

Council Agenda



Epping Forest District Council

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM at 7.00 pm on Thursday, 17 December 2020 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Blakemore'.

Georgina Blakemore
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Gary Woodhall Tel: (01992) 564243
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

WEBCASTING NOTICE (VIRTUAL)

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore, by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.

In the event that technical difficulties interrupt the virtual meeting, that cannot be overcome, the Chairman may need to adjourn the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Corporate Communications Manager on 01992 564039.

BUSINESS

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking. The Democratic Services Manager will read the following announcement:

“The Chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

2. MINUTES

That the minutes of the last meeting on 29 October 2020 to follow.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) Apologies for Absence
- (b) Chairman’s Announcements

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Council Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to any Portfolio Holder; or
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

6. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within the Council’s rules in Part 4 of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;

- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or
- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

The Council's rules provide that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

7. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER & MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 7 - 46)

To receive reports and any announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader (verbal);
- (b) Report of the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (c) Report of the Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (d) Report of the Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (e) Report of the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (f) Report of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
and
- (g) Report of the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder (attached).

8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

The Council's rules provide for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under the previous item; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non-operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

The Council's rules provide that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Service Director.

In accordance with the Council's rules, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further ten minutes at their discretion.

9. MOTIONS

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under the Council's rules of procedure.

(a) Epping Forest District Council

Proposed by: Councillor Stephen Murray

Seconded by: Councillor Steven Neville

"That the Council notes and:

- (i) recognises and celebrates the contribution and hard work of the voluntary sector and the many community groups working throughout Epping Forest;
- (ii) puts on record our thanks to the many volunteers for their many hours of service to our local community; and
- (iii) resolves to continue to support the voluntary sector and as many community groups as possible throughout 2021 and beyond."

Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

Reports of the Cabinet

10. QUALIS BUSINESS PLAN (Pages 47 - 72)

To receive the attached report of the Commercial and Regulatory Portfolio Holder on the Qualis Group Business Plan.

11. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021/22 (Pages 73 - 74)

To consider the attached report of the Customer and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 75 - 76)

To receive the report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council Rules.

13. STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY (Pages 77 - 94)

To receive a report of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee to recommend that the Council adopts the Statement of Licensing Policy attached as an appendix to the report.

14. CALL-IN AND URGENCY - ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT POLICY (Pages 95 - 96)

To note the attached decision taken by the Chairman of the Council to waive the call-in provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules.

15. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(a) To receive from Council representatives the reports (attached - if any) on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice; and

(b) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings.

16. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Paragraph Number	Info
Nil	Nil	Nil	

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Background Papers: Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

(a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and

(b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 17 December 2020

Subject: Commercial and Regulatory services Portfolio Holder

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Aniket Patel

Recommending:

That the report of the Commercial and Regulatory services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Regulatory services:

I am pleased to report that the Regulatory Service, with the Community Resilience Team continue to pro-actively and reactively work together to promote and enforce the Corona virus restrictions in order to protect the community. A report was sent to members last month explaining in more detail the approach taken by officers and also included data on the number of engagements in terms of advice and information and enforcement action.

The team continues to work in the same way and will be advising businesses and the public on the new Tier restrictions from 2 December 2020 and beyond.

The impact on the Licensing income as a result of covid is being monitored on a monthly basis. There has been an overall income loss of approximately £100,000 since lockdown, as a result of reduced licence renewals taxi licences and other small businesses.

The Private Sector Grants Team continue to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants and Loans under the Housing Assistance Policy, with the following expenditure to date:

- 59 DFGs approved = £426,105.80
- 44 DFGs paid = £267,837.92
- 5 Decent Homes Approved = 29,758.46
- 2 Decent homes Paid = 12,678.93

There are also over 100 live cases being processed at various stages.

Commercial services:

North Weald Airfield

I am pleased to report that the second lock down has not impacted on the majority of the Airfield businesses too adversely and they remain very busy.

Unfortunately all public events have been cancelled for 2020.

Before the second lockdown the casual bookings were very slowly starting to pick up with a number of regular hirers returning to use the facilities. We wait to see what affect this latest lockdown will have.

The second lockdown has unfortunately affected aviation with the DfT grounding general aviation and flight training schools. However, I am pleased to report that it looks very likely that as from December 2nd general aviation will be permitted to restart. It is envisaged that we will achieve pre second lockdown movement numbers very quickly.

The market has continued throughout the second lockdown offering essential goods only. Again, I am pleased to report that from December 5th it will re-open fully which is fantastic news for the traders who rely heavily on good Christmas sales.

National Police Aviation Service (NPAS)

I am pleased to report that noise complaints regarding the NPAS operation have reduced significantly over the last 8 weeks. The recent independent noise monitoring exercise has concluded and the consultants report has been submitted for analysis.

Counsel's advice has also been sought following noise complaints and that advice would suggest that the Council has a robust defence against any actions taken against it.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust (EHAAT)

I am pleased to report that the construction of the new Hangar is progressing well and is on target to be completed in early 2021.

NWA Master Plan

The Master Plan is progressing well. Within the last two weeks the first engagement session took place with the Airfield tenants and the initial feedback being very positive.

Building Control

Building Control income at the end of the last financial year was around £130,000 above budget, with a notable increase towards the latter part of the year. This positive result should, however, be treated with caution as this was influenced by the new high-volume partnership scheme working with Ken Judge Associates for nationwide conservatory roof replacement approvals. This produces up-front income with tail-off cost liabilities that run into subsequent years which are not typically encountered with other Building Regulations applications. A new accounting process has been instigated to better reflect and ring-fence our ongoing cost commitments resultant from this scheme.

Unsurprisingly Building Control income has been affected by Covid 19. Application numbers received are 30% fewer than the previous financial year discounting the partnership scheme with Ken Judge Associates. As of 31st July 2020, income was approximately £82,000 short of budget forecasts, but around £68,000 less than for the same period in the 2019-2020 financial year. We are awaiting income reports for August and September.

This conservatory partnership income recommenced this financial year only after the easing of Covid 19 restrictions and we have received a total of 522 applications, suggesting performance at or above the level expected.

Since the start of September, inspection requests to active building sites have picked up substantially. The remaining year performance will depend much upon any need for further Covid restrictions and any resultant uncertainty in the wider economy.

A vacant Senior Surveyor post was filled at the end of October and recruitment to fill the vacant Principal Surveyor post is ongoing.

A new Building Safety Bill published in July and awaiting Royal Assent introduces significant changes to the Building Control system by removing competition for Building Control services

on high risk buildings and placing increased expectations on competency validation for all professionals involved with Building Control for all building types. These changes are expected to be implemented over a two-year period.

Epping Forest Shopping Park

The Epping Forest Shopping Park is under Covid-19 related trading restrictions as per Government regulations, excepting essential traders including Aldi and Boots.

The original roofing contractors have now submitted formal proposals as to substantial roofing and drainage works specification. Our solicitors, specialist roofing contractor and specialist drainage surveyors are currently reviewing and reporting on these proposals.

North Weald Airfield

Former Gymnastics Centre under offer to a community sports centre, transaction approved by EFDC and with solicitors to progress to completion.

Hanger 1 is under offer for a 10 year lease (this being the minimum term achievable given investment in the building required by any prospective occupant) following an extensive marketing period. Pending EFDC formal approval.

A large number of asset management and lease initiatives are ongoing at the airfield (subject to the outcome of the Master Plan).

HMRC have requested an additional 5 years plus expanded occupation space for customs and transit from 1st January 2021. Negotiations over rent, space, use are ongoing and are also subject to simultaneous stakeholder engagement by HMRC and liaison with Planning over the proposed SDO.

Landmark Building

Units B, C & D were handed back to the Council by the tenant on 24 February 2020 and immediately marketed by our agent. On 30 October 2020 the letting to a local boxing gym completed. In order to comply with planning permission conditions, the tenant will need to submit layout plans and also confirm that it complies with Building regulations in respect of noise & vibration emanating from the premises. The plans have been submitted and the noise conditions are expected to be submitted by December 2020.

Terms were agreed for Unit A with a local fitness centre / gym at the asking rent, however the operator has now decided not to pursue their interest. Property is now being marketed and despite difficult access arrangements, some initial interest has been shown.

On 1 October 2020 the letting of Unit G completed to Wenzel's The Bakers, a good covenant with 60+ stores. The tenant has now completed their fit-out to a high standard and is trading. This is an excellent addition to The Broadway and will hopefully increase footfall.

There is an offer on Unit E from a local business who wish to open a tanning salon and a change of use application has now been granted. Legal completion is expected by December 2020 / January 2021.

The lease for Unit F has now completed. The tenant has submitted the necessary planning and building regulations applications. Following the recent refusal at planning committee, the tenant is working with the Council on the best way to secure consent for its mechanical and engineering works.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council

Date: 17 December 2020

Subject: Commercial and Regulatory Portfolio – Covid19 Responsibility

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Aniket Patel

Recommending:

That the report of the Commercial and Regulatory Portfolio Holder be noted in related to Covid19

The national and local Covid19 response has varied over the last 2 months moving firstly from Tier 1 to Tier 2, then a National lockdown and then back to Tier 2 in this area. The changing rules has meant constant adaptations to the Council's response and a constant change in its focus.

The tightening of rules has also been accompanied by different financial support mechanisms from the Government, which individual councils have been asked to administer. Responding to these quickly, so that support can be provided to those businesses that need it most, has created additional pressure on the Council's Revenues, Benefits and Customer Teams.

The changes in rules has also resulted in uncertainty amongst the public and businesses so our Environmental Health Team has also been particularly busy in providing advice and in ensuring compliance with the changing rules. Where there have been deliberate and repeated breaches, the Council's EHO officers are also taking enforcement action as a last resort.

Community support demands are fewer than last time the Country was in full lockdown, but we continue to support partner agencies and colleagues at the County in a joined up and coordinated response.

The Communication response has been central to getting important messages to the wider community and have been focused on clarifying the rules that are in place at the time and on repeating the basic health advice that will help to reduce the spread of infection. I want to thank the Communications Team for their continued hard work in pushing out these critical messages. I would like to say that we understand the fatigue that residents are feeling right now and frustration and difficulty that the tighter rules cause, but the sooner we have the virus under control, the sooner we can return to normality and everyone's continued vigilance will be vital in achieving this.

Over the last few months, the infection rate in Epping Forest District has remained one of the highest in Essex and so officers and the Leader having been meeting regularly with the County Council's Health leads to make sure that we are taking all necessary actions to reduce the infection rates faster.

Part of this is in supporting partner agencies to increase the supply of community testing and to provide help in the preparation of sites for the community vaccination programme in the very near future.

I continue to hold regular meeting of my cross-party Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PAG) to share latest information and receive views and advice on the current Council response actions.

Looking beyond the current spike, we are also still working hard on producing recovery plans for the Economy and for the Community. A number of reports relating to these actions have already been considered by Cabinet.

With multiple vaccines either cleared or approaching the point of clearance, I genuinely think that the end is now at least in sight. Alongside this, the temporary Christmas relaxation will give many the chance to visit loved ones and lighten the darkness of this time of year. Together, I hope that these will raise spirits in the festive season.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

People Team

Common Operating Model

Consultation and recruitment are still underway for the remaining teams/positions to finalise the restructure process for ICT. Legal has yet to commence.

The Council needs to ensure that our services are aligned as effectively as possible so that we can deliver on our priorities and outcomes. Recognising there will always be change within Local Government that require structures to adapt, our intention is to continuously review our current services and ensure they are aligned to deliver the corporate plan and the new recovery actions.

This has necessitated some redistribution of service responsibility into functional groupings which in turn align to our priorities. Considering some recent resignations, we are now considering our phase two approach. This realignment is mainly within the Chief Operating Officer strategic area of accountability. This plan is being worked through and individuals impacted by this further service delivery realignment will be consulted with. Internal communications and updated OD chart will follow.

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

As part of the continued work within the People Strategy a new Learning Strategy ‘Putting Down Roots’ has been developed. The Learning Lifecycle is designed to show the development opportunities at all levels of the organisation at EFDC. The Strategy is underpinned with a detailed milestone plan including onboarding and induction. This also includes a comprehensive management and leadership development programme which aligns to the future needs of the organisation.

The Recruitment Strategy will be delivered in a phased approach over a 2-year period (2020/21). Phase one will see us go live with our current iTrent application, where workflows will be developed, automation introduced and a candidate booking system launched in February 2021. This will be followed by an additional two phased approach; both being delivered by May 2021.

The People Team continue to accelerate and build upon our Wellbeing agenda for employees. The Council is recognised for our internal efforts, being asked to consult, support and share our work with other councils to support building their employee wellbeing plans.

We have now launched our new benefits platform through Perkbox including an integrated EAP (Employee Assistance Programme), wellbeing platform and Perkbox Medical – access to an online GP 24/7. We have had a total of 78% uptake within our current employee establishment.

We have also launched our new employee engagement platform through Perkbox Insights on 1 November 2020. We have had 185 employees complete a short pulse survey with 115 verbatim comments left. So far, we have an overall engagement score of 3.6 out of 5 for the organisation which is a good score four weeks into launch.

We are launching the last part of our Perkbox offering, Perkbox Recognition, on 1 December 2020 shortly followed by 'Merry Perkmas' which will be our £20 employee voucher Christmas incentive (funded through the Civic Office mast rental income).

We have now trained 98% (up from 97% since the October update) of our managers on 'Mental Health for Managers' training through MHFA England (Mental Health First Aid) and have trained 32 MHFA Aiders for EFDC with an additional three Cohorts of employees currently training to become Mental Health First Aiders. We are on track to exceed our ambitious target of 1 in 10 trained by February 2021.

We have now launched our winter wellbeing initiative 'Keeping you a little bit warmer this winter'. This support guidance offers managers and employees hints and tips around winter wellbeing. We are now in design stages of a Winter wellbeing risk assessment for managers who may have certain employees/teams that require more bespoke support, this is due to launch in the coming weeks.

We have also developed a new essential training course for all managers on inclusion and unconscious bias. The target for completion is January 2021.

Work continues to assist the Accommodation Project and work alongside the accommodation team to support the 'Effective Flexibility' guidance tool, supporting a more agile mindset to working in different and remote ways.

Corporate Health and Safety

The electronic Accident / Incident reporting system has now been fully trialled, and the launch is planned for the beginning of December as part of a focussed Health & Safety communication campaign. The system will be able to monitor accident/incident/near miss investigations and analyse trends.

The Council has invested in 13 on-line Health & Safety courses. Six will be essential training and the other seven will be dependent on job role (to be determined by managers). We aim to launch the courses at the beginning of Jan 2021 with requirement for 6 essential courses to be completed by end of March 2021. Each on-line course will last approximately half hour with a multiple-choice test.

Our four construction apprentices have completed an essential Health & Safety in the Workplace training course with a further session to be delivered at Oakwood Hill Depot for the Fleet apprentice.

Risk Assessment Training material has been purchased and training dates are being organised, the delivery has been slightly delayed due to the second lockdown but this will be progressed as soon as possible. Work will continue on additional guidance and templates on other key areas including COSHH, Manual handling and the provision and use of PPE.

