

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 11 October 2022

Chairman: Councillor H Kane

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for July to September 2022 be noted.**

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 26 July 2022

- Quarter 1 corporate performance reporting was reviewed in full, as was agreed with the Committee. The report detailed a project status summary, key milestones and RAG status for those projects identified as a 'Priority Project' within the portfolio and which aligned to the Council's Corporate Objectives. All key performance indicators (KPIs) regardless of status were included in this report. Members queried several KPIs covering Customer Services, Community Health and Wellbeing, Contract, Planning and Development and People services areas.
- The select committee (SC) chairman, reported on scrutiny undertaken at their last meetings. Councillor J Lea commented that Stronger Communities SC had co-opted W Marshall as a non-voting member, and reviewed reports on: cash paying customers at the Debden Broadway office; refurbishment of Frank Bretton House; the Housing Strategy 2022–2027; and the Changing Landscape of Housing Paper 1. Councillor J McIvor advised that Stronger Council SC had reviewed the People Strategy Overview 2022, Azure – move to the Cloud business case and the quarter 4 Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22. The effectiveness of officers attending meetings via Zoom was added to the work programme. Councillor R Balcombe reported that the Stronger Place SC had scrutinised EFDC's Litter Strategy, but an updated version would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- Future work programme items for the Committee included the new Corporate Plan, the Qualis 4-Year Business Plan while Epping Forest Youth Council would attend in April 2023.
- Members queried Cabinet's Key Decision List of 1 July 2022 and received clarification from the relevant Portfolio Holders on the Local Government Council Size and Boundary Review, Air Quality Action Plan and charging for additional waste containers.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27 September 2022

- The Committee pre-scrutinised the Council's Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 introduced by the Continuous Improvement Specialist (N Gambrill). This key strategic planning document detailed a new set of corporate aims including a new set of key results – developed to support the aims and key objectives. These Corporate aims would be reviewed annually through objectives and key result measures to deliver and work towards the achievement of each objective that year. Members made several suggestions such as: to clarify that Epping Forest was referring to Epping Forest District (not the forest); the inclusion of references to historical ancient hill forts; more on the Council's focus on health, climate change, waste recycling and the relationship building opportunity the Council had with local councils.
- The Strategic Director (A Small) introduced the 1-Year Qualis Business Plan. In the rapidly changing current economic climate, considerable economic pressures were being put on

the Council's finances. Although Qualis should produce a 4-Year business plan under the Shareholder Agreement, in this time of great uncertainty the decision had been taken that a 4-Year Business Plan would be too challenging and be out of date sooner than forecast. Members raised many questions which were answered by the Finance Portfolio Holder (Councillor J Philip), the Strategic Director and Qualis Group Managing Director (S Jevans).

7. The select committee (SC) chairmen updated members on the business undertaken at each of their committees. Councillor J Lucas (Acting Chairman) provided a short report for the Stronger Communities SC, which reviewed several reports. These covered the work of the Council-funded police in the District, a Customer Service strategy update, estate improvements undertaken at Harveyfields in Waltham Abbey and the new support model for sheltered housing. Councillor J McIvor reported that members of the Stronger Council SC were being kept well informed by the Finance Portfolio Holder and officers in this demanding economic situation. The quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23, Financial Planning Framework 2022/23 to 2027/28 and Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report had all been reviewed. Members had been especially interested in Council overspending and where the challenges were in the service areas. Councillor R Balcombe advised that Stronger Place SC's September meeting had been cancelled as it would have taken place during the mourning period for Queen Elizabeth II. The Committee had agreed to reschedule the work programme to ensure outstanding business would be realigned to be completed within this municipal year.
8. The Committee reviewed its current work programme and noted that quarter 2 Corporate performance reporting was scheduled for the next meeting on 17 November 2022.
9. The Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for 1 September 2022 was assessed and the Leader (Councillor C Whitbread) advised that a response on the draft proposals for the Government Council Size and Boundary Review was due to be received in the first week of October 2022. Also, the Housing and Community Portfolio (Councillor H Whitbread) replied to queries on what provision the Council was making for Ukrainian refugees in the District.