

## **EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES**

|                           |  |              |                         |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Committee:</b>         | Overview & Scrutiny Committee  | <b>Date:</b> | Thursday, 15 April 2021 |
| <b>Place:</b>             | Virtual Meeting on Zoom  | <b>Time:</b> | 7.00 - 10.00 pm         |
| <b>Members Present:</b>   | Councillors M Sartin (Chairman), R Jennings (Vice-Chairman) R Baldwin, P Bolton, L Burrows, D Dorrell, I Hadley, S Heather, H Kane, J Lea, S Murray, S Rackham, D Stocker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley   |              |                         |
| <b>Other Councillors:</b> | Councillors N Avey, R Bassett, S Kane, A Lion, C McCredie, A Patel, J Share-Bernia, C Whitbread and H Whitbread  |              |                         |
| <b>Apologies:</b>         | Councillors D Plummer and P Stalker  |              |                         |
| <b>Officers Present:</b>  | G Blakemore (Chief Executive), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), W Cockbill (Young Persons Assistant), N Cole (Corporate Communications Officer), V Gayton (Culture & Community Team Manager), D Gilson-Butler (Young Persons Officer), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer), R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), L Wade (Service Director (Strategy, Delivery & Performance)) and G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services) |              |                         |
| <b>By Invitation:</b>     | Epping Forest Youth Councillors: S Bazzoni, N Moffat, M Prinsloo and A Zarras; and<br><br>S Garner, Assistant Director, Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children & Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Collaborative and Programme Director Joint Commissioning SEND (Essex)).  |              |                         |

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### **87. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman reminded everyone present that this virtual meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### **88. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The Committee noted that Councillor H Kane had been appointed as substitute for Councillor P Stalker.

### **89. MINUTE'S SILENCE FOR HRH THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

The Chairman, Councillor M Sartin, invited all members to join in a one minute's silence as a mark of respect following the death of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on 9 April 2021.

### **90. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

**91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

**92. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that no public questions or requests to address the meeting had been received.

**93. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN**

The Committee noted that no executive decisions had been called-in for consideration since the previous meeting.

**94. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY EPPING FOREST YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee received an annual progress report on the work undertaken by the Epping Forest Youth Council supported by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team. Four Youth Councillors, Aliza Zarras from West Hatch, Martin Prinsloo from Davenant Foundation, Natalie Moffat from Roding Valley and Sonny Bazzoni from Epping St John's gave an informative presentation on the activities of the Youth Council. Their views on the challenging year that unfolded with the unprecedented Covid crisis and national lockdowns was inspiring for the Committee to hear, and especially how the Youth Council's work had helped them and their fellow students in the District's secondary schools cope. The Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team was also commended for their guidance, training and support in continuing the strength of the District's national award-winning Youth Council.

Highlights included:

- A thank you for Council funding of £5,000 for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021;
- Awards and additional funding received from the Jack Petchey Foundation;
- #Your Say survey where young people shared their experiences during the Covid pandemic, and that the top three concerns were mental health, loneliness and isolation and education pressures;
- MiLife C19 project and website <https://www.rbf.org.uk/milife> that was helping young people to build their emotional resilience;
- MiLife C19 promotional film had been distributed to seven District's secondary schools see link <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/youth-council-launch-new-wellbeing-project/>
- October 2020 half term community day litter picking event;
- Staying safe campaign poster of youth councillors wearing their face coverings;
- 'Keep your Granny safe' poster in October 2020 to remind everyone of the Covid guidelines for 'hands', 'face' and 'space' on hygiene and socially distancing;
- Consultations and surveys undertaken with various local to national organisations;
- EFYC topical mugs were sent to NHS staff at Princess Alexandra Hospital in February 2021 to remind them to take regular breaks;
- Mugs were also sent to the secondary/independent schools' headteachers/headmaster;

- Being (virtual) guests of the Right Honourable Dame Eleanor Laing MP and the High Sheriff of Essex;
- Having a youth voice and their continued liaison with other Essex youth councils;
- Future EFYC projects, one of which had involved researching their family histories and working with Epping Forest District Museum on the exhibition on the Loughton Boys, holocaust survivors; and
- Taking part on the EFYC 2021 conference in November 2021.

Councillor M Sartin, had been very impressed with the powerful message conveyed in the EFYC's Keep your Granny safe poster.

