Supplementary Committee Agenda

SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Thursday, 16th July, 2020

Place:	Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Time:	7.00 pm
Democratic Services Officer:	Gary Woodhall Tel: (01992) 564243 Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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11.a Q1 SERVICE PLAN OBJECTIVES PROGRESS (Pages 97 - 104)

(People & Performance Service Manager) To consider the attached report.

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SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

Report to Overview & Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 16 July 2020

Portfolio: **Leader**

Subject: **Q1 Service Plan Objectives Progress**

Responsible Officer: **Louise Wade (lwade@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**

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

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Committee reviews the impact to Q1 Service Plan objectives as a result of Covid-19 impact:

Report:

1. The Q1 Service Plan report references the capacity and Covid-19 restriction impact on each service, and subsequent impact on the delivery of Q1 Service Plan Objectives.

(2) That the committee acknowledge that the impact of Covid-19 and Covid-19 recovery plan will require services to review their priorities and objectives within their service plans and with their portfolio holders.

Legal and Governance Implications:
There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, any implications arising from actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible Service Director.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:
There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues with the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible Service Director.

Consultation Undertaken:
Leadership Team
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee

Background Papers:
Corporate Plan 2019-20 Quarter 4 Performance Final V3

Risk Management:
There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from replanning or actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible service director during business planning and communicated to the Corporate Risk Management Group.

Report on the impact of Q1 service plan objectives

As at 30 Jun 2020

In Q4 2020, Annual Service planning identified a set of objectives that each service wanted to achieve in 20/21 (service plans – ownership with service managers). This report summarises the impact on 2020 Q1 activities or subsequent roadmap activities as a result of Covid-19.

In summary, whilst services have been maintained and an outstanding effort has gone into ensuring these were in operation throughout, the impact of the additional demand on their BAU activities or supporting other services has resulted in an impact on Q1 2020 objectives. In addition, further impact to objectives has been as a result of emergency legislation to stop certain activities or as a result of lockdown and Shielding.

Based on the ambitious objectives within some of the service plans, the additional needs to recover from Covid-19, clear lessons learnt and an organisation that is already impacted by the demand and intensity of the last few months, there will be the further need to review the Service Plans. This review will need to be led by strategic planning and prioritisation within the Exec team and as a result of budget discussions in July 20, this will then enable the direction for the service areas and organisation. This should also be an opportunity to keep the momentum on acceleration of transforming internal processes and digitalisation which had not been explicitly called out before and contributes towards the financial position. This will provide the organisation with clarity and purpose, during a challenging and constantly changing environment and equip them to respond as best they can to this.

A summary of the specific objectives impacted are referenced below:

Housing:

Meeting resident support needs virtually as a result of the Shielding, supporting Operation Shield with other vulnerable residents, meeting the needs of our homeless and the impact of meeting the needs of rough sleepers within our district, the capacity in this service area has been impacted. In addition, there has been an additional capacity impact in the housing management team with a 108% in UC cases since February and therefore arrears. The overall directorate impact on housing service plan objectives is as follows:

- **Older people services and housing:** Majority of Q1 objectives were not impacted with the exception of
    - Ability to re-let void properties
    - Delay in sheltered housing review delivered which will be delivered in Q2.
- **Housing Management and Ownership:**
    - Delay to Housebuilding programme by approximately 1 month due to pause in construction industry
    - Due to the emergency legislation to suspend new evictions and protect renters, any target setting and achievement within team has been delayed.
    - There was an intention to pilot PCOL and go live with online methods at this point, however this has been put on hold due to the suspension in collection.
    - Delay to Tenancy Audits
    - Impact to gas servicing targets, due to not being able to access all Shielded resident properties

- Home visits impacted with regards to ASB has led to longer case turnaround times when tenants have not responded to letters or phone calls.
- All hoarding cases have been placed on hold as most properties don't allow the officers the ability to social distance

Customer Services

As an impact of Covid-19, customer services have been impacted by the need to establish a Covid-19 helpline with a high volume of customer calls, an accelerated response to channel shifting customers to digital interaction and the vast task of providing the business support as a result of government measures to respond to businesses. In an already under resourced area, the impact of Covid-19 further compounded this situation. Impact to service plans as follows:

