

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Tuesday 30 July 2024

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Baldwin (Chairman), C McCann (Vice-Chairman), E Barnard, M George, A Lion, J Lucas, M Markham, S Murray, J Parsons, S Rackham, G Wiskin, D Stocker and R Morgan

Other Councillors: Councillors I Allgood, R Balcombe, N Bedford, B Cohen, S Patel, H Whitbread and J H Whitehouse.

Apologies: R Bassett and J Lea

Officers Present: L Kirman (Democratic Services Officer), J Gould (Strategic Director and Chief Operating Officer), P Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer) and N Cole (Corporate Communications Officer)

Officers Present (Virtually): S Balu (Interim Housing and Property Director) and T Larsen (Democratic Services Officer)

[A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR REPEATED VIEWING](#)

13. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

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

14. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that Councillor R Morgan had been appointed as substitute for Councillor Bassett.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Resolved:

The Committee noted there were no matters arising or outstanding actions.

18. 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.

19. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN

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

20. ORGANISATION PERFORMANCE - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUITE

Paula Maginnis, Service Director, introduced the organisation performance report, highlighted that scrutiny should have oversight of the organisation's performance and sought the Committee's opinion on the efficacy of the proposed KPI Suite and priority projects. The report recommended that the KPI suite should be reported by exception to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, housing and customer service KPIs should be reported to Communities Scrutiny and that planning KPIs should be reported to Place Scrutiny.

The following corrections to KPI targets were provided,

- KPI 5: First point resolution of calls taken by Customer Contact Centre; target should read 70%
- KPI 10: Average relet time in calendar days, target should read 42 days or less; and
- KPI 28: HRA Rent Arrears target should read 1.67% or less.

The Committee welcomed the report, agreed this would provide oversight of organisational performance and raised several queries.

The Committee were advised that

- The corrections given to targets were not a fundamental change, but amendments required due to a typographical error.
- Work on complaints was being carried out and this encompassed member enquires. Emerging themes and learning outcomes were considered by the management team and this would reflect any significant areas members experienced through their case work.
- Communities Scrutiny had previously approved the customer satisfaction indicators.
- Some of the KPIs shown, did not have targets as these were outside the control of the Council, however, the data sets provided would allow trends to be identified and were for members information.

The Committee

- Supported the proposal to report detailed KPIs on Housing, Customers and Planning to the Communities and Place Scrutiny Committees. The Chairman of Place Scrutiny, Cllr Lucas, detailed that tenant's satisfaction and grounds maintenance performance had recently been scrutinised by the Communities Committee.
- Discussed and challenged that KPIs should be reported by exception and suggested that there was value in the complete suite of KPI being presented to Scrutiny.

- Proposed, seconded and voted to recommend to Cabinet that the Broadway Refurbishment project should be added as a fourth priority project, to be reported to Scrutiny.

Resolved:

That the Committee commended the report to Cabinet and suggested that Cabinet should agree the following recommendations:

1. (i) The KPIs set out in the report, with corrected targets, were adequate and robust
(ii) That 4 projects: fit for the future, waste collection services, new Epping leisure centre and The Broadway refurbishment should be classified as priority projects for Scrutiny
2. That all KPI contained in the report should be scrutinised on a regular basis, and
3. The ongoing work to develop the KPI suite was adequate and robust

Action (1) Officers would identify if there was a measure of broadband take up in the district and, if available, circulate to members.

21. ORGANISATION PERFORMANCE 2024/25 - QUARTER 1 REPORT

Paula Maginnis, Service Director, presented the Quarter 1 Organisation Performance report for 2024/25. Because of the amendments to targets for KPI number 5, 10 and 28 detailed in the previous item on the agenda (minute 20 above), a correction to the report was required. The following paragraphs in the report should be read as:

1. *The KPI Suite has a total of 26 indicators with corresponding targets of these 26 there are 5 annual targets. The outturn for Q1 shows 14 indicators have met the Q1 target and 6 that have not.*
2. *The following indicators have not met the target for Q1;*
 - *2 are in Customer,*
 - *1 in Housing,*
 - *1 in Contracts, Partnerships & Procurement*
 - *1 in Corporate Services*
 - *1 in Finance*

It was noted that actual figure for KPI 10: Average relet time in calendar days, should be read as 41.7 days and not 41.7%

The Committee raised a series of queries, and an overview of the monitoring and management of the indicators was provided. The Committee were advised that in future corrective actions would be provided for indicators that were below target.

