

## Select Committee Agenda



### **Stronger Communities Select Committee Tuesday, 21st March, 2023**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Stronger Communities Select Committee**, which will be held at:

**Council Chamber - Civic Offices**  
on **Tuesday, 21st March, 2023**  
at **7.00 pm** .

**Georgina Blakemore**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

R Perrin  
Email: [democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

#### **Members:**

Councillors J Lea (Chairman), J Lucas (Vice-Chairman), C Amos, R Balcombe, I Hadley, S Murray, C Nweke, R Pugsley, D Stocker, D Wixley and S Yerrell  
Co-opted Member W Marshall

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE: 6.00PM**

#### **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

**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 and copies made available to those that request it.**

**Therefore, by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured, they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area.**

**If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Corporate Communications Manager on 01992 564542.**

**1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I 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).

Therefore, by entering the Council Chamber and using the seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To be announced at the meeting.

To report non-attendance before the meeting, please use the Members Portal webpage to report non-attendance at meetings <https://eppingforestdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Member>Contact> to ensure your query is properly logged.

Alternatively, you can access the Members portal from the front page of the Council's website, at the bottom under 'Contact Us' <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/members-portal/>

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 3 - 8)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed the Terms of Reference and work programme for this Select Committee. Members are invited at each meeting to review both documents.

**6. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY UPDATE (Pages 9 - 12)**

To consider the update on our Customer Service Strategy and provide feedback on 'what our customers are telling us'.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE 2022/23**

#### **Core Areas of Responsibility**

- (1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:
  - Customer Excellence - Delivering services that put the customer at the heart of everything we do;
  - Behaviours and Insights - Future-proofing the Council's service provision by understanding customer needs and expectations over the next ten years and beyond; and
  - Partnerships - Working with public, private and third sector partners to deliver and develop services to our community, businesses and visitors to the district including shared and cross-border working.
- (2) To monitor levels of customer satisfaction and provide scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement. This will also include matters of concern that are identified by the Stronger Council Select Committee in its review of Corporate Key Performance Indicators.

#### **Scrutiny Role of the Select Committee**

- (1) To engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- (2) To develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;
- (3) To consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- (4) To look outwards and show community leadership;
- (5) To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- (6) To establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- (7) To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- (8) To monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- (9) To engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

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## Stronger Communities Select Committee

### Work Programme 2022/23

**Chairman: Cllr J Lea**

**Stronger Communities Corporate Programme Alignment focuses on People living longer, healthier and independent lives; Adult and Children were supported in times of need; and People and Communities achieve their potential.**

No.	Item	Meeting	Progress and Comments		Owner (Officer)	Programme of Meetings
12 July 2022						
1.	Overarching Housing Strategy		EFDC's current Housing Strategy reaches end of life in March 2022. A revised strategy will need to be taken through governance structure ahead of formal adoption in August 2022.	Completed	J. Gould	July
		July 22	Considering the draft Strategy and make recommendations to Cabinet.			
2.	Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme	July 2022	Review of Frank Bretton Court and further recommendations.		D Fenton	
3.	Changing Landscape of Housing Paper 1 – Building Safety Bill & Fire Safety Bill & H&S Analysis	July 2022	To review the report on the new social housing regulation		D. Fenton	
4.	Cash paying customers at Debden Broadway	July 2022	To consider the report		S. Lewis	
5.	Transfer of services from the Broadway Housing Office	July 2022	To consider the proposed closure and re-provision of the service	D. Fenton		
<b>20 September 2022</b>						
6.	"What are our customers telling us?" and the		Update reporting on a 6-month basis		S. Lewis	September

	Customer Services Strategy			Completed		
7.	Six-month report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers		Six-month update report		C. Wiggins	
8.	Sheltered Housing rebrand and support model		Introduction and approval to progress to Cabinet.		D. Fenton	
9.	Harveyfields		Report on the impact of the estate improvements at Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey. Creating great places where people want to live	Completed	R. Smith	
<b>15 November 2022</b>						
10.	Annual Lettings Report		To scrutinise allocations and lettings performance for 21/22	Completed	J. Gould	
11.	Domestic Abuse Act	<b>An item to be placed in the members Bulletin</b>	A briefing to members on the Act and the Strategy and impact on EFDC.		J Gould/C Wiggins	
12.	Museum collection rationalisation programme		To scrutinise the rationalisation programme of work that is reducing and consolidating the museum collection		J. Gould / F. Pellegrino	
13.	Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026		To be refreshed.		G Wallis	
<b>17 January 2023 – Meeting cancelled (All items moved to 21 March 2023)</b>						