- **Revenue and Benefits**
  - Delay to completion of Annual Service Planning
  - Delay to the roll out of the new sundry debtors system due to the availability of business resources to progress project
  - Delay to the objective of transferring of all R&B's printing to Uttlesford DC
  - Delay to progress on New Local Council Tax Support scheme this year, which is now expected to go into next year

- **Customer Services**

Due to the capacity of the team to focus on Covid-19 and the ongoing limited staff working within Customer services the following intended service objectives are impacted:

- All Ombudsman complaint cases on hold
- Delay to intended Multi-Agency hub rollout continuation in Waltham Abbey and further expansion
- Impact to further digital enhancements to enable further channel switching for services
- Impact on building further capacity into the customer services team because of the lack capacity to recruitment and training of new resources due to limited capacity and priority on the response needed to residents
- Impact to the intended objectives on Contact Centre Operator metrics review, Customer Satisfaction reporting, Contact centre Opening hours review, Customer Journey mapping
- Customer strategy not launched to customers
- Customer standards have not been launched or embedded by service areas
- ICS survey results not launched to staff
- Delay to BYOD rollout for members
- Delay to Microsite development now in Q2
- Delay to Wallet and Recurring now in Q2
- Impact to Q2 improvements in the onsite payment system due to third party resourcing issues relating to Furlough, expected in Q3
- Delay to Resident Digital project inclusion

In addition, due to Covid-19 funding amendments there has also been the delay to Channel Switch and Web enhancements into 2021/22.

- **Communications**

Directly impacted by the increase in volume of both external and internal communications, the team capacity was directly impacted as a result of Covid-19.

  - Delay in all three microsites migrated to EFDC website; Museum, NWA and Countrycare

Community and Partnerships

- **Community Health and Wellbeing Team**

The majority of the Business As Usual activities were suspended eg all Active Living programmes, school based delivery programmes, Museum outreach programmes, Dementia Action work etc…
Although this released capacity within the service, this was then diverted to focus on Operation Shield efforts. This effort included supporting of calls to the most vulnerable circa 1200, Covid helpline support, Establishing a EFDC food hub management and distribution service and direct welfare checks. Impact to service objectives were:

  - Delay to the engagement of wider businesses in in respect of workplace health programmes
  - Delay to the commencement of focussed health & wellbeing community engagement work in Waltham Abbey and Ongar
  - Delay to the development and roll out of programmes linked to the Cultural Strategy have been delayed by approximately 3 months

In addition, the Council had been commissioned to commence a Falls Prevention programme on behalf of the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group from April and this will not now start until the Autumn.
The EF Health & Wellbeing Board meetings and the work of the three thematic Action Groups was also suspended from late March due to the unavailability of key partners to engage during the height of Covid 19.

- **Economic Development**

The Economic Development team were focused on developing an action plan from the Nurturing growth strategy and actions. However, this area has been severely impacted with the need to divert all resources to focusing on supporting our local businesses. As a result of Covid-19 the review of the Nurturing Growth Strategy and the High Street Economic Development is being reviewed as part of the recovery plan. Both completion and relevance of the service planning within this area was therefore put on hold.

- **Community Resilience**

The community resilience team were already operating under capacity, and further capacity focused on the response to Covid-19, specifically the impact of lockdown during Covid-19, impacted the team.

Impact to Service plan was

  - Delay to the review of Fixed Penalty Notices on fly tipping and littering

Contract, Technical, Commercial and Regulatory

- **Technical Services**

With the exception of some temporary suspension on some services, Technical services continued with providing Business As usual objectives, with impact to services objectives as a result of prioritisation and communication with customers

- Delay to objectives to achieve Increased Biodiversity at 3 sites
- Delay to customer satisfaction measurement

- **Contracts**

With a large impact to business as usual operations of Car Parks and Leisure centres, the resources were able to support Operation Shield in mobilising a Food distribution hub for EFDC. Specific impact to objectives were:

- Delay in the issuing of Car Park Tender

- **Regulatory**

At the present time, the Regulatory team resources are focused on Covid-19 response activities and are unable to provide an update. Given the demand on this area, it is expected to directly impact the intended objectives in Q1 and Q2.

