefits introduced the informative report on the Governments Universal Credit Scheme. This was to inform all members on the rollout of Universal Credit and the impact it would have on the work of the Council.

Universal Credit would replace the following benefits that people now received: Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit. A single payment would be made on a monthly basis to cover both living expenses and housing costs.



Universal Credit was not paid for the first week of the claim. The payment was made monthly in arrears and was designed to replicate the budgeting required by people who receive a monthly wage. The claimant was then responsible for paying their full rent to their landlord. This was a change for council tenants as Housing Benefit was paid directly to the rent account and not to the tenant.

Up until 20 September 2017, in Epping Forest District, Universal Credit had been restricted to new claims from single people who were job seekers. However, this was changing as 'full service' was rolled-out throughout the country from July 2017. In the future, couples, families with children and people with disabilities who were of working age, would also be directed to claim Universal Credit. This meant that they could no longer claim Housing Benefit and they can only get help with their rent through Universal Credit, although there were some exceptions.

The exceptions to the move to Universal Credit were as follows:

- People who have more than 2 children
- People who live in exempt and specified accommodation, i.e. accommodation where support is provided by the landlord to tenants who are vulnerable in some way, e.g. physical disabilities, mental health issues or drug/alcohol addictions.

People falling into these categories would still claim Housing Benefit.

The Council still remained responsible for Local Council Tax Support, and therefore people would have to claim Universal Credit from the DWP for help to pay their rent, and at the same time make an application to the Council for help to pay their council tax.

There were delays in getting claims out and there was a wait of 6 weeks or longer for payment which put the claimants in rent and Council Tax arrears. People on long term benefits usually had difficulties in budgeting on a monthly basis; the council provided support and help for them.

Because of the monthly payments going directly to the claimants, and their resulting difficulties in budgeting, there was an increase in rent and council tax arrears and it may be that the council would need to consider different ways to collect council tax.

It was also noted that Officers had communication problems with DWP staff and the Universal Credit Centres, they found it hard to find someone to speak to and resolve problems.

It was known that Landlords on the whole were not taking on persons on Universal Credit and this in turn was resulting in more homelessness and more people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. It was hoped that the B&B costs would be moved out of Universal Credit, but there was no sign of this happening as yet.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director Benefits for her informative report and for bringing the problems around Universal Credit to their attention.



4. NEIGHBOURHOODS SELECT COMMITTEE

The Neighbourhoods Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor N Bedford (Chairman)
Councillor H Brady (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, R Baldwin, L Hughes, J Jennings, R Morgan, S Neville, A Patel, C P Pond, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, E Webster and J H Whitehouse

The Lead officer was Derek Macnab, Director of Neighbourhoods and Deputy (and currently Acting) Chief Executive.

Terms of Reference

General

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Neighbourhood Directorate;
2. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
3. To keep under review:
 - (i) *Environmental enforcement activities;*
 - (ii) *Waste management activities; and*
 - (iii) *Leisure Management*
 - (iv) *Local Plan Scrutiny*
4. To respond to applicable consultations as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary;

Performance Monitoring

7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate, against adopted Key Performance Indicators and identified areas of concern;

Environment

8. To monitor and keep under review the Council's progress towards the development and adoption of a corporate energy strategy / environmental policy and to receive progress reports from the Green Working Party.
9. To receive reports from the Waste Management Partnership Board in respect of the operation of and performance of the waste management contract;

Leisure

10. To monitor and keep under review leisure management matters and in particular the procurement of the Leisure Management Contract.

Transformation Project

11. Transformation Projects relevant to this Committee:
Details of relevant new transformation projects to be submitted to the relevant SC for scrutiny.
12. Transformation Projects closure and benefits reports:
That any Directorate appropriate project closure and benefits realisation reports to be submitted to this SC for information.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Neighbourhoods Directorate Business Plan for 2017/18 – At their first meeting of the year, the Select Committee received the Neighbourhoods Business Plan. The relevant Portfolio Holders attended the first meeting of each Select Committee to present their Business Plans, which were developed on a Directorate basis. This enabled each Select Committee to undertake a more in-depth scrutiny role regarding the numerous services which made up each Select Committee.

(ii) Regular Updates on the Local Plan – Throughout the year the Committee received regular updates on the development of the Council's Local Plan when they received reports from the officer in charge and had the chance to scrutinise the progress made and identify any obstacles that were encountered.