2 March 2023						
14.	Community Safety Partnership annual report and review of the district Strategic Intelligence Assessment	2 March 2023	Annual Report		C. Wiggins	March
15.	Presentation from the District Commander for Epping Forest and Brentwood	2 March 2023	Annual report		C. Wiggins	
16.	Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies	2 March 2023			C. Wiggins	
21 March 2023						
17.	“What are our customers telling us?” and the Customer Services Strategy	21 March 2023	Update reporting on a 6-month basis		S. Lewis	March
18.	HRA Business Plan		Yearly Performance update		P. Wharfe	
19.	Resident Involvement Strategy	Moved due to further consultation /information sessions required.	Introduction and approval to progress to Cabinet.		P. Wharfe	
Next Municipal Year 2023/24						
20.	Tenant Satisfaction Measures Consultation				P. Wharfe	
21.	Review of caretaking in blocks		To review the proposal. (Links to TSM, residents will rate the cleaning in blocks)		P. Wharfe	
22.	Annual Housing performance report		Report on annual housing KPI's including compliance around the Building Safety Act.		P. Wharfe	
23.	EFDC Museum		Alternative operating model for the Epping Forest District Museum		J. Gould	June/July 2023
24.	Safer Streets				C. Wiggins	Sept 2023

Date to be confirmed						
25.	O&S (3.11.22) Older Persons Services – To establish whether this should be an update in the members bulletin or whether this should be referred to the Committee for inclusion and a report to follow 2023/24.				D Pegler	
26.	That the Committee determines whether quantitative KPI performance data for housing repairs should be added to the work programme; (O&S 17.11.22)				P Wharfe	
27.	Customer Services (Overall satisfaction)		To receive a recovery plan on this failing KPI. <b>This will be reported via O&amp;S with the KPI's.</b>		S Lewis	
28.	Unaffordable rents	Completed	To report on the numbers of social rents and affordable rents for properties being built under the Council Housebuilding programme and those being bought under right to buy receipts. (O&S 12.10.21)	completed	J. Gould/ D Fenton	Verbal report at O&S 16.06.22 and written report attached to the minutes





## SCRUTINY



## **Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 21 March 2023**

**Portfolio: Customer**

**Subject: Customer Service Strategy Update**

**Officer contact for further information: Susan Lewis**

**Democratic Services Officer: R Perrin (01992 564243)**

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

To note the update on our Customer Service Strategy and provide feedback on 'what our customers are telling us'.

### **What are our customers telling us?**

1 Members will be aware of the issues with the current **Waste and Recycling** contract and the number of missed collections experienced by residents in recent months. Customer Service are still receiving an increase in calls above the norm however volumes are slowly declining. From 1<sup>st</sup> Jan to 1<sup>st</sup> March 23 call volumes were 9.76% higher than the same period last year due to waste calls. The number of calls resolved by the contact centre at '**first point resolution**' saw an average increase of 5.11% for same Jan-March period and a 5% increase in online customer transactions in comparison to last year. Full KPI information will be reported to Stronger Council.

2 **Formal customer complaints** for waste from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 23 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 23 were 141 in comparison to 20 for same period last year. Whilst waste remains the highest volume for formal complaints, the volumes are starting to decrease.

### **Customer Strategy 2023/24 Update**

3 Our aim this year is to continue to improve customer access to our services, increasing use of digital solutions, whilst retaining phone contact for less digitally enabled customers. Our proposed projects are outlined below, many of these are awaiting a corporate prioritisation exercise to confirm we will proceed with the projects.

4 We are launching a **data capture process** which will provide us with improved customer insight, namely call causation on why customers call us as well as visibility of back-office customer contact. Customers who need to speak to a Technical Officer will no longer be transferred to a voicemail if an Officer is not available, instead, the team will receive a 'contact request' to a generic email account. Corporately we have agreed to one working day response time for initial acknowledgement back to the customer. Managers will have access to a Power BI dashboard to view and extra customised reports. Senior leadership will receive key messages from the reports on a monthly basis. This process will launch in March.