- **North Weald Airfield**

Impact to NWA objectives were due to restrictions, as opposed to capacity. During this time the team were able to support Operation Shield in protecting the vulnerable, the Impact of Covid-19 specifically were:

- Delay to the implementing landing fees and generating income. This was due to the delay in staff training and payment solution issues
- Due to capacity within other teams the implementation of a modern and dynamic website has also been delayed but should be available by the end of Q2.

- **Building Control**

The direct impact of Covid-19 was the restrictions in the industry leading to the possibility of referrals. Therefore impacting:

- Impact on the building control referrals of 125 per month, with only 28 for the year thus far we are substantially under achieving where we intended to be.

Planning

- **Planning Development**

The planning team productivity was positively impacted by the move towards more virtual working. As a result and reflecting on the new ways of working the order of the delivery objectives were impacted:

- Deciding to swap the streamlining of the application and appeal service with the procurement and implementation of a planning back-office system
- Less priority on the improvement of the duty planner advice as face-to-face appointments being on hold.

- Delay to improvement of pre-application and planning performance agreement service offer, now expected in Q2

- **Planning Policy**

For most part planning policy and implementation were not directly impacted with most objectives being broadly on tracking with the exception of:

- Delay to the Development of MMs originally intended for Q1. - A revised timeline with the Inspector on 24 April 2020 which reflected a new date for the final submission of MMs in early September 2020

Business Services

- **People**

People team objectives have been impacted but mainly with an impact of reprioritisation. Having responded to the Employee Health and Wellbeing impact from Covid-19, other objectives have been de-prioritised. Given the sensitivities during an uncertain time, all consultations across the organisation were put on hold. The capacity of the team was further impacted by support provided to the Covid helpline.

Specifics:

- Delay to People Team consultation and restructure
- Re-prioritisation of Sourcing our future workforce - attracting, recruiting an rewarding talent and brining forward the Wellbeing agenda
- Delay to iRecruit – Dependency on IT and Comms regarding SharePoint integration being on hold
- Delay to Digital Signature implementation – DocuSign launch on hold due to redeployment in IT

- **IT**

The need to respond to mobilising a working from home environment for all staff overnight, meant the focus and priority of the IT resources and management were focused on the response. This response also required the immediate response to teething issues as the new ways of working were embedded. As a result specific impact is as follows:

- Delay to IT Team consultation and restructure
- Delay to IT Strategy kick off
- Delay to Roadmap creation, defining the projects for year and supply planning
- Delay to progress on delivery of IT project enhancements and initiation of new projects

- **Business support**

Business support were largely impacted due to the need to support the business needs for their internal customers working from home. However implementing new digital processes where possible to replace previous manual processes has accelerated the process improvement objective.

Risk and Audit

Capacity of resources were largely impacted, however the ability to progress work was directly impacted with a reassessment of audits and risks as a result of Covid-19. As a result, there has now been a reprioritisation of audit priorities.

Strategy, Performance and Delivery

Supporting the Operation Shield project, by establishing a food hub, providing data support on the most vulnerable information received from Essex, supporting outgoing calls to vulnerable residents and incoming calls on the Covid hotline, the capacity of the team was directly impact. Subsequent Q1 objectives impacted were as follows:

- Delay in design of function and recruitment of resources
- Delay in establishing Project Management Framework and baseline of projects
- Delay in 20/21 programme and KPI scoping
- Delay in Q1 performance monitoring
- Delay in Peer Review
- Delay in the initiation of the new Strategy for the council

Finance

Covid-19 has directly impacted the service in the need to deal with exceptional/unprecedented transactions e.g. such as sudden changes in the Business Rates rules, 'emergency grants' to businesses etc. In addition, the remote working with a team that requires support and coaching has also proved challenging virtually. To add to this Covid-19 struck at year end and with activities already rolling over from previous year, this added to the volume of work.

The service objectives directly impacted were therefore:

- Delay in Annual Service Planning
- Delay in the service improvements within the finance service
- Delay in development of finance team