A Health & Safety liaison group has been set up for the Oakwood Hill Depot which includes representatives from all relevant EFDC Services (Facilities, Fleet, Grounds Maintenance) and Qualis. The aim of the group is to establish operational arrangements, emergency procedures and effective communication channels. A workplace transport and traffic management assessment took place on 19 Nov 2020 which reviewed the vehicle and yard transport, parking and pedestrian arrangements, officers are waiting for the result of this assessment.

To ensure our certificated first aiders are appropriately trained some First Aid training sessions have been delivered with further planned for January/February. The planned training schedule has been disrupted due to both lockdown periods and the respective restrictions.

Contingency Planning

A review of our Emergency Response plans is progressing. A 9 week on call rota has been agreed at Director level which will provide a GOLD officer to deal with any emergency either in the district or internal to the council with a tactical team who can be convened as necessary to deal with evacuation or business as usual issues. This plan will include links to the Emergency Media Plan, the ICT Disaster Recovery process and internal Business Continuity protocols. Training for Directors has been arranged for 26 November 2020 and training for other aspects of responding in an emergency has been arranged for January 2021

ICT

The improved governance processes around projects and service management are beginning to show benefits. There is now a clear view of the work that needs to be done within ICT, and the team are better able to prioritise and manage escalations. A new problem management process has been implemented to help to identify underlying root causes, so that the overall number of issues can be reduced. New Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have also been implemented to ensure a more realistic approach to dealing with issues raised with the Service Desk.

The new monthly ICT project governance process is now starting to reap benefits and resourcing issues are being addressed at a senior level to ensure the right projects are done first. To assist the process further project management resource is being considered to drive the chosen projects through to complete by the agreed timescales.

Work on the Accommodation Programme continues with ICT providing input in many areas including network provision, Audio Visual solutions, and new applications to support new ways of working, resource booking and equipment provision.

The formal consultation for the ICT team restructure is running to plan. The initial round of shortlisting and interviewing is complete. There has been a large impact on the team, and some staff have left the Council already. The process of advertising vacant roles to the suitable alternative employment register is now underway. Any vacant posts at the end of this process will be advertised externally. Resourcing issues are being dealt with and external support put in place to fill any gaps.

Business Support

Business Support, including Accounts Payable, are supporting the Revenues team with the Local Restrictions Grant (open) grant which covers businesses during the Tier 2 restrictions which ran for 19 days between 17 October and 4 November. Crucially, under Tier 2, businesses were not required to close, so this grant is for hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses that remained open but were severely impacted by the restrictions on socialising. Business Support will also manage the online application process for the Additional Resources Grant (ARG) which will be available soon to businesses that have not necessarily closed due to the national restrictions but will be required to complete an online application form. The LRG grants are being issued now and the ARG grant will be initiated shortly.

The team continue to build a positive working relationship with HM Land Registry (MMLR), having biweekly project meetings to discuss progress on the data migration project. Also, the team have additional meetings with a MMLR Business Analyst to manage data extracts. The team are on track to migrate our data to the Land Registry in Q4 of 2020/21.

Business Support - Continuous Improvement

Business Support are currently reviewing the Council's printing and post practices. The aims of this project include;

- reducing printing volume in the Council to meet environmental policy;
- reducing costs;
- save physical space
- increase compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.

The team are on track to procure a supplier in December 2020 and implement the full programme by Q4 of 2020/21.

We continue to explore the management of incoming and outgoing correspondence for the organisation in line with the Service Plan. Currently incoming post is being reviewed to look at creating innovative ways to incorporate a modern, virtual way of working. This includes researching an external solution to scan EFDC post, index it and allocate it to the relevant Service area for actioning. This project is in its infancy and will hope to produce an effective and efficient solution to assist the Accommodation review and support new ways of working for the Council.

The team are also reviewing stationery held by the Council, looking at ways of reducing costs, reducing office space whilst supporting staff working from home. The launch of '**Scan it, Scrap it, Store it, Stop it**' was communicated to staff this month with Business Support leading the way. Equipment such as rulers, treasury tags, pencil sharpeners, hole punches and staplers are just a few of the items that will be re-homed to local charities and schools within the district. Over 95 boxes of old paperwork has been disposed of confidentially from storage at North Weald Airfield and another 350 boxes are due to be destroyed in the coming weeks. This project is to get staff thinking about scanning documents instead of keeping paper files, Scrap old expired documents, Store work electronically where possible and Stop it - how can processes be changed to prevent an excess of paper files. The team are on track to reduce stationery and storage by December 2020.

Our Freedom of Information request process is being reviewed. This includes;

- a new e-learning course for employees,
- a new IT system which incorporates a more effective way for our customer to engage with us and accountability of internal ownership to meet our timescales.

- Ensuring our website is up to date with information to prevent FOI's being made unnecessarily
- reviewing charges (within FOI guidance) with potential to generate a revenue stream from requests which are timely and large in volume to at least recover some of the time and effort spent on the requests.

This project is on track to be delivered in Q4 beginning of Q1 2021.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

1 The Customer Directorate has again been heavily involved in the Covid response, particularly within the Revenues and Corporate Communications teams.

Revenues and Benefits

2 The Revenues team has been implementing a new phase of the Government grants covering the period when the EFDC area was subject to Tier 2 restrictions, during the latest lockdown

- **Local Restrictions (Closed) Grant** – this grant relates to the businesses that have been forced to close during the current lockdown. This scheme is worth around £2m.
- **Local Restrictions (Open) Grant** – this grant relates to the period when authorities are placed in either Tier 2 or Tier 3 Covid restrictions and certain businesses are impacted by this. The scheme relates to leisure, hospitality, hotel and bed and breakfast establishments. A grant payment is made for each 28-day period an authority is in the Tier 2 or 3 situation. For every For EFDC the grant applied to the 19 days we were in Tier 2 prior to the lockdown and the grant levels are apportioned to the number of days involved. it also covers all subsequent periods post=lockdown
- **Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)** – this is the ‘Discretionary’ scheme that applies to businesses that had not been forced to close but were severely impacted by the effects of the lockdown. Working with Economic Development a list of priority areas for award were developed and a policy created. This also incorporated elements of the last Discretionary scheme for those who had fell the through the net before. There has been £2.6m available for tis scheme.
- **Business Adaption Grant (BAG)** – this scheme relates to grants for businesses who want to make adaptations, buy equipment etc to cope with the Covid environment. There was £2.2m provided to ECC and they are providing funds to districts to administer the scheme locally, based on a

common policy which is attached. There is £242,000 available for EFDC on a first come first served basis.

Further information on all the schemes is available on the Council's website.

3 The Government's Test and Trace payment scheme has been in place for a few months for those who are required to self-isolate for up to 14 days, cannot work from home and are on low incomes and in receipt of qualifying benefits. Successful applicants receive a £500 payment. The team have administered and paid around 100 of these applications thus far. Full details are available on the Council's website.

4 Caseload numbers for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support remain fairly stable, likely due to the extension to the Furlough scheme to the end of the financial year, which will delay rises in unemployment. New claims during Q3 are being processed in 9.56 days compared to 11.07 days in Q2. In terms of channel shift, I am pleased to report that 84% of new claims that the Council processes are now made on-line compared with 50% at the start of the financial year.

5 The team continues to pursue outstanding debts for Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments. A further 1,500 reminder notices have been sent making a total of 5,500 since recovery action recommenced in September.

Customer Services

6 The Customer Services team was central to the front-line response to the first wave of Covid lockdown. The service has welcomed two new Officers and are currently recruiting for a new Complaints Officer which will see the team fully resourced. Further coaching and support on the complaints process will be rolled out in Q4 to those Managers identified as needing it.

7 To ensure we are providing the right service to meet our customer demand we are currently collating data for customer call patterns to identify opportunities for improvement.

8 The second day's training pilot of 'Customer Shoes' training will be held 2nd December. The trainers have been provided with real-life scenarios for dealing with difficult customers, these will be role modelled and practised in the session. The next stage will be videos using these scenarios available via a customer shoes hub for all staff access.

9 Work has started to rejuvenate the Digital Buddies programme. In conjunction with VAEF we are looking at support options for the 2021 Digital Census and in addition linking up with the CCW team to offer digital support for residents as an output of the feedback received from their doorstep activity challenge visits.

10 Feedback received from Members regarding their iPads and alternative options is being discussed with ICT colleagues to agree a way forward. A working group was set up to discuss challenges with the Members Contact process, it's been agreed that all new contact will come via the existing channel, medium term the Members Contact form will be simplified and long term the content will be available on the Councillors Portal.

11 Looking forward, we will be developing a Customer Shoes hub providing access to 'all things' customer for staff and Managers. A link to the content will be

included in new starters onboarding to ensure all staff live and breathe the customer shoes culture from day one.

12 During Customer Service week we engaged with cash paying customers at the Broadway to identify why they pay cash. Two thirds said they felt fully informed of the alternatives but over half did not feel confident or competent in using them, relying on the assurance of face to face support. Many did not have bank accounts or were carers making a payment on behalf of someone. The cash office remains open Mondays/Tuesdays 10 am to 2pm, Waltham Abbey library is expected to open 4th December providing access to the kiosks.

13 Cover has been arranged with Mears our Out of Hours provider for the Christmas & New Year closure period, customer expectations will be managed with a communication confirming it will be an out of hours only service provided on these days.

14 Q3 performance key points to date are: 74% overall customer satisfaction vs 71% at Q2, (target 80%), 49% first point resolution (target of 45%), 79% of complaints resolved within SLA (10 working days). For October 42 complaints received, this almost equals the amount received for entire Q2. Complaints to Housing Repairs has seen a significant increase. Root cause analysis and discussions with Qualis will take place.

15 With Epping having one of the highest Covid-19 infection rates in the County. Our Communications team are continuing to operate in crisis mode with communications across all platforms being delivered in partnership with ECC and Public Health England.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Avey

Recommending:

The report of the Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

COVID-19 – Response of Contracts and Technical Services

All services continue to perform well during the Covid-19 period. Office based staff are continuing to work remotely by using Microsoft TEAMS or ZOOM. Those who need to come to office for operational reasons are taking precautions to avoid the risk of infection. Operational staff have assisted with the Council's Safer Spaces Project to keep the high streets safe.

Waste Management

The new trial of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling (WEEE) bins for flats is now being rolled out. This will allow residents to dispose of small electrical items such as toasters, hairdryers etc for recycling the same as what is available for houses.

The new recycling banks are now in place. These new banks occupy a smaller footprint and can collect glass, cans and plastic bottles as well as paper and card. They are also based on 1100 Litres wheeled bins so that all our recycling freighters can collect the banks on a more regular basis. This new bank system will reduce the amount of space occupied compared to the current system, reduce/eliminate the need for specialist collecting equipment thus reducing the carbon footprint of the service and have a faster reaction time to issues including overfilled banks as we can use our existing freighters. It will also improve the appearance of the recycling sites with distinct EFDC corporate identity.

There is a reorganisation of the operational management of Biffa to allow a more individual responsibility for issues within a geographical area that can be directly linked to the council's area-based waste officers for all waste issues for ease of contact for residents and councillors.

Leisure Management

The district's leisure centres closed on 5th November under the Government's national lockdown. The centres will re-open on Wednesday 2nd December. Places Leisure are working towards getting the Centres ready and Covid-19 restrictions will be in place and a booking system as per the re-opening of the facilities in August.

The refurbishment work at Ongar Leisure Centre is on track and going well. It is anticipated to reopen the pool on 2nd January. The bulk of the new pool plant has now been installed along with the new filtration systems and air handling units. Commissioning of the new pool plant is scheduled for the second week of December. The roofing work is largely complete and the electrical & lighting upgrades are progressing ahead of schedule.

The majority of the £1.3 million budget has been spent on: fixing the roof, replacing the pool plant, upgrading electrical systems and a slight underspend has been used to improve the poolside seating area for parents and families.

Car Parking

The car parking team recently underwent a DVLA audit. The purpose of the audit was to ensure that the very strict legislative and regulatory requirements for accessing and using vehicle keeper data are being adhered to. The audit was carried out by the Government Internal Audit Agency. I'm very pleased to report that the team have passed the audit, where a high level of compliance was demonstrated.

Car parking usage is still considerably lower compared to the same time last year, therefore income from the car parks remains significantly lower than previous years. The temporary relief tariff of 20p remains popular.

Fleet Operations

MOT demand from the general public is increasing week on week and to meet demand additional MOT slots have been created by changing working shift patterns.

Servicing of the outsourced Grounds Maintenance plant has now been brought in house. This has resulted in a significant turnaround with reduced down time and reduced expenditure with external suppliers.

A new fleet of 24 motor vehicles has been provided to Qualis with new Qualis livery, additional security racking, security locks and tracking systems fitted, the new Qualis fleet will also have two new electric vehicles added to their existing fleet supported with 22 low emission, euro 6 engines and fitted with speed limiters.

The team are recruiting for a new vehicle apprentice in collaboration with Epping Forest College and have provided potential candidates with a period of work experience as a taster session.

Grounds Maintenance

The unseasonably warm weather has meant that grass cutting continues throughout the district where surface conditions allow. Occasionally heavy rain has prevented the grass cutting machinery from operating safely or to the required standards and resources have been deployed elsewhere. With the shorter daylight hours and changing weather conditions grass cutting will cease shortly. Shrub and hedge maintenance continue, with many sites now having their annual cut and the tractor & flail is operating on a scheduled route of works around the district to maintain vehicle sightlines and pedestrian access paths. The gardeners are continuing to remove and replant the flower beds with spring bedding and bulb displays.

The autumn and winter months are when the main shrub & tree planting takes place, which this year, has also included the planting of 12,000 spring flowering bulbs. These new bulb areas are located on various green spaces across the district and will provide a welcome splash of spring colour.

Country Care

The late summer saw volunteer numbers restricted to four per week plus two members of staff, unfortunately Lockdown 2 has meant they have had to be cancelled again.

The team continues to carry out their habitat management work but without the volunteer army to assist the sites are presenting challenges. A butterfly survey report has been completed which shows that butterfly numbers on two of the reserves have been increasing over the last five years. Wetland bird surveys continue.

The team are planning some environmental events to take place in the Festival of Culture 2021.

We are currently recruiting for an Arboricultural Officer due to a vacancy so we are prioritising work requests based on health and safety risk.

A portacabin has been installed at Town Mead Depot to facilitate the additional teams that are now based there including the new Highway Ranger team.

Environmental Protection and Land Drainage

The team continues to provide support to residents across the district with drainage and pollution issues. Our contractors provide support as we prepare for winter in clearing and maintaining certain watercourses, storm grills and maintaining our Council maintained flood storage areas. The team are also consulted by our planning colleagues for development management and are providing input for contaminated land, drainage and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) for key Qualis development sites as well as Housing development sites.

Drainage engineers have been providing input into Thames Water plans for surface water and drainage water management plans to reduce the surface water that enters sewers and likely to have contributed to the flash flooding in Loughton in August.

The impact of the coronavirus has meant that visits to assess less urgent drainage issues or undertake sampling of private water supplies had been reduced and only undertaken where necessary. The recent recruitment of a Principal Environmental Protection Officer, who has now joined the team and is working on pollution and private water supplies bringing the team to full strength.