Councillor S Rackham asked the youth councillors what had helped them get through the Covid pandemic? N Moffat replied that having something to do every day had made her feel active and the world more normal. M Prinsloo recalled that when the lockdown had started the Youth Council saw what the problems were and had wanted to make people feel less lonely and making the videos had helped him. S Bazzoni said that the Youth Council's work had benefitted and helped him as their work had reached over 5,000 others and he was proud to be playing a part in that.

Councillor D Sunger praised the 'Staying safe campaign' poster which featured the youth councillors all wearing face coverings and asked if Zoom had helped youth councillors to connect more? S Bazzoni replied that Zoom had definitely assisted the youth councillors to socialise virtually with each other more and with other youth councils. A Zarras was looking forward to meeting others outside more. M Prinsloo agreed Zoom had helped but there had been some issues and they needed screen breaks, which had helped at school. Also Zoom allowed more people to interact virtually at the same time.

Councillor S Murray remarked that the funding achieved was impressive and that teachers were very impressed with the resilience of young people during the Covid crisis. The Councillor asked what had been the most difficult thing to face during Covid and what had the youth councillors got from the Duke of Edinburgh scheme? M Prinsloo replied that he was not taking part in the scheme because of the lockdowns but he would apply later. The three MiLife C19 top key issues on mental health, loneliness and educational pressures were the most difficult to overcome. S Bazzoni said that he had applied to do the scheme before lockdown but unfortunately the Royal Air Force cadets had shutdown. Mental health was the largest issue and cause for concern regardless of the Covid pandemic but became elevated because of the lockdown. Most young people had been more affected by the lockdowns but not Covid, so keeping the schools open had been the best decision. N Moffat agreed that lockdowns had been hard for teenagers because of the isolation from the people you wanted to talk to, your friends. Also, six youth councillors were already doing the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

Councillor H Kane, as the previous portfolio holder and as a supporter of the Youth Council, was very proud of their work, how they had adapted and congratulated them.

Councillor C McCredie said that three youth councillors had made a presentation to the Epping Forest Independent Advisory Group a month ago and thanked D Butler, Young Persons Officer for her guidance.

Councillor A Patel was very impressed by the high standard of their presentation and how their voice was being heard by other youth organisations.

Councillor H Whitbread remarked that she was a big champion of the Youth Council and had started there herself ten years ago. It was a fantastic opportunity for young people to show leadership on key issues and long may the Youth Council continue.

Ms S Garner, who had been invited by the Committee to address members on mental health services for young people, agreed that it was important for young people to influence decisions and to continue to champion mental health and wellbeing.

Councillor M Sartin thanked the youth councillors for the informative presentation on the work that they had achieved throughout the year and wished them luck on their Youth Council Conference later in the year. She invited the youth councillors to stay to hear the next presentation on mental health services for young people which complemented the key issues that they had talked about.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the annual progress of the work undertaken by the Epping Forest Youth Council during 2020/21 supported by the Council's Community, Culture and Wellbeing team, be noted.

**95. LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION**

The Chairman introduced Ms S Garner who was the Assistant Director, Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children & Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Collaborative and Programme Director Joint Commissioning SEND (Essex) and was based at St Margaret's Hospital in Epping. She collaborated with seven Clinical Commissioning Groups and three local authorities. As she was the lead commissioner in Essex, equal access across Essex was important. Targeted and specialist services for children and young people 0–18 were accessed via a single point of access, supported by a County-wide crisis team, learning disability service and eating disorder service. Continued support where clinically appropriate was also available up to age 25. There was a locality hub based at Harlow and others sited in each CCG area. Various mental health disorders were covered, but of all the referrals, including self-referrals, coming into the Essex single point of access, 25 per cent were referred on to other people/organisations. The Crisis Support teams visited individuals to review and assess them 24/7. The Children and Young People Eating Disorder service, which covered anorexia and bulimia, and the Learning Disability service had seen a rise for their services during the lockdowns. There were seven community teams that worked alongside six youth offending service workers. There was a lot of provision with place base teams, life coaching and various support help available. The referrals between 2015 and 2020 had increased annually, but it was better to catch these early. During the Covid pandemic services had continued to operate as usual. Digital help offer had been expanded through apps and online therapy. Group therapy and support offers were widened, as was communication through schools and community groups to reach young people in need. Additional support was being provided for community eating disorder services and the voluntary and community sector to support the Crisis teams and single point of access. Future plans for young people's mental health services were outlined, which included development of 0–25 services, and getting risk support and the Crisis teams integrated and working across the NHS and Children's Services.