(iii) Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 – Outturn Review – The Committee reviewed the outturn position of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17.

Thirteen of the KPIs fell within the Neighbourhoods SC's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators, was as follows:

- (a) 9 (70%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 2 (15%) indicators did not achieve target; although
- (c) 2 (15%) indicator performed within its tolerated amber margin.

(iv) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Outturn Review - The Committee reviewed the outturn position of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 in relation to its areas of responsibility.

Fourteen actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- 8 (57%) of these actions have been achieved at year end; and
- 1 (36%) of the deliverables or actions were not completed by year-end albeit significant progress has been made.
- 5 (7%) of these actions were expected to achieve target in the next 6 months

(v) **Environmental Charter** - The Corporate Green Working Party (CGWP) had been asked to develop an environmental charter and action plan to replace the Council's Climate Change Policy from 2009. The CGWP agreed that this should be modelled on the Climate Local methodology. This was a Local Government Association and Environment Agency initiative to support local authorities to look at climate change and take action.



The CGWP took the Climate Local Environmental Charter template and adapted it to EFDC's needs. The group also created a commitments and actions spreadsheet, modelled on the Climate Local system. The commitments and actions were broken down into three main areas (climate change, greenhouse gases and sustainability) with some overarching goals. This was to replace the group's Work Plan, which was very ad hoc.

(vi) **Key Performance Indicators 2017/18 – Quarterly Performance** – The Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(vii) **Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2017/18 – Quarterly Position** – The Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(viii) **Corporate Plan 2018-2023** – At their September 2017 meeting the Committee noted that the Corporate Plan, the Council's highest level strategic document, which would cover the period 2018 to 2023, was being reviewed and updated. The draft had been shaped from input from the Management Board, Leadership Team and Cabinet. The draft was an attempt this time to be illustrated in a diagrammatic fashion.

(ix) **Leisure Management Contract** – the Committee noted that a Partnership Board had been established between Places for People and EFDC, with the first meetings being chaired by the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder. The purpose of this partnership board was to act as a liaison between the two organisations.



(x) **Engineering, Drainage and Water Team** – at their January 2018 meeting the Committee received a presentation from the Council's drainage team on land drainage, land and water quality and general drainage issues.

(See Case Study for details)

(xi) **Neighbourhoods Directorate Business Plan for 2018-19** – at their last meeting of the year, in March 2018, the Committee was taken through the proposed Business plan for the coming year by the Director and the relevant Portfolio Holders.

(xii) **Transformation Programme** – also at their last meeting for the year the Committee received several reports on the transformation programme projects, project closures and a list of high and medium complexity projects. They also received a report on the future of how the corporate specifications would be presented to the various Select Committees in the new year.

(xiii) **Environment Enforcement Activity – Annual Report** - The Environment and Neighbourhoods Manager, presented the annual report for the period 2017/18, which

summarised enforcement activity that had been carried out by the Council's Environment and Neighbourhoods (EN) Team.



Fly-tipping incidents currently took up the majority of the Team's time and such incidents were on the increase. Much of the waste fly-tipped was commercial in origin, and there were areas across the District consistently being targeted, one of which was Stapleford Abbots.

Noise complaints were the second most frequent problems the Team would investigate. This was not an easy subject for officers to handle. The Council's role in resolving noise nuisance was difficult but could make a significant difference to the neighbour who was being subjected to unreasonable noise.



Unauthorised encampments (UE) generated much concern to residents nearby and when they were reported, the Team gave them priority. All UE that were on Council owned land were visited by the EN Team on the first day of their occupation. This enabled the process of eviction to be started as soon as possible. Officers normally took the paperwork down to the Courts themselves to get the proceedings started without delay.

Case Study: Engineering, Drainage and Water Team

Land Drainage

The Land Drainage Engineer made a presentation on the work of the Engineering, Drainage and Water Team (EDWT). The EDWT was on call 365 days a year to provide a discretionary emergency flood response service to deal with flooding emergencies across the District, mainly arising from the flood risk assets that are the Council's responsibility.



Officers would monitor and respond to incidents and worked closely with the Environment Agency (EA), who has responsibility to manage Main River flooding, Essex Fire and Rescue, Essex County Council (ECC) for highway assets and relevant water companies.