Highway Rangers

The Highway Rangers have been in post for 2 months and have been working across the district on a range of minor highway works. They are working well and are proving to be a real asset to the Council. They have undertaken dozens of tasks including cutting back hedges around road signs, replacing damaged bollards and replacing damaged fences. The rangers have also been assisting with the Covid-19 Safer Streets projects and restoration of works in Epping and Waltham Abbey Town Centres. Recently the rangers completed the repair of two tree pits on Sun Street in preparation for a new tree outside the carpet shop and they have reset a number of paving slabs that were loose or causing trip hazards in Epping High Street. Please continue to report local highway issues for the rangers to consider via the EFDC website below for consideration and assessment.

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/environment/highway-rangers-service/>

An example of two tree pits repaired in Sun street is shown below:



Epping High Street Pavement Repairs



Chigwell Obscured sign



Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.

Covid Economic Development Programme: In September, the Council appointed independent business consultants Studio-3, to complete town centre appraisal work following on from work previously undertaken by directors as part of the Safer Spaces programme. This work initially focussed on Waltham Abbey Town Centre and a full report which includes a detailed appraisal and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet on 22nd December.

Studio-3 have also commenced initial work in Ongar and an update report on this and the other town centres in the district will also be presented in December. A further report on the potential development of a Digital Gateway for businesses and services in the Epping Forest District will also be considered at this meeting, to discuss the benefits and opportunities that this might bring. The Digital Gateway report outlines online support packages to support local businesses and residents to shop locally and embrace online marketing and media.

Covid Business support grants: Officers have been working closely with colleagues in the Non-domestic Rates team to establish criteria to underpin the discretionary grants element of government lockdown funding, to support key sectors in the local economy. These grants are now operational.

Civic Office accommodation: Although soft marketing has seen a range of business interest in the commercial space within the Civic Offices which has resulted in a number of site visits, formal marketing has now commenced with Savills and Derrick Wade Waters and advertising is in place on Rightmove. However, the second wave of lockdown has impacted on interest.

Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ): Digital Leaders DL100 2020 –The DIZ was announced as the Winner of the ‘Cross Sector Digital Collaboration of the Year’ at the Digital Leaders #DL100 Awards on 15th October, beating other nominations including the Cabinet Office. The DIZ was praised for “its great breadth of engagement across both public and private sectors, describing it as an exemplar for regional development and collaboration that could be usefully replicated by local authorities across the UK.”

BDUK Local Full Fibre Network project – The first GP sites that are planned to be connected up to this new fibre broadband infrastructure being built across the DIZ, will shortly have their site surveys undertaken, the first step in getting them linked up to this ultrafast connectivity. The project will deliver fibre broadband to around 80 GP and primary care sites by the end of March 2021 and the focus will then shift to realising the potential benefits that this investment could bring for residents and the delivery of digital healthcare across the area.

The DIZ Digital Inclusion Project has begun discussions with digital infrastructure, tech and telecoms providers about the potential to develop a scheme that combines the donation, repurposing and reuse of unwanted and new devices with mechanisms for the provision of the vital mobile data and connectivity that would enable recipients of the technology to also connect up to the internet. Along with digital skills support and training it is intended that the project provides an all-encompassing solution to the emerging critical issue of digital exclusion. Work is ongoing with community and voluntary sector and health partners to fund and deliver this ambitious project and the DIZ Programme Manager will be presenting, with CVS partners, to the NHS Herts & West Essex Digital Leaders Forum on the project.

Work continues to support the latest phase of the Superfast Essex ultrafast broadband delivery across Epping Forest District. Works are being delivered by Gigaclear and they are currently delivering this fibre broadband network in Ongar. This phase will deliver gigabit capable broadband to over 1800 premises throughout Epping Forest District that currently do not have access to superfast connectivity and is due to complete by December 2021. The project is co-funded by the Council with BDUK and Essex CC.

Local Land and Property Gazetteer Address Information key challenges: Work on the local land and property gazetteer/business database has paused following a member of staff leaving the organisation. Additional capacity has now been secured to continue this work.

Kickstart: We are still awaiting further information and registration from DWP. Harlow Council which is also delivering Kickstart on behalf of Uttlesford is working with EFDC to create a combined West Essex Kickstart. A supporting website is being designed to provide information and application forms to prospective businesses and a claims and support portal for Kickstart employers is being set up.

General Economic Briefing: The claimant count level for the Epping Forest District fell to 4,715 in October which is the lowest figure since June. The biggest drop in claimants was in the 25 to 49 age group. The Government's revised winter financial support has cancelled JSS in favour of continuing Furlough and reinstated the SEISS rate as 80%. Approximately 6,500 local residents were reported furloughed by the end of September which accounts for 11% of the total working population. At risk businesses are currently being supported by three government grants and one ECC grant, all being administered by local authorities.

Visitor Economy: The local visitor economy continues to be hard pressed by the current restrictions, with hospitality and events closed or operating at much reduced levels. The tourism website continues to perform at 50% above the levels of 2019 with an average 5,000 visitors a week. Popular web pages reflect the changing circumstances with 'staycations' generating searches for accommodation. Walks and parks remain very popular during lockdown.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.

Finance

The current position on Finance is still dominated by the impacts of Covid19. This means managing current year budgets and developing next year's budget in an environment of changing Covid Tiers and rules. These have consequences which have financial impacts which are not easily understood. Managing and developing a budget for the current year, for next year and a Medium-Term Financial Plan thereafter is unusually complex whilst such uncertainties exist.

Covid-19 is still expected to cost Epping Forest District Council in order of £7 million in the current year. Mitigating this is Government support of almost £4 million and underspends, resulting from a slowdown in the delivery of some services. The current conclusion is that we will need to draw upon General Fund working balances at the year end by up to £2 million. The Council's strong balances position, built from sound financial management over previous years, means that this can be accommodated and still leave flexibility for 2020/21 budget planning.

In respect of Budget Planning for next year, the process is more challenging than it has ever been and the information we need to formulate a sound budget continues to only emerge slowly. In addition, some information will not exist at all and we will therefore need to make a best guess, for example around the extent and how quickly car parking and sports centre income will recover during next year.

The Government set out a bleak funding position in its Spend Review on 25th November, but did offer some welcome on-going support to local authorities for income losses and the continuing costs of managing the impacts of Covid-19. Unfortunately, most of the additional Spending Power offered to local authorities came from assumptions about higher Council Tax levels next year. The detail of how this announcement affects Epping Forest District Council will not be known until the Government announces the 2021/22 Finance Settlement at some point during December. This information is critical to budget development and so if the information arrives late, this will have a direct bearing on the quality of draft budget plans available for scrutiny.

The Council's external auditors had been due to sign-off the Final Accounts for 2019/20 by 30th November. They recently contacted us to say that because of resources constraints (mainly sickness) on their part, they are no longer able to meet the deadline. They have said that our processes are much improved and that the information had been given to them in a timely fashion this year and delays in achieving the deadline are on their part. The Chair of Audit and Governance, together with the Council's S151 has recently met with the Partner from our Auditors to express our unhappiness about this situation. The Audit and Governance Committee has been rescheduled to accommodate the delay. I am keeping a close eye of the process to conclude the Audit.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 17 December 2020

Subject: Housing and Community Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Executive Summary

The following report provides an update on progress in the following areas:

Older People's Services

The Older People's Service continue to support our older and vulnerable tenants whilst in lockdown. We have continued with our decision to keep the communal areas closed to support our residents with social distancing.

Following the recent review, our asset team are reviewing the capital programme to include some of the recommendations. In addition, capital has been provided in next year's budget to allow for the development of scooter storage.

Income Recovery

The team continue to work in challenging conditions in terms of trying to collect rent in a difficult climate. The team have put in place extra measures to support tenants who are experiencing challenges due to Covid 19. This includes providing one to one support and if required engaging with other agencies to ensure a holistic approach is taken.

Estate and Land Team

The estate and land team have embarked on a number of projects to improve the environment and create places where people want to live

Limes Farm – the team have worked with the resident's group to reinstate the football pitch; this includes new goals which were installed on the 26 November 2020.

Growing Project – the team have been partnered with the community wellbeing team to create a project which works with local people to create small sensory areas. Several are planned for Waltham Abbey. Also, a wildflower meadow is planned.

Asset Management

Significant changes have been made to the way the team carryout inspections, they are now being carried out in partnership with the Estate and Land Team using an IT solution called Photobook. This allows accurate reporting to be emailed directly from the tablet and saves on time and resources. Furthermore, the teams are working together on estate enhancements and block improvements. The first major refurbishment is planned for Limes Farm in 21/22.

Housing White paper

The Housing White Paper was published this week. This is likely to have major implications for us as a Council, not least, the vastly increased scrutiny and regulation. Members can expect a briefing paper shortly. Briefly the main points to highlight are:

- A strengthened role of the existing Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in consumer regulation and safety with links across to the new Building Safety Regulator;
- Social landlords must identify a nominated person responsible for Health & Safety;
- A consultation is being launched on fitting of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms to be followed by consultation on improved measures for electrical safety;
- A new suite of draft KPIs is proposed (although not referred to as KPIs but as “tenant satisfaction measures”) The RSH will be responsible for finalising the KPIs and will consult further. There will also be a small number of “financial measures” including Chief Executive salary & management costs. League tables are not specifically mentioned but it’s clear that tenants must be able to compare their landlord’s performance;
- Social landlords must also identify a senior person responsible for ensuring compliance with consumer standards;
- Landlords must also provide a clear breakdown of how their income is being spent;
- The democratic filter for complaints to the Housing Ombudsman will be removed and there will be a national awareness campaign for tenants and residents on how to complain;
- The “serious detriment test” will be removed and the existing cap on fines for breaches of regulations lifted;
- There are plans for a new inspection regime of inspections of landlords by the Regulator every 4 years;
- Tenant engagement will be improved through a programme of engagement and a requirement for landlords to seek out best practice. Government will introduce a new “Empowerment Programme” to support residents and there will be a review of professional training & development; and
- There will be a review of the Decent Homes Standard

Development

Our programme to build and accrue housing continues and is progressing as expected, albeit apart from some short delays due to Covid. We continue to review our programme as further opportunities arise.

The phase 5 programme will be presented shortly to CHBCC for approval, in addition there may be an opportunity for the Council to purchase the affordable stock from Qualis.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Housing and Community Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Anti-social Behaviour: Over the last month, 18 ASB complaints have been dealt with and one of these cases has resulted in a Criminal Behaviour Order application being completed for two residents who have caused persistent ASB. They have a court appearance in December.

Covid Compliance: Since the recent lockdown, officers and the Councils police team have been working closely with the Councils Environment Health & Licensing Officers, to undertake joint compliance checks local on premises at weekends. This is to continue as required.

Other services: Virtual “Coffee with Cops” sessions have been arranged for December, where our funded police officers and Senior ASB Officer will present the functions of the CST and how internal members of staff can utilise the team within their job roles.

Safeguarding: The number of safeguarding cases being dealt with remains high at 39 for November and will likely see a further increase during the Covid restrictions. This number includes a rough sleeper and a large number of cases related to poor mental health. Covid is causing difficulties in securing evidence as well as preventing visits to Hoarders properties.

CCTV: There are 3 Rapid Deployment Cameras operating out in the district at present, and 3 more waiting to be deployed. Download requests from the police have been consistent and the team are currently assisting police with the possible knife attack in Debden.

The team are to install new CCTV cameras for HMRC at North Weald Airfield by January 2021 and have received a request to supply CCTV for newly acquired car park behind Centric Parade in Loughton, for Qualis.

Environmental Enforcement: The team have been very busy in recent weeks with a mix of noise complaints (105), general fly-tipping (135), EFDC tenants fly-tipping (45) and 373 service requests. Several Noise abatement notices have been served on properties in Loughton and Waltham Abbey, resulting in Community Protection Warnings being served. In addition, Fixed Penalty Notices have been served for fly tipping around bins in Limes Farm and 3 incidents of fly tipping around the bins at Ongar Youth Club.

Action was taken to remove travellers from the carpark in Darby Drive, Waltham Abbey, including a court hearing on 24 November.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Housing and Community Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Holly Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Executive Summary

The following report provides an update on progress in the following areas:

Housing Career Pathway Apprentices

Our four new Housing Career Pathway Apprentices started with the Council on 2nd November. Alex, Lexie, Charlotte and Sean have thoroughly enjoyed their first few weeks, although they have had a lot to learn. The Apprentices will be with us for two years and will get to experience four different placements within the Housing Service. They will also gain a Level 2 qualification from the Chartered Institute of Housing. This is a great opportunity for us to grow our own talent.

Temporary Accommodation

Norway House

The Halloween Party for the children at Norway House was a great success thanks to the fantastic entertainment provided by the Culture and Community Team. We are now planning for Christmas and are extremely grateful for the various donations we have been offered this year, including Christmas food hampers, Christmas presents for the children, vouchers and selection boxes.

Funding

We have also been successful in securing just over £5,000 in funding from the Travis Perkins Community Benefit Scheme, which will be used to improve our small garden area at Norway House. We want to turn this garden into a chill out area where people can relax and eat outdoors in the summer. This project is being supported by the Culture and Community Team.

Homelessness

Although face to face service is still suspended due to the pandemic, the Team are making continuous improvements in how our customers and professionals are now accessing our service. This has been achieved by updating the functionality of our cases management system and our client facing website presence.

We are currently looking at further service improvements across the team which will streamline processes, improve service delivery and ensure legal compliance.

Private sector lettings

Since its inception (September 2020), our Private Sector Lettings Team have successfully rehoused 17 households so far and have developed a number of relationships with external agencies.

Rough sleepers

We currently have six rough sleepers housed in emergency accommodation.

Older People's Services

Sheltered Housing

Our Sheltered Housing Officers had been working at their scheme since September and this has continued to be the case through the second lockdown. All residents are being accounted for and those that need support are being helped accordingly. Given the impact COVID has had on people's mental health, especially with regard to social isolation, we are working with Essex County Council and staff within Community and Wellbeing on the following projects:

- Installation of alcove devices which allow residents to connect with family and friends and have visual conversations (one resident was overjoyed at being able to see her new great granddaughter).
- Allotments – Hyde Mead House and Jubilee Court will have raised beds installed in the communal garden to allow residents to plant vegetables. If successful, this will be rolled out to other sheltered schemes.

In addition to this we have updated our 'Services for Older People' booklet and our Sheltered Housing Officers now undertake new tenant sign-ups at their scheme.

Re-Housing Support Officer

This role has been moved into the Rehousing Team but will retain a close working relationship with Older Peoples Services.

Telecare

Although our Telecare service will cease next year, we continue to ensure our clients receive a quality service and will do so until Essex County Council have procured a new provider to deliver care technology.

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Data Return – Rents (LADR)

Last month the Team submitted the new mandatory annual government data return (LADR). From 1 April 2020, the Regulator became responsible for regulating local authority rents. All registered local authority providers of social housing in England are now required to complete the LADR. The purpose of this return is to provide the regulator with data on council stock and rent levels.

Repairs move to Qualis – Comms to tenants

The Team wrote to all council tenants to communicate the Housing Repairs Service move to Qualis Management and to inform them of the new contact details. An article was also placed in the autumn edition of the Housing News tenant newsletter.