The Chairman invited the youth councillors and Community, Culture and Wellbeing team to stay and ask questions after members as their input would be welcome.

Councillor M Satin continued that mental health services for young people was a very broad area.

Councillor S Rackham asked how many referrals had there been over the Covid period and now the UK was coming out of the latest lockdown would cases decrease? An increase in anorexia was highlighted but had there been increases in any other mental health issues? S Garner advised that there had been a year-on-year rise in demand for their services predominantly from anxiety and depression, which could be because of parents losing their jobs, losing their home, poor housing could affect children, not having enough food, or anxiety from young people worried about being in a large group. Anyone could self-refer. There had been a sharp rise in young people feeling very lonely and isolated, as well as a rise in anorexia, but there had been an £800,000 funding increase with more bids to the NHS. Numbers had reduced going into the December 2020 lockdown but were increasing as we came out of this lockdown.

Councillor S Murray asked what constituted a crisis? From feedback as a teacher, how long did it take to access these services if it was not a crisis? With the expansion of young people's mental health services was there a problem recruiting staff? S Garner replied that a crisis was an overdose, self-harm or a young person wanting to take their own life. Those in the middle ground were triaged in as soon as possible but non-urgent cases could take twelve weeks depending on priority of need. Mental health nurses were in decline and Covid had affected the nursing sector but there was no problem in recruiting to less face to face roles.

Councillor D Sunger remarked that although there were lots of referrals from people who recognised there was a problem, what about silent cases, because although early intervention was the best option, how long did it take sometimes to get to a person who was in need? Were teachers trained to see any early signs? Also, the flowcharts were very interesting, and he asked if these could be circulated and included in the minutes of the meeting? Ms S Garner replied it was hard to say about silent cases and that was the fear because a child might need help. There were lots of avenues to go down to assess how much someone's mental health had deteriorated. There were mental health school teams in 25 per cent of schools, and it was better to meet a person's need early on.

Councillor H Kane asked if home visits were more reassuring? S Garner replied that the Crisis teams undertook home visits and there were no plans to expand home provision. During the past year most were conducted virtually via video or over the phone, as it was difficult to socially distance in the space in hospital clinics.

Councillor D Wixley asked at what point did you define mental health issues? With the pressures on young people where did you draw the line in that, when must they cope with it and when did you intervene? S Garner replied that she was not a clinician, but they did an assessment to see if the young person could be counselled or needed some form of medication. For psychosis, medication was the only way to help usually, but medicating children was a last resort.

A Zarras asked S Garner what had inspired her to motivate mental health? S Garner replied that she liked mental health. It was a difficult issue, but very interesting and exciting. The stigma had declined, and this had been helped by celebrities coming forward. We needed to normalise mental health and help each other and include people more.

S Bazzoni asked about male suicides, which were astronomically high. What was the main cause and were males in the younger generation less able to speak out?

S Garner replied that females had bigger friendship groups and reached out more. Men were seen as strong, independent males and loneliness was a key factor that affected men more. It was ok to not be ok if you were a young man.

Councillor M Sartin asked of the 18,000 referrals this year, had more females in Essex self-referred? S Garner advised that more males were referred by parents and teachers, but she could provide the breakdown of the figures after the meeting. It was noted that the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager would be able to circulate these to members after the meeting.

Councillor A Patel asked how the outcome for a child was measured and what evaluation was done that the right treatment had been provided? S Garner advised that they used a clinical outcome. The GAD (generalised anxiety disorder) score was used and the PHQ-9 (public health questionnaire depression test) score. There was also the patient experience group and a group of young ambassadors provided vital feedback, which was used to improve services. The mental health sector was ever moving forwards and they were continuously adding services. The sector had to listen to these children and every year the Mental Health Transformation Programme Annual Report was published, which was a national document due yearly in September.

The Chairman thanked S Garner for attending and presenting an overview of the young people's mental health services and answering all of their questions. It had been very illuminating especially the help given to a large number of people in the wider area of Essex. It was very important that mental health was out there in the public domain and that the youth councillors had been able to participate during the meeting.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the external scrutiny by the Committee of young people's mental health services in Epping Forest and Essex, be noted;
- (2) That the presentation slides of the flowcharts be added to the minutes; and
- (3) That the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager was to circulate the breakdown and figures of self-referrals by females/males in the past year to members.