The team also monitored and maintained 50 storm grilles, which helped to protect key surface water pipes. The Council's contractor checks these on a regular basis.

The Team also oversee 2,500 kilometres of ordinary watercourses.

Since 1983 the Council has had its own Land Drainage Byelaws to help control development along water courses, and is the only district within Essex to have such Byelaws. The Council also had enforcement powers under this Act, which were used when necessary.

The EDWT worked within the National Planning Policy Framework to reduce flood risk when new developments were proposed. It had assessed over 1,200 planning applications last year for flood risk and drainage concerns. It had also worked with the Planning Policy Team

during the draft Local Plan process to ensure policies on the management of flood risk and drainage were robust and reflected both best practice and national Guidance.

Members were also apprised of different ways that the EDWT used to manage surface water flood risk as it was very proactive in the District. One way was through Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP). ECC had determined that Loughton was a 'Tier 1' location and in 2016 the Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois SWMP was completed. This identified seven Critical Drainage Areas to help manage predicted flood risk. Waltham Abbey (Tier 2) would be the next area for a SWMP when funds were available from ECC. The Council uniquely had its own Flood Risk Assessment Zones (FRAZs) to help alleviate flood risk from incremental development. These were zones derived from the catchments of ordinary watercourses where there was a particular risk of flooding.



Land and Water Quality

The Land and Water Quality Officer reported that the Council had a duty to risk assess and sample water quality and had enforcement powers to ensure private water supplies were safe for human consumption and without risk to human health. This covered water extracted from boreholes, springs and wells. Of the 78 known private water suppliers, 38 had been inspected, and there are likely to be other unknown water supplies.



Problems could arise from contamination for instance where there are ineffective sewage systems or where systems were not properly maintained. There are many other factors that could impact on private water supplies. The Lee Valley sustained a large horticultural nursery industry so it was important that water used to irrigate crops and used for public consumption meet the required standards. Many nurseries did not have effective contamination reductions in place. Water towers also needed to be inspected. The Drinking Water Inspectorate considered that some of these sites were of the highest risk in the UK.

The Council was statutorily required to inspect and assess contaminated land under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. There were several thousand potentially contaminated land sites. These included former landfills, ex gas works, factories, brickworks and munitions stores. It also investigated the pollution of watercourses to maintain and improve water quality and deals with a range of pollution issues. .

General Drainage and other issues

The Engineering, Drainage and Water Team Manager spoke about general drainage issues and that her officers liaised with the water companies (Thames Water and Affinity Water), the EA and other organisations. The Council operated and maintained seventeen sewage treatment plants and pumping stations. The Council had a statutory requirement under the Building Act 1984 to ensure buildings had satisfactory drainage, duties under the Public Health Acts and various other statutory duties under a range of legislation.

In October 2011 most private sewers transferred to Thames Water. The Council was also responsible for all rural drainage systems, misconnections and other problems.

The Council had ongoing capital projects and managed its own assets. Bobbingworth Nature Reserve, a former landfill site, was one such successful project in operation.



TASK AND FINISH PANELS

Transformation Task and Finish Panel

Origin:

The scrutiny of the Council's Transformation Programme was proposed by the PICK form considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 28 February 2017. The O&S Committee agreed that the Resources Select Committee should be tasked with this scrutiny.

The Resources Select Committee met on 10 April 2017 to establish the baseline for the scrutiny of the Council's Transformation Programme.

That meeting agreed that they would like to scrutinise the Programme Management Board and the High Risks Projects that had been identified. They noted that the medium level ones went to the various Select Committees anyway.

They noted that there were two options, either to form a sub group, from a smaller pool of talent to choose from, that would have no formal structure making it more difficult to scrutinise the topic on hand; or to form a Task and Finish Panel. By the general feeling of the meeting it was agreed that it would be better to go to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee and ask for a Task and Finish Panel to be set up, agreeing that a Task and Finish Panel would be more appropriate.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at their 18 April 2017 meeting agreed to the establishing of an appropriate Task and Finish Panel.



Aims and Objectives:

- (a) To report findings to the Resources Select Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to submit a final report for consideration by the Committee by end of September 2017;
- (b) To gather evidence and information in relation to the review through the receipt of appropriate data, presentations and by participation in fact-finding visits to other authorities if necessary;
- (c) To have due regard to relevant legislation and the Council's procedures; and
- (d) To consult political groups and independent Councillors during the review process.