5 Our objective is to improve our **online customer experience** through simplified web content, better navigation and search as well as a consistent look & feel to instil trust in our brand. Officers will be provided with a web content strategy as well as templates to assist with writing web content. Project awaiting corporate prioritisation.

6 Following the **closure of Debden cash office** on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and the roll out of Allpay cards to Council Tax and Business Rate customers in November over £87,952.21 of income has been received using this new scheme. Monthly income from the Debden Cash Office accounted for between 0.2%-0.5% of total income, and with total income variance each month considerably more than this it's not possible to identify which channels customers have shifted to globally. However, examining average Council Tax income at Debden for the last year and comparing it to the income of the new Allpay service at this early stage around 65% of income has channel shifted to this service with usage of the Allpay cards increasing month on month.

As previously advised, we have now removed the payment kiosk from Waltham Abbey library. The intention is to remove the kiosks at the Civic offices by the end of March. As with Debden, cash paying council tax and business rates customers have been sent Allpay cards enabling them to make payments at over sixty Post Offices throughout the district.

We will be migrating to a **cloud-based solution for our payment's** solution provider Pay360 when the current contract expires at the end of March 23. This migration will reduce licensing, support and transaction costs as well as creating savings within ICT for hardware, software, licensing and disaster recovery. Go live date for migration will be August 23. Over a five-year period, revenue savings are estimated at £85,000.

7 On our digital Members journey we will continue to support the transition to digital with the launch of the **Members portal**, providing access to all information in one place. The portal was launched to Members at one of our regular Members coffee mornings. Timescales for this project are awaiting the corporate prioritisation exercise after which further engagement sessions will be held. There is a wide range of digital support for Members available from drop in sessions prior to meetings, one to one support, coaching on using Mod.Gov and your EFDC iPad, please email Louis Walton on [lwalton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:lwalton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) for further details.

Our **members coffee mornings** continue to be popular with regular Officers across service areas such as the People team, Planning and Parking attending. We have also had updates on Members Safety with the upcoming elections as well as an update from Qualis on their works. We would encourage Members to let us know of any particular subjects they would like to hear about at Members coffee mornings, please email Louis Walton.

8 **Community Hub** partner engagement continues to be on the increase with the highest volumes recorded for January 2023 – 284 visits. With our most popular services being EFDC benefits, DWP, EFDC Homelessness, Epping Foodbank and Barclays. In most recent months we have welcome three new partners: Essex Police (Community Engagement), Essex Family Support Services and Essex Wellbeing Services. The Hub continues to receive positive feedback from visitors regarding the face-to-face support and help on offer. The majority of The Hub users are from Epping, Loughton, Waltham Abbey & North Weald & Buckhurst Hill.

9 To enhance the **audio quality in the Council Chamber** and taking account of budgetary constraints, Facilities, ICT, Planning and Corporate Communications have been working with the assistance of several councillors to develop affordable enhancements to the audio and visual quality.

A new Wi-Fi-based hearing assistance system based on smartphone technology is due to replace the outdated and inadequate IR hearing system. A new Digital Signal Processor (DSP) has been installed to improve audio quality along with new speakers to enhance sound quality. Larger TV monitors are being installed to aid viewing of PowerPoint and planning presentations.

## 10 **Webcasting Update**

Microsoft Teams will replace Zoom for hybrid webcast meetings later this year. Members will be able to join meetings via the Council's licensed MS Teams app. Free MS Teams app and browser options are also available to external attendees such as objectors, applicants, and parish councils at planning meetings.

The move to MS Teams is part of the Council's wider savings. Further cost reductions have been identified in the Council's webcasting contract. From July, webcasting costs will be reduced by approximately 50 percent to £10,000 per year. Main webcasting commitments will be retained including the live streaming of

- Full Council
- Cabinet
- O&S
- DDMC
- Plans Sub Committees

**Reason for decision:** none

**Options considered and rejected:** none.

**Resource implications:** none

**Legal and Governance Implications:** none

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** none

**Consultation Undertaken:** customer consultation.

**Background Papers:** none

**Impact Assessments:** none

**Risk Management:** none

**Equality:** customer consultation on digital usage includes contact details for digitally excluded customers requiring support

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