**96. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2020/21 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman emphasised that this was the first draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report, as it was not completed yet. The photographs on the cover were not final, as the Civic Offices' refurbishment was nearing completion. If members had any comments, she asked members to forward these to Democratic Services. The final draft would be submitted to the Committee on 1 July 2021 and then to Council for approval on 29 July 2021.

Councillor D Wixley said he would report some minor corrections directly and that the last select committee cycle was still finishing, so this still needed to be factored into the final report.

Councillor S Murray remarked that this was our report and members needed to take ownership of it. Overview and Scrutiny had three key functions – scrutiny of external services and bodies, the scrutiny role of the Council and its services and that it acted

as a body of the call-in mechanism. There was a national executive scrutiny model and the call-in mechanism was very important but rarely used by this Council, so when it was used, it was because members were really unhappy with a Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decision. The Councillor wanted greater detail to be given on the two call-in requests especially as the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen seemed more detailed to him. Councillor M Sartin replied that she would discuss this with Democratic Services officers before the final version of the report but if Councillor Murray wanted to email details of what he wanted included, then to contact Democratic Services.

Councillor J H Whitehouse said we should ask ourselves who this annual report was for. When the Cabinet model for scrutiny was introduced in 2000, there was a real enthusiasm for scrutiny. The Council took up residents' concerns and reports were written by officers which were publicised in libraries for the benefit of residents. The annual report was written in the style of minutes and although she found the sections on the Agenda Planning Group and Joint Meeting interesting, she could not imagine residents being very interested in the annual report. She thought some of the external scrutiny could be better dealt with by a Task and Finish Panel that could be done over a few weeks, not months. The report showed that we were looking at things more internally rather than the scrutiny concerns of residents. The Chairman replied that this report was looking back at the scrutiny undertaken over the last year. Perhaps this was a discussion to have at another time to look at how scrutiny could be undertaken by the Council.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the first draft of the Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 Annual Report of the work undertaken during the past municipal year, be agreed, subject to members submitting any further comments to Democratic Services;
- (2) That the final draft be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 1 July 2021; and
- (3) That the Annual Report be submitted to Council on 29 July 2021 for approval.

**97. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN YEAR 3 2020/21 - QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

This report reviewed and commented on the delivery against the quarter 4 milestones specifically the projects that highlighted exceptions, which was determined by a red status. There were more 'reds' than in previous quarters but the reasons for the red status were referenced. The focus on the red status was where there had been missed targets on key milestones, a key issue of resolution or KPIs had missed targets. These had been reviewed in detail at the recent Stronger Council Select Committee. The majority of cases would be re-baselined to achieve a green status and the reasons for this would be referenced. The quarter 4 KPIs had been unavailable because of the timing of the reporting period and these would be available in the minutes. Also, People KPIs were in their infancy. Staff turnover had increased mainly because of the ICT restructure.

Councillor D Dorrell queried the re-baselining of project milestones and that better descriptions would be helpful. He wanted to know what would be carried over into 2021/22 where delivery had been intended for 2020/21. L Wade, Strategy, Delivery

and Performance Service Director, replied that she would supply this information, which was to be included in the minutes.

Councillor D Wixley was worried by the high staff turnover and asked if the Council had a process of interviewing staff when they left, as there was a concern about efficiency when losing experienced people. The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director replied that the ICT restructure had involved new roles and not all staff had been successful at interview. The Council did hold exit interviews and collated information on this. Also, the Senior Leadership Team looked at employee feedback on a quarterly basis.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked where the project to create vibrant high streets and town centres had got to? The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director advised that progress on this was reported to the Stronger Place Select Committee.

Councillor S Murray highlighted that a more detailed report had been reviewed by Stronger Council Select Committee on 13 April 2021 and that the meeting could be viewed on the webcast.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the quarter 4 performance report;
- (2) That the updated quarter 4 KPI performance reporting be included in the minutes (see attached); and
- (3) That information on the re-baselining of project milestones that would be carried over into 2021/22 where delivery had been intended for 2020/21, be provided in the minutes (see Post Meeting update below).