Term of Reference:

- (1) Fully evaluate and establish:
 - a) A clear statement as to the objectives of the programme;
 - b) A clear understanding as to the scope of the programme;
 - c) A clear understanding as to the budget and financial implications of the programme;
 - d) To document proposals for the ongoing scrutiny required to ensure that the programme continues to be:
 - 1) Meeting the programme objectives;
 - 2) Focused on the identified scope;
 - 3) On schedule; and
 - 4) Within budget
- (2) The Panel should also look at the high risk projects that required Council wide co-ordination and were overseen by the Transformation Programme Board; and should also be mindful of having a clear end date to complete their work on.
- (3) To consider any other matters that were deemed appropriate.

The Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed the following members to serve on the Panel:

Councillors A Patel (Chairman), S Kane (Vice Chairman), N Avey, R Baldwin, R Bassett, N Bedford, R Brookes, K Chana, D Dorrell, S Heap, L Hughes, M Sartin, B Surtees and H Whitbread

The Lead officer was P Maddock, Assistant Director Accountancy.

The Panel met three times in June, August and September 2017 before reporting to the main O&S Committee in October 2017.

At their first meeting in June 2017, the Panel considered the report that set out to answer the questions posed at the special Resources Select Committee meeting held on 10 April 2017.

There were five questions set out on the main agenda to consider:

1. How best to scrutinise the management of the Transformation Programme;
2. How to best monitor and assess performance of the management of the Transformation Programme;
3. How to identify projects and sub programmes not within the remit of specific Select Committees;
4. How to measure and assess performance of identified projects and sub- programmes not within the remit of specific Select Committees; and
5. Suitable forums for future scrutiny of Transformation Programme.

Mr Bailey the Head of Transformation took the Panel through the report, highlighting that transformation was about change management. It was best looked at as a way of managing

that change. It was noted that it was useful to note that transformation was charged with realising four key benefits, that of:

- Recognising what customers' value about our services and placing them at the heart of everything we do;
- Focussing on getting things right first time through joined up services;
- Reducing red tape to simplify how we work; and
- Delivery of resource savings and income generation, to keep Council Tax low

The four drivers for change were detailed in the Corporate Plan 2015/20. They were:

- Our customers and their needs are changing;
- Our customers expect modern, customer focussed services;
- Our customers demand well-managed, value for money services; and
- Our customers want us to reduce our costs and protect front line services.

They noted that the Transformation Programme used the Covalent System. Covalent was a cloud-based performance and project management software that provided real-time visibility and control of strategic and operational performance, project management and risk. The Council had purchased Covalent system licences for all staff, initially for a twelve-month period.

The Panel also closely looked at the costs and benefits of the Transformation programme. This was broken down by Transformation team structure and cost estimates; Benefits from management of the Transformation programme; individual project costs; and individual project benefits: financial and non-financial.

Outcome

Finally the Panel made the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their October 2017 meeting which were agreed.

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the five closure reports of the finished (high risks) projects, to enable them to compare lessons learned across projects.
2. That an updated Transformation Programme Project Dossier should be reviewed at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
3. That the Head of Transformation should submit an end of year report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (preferably to their March meeting) summarising the project work during that year and setting out any potential areas for scrutiny for the coming year.
4. That details of new projects should be submitted to the relevant select committee for their scrutiny, or in the case of those being managed by the Chief Executive they would come to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
5. That project closure and benefits realisation reports should be submitted to the relevant select committee for their information, or in the case of those being managed by the Chief Executive they would come to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
6. That reporting of projects entering lifecycle stages be included in the Cabinet 'Highlight Report' for information.
7. That arrangements be made for all members of the Select Committees and the Overview

and Scrutiny Committee to receive training on transformation and the various elements of the project lifecycle.

8. That members be allowed 'read only' access to the Covalent system for information. The access to be at project level.

9. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake appropriate scrutiny of projects and initiatives that concern matters within the service responsibility of the Chief Executive.

10. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive an annual update of the Customer Services Programme from the Head of Customer Service.

11. That existing projects be reported to the relevant Select Committee to be reviewed.