Allocations Paper

The Team produced an Allocations Paper for the Members' Workshop. The paper gives information about our current Housing Allocations Scheme and highlights areas for discussion around potential changes to the Scheme ahead of a full review next year and policy update in June 2022.

Housing White Paper – Charter for Social Housing Residents

The long-awaited White Paper – Charter for Social Housing Tenants has now been published. The aim of which is for tenants to feel protected and empowered by a stronger regulatory regime and a culture of transparency/accountability. Fundamentally, the Government is going to strengthen the Regulator of Social Housing to create new consumer standards for landlords to be measured against. When the new standards are published, the Team will work to ensure the requirements are met.

Community, Culture & Wellbeing

Locality based community engagement

Staff from across the three teams have been actively engaging with residents living on Ninefields and Shelley estates in Waltham Abbey and Ongar as part of a focus place-based approach to supporting positive health and wellbeing. Observing social distancing, staff have delivered 1,000 Stay Well This Winter resource packs to older residents and 180 activity packs to families and children. Follow-up doorstep challenges including; "Dance on your Doorstep" and "Stretch & Relax" physical activity sessions, along with creative "Brighten up your Street" chalk art initiatives have been a huge success.

Litter Pick Pod events have also proved popular. Members of the Youth Council joined community teams of six, along with support from VAEF and residents' associations, and managing to fill 17 bags of litter across both locations.

In partnership with Estates Management and Housing, several horticultural projects are currently being established; new sensory planted areas will become focal points of natural interest in Waltham Abbey. Volunteers from the Longfields Community Allotment will help maintain these areas. A 'new' meadow is being created for and by the residents of Shelley at Cripsey Brook with residents growing a selection of wildflower seeds at home and

transferring these to the plot. A 'grow your own zone' will also be set up for the residents of Shelley close to the shops.

Data is being captured to demonstrate the impact of each initiative on residents' physical and mental health including reductions in feelings of loneliness and isolation.

This work forms part of a multi-faceted, strategic project endorsed by the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board and is being heralded as a model of good practice by Essex Director of Public Health, Mike Goherty.

Epping Forest Youth Council – MiLife C19 Mental Health Project

Once again, the Youth Council has worked alongside officers to co-design a bespoke project to benefit local Epping Forest teenagers. Having surveyed their peers to identify their key concerns about living in a Covid world, by far the most prevalent need identified related to deteriorating mental health. In direct response to these findings, and with the backing of Cabinet, the MiLife C19 Project has been developed. Youth Councillors have made a promotional film to launch this innovative project which can be found via the following link: <https://youtu.be/qUaGz3HWIZY>

MiLife C19 will include a website featuring a plethora of positive youth mental health resources and signposting to wider support services. Alongside this, workshops and activity sessions will be rolled out in each of the district's secondary schools from February 2021. The project will be delivered by the Community, Culture & Wellbeing service in partnership with the Red Balloon Foundation.

Life Walks

The Council's Life Walks programme continues to be a great success with participants becoming accustomed to booking online. In October we had 377 people take part in organised walks. Life Walks will start again for the second time in December if restrictions allow.

Older People's Officer, Karen Murray, was nominated by her Life Walkers and received the Essex Activity Heroes Award for her outstanding contributions to her community throughout 2020.

Social Active Strong – Strength & Balance Programme

The Social Active Strong, strength and balance programme commissioned by the West Essex CCG and lead by the Team across West Essex is being presented as a model of best practice by the Hertfordshire and West Essex STP, with the aim that our model will be replicated across a Hertfordshire.

The programme continues to support residents despite lockdown. All participants have been given an activity pack with simple exercises to do at home, are being supported to access virtual classes and have regular one to one telephone calls to in order to sustain their progress.

Community Collage

The community art mural celebrating the NHS will be installed at Princess Alexander Hospital before Christmas in the Paediatric A&E department. A launch will follow when agreed by the hospital.

Museum Rationalisation Project and Education & Outreach

In line with Government guidelines, Epping Forest District Museum was required to close for a second time in early November, however, staff have used this time productively to move forwards at pace with the collections rationalisation project. This project will ultimately lead to savings for the Council through a reduction in the number of external storage sites required, whilst enhancing the accessibility of the collections for all to enjoy.

Over the two weeks from 9 to 20 November a total of 17 virtual heritage schools workshops took place reaching over 400 individual pupils. The Education Officer delivered topic boxes to schools in the two days before lockdown to ensure pupils didn't miss out on the opportunity to handle original historical objects as part of their learning experience. Existing teaching sessions were quickly adapted for delivery in a virtual format via Zoom or Teams. Sessions were delivered to all age groups from Year 1 to Year 6, covering a wide variety of topics.

Support for the district's Covid 19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) residents

Whilst universal shielding is not in place, residents who have been categorised as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable by their GPs or hospital clinicians have been invited to register on the Government's website if they require support with shopping or wider services. The majority of requests are being met at source via the government's priority supermarket delivery slot scheme, however, requests not serviced in this way continue to be devolved to the districts. The team receives weekly lists from Essex County Council and continues to undertake doorstep welfare checks where necessary to ensure our most vulnerable residents are safe and well and receiving the support they need.

Social Recovery Map

An interactive Social Recovery Map has been developed which illustrates how work led by the Team and the wider multi-agency Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Action Groups is contributing to Covid-19 recovery in key wards and more widely across the district as a whole.

The map captures how initiatives to improve residents' mental health and wellbeing and increase their engagement in physical and cultural activities can serve to reduce health inequalities and build cohesive, resilient communities.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 17 December 2020
Subject: Planning and Sustainability Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Bedford

Recommending:

That the report of the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Local Plan progress update

Following the hearing sessions for the Independent Examination of the Local Plan, the Inspector released her Advice on 2 August 2019. Within her advice the Inspector set out a number of changes to the Plan which are required to remedy issues of soundness in the form of Main Modifications (MMs).

In accordance with the high level programme in the Council's response to the Inspector, dated 24 April 2020, the Team worked hard to ensure that the final tranche of Main Modifications were submitted to the Inspector in September with a view to consultation on the MMs in October 2020. However, the Inspector wrote to the Council on 2 October 2020 (ED115) to advise that due to other work commitments during October and November it is likely that she will not be able to provide a full response immediately. As reported at the last full Council we still await further information from the Inspector with a clearer indication of the likely timeframe for her response and proposed timetable for consultation on the Main Modifications.

In the meantime, the Inspector wrote to the Council on 19 October 2020 to ask whether the amendments to the Use Classes Order which came into force on 1 September 2020 will impact the implementation of policies set out in the emerging Plan. The Council has responded that the changes do not impact on the soundness of the policies in the emerging Plan whilst recognising that in due course some of the policies may need to be updated to reflect the new definitions. In the light of the advance stage of the emerging Plan and the potential impact of COVID 19 on the recovery of town centres and the future of office floorspaces evidencing any impact of the changes would be difficult. The Council therefore proposes that this is best dealt with as part of a Plan review.

Following the letter to the Council from the Inspector on 16 July 2020 on the ONS 2018 Household projections (ED111) and the Council's response on 23 September 2020 (ED114 and ED114A), the Inspector has now consulted those who made Regulation 19 representations these documents. The consultation responses are available on the Council's local plan examination website pages - see <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/consultation-on-2018-household-projections/>

Further work has progress to update Sustainability Appraisal – this is currently being undertaken by consultants AECOM and will be finalised once the MMs have been agreed ready for consultation. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Assessment is being updated

and the Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy is finalised to take account of feedback received from Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest. An Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy is the subject of a separate report which will be published on the website shortly.

Once adopted, this will enable the Council to lawfully grant planning permission for new development that would result in a net increase in vehicle movements through the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

2. Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy

The comments received are currently being addressed and the Final strategy will be brought back to Cabinet (programmed for the January 2021 meeting) for endorsement as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, masterplans/concept frameworks and guide design and implementation processes.

3. Draft Sustainability Guidance

On 19 September 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency, including a resolution to do everything within the Council's power to make Epping Forest District Council area carbon neutral by 2030. To support the declaration and policies in the emerging Local Plan in relation to sustainable and high quality design and construction of developments the Council has produced two EFDC draft Sustainability Guidance documents for use across the District; one for Major Developments (10+ units) and one for Minor Developments (1-9 units). This was reported to Cabinet on 19 October and public consultation was undertaken for a six week period from 2 November 2020 to 14 December 2020. The responses will be considered and the final guidance will go back to Cabinet for endorsement as a material consideration currently scheduled for March 2021. Work is also underway to prepare a third document relating to the retrofit and refurbishment of existing buildings which will be the subject of consultation in Spring 2021. The intention is for this guidance to align with the work being projected by the Retrofit Working Group of the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI).

4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

A capacity fund bid was submitted to Homes England in early September for future funding, and the Garden Town is awaiting the outcome of this bid. Recent work has included the Sustainable and Healthy Living consultation running from 02 November to 14 December on the draft HGGT Sustainability Guidance and draft Healthy Garden Town Framework. Early drafts of the HGGT Communications and Engagement Strategies are also being prepared by officers for engagement with Members, partner officers and stakeholders.

Amended information is being submitted for the two Outline planning applications for the Gilston Area, and consultation on these revised applications by East Herts District Council is expected to begin shortly.

5. Development Management Planning Applications

Planning application income up to the end of October, including Pre-application fees, was £487,587, which is a shortfall of £328,213 against a budget estimate that is profiled on a 3-year actual average. This is at a similar income level (although still lower by about £50,000) to that received at this stage in 2017/18 compared with the relative high income received in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

However, we are expecting two major planning applications in December, which will each carry a comparatively substantial fee. In addition, a report updating on the Local Plan to the October 19th Cabinet updates that the Implementation Team has been proactively engaging with relevant site promoters to progress the Strategic Masterplan and Concept Frameworks in the District and whilst some are more advanced than others, it is picking up again and good progress has been made. Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) income is expected also over the next couple of months, which will cover the pre-application processes for masterplanning work.

Virtual Planning Committee meetings with public participation are being held in general on a weekly basis such that decisions are being taken with all relevant information available through Zoom. It continues to be generally well received by the public, acknowledging that we are trying to ensure that these committees are run as normal as possible. This includes a recent Development Management Forum for development proposed by Qualis for Cottis Lane and Bakers Lane sites in Epping.

6. North Weald Airfield Inland Border Facility

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is proceeding with works to establish a temporary Inland Border Facility at the airfield for a period of two years, commencing on 1 January 2021. The Government has made a Special Development Order (effectively granting planning permission for such facilities) that came into force on 24 September 2020, and HMRC are in the process of obtaining detail approval for the use of the site and associated buildings and development. Whilst the process does not include an ordinary planning consultation process, there is a requirement for an engagement strategy and report that records the views of any feedback received as part of the engagement period that spanned 14 days and ended on 29 October 2020. EFDC continues to be involved in discussions with HMRC and stakeholders (including the Police, highways authorities and North Weald Bassett Parish Council) to prepare for the commencement of operations on 1 January 2021 and to mitigate the impact of the activities on the locality. A financial contribution for environmental improvements in the locality is also under discussion. Periodic communications will be published on the Council's website to keep citizens informed. Further details of the facility may be viewed here: https://inlandborderfacilities.uk/?page_id=53

7. Development Management Service Charters

The Development Management Service has prepared and adopted Development Management and Enforcement Service Charters, confirming the principles for service provision and committing us to providing equitable, timely service provision in accordance with published standards. The Service Charters are awaiting publication on the Council's Website.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council

Date: 17th December 2020

Subject: Qualis Business Plan 2020-2021

Portfolio Holder: Commercial and Regulatory Services – Cllr A. Patel

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Council agrees the Qualis 2020/21 Business Plan.**
-

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Cabinet considered the attached Qualis 2020/21 Business Plan Report at its meeting on 3rd December 2020 and has Recommended to Council that the Plan be approved.
- 1.2. The Governance framework for Qualis, as agreed by Cabinet in February 2020, set the requirement that Qualis should seek agreement from its sole Shareholder (Epping Forest District Council - Cabinet and Council) for its proposed activities in the forthcoming year. The proposed activities are to be set out in the form of an annual Business Plan, which sets out the immediate priorities, and a 4 year rolling Plan, setting out the Strategic direction.
- 1.3. The Business Plan submitted by Qualis meets the requirement to produce a 1 year Plan, setting out their immediate priorities. However, Qualis has asked for more time to produce their 4 year Strategic Plan as the permanent Board membership was only confirmed by this Council on 29th October. This gave the new Board insufficient time to properly consider direction, longer term plans and strategy. Given the short timeframe Qualis had for their new Board to consider their plans, Cabinet agreed that more time to properly undertake the development of a 4 year Plan was appropriate.
- 1.4. The report presented to Cabinet, comprising the Business Plan and a cover report including a commentary by the Council's S151, is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.5. The key message for Council is that given the limited time available for the newly appointed Qualis Board to consider its plans, the plan for the forthcoming year largely focuses on the delivery of the existing agreed priorities for Qualis. These priorities are those set for it by Council at the point Qualis was created this time last year.
- 1.6. Any new proposals will be contained within the 4 year plan, once developed, or alternatively in standalone proposals to the Council in order to comply with the requirements of the Shareholder Agreement. Either way, any significant new proposals will require separate approval by Epping Forest District Council.
- 1.7. Usually this report would have been considered by Overview and Scrutiny before coming to Council but because of the fall of meetings, the limited new proposals

contained within the Plan and the need to agree the Business Plan for incorporation within the draft Budget proposals, the Business Plan comes straight to Council from Cabinet; thereby still giving it the widest consideration by members.

1.8. The detailed report is attached as Appendix A.

2. Resource Implications

2.1. Qualis generates significant amounts of income for the Council from margins on the loans given by the Council, from recharges for support services and from projected future dividends. The Business Plan for next year needs to be agreed so that the projected transactions between Qualis and the Council can be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plans of the Council.

3. Legal and Governance Implications

3.1. None contained within this report.

4. Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

4.1. None.

5. Consultation Undertaken

5.1. None

Background Papers

Group Company Governance Document – Cabinet 6 February 2020

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 03 December 2020

Subject: Qualis Group Business Plan 2020-2021

Portfolio Holder: Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder –
Cllr A. Patel

Recommending:

That Cabinet recommends that Council agrees the one-year Qualis Business Plan, as attached.

1. Under the terms of the Shareholder agreement between Qualis and the Council, Qualis is required each year to bring forward an annual and a 4-year Business Plan for agreement.
2. The Business Plan sets out the detailed activities for Qualis in the forthcoming year and, once agreed by the Council, Qualis can deliver these activities without further recourse to the Council.
3. Approval of the Business Plan represents the Council's main mechanism for annually influencing and controlling the activities of Qualis.
4. During the year Qualis must only seek Shareholder approval if an action or activity sit outside of the approved Business Plan and is specifically set out as a matter requiring Shareholder approval within the Reserved Matters section of the Shareholder agreement.
5. The Business Plan presented here is the first full Business Plan produced by Qualis and reflects the ongoing development and positioning of the company. For this reason, and because the final Board has only recently been appointed, Qualis has produced a single year Business Plan for 2020/21. A 4-year Business Plan will be developed and presented to the Council as the new Board of Qualis plans the future strategy for the Group.
6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

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QUALIS GROUP BUSINESS PLAN

2020-2021



This is the start of the first full year of Qualis Group's operation since it was established in February 2020. In accordance with the Shareholder Agreement, Qualis Group is required to produce a business plan setting out the company's priorities and objectives. The financial year for Qualis Group runs from 1st November to 31st October each year. This one-year business plan is for the 2020-2021 year with financial projections over a five year period.