**(Post meeting update: Re-baselining of project milestones carried over into 2021/22:**

**Projects from FY20-21 rolling over to FY21-22**

| <u>Programme / Project</u>  | <u>Milestones for FY21-22</u>  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Waltham Abbey Community &amp; Cultural Hub</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Confirm EFDC capital funding</i></li> <li>• <i>Produce/agree SLA for management of revised facilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Detailed proposal sign-off (FY21/22-Q1)</i></li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fix The basics</i></li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CHW 1st line migration to contact centre</i></li> <li>• <i>Contact centre Operating Hours review</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital Customer Journey</i></li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Customer single sign-on</i></li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital Members Journey</i></li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Councillor Portal</i></li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research &amp; Feasibility Recommendations</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establish Corporate objectives for Community Data Insight objectives</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide Options for Data analysis tools</i></li> </ul>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High Performing and Flexible Workforce</i></li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital Performance Management Review and implementation</i></li> <li>• <i>New automated recruitment process through iRecruit</i></li> </ul>                                   |



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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Internal Policy and Process improvement</i></li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Automate people management by moving to digital processes</i></li> <li>• <i>People policy review / refresh</i></li> </ul>        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Flexible and Remote Working</i></li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>O365 rollout complete</i></li> <li>• <i>Govroam (Wi-Fi roaming in public sector locations) complete</i></li> </ul>               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mobile Phone Review</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Assessment and strategy complete</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Infrastructure Review</i></li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Infrastructure testing complete</i></li> <li>• <i>Further Infrastructure strategy action plan complete</i></li> </ul>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Business Application Review</i></li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Supplier management process implemented</i></li> <li>• <i>Strategy and plan for business application architecture</i></li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Council Housebuilding</i></li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planning permission granted</i></li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing and Asset Management System</i></li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Initial tender response and evaluation complete</i></li> <li>• <i>Cabinet approval and award</i></li> </ul>                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Climate Action Plan</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cabinet adoption of Climate Action plan</i></li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Green Infrastructure Strategy</i></li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cabinet consideration of strategy for endorsement as a material planning consideration</i></li> </ul>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital Planning Process Improvement &amp; Digital Solution</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Phase 1 implementation</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Local Plan</i></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Main Modifications consultation</i></li> <li>• <i>Adoption of local plan</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital Enablement and Gateway</i></li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Phase 1 implementation</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Business Zone</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appraisal option completed</i></li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Town Centre Regeneration</i></li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Presentation to Cabinet</i></li> </ul>   |

## 98. CABINET BUSINESS

Cabinet's Key Decision List updated to the 1 April 2021 was scrutinised by the Committee and the following points were raised.

### (a) Finance and Economic Development Portfolio

On the Town Centre Regeneration of Loughton, Epping and Buckhurst Hill, Councillor S Murray asked would member input be sought from Loughton councillors? No officers had contacted them, yet they had some expertise and

wanted to see discussion at an earlier stage in the drafting of this report. Councillor A Patel advised that the officer was still researching this project for the report draft but would liaise with ward councillors. Councillor S Murray replied that town centres did not work like that as all his ward residents used the High Road and The Broadway and he would not be satisfied if just the ward councillors were consulted. The Chairman agreed that some discussion before the report was produced and finalised would be necessary, and believed the lead officers were N Dawe, Chief Operating Officer, and J Houston, Partnerships and Economic Development Specialist. The Leader, Councillor C Whitbread, assured councillors that there would be input from District and Town councillors. The Epping scheme had been done with Essex County Council, so local input was important, and input from businesses, as they were all partially shaping the future place. The final impact of Covid on high streets was not known.

#### **(b) Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio**

Councillor J H Whitehouse remarked that Cabinet could not make a decision on the transfer of services to Qualis before pre-scrutiny and also Epping Leisure Centre deserved scrutiny. The Chairman replied pre-scrutiny was an opportunity for members to raise any concerns. The Leader emphasised that the Key Decision List showed the decision timelines and highlighted the importance of scrutiny before a Cabinet decision. G Blakemore, Chief Executive, advised that transfers of services to Qualis had been moved from Stronger Place Select Committee to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give members this pre-scrutiny opportunity. Councillor S Murray asked that sufficient time in a future agenda needed to be factored in. Councillor B Jennings agreed this Committee should rightfully pre-scrutinise in depth the transfer of services to Qualis. It was noted that an extra meeting of this Committee had been arranged for 8 June 2021 for members to pre-scrutinise three Qualis items.

