

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 29 April 2021

Chairman: Councillor M Sartin

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for April 2021 be noted.**

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 April 2021

1. 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 that led to the national lockdowns was inspiring for the Committee to hear and learn how the Youth Council's work had helped them and their fellow students in the District's secondary schools cope with this isolation. Highlights included: the #Your Say survey where young people shared their experiences during the Covid pandemic; the MiLife C19 project and video to help young people build their emotional resilience; and their funding and awards achieved in 2020/21. 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.

2. The second presentation covered local mental health services for young people, which complemented the Youth Councillors' work on mental health issues. Ms S Garner, the Assistant Director, Southend, Essex and Thurrock Children and Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Collaborative/Programme Director Joint Commissioning SEND (Essex)), outlined the emotional wellbeing and mental health services for young people. Although based at St Margaret's Hospital in Epping, Ms Garner worked in collaboration with seven Clinical Commissioning Groups and three local authorities, Essex, Southend and Thurrock – the Essex Collaborative. Mental health and wellbeing support services covered ages 0–18 but could continue support up to 25 if clinically appropriate. The Committee undertook external scrutiny and, along with the Youth Councillors present, heard about the various mental health disorders that met referral criteria and that these had increased year on year. The Covid pandemic had shown how we had needed each other and to include people more. The stigma surrounding mental health issues had declined in recent years. This had been helped by celebrities coming forward and it was very important mental health was out in the public domain. A patient experience group of young ambassadors gave vital feedback which helped to improve the service, as they had to listen to children.

3. The Overview and Scrutiny 2020/21 draft Annual Report of the work undertaken by the scrutiny committees during the past municipal year was discussed. The final report would also include the work undertaken by the last cycle of meetings of the select committees and this Committee. Photographs would be updated once access to the refurbished Civic Offices was allowed. Members should forward any comments to V Messenger, Democratic Services, by 15 June. The final draft would come back to the Committee on 1 July and be submitted to Council on 29 July for approval.

4. The Committee reviewed the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2020/21 quarter 4. The report only detailed project and KPI status by exception. In the agenda report, exception was determined by a red status, e.g. those deemed to have missed a key milestone or to have

presented a key issue for resolution or KPIs that had missed targets. The Stronger Council Select Committee had reviewed this in detail at its meeting on 13 April. There were more reds than usual but with the challenges of the year from Covid and the ambitious programme the Council had set out to achieve, much work had been progressed, albeit later than anticipated. The timing of the quarter 4 report with this meeting had not allowed full KPI reporting but this would be included in the minutes of the meeting.

5. Other business considered by the Committee included the Executive's current programme of Key Decisions for 1 April 2021. Members were assured that pre-scrutiny of service transfers to Qualis would come under this Committee, while pre-scrutiny of Council policies would go to the relevant select committee. The work programmes of the scrutiny committees were also reviewed, and each select committee Chairman gave a summary of matters covered in their March or April meetings.

6. This was the final meeting for 2020/21 for the Committee. Its first meeting in the new municipal year will be held on 3 June 2021 to receive from the Leader of the Council an overview of the Council's Corporate priorities for 2021/22, the Committee's work programme for 2021/22 and the select committee memberships for 2021/22 will also be approved.

7. An extra meeting of the Committee has been organised for 8 June 2021. This is to allow members the opportunity to pre-scrutinise Cabinet business before its decision deadline of 21 June. This will include Qualis' four-year business plan for 2021-2025, the business case for the transfer of Corporate Asset management service to Qualis and the Pyrles Lane site. Pre-scrutiny of the business case for the transfer of MOT, Fleet and Grounds maintenance to Qualis will be scheduled into the Committee's work programme for 2021/22.