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1. Introduction

The main government grant funding to local authorities ceased from 2018/19 and councils are required to become more self-sufficient in order to offset the government grant reduction. Capital programmes have become focussed on generating longer-term revenue returns to councils.

The Group will operate with flexibility and commercial focus in order to generate additional income to support key services and underpin the long term financial strength of the Council. This plan sets out the programme of activities that will make Qualis a sustainable and profitable business to the benefit of the Council and the community.

This business plan sets out the objectives for Qualis Group and subsidiaries for the first full year of operation. During the first year the new Board and Executive Team will develop its four-year business plan for 2021 – 2025.

The creation of Qualis Group is key to the Council putting itself in a position where it has the right legal entity, governance, capability and capacity to undertake development and delivery of services at the scale and ambition set by the Council.

The Group has been set up as companies limited by shares and are as follows:



Qualis Group – is the parent company that has responsibility for the overall performance and governance of the subsidiary companies.



Qualis Living – will own and manage assets for long term rental. Qualis Commercial will be commissioned to undertake developments.



Qualis Commercial – will build the schemes either on Council owned land purchased by Qualis or land acquired on the open market. Developments will include a range of housing, commercial and leisure.



Qualis Management – will deliver facilities management services.



Qualis Community – will be set up as a community interest company and will undertake activities that provide a benefit to the community. It will work with other established community interest groups.

2. Purpose of Qualis Group

- To bring forward the development of key sites to deliver new homes and public amenities within the District.
- To act commercially to maximise profits within Qualis and deliver sustainable returns to the Council as Shareholder.
- To deliver long-term value across all Group activities and positively impact communities, the environment and economy.
- To build a highly effective team and create a corporate culture that empowers and energises people.



Qualis Group is wholly owned by Epping Forest District Council.



3. Governance

A governance framework has been put in place to enable the Group to effectively organise its operational, financial, risk management and reporting processes. This means the Board will receive the information it requires to effect good governance allowing the companies to conduct activities in ways that comply with regulations and other obligations.

The parent company Qualis Group sits between the Council and the four subsidiary companies; Qualis Living, Qualis Commercial, Qualis Management and Qualis Community. Each company is wholly owned by the Council.

The Directors are responsible for governance and oversight of company activities. The Council has recently interviewed and appointed all permanent members of the Qualis Group Board.

Qualis Group has entered into a Shareholder Agreement with the Council. The primary purpose of this agreement is to set out reserved matters that the Directors of the company cannot undertake without the consent of the Council. This includes approval of the one and four year Business Plan.

The Council has identified the Section 151 Officer to monitor compliance and administration on behalf of the Council.

Quarterly financial and operational performance reports will be shared with Cabinet and Full Council.

Qualis Group Board

The Board is made up of nine members including; three Independent Non-Executive Directors, Chief Executive of the Council, Group Managing Director, Group Operations Director, Group Finance Director and two elected Council Members.

Qualis board meetings for all companies are held on a regular frequency and are supported by the following committees:

Risk and Investment Committee – reviews and appraises all development schemes and investment opportunities. The Committee is chaired by one of the elected Council Members on the Board.

Finance and Audit Committee – provides oversight and monitoring of finance, audit and compliance, including health and safety. This is chaired by one of the independent Non-Executive Directors with accountancy expertise.

Appointments and Remuneration Committee – appoints and removes Directors, agrees remuneration and assigns responsibilities for senior roles.

The Board and all committees will have responsibility for risk governance and risk management.

Qualis Leadership Team

- Group Managing Director.
- Group Operations Director.
- Group Finance Director.
- Company Secretary.
- Group Health and Safety Director.
- Managing Directors of each subsidiary business.

4. Finance

4.1 Loans and Funding

The Council and Qualis Group have agreed a financial model to support the launch and the development of schemes, property investment, and delivery of services in accordance with the agreed objectives.

A major investment by Qualis over the next five years is the development of five sites in Epping and one in Waltham Abbey with a combined land purchase cost of £19m and an anticipated total development cost of £66m. These developments are treated as work in progress and do not feature in the income and expenditure statements at Section 3.2 but are shown in summary at 3.3.

The following initial loan agreements appeared in the Council's Budget for 2020/21 and the first three were formally agreed in October 2020.

The value of the loan will reflect any final valuation, ownership and development approaches agreed between the parties.

Loan	Value £m	Duration	Basis of Loan
Working Capital	6	5 years to Oct 2025	Single currency revolving facility agreement
Asset Purchases from the Council	19	30 years to Oct 2050	Single currency, term facility agreement, interest and principle repayment
Asset Purchases from Market	30	10 years to Oct 2030	Single currency, term facility agreement, maturity repayment

The following loan agreement is due to be struck between the Council and Qualis in 2020 noting that the value is subject to final review:

Loan	Value £m	Duration	Basis of Loan
Development	66	30 years to Dec 2050	Single currency, term facility agreement, interest and principle repayment

4. Finance

The Council will provide the loan facilities to Qualis Group at state aid compliant rate. This will provide Qualis Group with the ability to manage the cash flow between the subsidiary companies.

Loan repayment and interest will be returned to the Council, as a result of income made on development sales, rentals and service provision, with distributions from profit shared between the Council and Qualis Group as agreed through the business plan.

In line with the agreed outputs of the Council's medium term financial strategy a return to the Council will be made by means; of the margins made on loans, future dividend payments and the provision of services.

Qualis Group is also expected to seek further loans from the Council for future asset purchases and developments.

If the Council is unable to provide a suitable loan facility Qualis Group can explore funding options with other providers or consider joint ventures. The financial plans have assumed that a further £60m asset purchase loan is secured from either the Council or the market.

4.2 Income and Expenditure Statements

The current financial plans for each of the companies in the Qualis Group for the next five-years is shown below. The figures include inter-company trading, loan repayments, operational costs and income.

It should be noted that for Qualis Commercial only central costs are shown. Land acquisition, professional fees and construction costs are shown as work in progress, then as completed assets in the balance sheet.

Qualis Group	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £**	2023/24 £**	20204/25 £**
External Income					
Group Recharges	2,129,194	2,188,825	2,190,156	2,191,520	2,192,918
Total Income	2,129,194	2,188,825	2,190,156	2,191,520	2,192,918
Operating Expenditure	2,067,178	2,125,073	2,126,365	2,127,689	2,129,047
Group Recharges					
Development Costs					
Total Expenditure	2,067,178	2,125,073	2,126,365	2,127,689	2,129,047
Interest Charges	-	-	-	-	-
Profit/-Loss before Tax	62,015	63,752	63,791	63,831	63,871
Qualis Living	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £**	2023/24 £**	20204/25 £**
External Income	2,660,000	4,550,000	6,125,000	6,300,000	6,300,000
Group Recharges					
Total Income	2,660,000	4,550,000	6,125,000	6,300,000	6,300,000
Operating Expenditure	94,381	173,585	201,085	203,585	203,585
Group Recharges	532,298	547,206	547,539	547,880	548,230
Development Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	626,679	720,791	748,624	751,465	751,814
Interest Charges	3,952,418	4,929,000	5,754,000	5,829,000	5,830,582
Interest Charges Transferred to WIP	- 1,927,418	- 1,929,000	- 1,929,000	- 1,929,000	- 1,930,582
Profit/-Loss before Tax	8,321	829,209	1,551,376	1,648,535	1,648,186

4. Finance

Qualis Commercial	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £**	2023/24 £**	20204/25 £**
External Income					
Charge to WIP	1,547,803	1,301,141	1,301,826	1,302,529	1,303,249
Total Income	1,547,803	1,301,141	1,301,826	1,302,529	1,303,249
Operating Expenditure					
Group Recharges	1,064,597	1,094,413	1,095,078	1,095,760	1,096,459
Development Costs					
Total Expenditure	1,502,721	1,263,244	1,263,909	1,264,591	1,265,290
Interest Charges	-	-	-	-	-
Profit/-Loss before Tax	45,082	37,897	37,917	37,938	37,959
Qualis Management					
	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £**	2023/24 £**	20204/25 £**
External Income					
Group Recharges	6,357,341	8,309,357	9,519,967	9,686,477	9,686,477
Total Income	6,357,341	8,309,357	9,519,967	9,686,477	9,686,477
Operating Expenditure					
Group Recharges	5,702,421	7,238,770	8,242,939	8,378,953	8,378,953
Group Recharges	532,298	547,206	547,539	547,880	548,230
Development Costs					
Total Expenditure	6,234,720	7,785,977	8,790,478	8,926,833	8,927,182
Interest Charges	-	-	-	-	-
Profit/-Loss before Tax	122,621	523,380	729,489	759,644	759,295
Total Group Profit/-Loss before Tax	238,039	1,454,238	2,382,573	2,509,948	2,509,311

** when projects complete additional income sources will be shown together with cost currently incurred in WIP (ie loan interest)

4.3 Qualis Living Balance Sheet

Qualis Living will own and manage the portfolio. Qualis Commercial will provide development management services to Qualis Living.

The balance sheet shows the growth of a property investment portfolio over three years totaling £90m and the completion of five projects in Epping and one in Waltham Abbey totaling £85m (£19m land and £66m development costs).

The simple balance sheet shows the creation of a property portfolio over five years and the completion of the Epping and Waltham Abbey projects in total by the sixth year, whereupon they transfer to completed assets and are revalued at 15%.

The financial plan assumes an average gross rental return of 6% is earned on bought and developed assets less appropriate fees, costs and Qualis Group recharges.

The figure in the balance sheet reflects the gross value of intended developments. It should be noted that these figures may be altered in the future to reflect agreements reached with EFDC around the ownership and operation of the planned Leisure Centre and Car Park in Epping.

The summary balance sheet for Qualis Living is shown below

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	20255/26 Revaue £m
Fixed Assets	30	60	90	90	90	220	253
WIP Land	19	19	19	19	19	0	0
WIP Build	6	34	148	152	156	0	0
WIP Sale	0	0	-45	-45	-45	0	0
Cash / Investments	0	0	39	34	29	29	29
Debtors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creditors	-1	-2	0	0	0	0	0
Loans	-55	-113	-257	-261	-265	-265	-265
Loans Repaid	1	3	8	14	20	20	20
Total	0	1	2	3	4	4	37
Profit and Loss Reserve	0	1	2	3	4	4	4
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Total	0	1	2	3	4	4	37

4. Finance

4.4 Other Financial Priorities

The following list of operational financial priorities are planned:

Objective	Aim	Target Date
Finance and Payroll System	Develop SAGE system	October 2022 in line with next stage of Qualis Living and Qualis Commercial activities
Expenses System	Web set-up and use	December 2020
Banking	Tender requirements	April 2021
Funding Sources	Identify alternative funding and partner sources for Phase 2 activities	April 2021
Final Accounts completion (November – October financial year)	Draft and Audited	End of November (draft), end of January (reviewed and submitted)
Risk Management	Launch process with monthly review	January 2021 and subsequently monthly

4.5 Financial Assumptions

The Business Plan financial estimates have been put together on the following basis:

Item	Actual Position / Assumption	Risk and Contingency
General approach	<p>As per appropriate IFRS standards and HMRC guidelines for a commercial company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and expenditure accounts prepared as per normal commercial practice, on an "Earnings Before Interest Taxation Dividend and Amortization" basis. No reporting deviations or approved tax schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited risk as standard approach. Appropriate notes to accounts and review of accounts by an external auditor.
Revenue costs staff, all companies	<p>Budgeted numbers of staff based on need and function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For seconded staff from the Council, cost plus 29% on cost plus 3% Council charge. For Qualis employed staff, cost plus 12% on cost. Phased in twelfths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Qualis Commercial posts filled currently by budgeted more expensive, interims. Recruitment underway. Qualis Living, two posts currently not recruited to but budgeted for pending agreement as approach to rental management. Directly appointed staff, are less costly due to reduced overhead. Limited and controllable costs provided no significant new expense incurred. Sized for growth of services, assets and development projects.

Item	Actual Position / Assumption	Risk and Contingency
Inflation staff	2.5% per annum as per Treasury norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of the Council and market costs will enable inflation assumption to be met.
Revenue costs non-staff, all companies	Budgeted at reviewed levels confirmed with service managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased in twelves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited and controllable costs provided no significant new expense incurred. Sized for growth of services, assets and development projects.
Inflation non-staff	2.5% per annum as per Treasury norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of the Council and market costs will enable inflation assumption to be met.
Contingency Reserve, Qualis Group	Set at 10% during formative stage (down on 15% in 2019/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General flexibility for unexpected and additional staff and non-staff costs.
Loans	Initially sought from the Council in line with Shareholder Agreement at competitive market rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard approach, limited risks.
Loan recognition,	Recognised when loan is agreed and accrued, (not later when interest and principle start to be payable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard approach, limited risks.
Loans, interest rates	Actual and assumed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For asset purchase and working capital loans agreed and signed, the loan rate stipulated (4%). For future asset purchases from market a rate of 3% has been used (as loan need is imminent). Construction loan drawn down over five years assumes an interest rate of 2% (as costs of money over the next two years' fall facilitated by quantitate easing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard approach, limited risks.
Assets Buildings	Default is 40-year life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless a specific valuation indicates. Revaluation would occur every third-year, or earlier if a significant local or national event has occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard approach, limited risks.
Work in Progress	Whist projects are live treated as WIP including rolled up financing costs (as is common practice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revaluation on completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard approach, limited risks.

4. Finance

Item	Actual Position / Assumption	Risk and Contingency
Asset revaluations	Land and buildings and fixed equipment indexed for two years and revalued every third year (see above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks.
Balance Sheet Creditors	Assume: Qualis takes 28 days of credit before settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks.
Balance Sheet Debtors	Assume: Qualis will give 28 days of credit before settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks.
Balance Sheet Loans	Recognised as short and long-term liabilities in line with standard practice and specific loan agreements, (including amortization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks.
Banking	Natwest Bank, normal multiple account facilities provided, electronic banking and limited use commercial credit cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal banking controls and security arrangements in place.
Treasury	Initially investments only through Natwest saving products until a full treasury strategy produced and agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent approach, limited risk (and returns).
Audit	Nordens appointed, KPMG available for detailed work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited risk, tried and tested local and national companies.
Tax, corporation tax, capital allowances, national insurance	Registered, electronic submissions, supplementary detail provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks, full detail made available to HMRC.
Tax, VAT	Registered, electronic submissions, supplementary detail provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard approach, limited risks, full detail made available to HMRC.

5. Qualis Living

Qualis Living has been set up to hold and manage assets for the long term. Qualis will take a low risk approach to property investment.

It will aim to build a £90m diverse property investment portfolio across a mix of locations and asset classes with no development or occupational risk, no immediate capital investment requirement, targeting assets with immediate and secure income for 10+ years from good covenants and a net initial yield of 6%.

