Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 23 March 2015

SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

Portfolio: Leader (Councillor C. Whitbread)

Subject: Cabinet Key Objectives 2014/15 – Quarter 3 Progress

Responsible Officer: B. Copson (01992 564042)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee review progress in relation to the achievement of the key objectives for 2014/15, for the third quarter of the year.

Executive Summary:

The Corporate Plan is the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the four-year period from 2011/12 to 2014/15, with strategic themes reflecting those of the Community Strategy for the district. Updates to the Corporate Plan are published annually, to reflect the key objectives for each year of the plan period and progress against the achievement of objectives for previous years.

The annual identification of key objectives provides an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered during the year. The key objectives are intended to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for each year, and are supported by a range of actions and deliverables designed to achieve specific outcomes.

A range of key objectives for 2014/15 was adopted by the Cabinet in April 2014. Progress in relation to individual actions and deliverables is reviewed by the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly and outturn basis.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review progress against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under-performance. This report presents nine month (1 April to 31 December 2014) progress against the key objectives for 2014/15.

Other Options for Action:

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review performance against the key objectives and to consider corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the Council's reputation and judgements made about its progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement were lost. The Council has previously agreed arrangements for the review of progress against the key objectives.

Report:

1.   The Corporate Plan for 2011/12 to 2014/15 translates the vision for the district set out by the Community Strategy, into the Council's strategic direction, priorities and the most important outcomes that it wants to achieve. The Corporate Plan helps to prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money.

2.   The key objectives adopted for each year of the Corporate Plan represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals for the year. The objectives are not intended to reflect everything that the Council does, but instead focus on national priorities set by the Government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district.

3.   The key objectives for 2014/15 were adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 April 2014. The achievement of the objectives is supported by a range of individual deliverables and actions, with target dates spread throughout the year (and beyond in some instances). Some of the deliverables can only be achieved incrementally or are dependent upon the completion of other actions, and are intended to be fluid to reflect changes in priorities and other influencing factors.

4.   Progress against the key objectives was an area of focus in former corporate inspection processes, in order to assess the Council's success in improving the services that it delivers, and to identify and reflect plans to secure improvement. Whilst such external assessment processes have generally ceased, it remains important to review progress against the key objectives, and to take appropriate corrective action where necessary in areas of slippage or under-performance. Progress towards the achievement of individual deliverables and actions is therefore reviewed on a quarterly basis, in order to ensure the timely identification and implementation of appropriate corrective action.

5.   A schedule detailing nine-month progress against the individual deliverables and actions designed to support the achievement of each of the key objectives, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. In reporting progress, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to the current cumulative position for each individual deliverable or action:

      Achieved (Green) - specific deliverables or actions have been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;
      On-Target (Green) - specific deliverables or actions will be completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;
      Under Control (Amber) - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets, but completion/achievement will be secured by a revised target date (specified) or by year-end;
      Behind Schedule (Red) - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets and completion/achievement may not be secured by year-end; and
      Pending (Grey) - specific deliverables or actions cannot currently be fully completed or achieved, as they rely on the prior completion of other actions or are dependent on external factors outside the Council's control.

6.   At the end of the third quarter of the year,

      (a)   47 (87%) of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives had either been completed or achieved, or are anticipated to be completed/achieved in accordance with in-year targets.
      (b)   5 (9%) may not be completed or achieved by year-end, and
      (c)   2 (4%) are currently on-hold as a result of external factors.

7.   The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider current progress against the key objectives for 2014/15. This report was also reviewed by Cabinet on 9 March 2015.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Consultation Undertaken:

Progress against actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 as set out in this report, has been submitted by each responsible service director. Current progress in respect of each of the key objectives for 2014/15 has been reviewed by Management Board (11 February 2015) and by Cabinet on 9 March 2015.

Background Papers:

Nine-month progress submissions for the key objectives for 2014/15 and relevant supporting documentation held by responsible service directors/chief officers.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Equality:

There are no equality issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.