

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 December 2022

Present: Councillor T Osborn (Chair)  
Councillors S Ahmed, D Allen-Williamson, P Jeffree, P Kloss and  
R Martins

Officers: Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services  
Executive Head of Human Resources  
Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy  
Business Intelligence Manager  
Democratic Services Manager

### 49 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There were two changes of membership for this meeting: Councillor Allen-Williamson replaced Councillor Rodrigues and Councillor Jeffree replaced Councillor Stiff.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ezeifedi, Feldman and Turmaine.

### 50 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 51 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were submitted and signed.

### 52 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

The committee noted that Finance Scrutiny Committee had met on 21 November and the minutes were published on the council's website. In the absence of Councillor Turmaine, Councillor Kloss, the Vice Chair, advised that the scrutiny committee had received the latest Finance Monitoring report and then had presentations on Property Investment Board and Croxley Park. The information had been exempt from publication due to the commercial sensitivity of the content.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

53 **Focusing on delivery: Council Delivery Plan 2022-24 Quarter 2 Update, Organisational Development Strategy 2022-24 Quarter 2 Update, Council Performance 2022-23 Quarter 2 Update**

The scrutiny committee received the report of the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services, Executive Head of Human Resources and Business Intelligence Manager which comprised updates on the council's Delivery Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and key performance indicators.

**Council Delivery Plan 2022-24**

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services provided highlights from the report. He advised members that in the first quarter update many items were at the planning stage. During quarter 2 many activities had commenced.

Councillor Martins referred to Market Lates. He said that he had attended many of the events and there was a mixed response; some were very successful. He asked if officers could advise about the marketing of the Market Lates events and who decided on their content. He felt it was a great concept but wondered how they could be consistently great.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Service responded that the designated market team worked with the operator to ensure the events were advertised. The operator contract was due for re-procurement shortly. The need to diversify the market offer would be included in the specification. Current marketing included posters and social media advertising campaigns.

Councillor Martins suggested it may be a good opportunity to involve community groups in the events. He was aware the Rotary Club had taken part on one occasion. They were keen to be more involved.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services thanked the councillor and said the team worked with local musicians and traders. He acknowledged the opportunity to work more with the community and voluntary sector.

Councillor Ahmed referred to the night-time economy and the proposed closure of the large night club in the town centre. Businesses and taxi drivers had

contacted him as they were concerned about the impact on other businesses. He asked if the council had any strategy if a big business were to close.

The Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy explained that the business was a private company, and the council had no jurisdiction. The final part of the Town Centre framework, how the council could support the town centre in the future, had just been completed. The council had consulted local businesses and the BID. The responses were in the process of being collated and a report would be presented to Cabinet in the New Year.

### **Organisational Development Strategy 2022-24**

The scrutiny committee was then provided with the highlights from the Organisational Development Strategy.

The Chair asked how the role of mental health first aiders worked in an agile environment, particularly for those mainly working from home.

The Interim Executive Head of Human Resources advised that managers would be able to pick up signs through one to ones, even when held online. Everyone was encouraged to have their video turned on when meeting remotely. He added that when the Organisational Development Strategy was to be reviewed it would factor in agile working.

In response to a question from Councillor Allen-Williamson about a Menopause Champion, the Interim Executive Head of Human Resources responded that workshops had been arranged in collaboration with Unison on an awareness of menopause. HR would be reviewing how the council could become more menopause friendly and what could be done in the workplace to support those experiencing the menopause.

Following a question from Councillor Kloss about the new office space, the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services explained that the objective had been for collaborative working. Staff had provided feedback. The arrangements had allowed more productivity, but some missed the face-to-face interactions. However, the feedback had been positive and had helped with the work-life balance. It had also enabled much more cross services working.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services added that officers had not been told that they had to be in the office for a minimum number of days each week. Each team had created an agile charter which set out the team's working patterns and frequency in the office. Some officers came in as they either needed to or chose to be office based. Some officers due to their role had to be in the office. The general feedback was that it averaged between

two or three days per week. It was a very different working environment when compared to working in the Town Hall pre-Covid.

### **Council Performance 2022-23**

The Business Intelligence Manager Introduced the update and provided details of some of the highlights.

There was a discussion about the results for the Return-to-Work interviews. The Business Intelligence Manager informed members that the indicator was about the time taken to complete the return on time and not whether the meeting had taken place. Further work had been carried out and it was found that for those that had not met the target, the meetings mainly had taken place but were late. The indicator required the interview to take place within one week of the officer's return.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services added that most meetings were carried out when the officer returned. The main reason for lateness was due to the manager being on leave. The returning officer may meet with the next line manager, however, that manager may not have access to the online form to record the information.

The Business Intelligence Manager advised that reasons for delay were monitored and where training was identified as an issue this was provided.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services informed members that services were currently undertaking a review of the key performance indicators. It would ensure that the indicators represented services. It had been agreed that the indicators would be updated in time for the new financial year.

The Chair said that he found the commentary attached to each performance indicator very useful. He noted on page 72 of the pack reference to an increase in littering.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services responded that the service was able to direct resources were needed. The report was useful and enabled officers to see where action was required.

Councillor Allen-Williamson commented that in Callowland she had noticed a lot of agency staff working for Veolia. She felt the standard in Callowland was not consistent and standards had dropped.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services advised that he would need to take this away and then provide the members with an update.

The Chair acknowledged that staffing was a big issue. There needed to be training to ensure familiarity with the equipment. It would be useful to understand the ratio of agency staff and if it was considered this was affecting standards.

RESOLVED –

1. that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress updates within this report relating to:
  - The Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24 (Appendix A)
  - The Organisational Development Strategy 2022-24 (Appendix B)
  - The key performance indicator results for Quarter 2 of 2022/23 (Appendix C).
2. that the key performance indicators and measures will continue to be reviewed as part of the council-wide service planning process and the ongoing work on the Business Intelligence Strategy.

#### 54 **Call-in**

The committee noted that no key decisions had been called in.

#### 55 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2022/23 and consider whether any further information was required.

RESOLVED –

that the current 2022/23 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

#### 56 **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair informed the committee that the Health Scrutiny Committee had met on 2 December. The Chair of the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System had attended the committee, who gave an update on essential improvements. It was necessary to make sure that all parts of the care system were talking to each other.

57            **Work Programme**

The committee reviewed the latest version of the work programme.

RESOLVED –

that the work programme be noted.

58            **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 1 February 2023.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 7.50 pm