All investment proposals are properly assessed by the Risk and Investment Committee before being recommended to the Group Board.

The aim is for Qualis Living to self-deliver property and asset management services across the portfolio. Until these management services are set up and fully operational, the Company will engage third parties to provide support where required. In future self-delivery will reduce operational expenditure and increase net returns .

The recently completed acquisitions are set out below:

			Commercial Investment Portfolio	
Location	Type	Size	NIY (%)	Gross Income
Birchwood Building, Leatherhead	Office	34,939 sq ft / 3,246 sq m	6.28	£916,389.75
Wickes, Maldon	Non-Food retail	28,199 sq ft / 2,620 sq m	7.26	£457,000
				Total: £1,373,389.75

After the deduction of the cost of finance this produces a net income of £604,589 per annum to Qualis.

5. Qualis Living

Birchwood Building, Leatherhead

The Birchwood Building comprises a newly refurbished multi-let office building of 34,939 sq ft (3,246 sq m) together with 154 car parking spaces and is located within The Leatherhead Park situated on Springfield Drive, to the north east of the park adjacent to the international headquarters of Unilever and the national headquarters of CGI.

The building has been comprehensively refurbished to provide modern, high-specification, trendy headquarters-style office space with the works completed in March 2020. The property is Fully-Let to 2 multi-national tenants in Zoetis UK and Hyundai Motor UK on FRI leases producing a total current income of £916,389.75 per annum.

zoetis

Zoetis UK is the development, manufacture, marketing and sales of animal health medicines and vaccines, with a focus on livestock and companion animals. Its parent company Zoetis Inc is listed on the NYSE and is the global leader in the sector with over 300 product lines and a presence in 120+ countries. Zoetis UK Limited is rated 99/100 and "Very Low Risk" by Experian.


HYUNDAI

Hyundai UK is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company with its principal activities including the importation and sale of Hyundai cars and associated parts to consumers in the UK and Norway. Hyundai is a Korean company that now sells cars to customers in more than 190 countries and employs over 75,000 staff. Hyundai is the fastest growing car manufacturer in the world due to its focus on technologically-advanced, high quality vehicles. Hyundai Motor UK Limited is rated 100/100 and "Very Low Risk" by Experian.

Wickes, Maldon

The property is a purpose build stand-alone retail warehouse comprising of approximately 28,199 sq ft (2,620 sq m) of accommodation at ground floor level. The site extends to 3.13 acres with the store occupying 0.7 acres. In addition, there are 149 car parking spaces to the front of the building.

The building is located in Maldon, East Essex at the head of the Blackwater & Crouch Estuaries, 27 miles east of Epping and 50 miles north east of Central London and is let to Wickes Building Supplies Limited.



Wickes was established in 1972 and has grown into one of the UK's leading DIY retailers. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Travis Perkins PLC, having been purchased in February 2005 trading from circa 230 stores across the UK. Wickes Building Supplies Limited have reported the following last three year's results and have a Creditsafe rating of 97/100 indicating a 'Very Low Risk' by Experian.



6. Qualis Commercial

Qualis Commercial has several key development schemes that form the priorities for year one of operation and are listed in the table below. The schemes are at different stages of development and approval.

The schemes will move through a series of 'gateways' which will require approval through the Risk and Investment Committee and Qualis Group Board. A detailed business case for each site will be submitted to the Board for approval. Timelines are indicative and subject to planning, procurement and finalising details with the Council.

Approved development schemes for 2020/2021

Scheme	Current gateway	Business Case Submission
Bakers Lane Car Park		
Development of new Leisure facilities including 6 x 25m pool, teaching pool, 4 hall sports centre and 2 squash courts	Pre planning stage first stage of public consultation complete. 2nd Consultation 1st week November and target planning application deadline December 2020	December Qualis Group Board
Cottis Lane Car Park		
330 space multi-storey car park, office, hotel and retail/leisure accommodation	Pre planning stage first stage of public consultation complete. 2nd Consultation 1st week November and target planning application deadline December 2020	December Qualis Group Board
Conder Site		
Residential development of 50 dwellings in a mix of family houses and apartments.	Pre planning stage first stage of public consultation complete. 2nd Consultation 1st week November EIA to be completed planning application target late January 2020	Full Business Case submission to Qualis Board Jan 2021
St Johns Site		
180 highly specified residential apartments to be operated on a build to rent model.	Pre planning stage first stage of public consultation complete. EIA to be completed planning application target late January 2020	Full Business Case submission to Qualis Board Jan 2021
Hemnal Street		
Residential development totaling 41 dwellings in a mix of family homes and apartments.	Pre planning stage first stage of public consultation complete. EIA to be completed planning application target late January 2020	Full Business Case submission to Qualis Board Jan 2021
Roundhills		
Residential development of 40 dwellings in a mix of family homes and apartments	Pre-planning Application process to commence November 2020	Full Business Case submission target March 2021



The Conder Building - A new community wrapped around a protected pond.



Bakers Lane Car Park - A new leisure centre including squash courts and sports hall

7. Qualis Management

Qualis Management was established to provide facilities management services. It will initially focus on the Council's housing repairs and maintenance service.

The company will operate commercially and deliver services at competitive rates with a focus on quality and customer experience and by using the right technology and smart sourcing solutions, significantly increase productivity.

During 2021 and 2022, the company will consider the transfer of additional services from the Council ensuring continuity and mitigating risk. Relationships with specialist contractors will continue until such a time when Qualis is able to self-deliver.

In future Qualis Management will provide services to Group companies including Qualis Living and Qualis Commercial and extend the offer to the private sector to increase income and profitability.

The business is committed to finding environmentally responsible ways to work, which includes investment in electric vehicles. It also aims to create social value through employment opportunities including apprenticeships, training programmes and placements for local people.

Priority	Target Date
Delivery of responsive repairs service including a customer online portal	October 2021
To bring voids service in-house to deliver 80% of work that is currently outsourced	July 2021
Development of the contractor portal to improve efficiency and productivity	March 2021
Preparation and mobilisation for kitchen and bathroom programme	April 2021

Additional Services

During 2020/2021, the Council will consider whether any further services may be transferred into Qualis Management.

Qualis Management are also able to seek opportunities to deliver services to the private sector up to 20% of total turnover. One of the objectives for 2020/2021 will be to explore new possibilities.

8. Qualis Community

The set up of Qualis Community has been approved and will be established in line with the following principles:

- To improve the economic, social and general wellbeing of the public through a sustainable approach to providing public infrastructure and services.
- To operate in the Epping Forest District Council area, adjacent authorities and broader East of England initiatives (with partners).
- For each defined project to set up a representative steering group that will make recommendations from the Qualis Community Interest Board to the Qualis Group Board.

The priority for 2020/2021 is to complete the registration and set up of the Community Interest Company.

Some of the Epping Town Centre sites and other potential developments across the district may have areas of public realm or community assets that would benefit from being operated through the Qualis Community Interest Company.

Some examples of the types of projects that could be delivered through Qualis Community include:

- Support local enterprise and community projects.
- A tree planting programme to achieve sustainability and environmental improvements.
- Volunteering, training, and apprenticeship opportunities.



9. Risk Management Framework

Qualis Group has developed a risk mitigation strategy which identifies the following key internal and external risks.

External

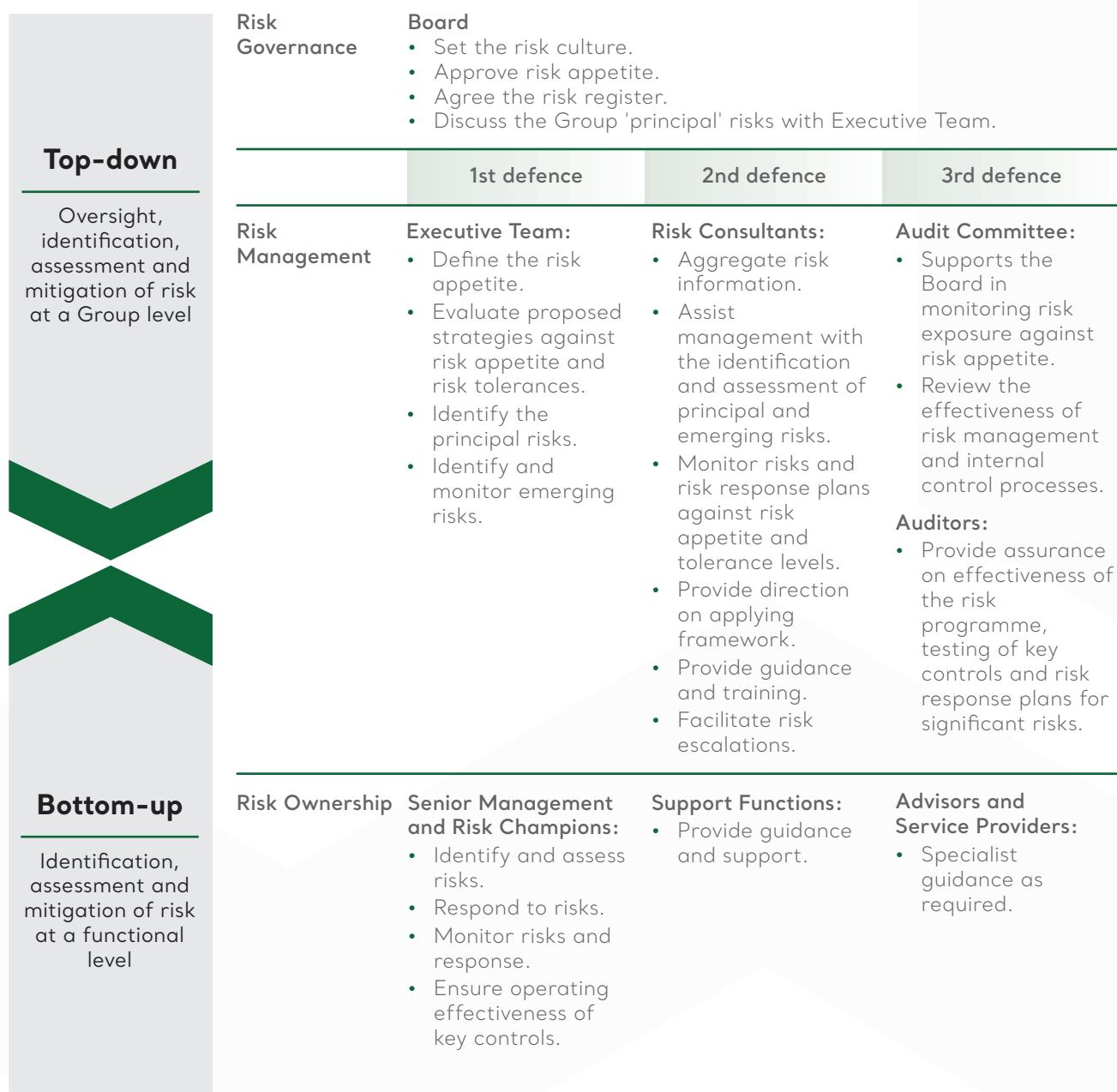
- Economic.
- Political and regulatory.
- Investment market.
- Occupier markets.
- Availability and cost of finance.
- Catastrophic business event.

Internal

- Finance strategy.
- Investment strategy.
- Development strategy.
- Operational strategy.
- People and culture.
- Information technology and systems.
- Governance.
- Supply chain management.

A detailed risk register is being developed for Group and subsidiary companies that will be presented to the Board in December 2020 for approval. This document will be reviewed periodically.

The risk framework below shows our high level approach to risk management across the Group.





If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

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hello@QualisGroup.com
www.QualisGroup.com

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 14 September 2020

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane (Customer & Corporate Support)

Recommending:

That Cabinet recommend that Council note that the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2020/21 will continue unchanged for 2021/22.

1. The Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) replaced Council Tax Benefit in 2013. Each local authority must review its scheme annually. The Government brought in regulations to ensure that pensioners continue to receive the same level of assistance as they would have done if the Council Tax Benefit scheme was still in place. The Council can therefore only make amendments to the scheme for people of working age. The Council has approved the general principle that the Local Council Tax Support scheme should be cost neutral. In legislative terms the scheme needs to be approved by 11th March each year so for 2021/22 approval needs to be made at Full Council in December 2020.

2. As there are no proposed changes to the 2020/21 scheme there is no legal requirement to consult residents of the district.

3. Currently, the total expenditure on LCTS is £6,475,794, which is made up of £3,537,760 for elderly recipients and £2,938,034 for working age recipients. This is £330,006 up on last year's expenditure (5.1%) with an increase of £16,720 for elderly recipients and an increase of £313,286 for working age claimants. The total number of recipients of LCTS is 6,219 comprising 2,922 elderly recipients and 3,297 working age. This compares with a total number of claimants at 31st March 2020 of 6,215. Although numbers have increased by few claimants, which may look contradictory in terms of an increase in expenditure on the scheme, the average increase in Council Tax of 4.5% in 2020/21 needs to be factored in. The overall expenditure on the scheme will continue to be monitored over the year as the principle is that it is self-funding. This will also form part of the review for the 2021/22 scheme.

Resource Implications:

LCTS scheme for 2021/22:

4. From 2014/15 the funding has been rolled into the Council's overall funding position made up of Revenue Support Grant and locally retained Business Rates. The actual amount of funding for LCTS is therefore not identifiable within the settlement figures, although the overall package continues to be reduced each year. The LCTS scheme is designed to ensure, as far as possible, stability and

sustainability in the Council's finances. It should be noted that LCTS is not a form of benefit and it is treated as a discount within the Council Tax calculations. This means that the Council's Tax base is reduced (as is the Tax base for all other preceptors) and that a large proportion of the lost Council Tax income is covered by Government funding.

Exceptional Hardship Fund:

5. For the last five years there has been a small hardship fund to assist households which have been experiencing exceptional hardship. It is anticipated that the current year's budget for this fund will be adequate. The County, Fire and Police are all contributing towards this fund and they have agreed that they will continue with those contributions for 2020/21.

Government Hardship Fund:

6. In response to the additional financial pressures brought about by Covid-19, Central Government awarded LCTS recipients a one-off £150 reduction in council tax for the current financial year. At present, there are no plans to extend this beyond 31 March 2021.

Conclusion

7. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.



Report to Council

Date of meeting: 17 December 2020

Chairman: Councillor M Sartin

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564265)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for November 2020 be noted.**

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 November 2020

1. At the meeting on 19 November 2020, the Committee undertook external scrutiny of UK Innovation Corridor. Dr John McGill, the Director, and Dr Ann Limb, the Independent Business Chairman, outlined the Innovation Corridor's geographical area, which extended from north east London to Cambridge and Peterborough, and from Stevenage eastwards to beyond Stansted Airport. The local authorities that formed the Innovation Core included Epping Forest (a founder member), Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Harlow and Uttlesford district councils. The Corridor was essentially funded by annual contributions from local authorities.

2. While its former name the London – Stansted – Cambridge Consortium had identified its geographical location, the UK Innovation Corridor evidenced the importance of 'innovation' to match the scale of its ambitions, and no one else had claimed the name. The Committee heard the Innovation Corridor had become the UK's most productive region and was home to 2.1 million jobs. A fifth of those people were employed in the 'knowledge economy' – ICT, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering, transport and logistics. The main sectors for Epping Forest were construction, business services, public admin and health, but lower employment in the information, financial services, communications and R&D sectors.