#### **(c) Housing and Community Portfolio**

Councillor S Murray sought assurance that all Council Policies should be pre-scrutinised by the appropriate select committee before a Cabinet decision. This should, therefore, apply to the Allocations Policy and Tenancy Policy. The Chairman agreed such policies should be pre-scrutinised. Councillor H Whitbread advised that this should be undertaken by the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

#### **Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee reviewed the Executive's current programme of Key Decisions of 1 April 2021 to enable the identification of appropriate matters for the overview and scrutiny work programme and the overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken over the period of the plan;
- (2) That an extra meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to pre-scrutinise three Qualis items be arranged for 8 June 2021; and
- (3) That Stronger Communities Select Committee should pre-scrutinise the Allocations Policy and Tenancy Policy.

**99. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME****(a) Current work programme**

Standing items on (3) Accommodation Strategy and (4) People Strategy had already been removed from the work programme and were being reviewed by Stronger Council Select Committee. Item (2) Group Company Structure would be looked at by this Committee at the first meeting in the municipal year on 3 June 2021. All other work programme items had been completed during 2020/21 except item (23) Environmental Information Requests (EIRs) regarding pre-scrutiny of charging for this service, which would be carried over into 2021/22.

**(b) Reserve work programme**

The reserve programme was noted.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that he was starting to draft the Committee's 2021/22 work programme and asked members to contact Democratic Services with their suggestions.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the current Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2020/21 be noted;
- (2) That the current reserve programme be noted; and
- (3) That members contact Democratic Services with their suggestions for the 2021/22 work programme.

**100. SELECT COMMITTEES - WORK PROGRAMMES****(a) Stronger Communities Select Committee**

Councillor D Sunger reported that four meetings had been held so far with a fifth due on 22 April 2021. Essex Police District Commander for Epping Forest and Brentwood, Chief Inspector Ant Alcock, had attended the last meeting on 30 March when members had received interesting updates on current policing activities and crime issues in the District. The Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership Annual Strategic Assessment, Annual Report and Partnership Plan were reviewed, as was the six-month report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers.

Councillor S Murray had attended that meeting and thanked Councillor D Sunger for the inclusive way that he had chaired it.

Councillor J H Whitehouse queried item 17, Museum collections, which had no date for when this item would be reviewed by the select committee. Work on the museum collections did not have to be finished before a report came before the select committee. Councillor D Sunder noted that she would like a report on what was happening to the collections to be considered at the next meeting.

**(b) Stronger Council Select Committee**

Councillor P Bolton reported on the ICT update and that members had been concerned by the large change of staff. However, this had been because of the

nature of the change of the ICT programmes, which because they had changed so drastically, not all officers had been suited to the new developments. There was a big bedding in process while this restructure was ongoing which the select committee would monitor. The People Team did undertake exit interviews which were acted upon when necessary. The People Strategy set out the achievements realised during year 1 for 2021/22 and what would be achieved in year 2 for 2021/22. The Accommodation Strategy regarding the upgrading of the Civic Offices was completed and it was hoped that meetings would take place soon. A high court hearing was due to be heard on 21 April 2021 to agree if there could be an extension on distance / virtual meetings, but members would be let into the Civic Offices when it was safe to do so.

Councillor S Murray asked if small groups of members would be allowed to view the Civic Offices? The Strategy, Delivery and Performance Service Director replied that there was a phased return for Conder Building staff and then the offices would be used for postal vote issuing and opening sessions, so early to mid-May seemed to be the earliest councillors might be able to access to the offices.

### **(c) Stronger Place Select Committee**

Councillor S Heather advised that the select committee had completed all its work programme apart from item 6, sheltered housing. Officers were now looking at leasing furniture instead of purchasing and the refurbishment of sheltered housing accommodation was ongoing. Members had also reviewed the Local Enforcement Plan and pre-scrutinised the Green Infrastructure Strategy before a decision by Cabinet in April 2021.

#### **Resolved:**

- (1) That the Committee noted the work programmes of the three select committees.

## **101. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Committee noted that there was no business which necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

The Chairman thanked all members of Overview and Scrutiny for attending over the last year and expressed her thanks to the vice-chairman, Councillor B Jennings, for all his help throughout 2020/21. The Chairman also thanked officers for their hard work. It had been an unusual municipal year with the Covid pandemic but hopefully everyone would be able to move into a more normal procedure by the next municipal year.

**CHAIRMAN**