

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 17 December 2019



Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council

Chairman: Councillor M. Sartin

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from December 2019 to the present be noted.

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 January 2020

1. The Committee received a presentation from Essex County Council (ECC) on the current provision, planning, management and performance of adult social care services across the District. activities within the District. The Committee was pleased to welcome Alex Green, Director of Local Delivery West, and Moira McGrath, Director of Commissioning.

2. The presentation covered a number of topics, including their work with vulnerable adults, their work with getting those with learning difficulties back into employment, and also the importance of early intervention when dealing with people suffering from dementia. A common theme across all their activities was the importance of trying to allow people to continue living in their homes for as long as possible.

3. It was reported that ECC had spent £590million on Adult Social Care in 2018/19, supporting over 17,000 adults and receiving 33,500 new requests for support. In the District, 1,182 people were being supported across a range of needs; the majority of whom were elderly. There was a move towards a preventative and early intervention model to minimise the level of dependency, but it was acknowledged that there would always be vulnerable people who required 24-hour care.

4. The Committee asked many searching questions of the service, particularly around inter-agency working, proposed budget cuts in 2020/21, the involvement of the voluntary and charity sectors in the provision of Adult Social Care, the use of technology in the provision of care, and the issues with social and sheltered housing. The Committee were appreciative of the services provided throughout the District, and welcomed the partnership initiatives being explored with the District Council.

5. The Committee went on to consider a draft protocol for the co-option of independent members to the Select Committees, and agreed to refer it to the Constitutional Working Group for approval. The Committee then agreed the terms of reference and work programme for the new Task & Finish Panel on Local High Streets, confirmed the membership of the Panel and

the appointment of Cllr Share-Bernia as the Chairman. It was also agreed to delegate authority to the Panel to appoint its own Vice-Chairman.

6. The Committee reviewed the Quarter 3 performance of the Action Plan for Year 2 of the Corporate Plan 2018 – 23. This report was an exception report as the full report was considered by the Stronger Council Select Committee, and there was 1 Key Performance Indicator as well as 5 Key Programmes whose performance was below target. However, it was noted that one of the Key Performance Indicators for Waste Management were above target.

7. The Committee noted the current progress with the Accommodation Strategy, and the proposed layout plans following the refurbishment of the Civic Offices, which would utilise a 7:10 desk to staff ratio. It was also noted that all Committee meetings would be held off-site for a period of 7 months following the Annual Council meeting in May 2020, and further information regarding proposed alternative locations would be detailed in due course.

8. The Control Tower at North Weald Airfield was under consideration as a venue for several meetings, but other options were being explored and it was acknowledged that public access to meetings was also important. The possibility of providing transport for Members from the Civic Offices to North Weald Airfield was also under consideration. Officers confirmed that the estimated cost of the structural works was £6.6million, and these works would be closely monitored to ensure that they stayed within budget.

9. The Committee then considered the further activities undertaken to date to establish a Group of companies wholly owned by the Council, which had been registered with the name 'Qualis'. The Committee heard that a six-year business plan for Qualis Management had been approved, and several key governance documents had been submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 6 February 2020 for approval. A Member workshop by the Council's legal advisors on the proposed governance documents had been held on Monday 3 February 2020.

10. The Committee was reassured by Officers that anything outside the scope of the approved business plan would need to be considered by the Council prior to any decisions being made. The Council was also aware of potential conflicts of interest for Members when planning applications for Qualis owned sites came before the Planning Committees. In addition, all staff within the Repairs service would be TUPE'd to Qualis and remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

11. The Chief Executive gave the Committee a presentation on progress with the People Strategy, which covered the following elements:

- The People Strategy from 2017 – 20;
- The five streams in the Strategy;
- Developing Leadership – Management Accountability;
- The Common Operating Model;
- The recruitment completed to date;
- Developing skills and capacity – essential management skills;
- The People Strategy financial outcomes; and
- Possible future elements for the new People Strategy.

12. Other business considered by the Committee included the Cabinet's Programme of Key Decisions, and the Overview & Scrutiny and Select Committee Work Programmes for 2019/20.

13. On 17 March 2020, the Committee will be receiving a presentation from the Youth Council on their activities for the past year, and scrutinising the provision, planning,

management and performance of the mental health services provided within the District by the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.