3. How did the Innovation Corridor support the Council? It was a voice to Advocate, Broker and Co-ordinate – an ABC. It was a non-statutory, like-minded group and coalition of the willing that gave it a bigger voice to lobby national and London government and private investors for districts' ambitions, such as Harlow and Gilston and the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ). It helped to promote investment opportunities, such as those for the North Weald Airfield Masterplan.

4. Colleges within the Innovation Corridor were now collaborating more effectively as they had signed the Regional Skills Concordat to get investments into colleges and therefore, would have the skills going forward to retrain older workforce and provide the younger workforce with the skills it needed. The Innovation Corridor had recognised that economic growth could widen social inequality and was trying to address this sizeable issue.

5. The Innovation Corridor organised an annual conference and visited trade shows, and Manchester Airports Group was one of its sponsors. In relation to putting carbon neutrality and environmental sustainability on its agenda, quite a few of its local authority members had declared climate emergencies, so it was active in promoting journeys by rail, especially West Anglia mainline. How much impact Covid-19 would have on changing working practices and on homeworking, only time would tell, but its agenda was shaped by its members.

6. The call-in by Councillors CC Pond, H Kauffman, S Murray, C Roberts and D Roberts over the release of restrictive covenants to Epping Forest College (now New City College) was ultimately referred back to Cabinet on 3 December 2020 for further discussion, to safeguard the land and the proposed new wellness centre for the community; and to resolve the future of the remaining open space and its protection for the community in perpetuity.

7. The Committee noted the report that detailed the new internal governance to manage and deliver the programme of works aligned to the Stronger council ambitions. It noted the delays on the three exceptions on the telecare offering project, ICT restructure and Local Plan. The Committee agreed that it would only receive summaries and exceptions in future, with more detailed reports going to Stronger Council. It also reviewed the performance of KPIs for quarters 1 and 2.
8. The Committee received a short progress report on the Accommodation programme to October 2020 and a Member workshop on 'New Ways of Working' had recently taken place.
9. The Committee learnt about the launch of a new Employee Assistance programme called Perkbox, which enabled employees to access online counselling, financial and legal support, and discounts from major retailers. The People Strategy report detailed a wellbeing platform that gave employees online access to mental and physical wellness programmes and Perkbox Medical that provided 24/7 online access to GPs. Extra platforms were being added and the Committee asked to see a further report on the uptake of Perkbox by the staff. Four new apprentices had been appointed to Housing and the Council had proposed an additional apprenticeship in its Fleet Operations Team.
10. The Committee noted the quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21 that was normally reviewed by Stronger Council, as its next meeting was not until January 2021. The report set out the 2020/21 General Fund revenue and capital positions, as at 30 September 2020, and provided updates on the capital position for the Housing Revenue Account. Although Covid-19 had made a large impact on the Council, on a positive note, overall funding from the Government was approaching £4 million.
11. The Committee discussed the report on Local High Streets and agreed to revisit the reconvening of the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel at the Committee's next meeting in February 2021, provided the Covid-19 recovery phase had progressed sufficiently. The Task and Finish Panel had only held one meeting in February 2020 before the first Covid-19 lockdown.
12. As a result of the Chairman of the Stronger Place Select Committee, Councillor R Bassett, being appointed to the Qualis Board, the Committee selected Councillor S Heather, the current Vice-Chairman as the new Chairman, with Councillor R Morgan as the Vice-Chairman.
13. Other business considered by the Committee included the Executive's current programme of Key Decisions, as well as the work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny and select committees.

Report to the Council

Committee: Licensing

Date: 17 December 2020

Subject: Statement of Licensing Policy

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan

Recommending:

That the Licensing Committee recommends that the Council adopts the Statement of Licensing Policy.

1. In 30 November 2020, the Licensing Committee considered a report on renewing the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy.
2. The licensing authority has a statutory duty to review its licensing policy and as such, a consultation was carried out, beginning on the 22nd September 2020. The closing date was the 16th November 2020.
3. The new Policy updates the existing, to align with current internal council decision making; informing on current guidance and other publications and updating details of consultees. There is also a section that covers Exchange of Information, not included in the previous Policy document, which recognises the Council's responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations. The Policy document will be reviewed again no later than 2025 or such earlier time if deemed necessary.
4. The proposed Statement of Licensing Policy is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.
5. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

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STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Made under Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003

DRAFT

Epping Forest District Council

This policy shall be reviewed not later than 2025

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Epping Forest District Council ('the Council') is the licensing authority under the Licensing Act 2003 ('the Act'). This policy relates to all those licensing activities identified as falling within the provisions of the Act, including granting premises licences, club premises certificates, temporary events and personal licences in the district in respect of the sale and/or supply of alcohol and/or the provision of regulated entertainment and late-night refreshment.
- 1.2 The Act requires that the Council publish a 'Statement of Licensing Policy' that sets out the principles the Council will generally apply to promote the licensing objectives when making decisions on applications made under the Act and to regulate licensable activities on, and in the vicinity of, licensed premises.
- 1.3 This 'Statement of Licensing Policy' has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 (referred to in this document as 'the Act') and having regard to the guidance issued under Section 182 of the Act.
- 1.4 This Statement of Licensing Policy has been produced in consultation with internal and external partners including the Chief Police Officer for Essex, the Fire and Rescue Authority, bodies representing local holders of premises licences, club premises certificates and personal licences, businesses and residents of the area and the Council's Licensing Committee. The policy will be reviewed in not less than 5 years, or in the light of changes to legislation or circumstances, whichever is sooner.
- 1.5 The planning and licensing regimes involve consideration of different (albeit related) matters. The Licensing Committee are not bound by the decisions made by a Planning Committee and vice versa.
- 1.6 There is no legal basis for a Licensing Authority to refuse a licence because the relevant premises does not have planning permission or where there are conditions on the planning permission of a premise. It is a statutory requirement that all applicants provide a copy of their application to the Planning Authority

Licensing Objectives

- 1.7 The Act requires that the Council carry out its various licensing functions to promote the following four licensing objectives:
 - The prevention of crime and disorder
 - Public safety
 - The prevention of public nuisance
 - The protection of children from harm
- 1.8 To achieve these objectives the Council will use the full range of measures available to it, including relevant legislation. The Council will work closely with the police, the fire authority, businesses, community representatives and local people in meeting these objectives.
- 1.9 There are a number of other Council and Government policies, strategies, responsibilities, and guidance documents that have been considered in the formulation of this licensing policy and which will be taken into account in its implementation.

- 1.10 Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have considered the four licensing objectives within their operating schedule. Applicants know their premises best and will be expected to address all aspects relevant to the individual style of their premises. Consideration must be given to all the licensing objectives. There are many control measures that are available to applicants to achieve this goal. Where appropriate, applicants should consider whether any additional measures are required, in respect of occasional or specific events, that are intended or are likely to attract larger audiences.

Consultation, Strategies and Policies

- 1.11 In developing this Policy Statement, the Council consulted widely. All statutory consultees have been consulted, these being:
- the Chief Police Officer for the District
 - the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
 - the Director of Public Health for East of England
 - persons/bodies representative of local premises licence holders;
 - persons/bodies representative of local club premises certificate holders;
 - persons/bodies representative of local personal licence holders; and
 - persons/bodies representative of businesses and residents in the area

In addition, the Council consulted with local groups, organisations and individuals, namely:

- Responsible Authorities under the Act;
- Other elements of local government,
- Organisations, including faith groups and voluntary organisations, and the Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Groups which have an influence on the night-time economy
- Made available on the Epping Forest Council website

The full list of external consultees is shown in Appendix 2.

Due consideration was given to the views of all those who responded to that consultation process.

- 1.12 The Council will take account of the guidance and strategies listed or any replacement guidance or strategy when preparing its policies and, in its decision, making.
- The Corporate Enforcement Policy
 - The Corporate Plan
 - The Local Plan (Emerging)
 - The Council Safeguarding Policy
 - The Council's CCTV Code of Practice
 - The Council Equality and Diversity Report 2019

Other Relevant Legislation

- The Gambling Act 2005
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Noise Act 1996
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Immigration Act 2016
- Regulators' Code under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
- The Anti Social Crime & Policing Act 2014

Guidance Documents

- Guidance issued under S182 of the Licensing Act 2003
- A practical guide for dealing with Alcohol related problems issued by the Home Office
- Safer Clubbing Guide - Home Office
- Code of practice: age restricted products and services – Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS)
- Security at Events Guidance – Home Office: relating to the Private Security Industry Act 2001 and associated regulations,
- Additional Guidance as may be produced by the Home Office

Any documentation relating specifically to temporary events such as:

- The Event Safety Guide: A Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Similar Events (HSE)
- Managing Crowds Safely (HSE)
- Steps to Risk Assessment: Case Studies (HSE) ISBN 0716 150804
- The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds
- Safety Guidance for Street Arts, Carnivals, Processions and Large-scale Outdoor Performances by [Outdoor Arts UK](#) and endorsed by the Institute of Licensing

- 1.13 The Council will have regard to, and consult with those involved with, local crime prevention, planning, transport, tourism, race equality and cultural strategies. Review or amendment to these strategies and guidance will be considered for their impact on this Statement of Licensing Policy.
- 1.14 Furthermore, arrangements will be made for the Licensing Committee to receive reports, when appropriate, on the needs of the local tourist economy to ensure that these are reflected in their considerations. The Licensing Committee will also be appraised of the local employment situation and the need for new investment and employment, where appropriate.
- 1.15 To ensure proper integration with the Council's planning policies, the Licensing Committee will provide reports to the Area Planning Sub-Committee, where appropriate, on the situation regarding licensed premises in the area, including the general impact of alcohol related crime and disorder, to enable that Planning Sub-Committee to have regard to such matters when making its decisions.

Exchange of Information

- 1.16 The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and to this end may use, for the prevention and detection of fraud, the information provided by applicants. It may also share this information for these purposes with other bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds.

- 1.17 In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Licensing Authority may exchange information provided by applicants with law enforcement agencies for purposes connected with the prevention and detection of crime.
- 1.18 When undertaking any data sharing exercise, regard shall be had to the relevant provisions contained in data protection laws, including under the General Data Protection Regulations.
- 1.19 The Council publish details of applications on the Councils website <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/> Details of all licensed premises are available on request and an on line register is being developed.

Equality Duty

- 1.20 The Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and associated Regulations to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between persons with the characteristics mentioned in the Act. These characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This Statement of Licensing Policy has been assessed to take account of equality issues.

Regulated Entertainment

- 1.21 As part of implementing local cultural strategies, proper account/consultation will be taken of the need to encourage and promote in suitable locations, a broad range of entertainment, particularly live music, dancing and theatre for the wider cultural benefit of communities.
- 1.22 If representations are made concerning the potential for disturbance of an entertainment activity, licensable under the Act, the Council's consideration, where disturbance is likely to be of limited extent, will be balanced against the wider benefits to the community. When attaching conditions, the Council will also be aware of the need to avoid measures that might deter live music, dancing or theatre by imposing indirect costs of a substantial nature.

Applications

- 1.23 In determining a licence application, the overriding principle adopted by the Council will be that each application will be determined on its merits, taking into account:
- the Licensing Act 2003 and the four licensing objectives;
 - Government Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003;
 - Supporting regulations;
 - This Statement of Licensing Policy; and
 - the nature and locality of the premises and the Operating Plan submitted by the applicant.

- 1.24 The Council requires the applicants to satisfactorily address the licensing objectives, from the design of the premises through to the daily operation of the business, in their Operating Plans, which must be submitted with their application.
- 1.25 Nothing in this Statement of Licensing Policy will:
- Undermine the rights of any person to apply under the Act for a variation of permissions and have the application considered on its individual merits;
 - Override the right of any person to make representations on any application or seek a review of a licence or certificate where they are permitted to do so under the Act;
 - Prevent any person from applying for a variety of permissions under the Act.
- 1.26 So far as possible, this Statement of Licensing Policy will not duplicate existing legislation and regulatory regimes that already place obligations on employers and operators e.g. The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, The Environmental Protection Act 1990, equalities legislation, and the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005. Conditions in respect of public safety will only be attached to licences if they are necessary for the promotion of a licensing objective. When considering applications, the provisions of the Legislative Reform (Supervision of Alcohol Sales in Church and Village Halls) Order 2009 will apply.
- 1.27 When one part of the Council seeks a premises licence from the Licensing Committee, the application will be considered from an entirely neutral standpoint. If relevant representations are made, for example, by residents or the police, they will be considered fairly by the Committee.
- 1.28 In all cases, the applicants and those making representations have a right to appeal to the magistrates' court against any decision made by the Council.

Representations

- 1.29 Responsible Authorities may make representations on applications, so far as they relate to the promotion of the four licensing objectives, and request reviews once licences have been granted. Representations must be evidentially based.

The Responsible Authorities are:

- The relevant licensing authority or any other licensing authority in whose area part of the premises is situated.
 - Chief Officer of Police,
 - the Fire and Rescue Authority,
 - the Enforcing Agency for health and safety purposes,
 - the local authority responsible for environmental health,
 - the local planning authority,
 - the authority responsible for minimising or preventing the risk of pollution
 - the Child Protection Authority,
 - the local Clinical Commissioning Group
 - the local weights and measures authority (trading standards).
- 1.30 The Act permits other persons to make representations. This includes any individual, body or business, or their representatives, known as 'interested

parties' and are free to raise relevant representations regardless of their geographical proximity to the premises. Any representations must be 'relevant' in that the objection relates to one or more of the four licensing objectives. In the case of a review, the ground must not be repetitious.

- 1.31 A Councillor for the District may also make representations. A representation would only be 'relevant' if it relates to the likely effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of at least one of the four licensing objectives. Any representation must not be frivolous or vexatious, and in addition, in the case of reviews, not be repetitious. Parties intending to make a representation are directed to the guidance issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (or similar government issued guidance) for assistance as to whether a representation is relevant.
- 1.32 In the absence of any representations the licence must be granted, and any representations must be heard at a hearing of the Licensing Sub-committee.

Conditions

- 1.33 Licence conditions will be tailored to the individual application and those **appropriate** to promote the licensing objectives will be imposed. Licence conditions will not be imposed where other controls/legislation exist to provide sufficient protection to the public. The Council may create its own pool of conditions to assist applicants. Essex Police have created a pool of conditions which may also assist applicants.
- 1.34 Any conditions arising from the operating schedule or as a result of representations will be focused on the direct impact of the activities taking place at the licensed premises, on members of the public living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area concerned and which are within the control of the individual licensees and others with relevant authorisations.

Administration, Exercise and Delegation of Functions

- 1.35 The powers of the Council under the Act may be carried out by the Licensing Committee, by a Sub-Committee or by one or more officers acting under delegated authority.
- 1.36 Apart from the approval and review of its Licensing Policy, decisions on licensing matters will be taken in accordance with an approved scheme of delegation aimed at underlining the principles of timely, efficient and effective decision-making. A table setting out how we will approach this is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.37 The Licensing Committee will receive regular reports regarding licences determined by officers under delegated powers, in order to maintain an overview of the general situation.
- 1.38 The Licensing Committee will expect individual applicants to address the licensing objectives in their Operating Plan, having regard to the type of premises, the licensable activities to be provided, the operational procedures, the nature of the location and the needs of the local community.