The Council did not operate performance related pay, however KPI owners would be required to provide corrective actions and attend Committee to answer Members concerns as required.

The sickness indicator was discussed, and the Committee were advised that the duty of care was addressed through an employee assistance programme, occupational health, and mental health first aiders. Sickness data was utilised to support the management of absence. Covid had impacted on figures, however, mental health and muscular skeletal injury were key reasons for absence.

Cllr Bedford, Housing and HGGT Portfolio Holder, suggested that the priority projects shown in Appendix B, should detail the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Resolved:

The Committee considered and provided comment on the organisation performance report.

22. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1 2024/25

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, A Small, introduced the report and highlighted the forecast end of year outturn position on the General Fund as an underspend of £0.225 million, the most significant pressure was an anticipated shortfall in income from Planning Applications. A small underspend of £0.022 million was forecast on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Capital programme for both General Fund and HRA projected potential underspends. The Committee were advised that these projections were made on quarter 1 figures and the final position financial position could change.

The Committee raised a series of queries and were advised that

- Shared Services should provide efficiencies, but the budget had been guarded to ensure optimum service design that provided resilient and stronger services.
- There would be some slippage on the IT revenue stream which would be available to spend in the next financial year.
- Exceptional void works involved a range of works including significant clearance of houses and gardens. The elongation of the planned works for kitchens and bathrooms meant in some cases these needed to be replaced before reletting. The service level agreement with Qualis should be in place by September and pre void works should assist with the budget pressure.

The Committee suggested that HRA Capital underspend, could be utilised on small scale improvements across the housing estates in the district, and specifically at Oakwood Hill Estate. The Portfolio Holder, Cllr H Whitbread detailed that there were specific challenges in relation to 'pride of place' and that there could be potential to roll out the safer street initiative, to Shelly, Ninefields and Oakwood Hill Estates. The the budget would be given careful consideration, as there were a range of pressures as the Council were responsible for a large Housing Stock.

The Committee and Finance Portfolio Holder acknowledged and thanked staff for the preparation of the report in a timely fashion.

Resolved:

The Committee noted

1. The General Fund revenue position at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2024) for 2024/25, including actions being undertaken or proposed to ameliorate the position, where significant variances had been identified.
2. The General Fund capital position at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2024) for 2024/25.

3. The Housing Revenue Account revenue position at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2024) for 2024/25, including actions proposed to ameliorate the position, where significant variances had been identified.
4. The Housing Revenue Account capital position at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2024) for 2024/25, including Appendix C; and
5. The wider position on Financial Performance and Risk at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2024), including the amended Prudential Indicator (“Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream”).

23. CHAIRMEN TO REPORT ON THEIR SELECT COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chairmen of Communities Scrutiny and Place Scrutiny reported on the progress on the work programme at the initial meeting of their respective Committees.

Cllr Lucas, Chairman of Communities Scrutiny detailed that the Community Lottery had been proposed as an additional item on the work programme.

The Chairman of Place Scrutiny detailed there had been engagement on the changed waste policies and a request to add recycling collections, which would cover the roll out of blue bins, to the work programme.

The Committee highlighted there were ongoing concerns about the quality of grounds maintenance.

Resolved

The Committee

- Noted the progress of the Communities and Place Scrutiny Committees was noted.
- Agreed the addition of items on Community Lottery and recycling collections would be added to the relevant scrutiny work programme.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee were advised that the date for TfL would be circulated to members, when agreed, and Members would be requested to submit their questions in advance of the meeting.

Resolved:

The Committee noted the work programme.

25. CABINET BUSINESS

Housing and HGGT Portfolio

The Broadway Refurbishment Project. The Committee acknowledged that some information in the report would need to be restricted but requested that as much information as possible be kept in the public domain.

Regulatory, Technical & Community Safety Services

Council Wide Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. The Committee agreed that a task and finish panel should be set to consider the development of the policy. Cllr McCann

was voted as the Chairman, Cllrs Rackham and Murray expressed interest sitting on the panel. Membership would open to all members and an item would be put in the members' bulletin.

Resolved:

The Committee reviewed the Executive's Forward Plan and agreed to set up a Task & Finish Panel to consider the Council wide ASB policy

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

CHAIRMAN