Cumulative Impact of a Concentration of Licensed Premises

- 1.39 Cumulative impact means the potential impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives of a significant number of licensed premises concentrated in one area.

- 1.40 The cumulative impact of licensed premises on the promotion of the licensing objectives is a matter that the Council can consider. This will not be confused with 'need', which relates more to the commercial demand for a particular type of premises and is therefore a matter for planning consideration and does not form part of this Statement of Licensing Policy.
- 1.41 The Council may receive representations from either a Responsible Authority or any party, (both defined by the Act), that the cumulative impact of new licences is leading to an area becoming saturated with premises of a certain type, making it a focal point for large groups of people to gather, and thereby creating exceptional problems of disorder and nuisance over and above the impact from the individual premises themselves. In such cases, the issue of cumulative impact may be considered alongside the individual merits of any application.
- 1.42 The Council will not operate a quota of any kind which would predetermine any application, nor will it seek to impose general limitations on trading hours in particular areas. Instead, regard will be given to the individual characteristics of the premises concerned within a given area. It is recognised that pubs, nightclubs, restaurants, hotels, theatres, and other clubs all sell alcohol, serve food and provide entertainment but with contrasting styles and characteristics. Proper regard will be had to those differences and the impact they are likely to have on the local community.
- 1.43 In determining whether to adopt a 'cumulative impact' policy for a particular area the Council may, amongst other things:
- gather evidence of local crime and disorder statistics, including statistics on specific types of crime and crime hotspots;
 - gather evidence of environmental health complaints particularly in relation to litter and noise;
 - gather evidence of health-related statistics such as alcohol-related emergency attendances and hospital admissions
 - Identify the area from which problems are arising and the boundaries of that area;
 - Assess the causes;
 - Adopt a policy about future applications for premises within that area.
- 1.44 The Council recognises however, that as well as the licensing function there are several other mechanisms for addressing issues of unruly behaviour that occur away from licensed premises. The Council recognises that licensing law is not a mechanism for the general control of anti-social behaviour by individuals once they are away from the premises and beyond the direct control of the licence holder.

Advice and Guidance

- 1.45 The Council recognises the valuable cultural, social and business importance that premises and events requiring a licence under the Act provide and welcomes the diversity of activities that are provided by licence holders. For this reason, pre-application discussions will be encouraged to assist applicants to develop their operating schedule. The Council, Essex Police and/or Essex County Fire and Rescue Service will offer as much advice and guidance to applicants, as resources permit.
- 1.46 The Council will also seek to liaise with applicants and/or mediate between applicants and others who may make representations, to achieve a satisfactory

outcome for all involved, wherever possible and where resources permit. Where an applicant considers that mediation and liaison may be likely or probable, it is recommended that the applicant discuss his proposal with the licensing department/section and those from who they think representations are likely prior to submitting their application. Once an application has been lodged, there are statutory timescales imposed upon the application and determination process, which restrict the opportunity for such discussions, liaison and mediation.

Reviews

- 1.47 A Responsible Authority and/or other parties can trigger a review of a premises licence or club premises certificate, but an evidentiary basis would be required to be presented to the Licensing Authority. Representations received must be relevant to the promotion of the licensing objectives and submitted in writing. Representations must not be frivolous or vexatious.
- 1.48 The Act provides a mechanism for reviewing Premises Licences where problems associated with achieving the Licensing Objectives occur. However, no more than one review from an interested party will normally be permitted within any 12-month period on similar grounds, except in exceptional and compelling circumstances or where it arises following a Closure Order.
- 1.49 In addition, where premises are associated with serious crime or serious disorder a senior police officer (Superintendent or above) may apply for a summary review of the premises licence which may result in: -
- (a) the modification of the conditions of the premises licence;
 - (b) the exclusion of the sale of alcohol by retail from the scope of the licence;
 - (c) the removal of the designated premises supervisor from the licence;
 - (d) the suspension of the licence.
- The initial decision may be determined in the absence of the premises licence holder. A review hearing must then take place within 28 days.
- 1.50 Where an interested party applies for a review, the licensing authority must be satisfied that the grounds are relevant. There is no appeal to the decision of the Authority other than by way of judicial review.
- 1.51 The Licensing Authority accepts that in exceptional circumstances, an Interested Party may not wish to provide his/her personal details to the licence or certificate holder. In those circumstances an Interested Party might consider providing the relevant Responsible Authority with details of how they consider the licensing objectives are being undermined so that the Responsible Authority can apply for a review.
- 1.52 Where possible and appropriate the Council, Essex Police and/or Essex Fire Service will give early warning to licence holders of any concerns about problems identified at premises and of the need for improvement.
- 1.53 No more than one review from interested parties will be normally permitted within any 12-month period on similar grounds except in exceptional and compelling circumstances.

Enforcement

- 1.54 The Council delivers a wide range of enforcement services aimed at safeguarding the environment and the community and at providing a 'level playing field' on which businesses can fairly trade. The administration and enforcement of the licensing regime is one of these services. The Council has adopted its Corporate Enforcement Policy designed to ensure effective and efficient public protection services. Specifically, the Council is committed to the principles of good inspection and enforcement practice and recognises the Hampton Principles of Better Regulation:
- Proportionate – intervention will only take place when necessary. Remedies shall be appropriate to the risk posed and costs identified and minimised.
 - Accountability – the Licensing Authority shall ensure it is able to justify its decisions and be subject to public scrutiny.
 - Consistent – rules and standards shall be joined up and implemented fairly.
 - Transparent – enforcement shall be open, and regulations kept simple and user friendly.
 - Targeted – enforcement shall be focused on the problems and minimise side effects.
- 1.55 Once licensed, it is essential that premises are maintained and operated to ensure the continued promotion of the licensing objectives, and compliance with the specific conditions of their licence and their Operating Plan. The Council will monitor premises and take appropriate enforcement action to ensure this.
- 1.56 The Council has established an enforcement protocol with Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and (Essex County Council) Trading Standards on enforcement issues. This protocol provides for the targeting of resources towards high-risk premises and activities that require greater attention, while providing a lighter touch in respect of low risk premises.

2. Licensing Objectives

- 2.1 The following sections set out the Council's Policy relating to the four licensing objectives:
- the prevention of crime and disorder;
 - public safety;
 - the prevention of public nuisance;
 - the protection of children from harm.

3. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

- 3.1 When considering Crime & Disorder applicants should look to include in their Operating Plan measures to control problems associated with this as required:
- Effective training and supervision of staff
 - Adoption of best practice guidance (e.g. Safer Clubbing, The National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Toolkit, Pub Watch schemes, CCTV, Drug Awareness)

4. Public Safety

- 4.1 When considering Public Safety, the applicant should consider whether it is necessary to address the following in their Operating Plan
- Suitable and sufficient risk assessments;
 - Effective and responsible management of premises;
 - Adoption of best practice guidance (e.g. Guide to Fire Precautions in Licensed Premises).

5. Public Nuisance

- 5.1 When considering prevention of public nuisance applicants should consider what measures may be necessary and should take account of the following:
- Adoption of best practice guidance (e.g. Good Practice Guide on the Control of Property, Noise, published by BBPA);
 - Ensuring customers leave quietly;
 - Installation of sound proofing.

6. Protection of Children from Harm

- 6.1 The Council recognises the great variety of premises for which licences may be sought. These will include theatres, cinemas, restaurants, pubs, nightclubs, cafes, takeaways, community halls and schools. Access by children to all types of premises will not be limited in any way unless it is considered necessary to do so in order to protect them from harm.
- 6.2 When deciding whether to limit access to children or not, the Council will judge each application on its own individual merits. Examples that may give rise to concern in respect of children would include premises where:
- entertainment of an adult or sexual nature is provided;
 - there is a strong element of gambling taking place;
 - there is a known association with drug taking or dealing;
 - there have been convictions of members of the current staff at the premises for serving alcohol to those under 18;
 - there is a reputation for underage drinking;
 - where the supply of alcohol for consumption is the exclusive or primary purpose of the services provided at the Premises.
- 6.3 In the case of premises which are used for film exhibitions, conditions will be imposed restricting access only to those who meet the required age limit in line with any certificate granted by the British Board of Film Classification or, in specific cases, a certificate given to the film by the Council itself.
- 6.4 Where a large number of children are likely to be present on any licensed premises, for example, a children's show or pantomime, then conditions will be imposed requiring the presence of an appropriate number of adult staff to ensure the children's safety and their protection from harm.
- 6.5 Venue operators seeking premises licenses and club premises certificates should consider including in their operating schedules particularly where their own risk

assessments have determined that the presence of children is undesirable or in appropriate conditions which could include –

- A limit on the hours when children may be present;
- A limitation or exclusion when certain activities may take place;
- The requirement to be accompanied by an adult;
- Limiting access to parts of the premises;
- An age limitation.

6.6 The Council will not impose any condition that specifically requires access for children to be provided at any premises. Where no restriction or limitation is imposed the issue of access will remain a matter for the discretion of the individual licensee or club. In all cases, it is expected that the applicant will have considered the protection of children in their Operating Plan. The Council commends the Portman Group Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks and would expect applicants to consider the Code in their Operating Plan.

6.7 In the case of premises giving film exhibitions the Council would expect licensees or clubs to include in their operating schedules arrangements for restricting children from age-restricted films as classified according to the recommendations of the British Board of Film Classification.

6.8 The competent responsible authority in relation to the protection of children from harm is the Essex County Council's Children's Safeguarding Service.

7. Licensing Hours

7.1 The Council recognises that longer licensing hours may be in the interests of the community by avoiding concentrations of disturbance from customers leaving premises, whilst ensuring that nuisance is minimised to residents. Premises will generally be able to sell alcohol during the hours they are permitted to open. Entertainment providers may provide a range of entertainment during their operating hours. When issuing a licence, however, stricter conditions are likely to be imposed about noise control, in the case of premises situated in largely residential areas.

Contact Details

Further information concerning all aspects of licensing can be obtained from our website: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Alternatively contact the Licensing Team: Licensing@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Tel: 01992 564034

Licensing Team
Commercial and Regulatory Services
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
CM16 4BZ

Delegation of Functions

Matter to be dealt with	Full Committee	Sub Committee	Officers
Application for personal licence		If a police objection	If no objection made
Application for personal licence with unspent convictions		All cases	
Application for premises licence/club premises certificate		If a relevant representation made	If no relevant representation made
Application for provisional statement		If a relevant representation made	If no relevant representation made
Application to vary premises licence/club premises certificate		If a relevant representation made	If no relevant representation made
Application to vary designated premises supervisor		If a police objection	All other cases
Request to be removed as designated premises supervisor			All cases
Application for transfer of premises licence		If a police objection	All other cases
Applications for interim Authorities		If a police objection	All other cases
Application to review premises licence/club premises certificate		All cases	
Decision on whether a complaint is irrelevant frivolous vexatious etc			All cases
Decision to object when local authority is a consultee and not the relevant authority considering the application		All cases	
Decision to object when local authority is acting as a Responsible Authority			All cases
Determination of an objection to a temporary event notice		All cases	
Decision whether to consult other responsible authorities on minor variation			All cases
Determination of minor variation			All cases
All policy matters except the formulation of the Statement of Licensing policy	All cases		

Consultation

Consultation will be undertaken with those listed below. The majority of those being contacted via email and the remainder by post. A copy of the draft policy will be available on the EFDC website. All comments received will be considered and the results of the consultation published on the EFDC website. The consultation period will be 6 weeks.

List of Consultees

Alex Burghart MP	Gambling Commission
Association of Multiple Licensed Retailers	GamCare
Attwater Jameson Hill Solicitors	Greene King
Bay Restaurant Group	Health and Safety Executive Essex
Betting Offices	HM Customs and Excise
British Transport Police	HM Revenue & Customs
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner Solicitors	Jarmans Solicitors
Campaign to Protect Rural England	Lea Valley Regional Park Authority
Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue	Local Chambers of Commerce
Child Protection Essex County Council	Local Council Liaison Committee
Church of England	Local Round Tables
Citizens Advice Bureau	Loughton Residents Association (Plans Group)
Community Safety Partnership	Loughton Residents Association
Consumers Association	Local Taxi Operators
Council for Voluntary Services	McMullen & Sons Ltd
Curwens Solicitors	Methodist Church
Director of Public Health Authority	Mitchells & Butlers Brewery
EFDC Councillors	Neighbouring Local Authorities
EFDC Senior Officers	Other Faith Groups
Eleanor Laing MP	Parish and Town Councils
Environment agency	Princess Alexandra NHS Trust
Epping Forest Conservators	Punch Taverns
Epping Voluntary Action	Robert Halfon MP
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Roman Catholic Church
Essex Coalition for Disabled Group	Rural Community Council of Essex
Essex County Council	Security Industry Authority
Essex Fire & Rescue	Spirit Group Retail Ltd
Essex Police Service	Town Centre Partnerships
Essex Probation Service	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers
Essex Trading Standards	Unison
Essex Tourist Bodies	Unite
Federation of Licensed Victuallers Association	West Essex CCG
Federation of Synagogues	Whiskers & Co Solicitors
Foskett Marr Gadsby & Head	All current licenced premises in the district

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Report to the Council

Committee:	Leader
Date:	17 December 2020
Subject:	Overview and Scrutiny Rule 53 (Special Urgency)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor C Whitbread (Leader of Council)

Additional Restrictions Grant Policy

Recommending:

That Chairman of Council agreed that the following decision be treated as a matter of urgency and not be subject to the call-in provision in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Rule (Call-in and Urgency):

- (1) That the Additional Restrictions Grant policy be approved; and**
- (2) That the Chairman of Council be requested to waive the call-in requirements for this decision due to it being considered urgent and any delay caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the public interest.**

1. The Government has made available a range of grants for businesses during the Covid period. One of the grants relates to those businesses that can remain open during the latest Covid lockdown but are severely affected by its impact, as an example there will be businesses that supply the hospitality business and remain open yet their income has been severely affected. The grant is referred to as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and it is for each local authority to determine their own policy in relation to this in accordance with Government guidelines. The Government has allocated EFDC £2.6m to fund this scheme.

2. The policy for EFDC as attached to the Leader's report targeted those businesses covered under Government guidelines and attempted to pick up businesses that have thus far not received any Government support. Revenues officers have been working with the Economic Development team to pull the policy together to maximise its impact.

3. The normal method for agreeing such a discretionary report would be a Cabinet report followed by a decision at Full Council. Due to the urgent need to get the grant payments out to struggling businesses it was recommended that a Portfolio Holder decision from the Leader accompanied with approval from the Chairman of the Council would facilitate the process in a timely manner.

4. In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Rule 53 (Special Urgency) of the Constitution, the Chairman of Council, Councillor H Kane was satisfied that this decision of the Cabinet should be treated as a matter of urgency. The Chairman of Council was satisfied that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the public's interest, as it would substantially lessen the time to get grant payments to struggling businesses.

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