

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 March 2024

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)  
Councillor F Ezeifedi (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors D Allen-Williamson, M Devonish, P Jeffree, A Khan,  
L Nembhard MBE and T Osborn

Officers: Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy  
Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ahmed.

There were two changes of membership for this meeting; Councillor Jeffree replaced Councillor Hill and Councillor Allen-Williamson replaced Councillor Kloss.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 89 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 were submitted and signed.

### 90 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

Councillor Khan provided an update on the recent meeting of Finance Scrutiny Committee which had considered the period 10 report. Housing and temporary accommodation were raised as key issues and the housing officers would be attending the committee meeting in June 2024.

### Q3 Performance & Progress Report 2023/24

The committee received a report of the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services, Delivery Support Lead and Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead.

The Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services introduced the report, providing an overview of key highlights.

The following points were raised in the discussion that followed:

- The drop in the response time for the pest control team was due to a reduction in available staffing resources; it was noted that a significant number of the visits had only narrowly missed the target of ten days.
- There had unfortunately been a technical problem with the issuing of electronic council tax bills that week which had led to residents receiving multiple copies. Swift action had been taken to resolve the issue including working with the system supplier. That evening, a notice had been put on the website and additional resources were available in the CSC to deal with the peak in demand; which was not uncommon at this point in the year.
- The Report-It system was designed to automatically send customers a resolution notice when an issue had been addressed but this was dependent on how it was categorised by the back-office team.
- Report-It was a popular system and had had over 30,000 reports since its launch, the vast majority of which successfully allowed issues to be reported, reviewed and resolved; where there were issues the digital team would work to address them. The benefit of the approach was that it ensured all the requisite information was captured in the form allowing officers to react to reports as soon as possible.
- Veolia had mechanisms to report fly-tipping to the council should it be evident during their rounds, but they would not automatically clear these because of the need for flytips to be investigated by the Enviro-Crime team to attempt to identify the perpetrator.
- A significant amount of work was ongoing to address fly-tipping. Press releases were routinely issued for significant prosecutions.
- A large number of trees had been planted and were asset tagged so their locations were known in the borough.
- The uptake of digital services was high at 77% and reflected only those services which had a digital offer. The implementation of digital services had been prioritised based on high quantity of transactions. Other areas, such as Licensing, which did not yet have a digital offer, were in the process of also developing digital processes.

A number of actions were also raised during the course of the discussion; these were:

- To update the committee with the outcome of whether there was an issue with Report-It resolution emails.
- If possible, to confirm the breakdown between councillors and officers and the general public of the 70% of Report-It issues which were submitted online (versus 30% submitted by the Customer Service Centre).
- To provide further information about the housing benefit error from Q1 which had impacted the figures in 2023/24.
- To confirm if/how Veolia could address the issue of bins blocking narrow pavements.
- To forward the suggestion around identifying and celebrating the 100,000<sup>th</sup> Beryl Bike journey.
- To provide further information around the recycling KPI performance.
- The number of prosecutions for fly-tipping.
- To discuss with Environmental Health about the potential to provide estate agents/landlords with an information pack to reduce end of tenancy fly-tipping.

RESOLVED –

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress updates within the report relating to:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24 (Appendix A)
- the external key performance indicator results for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (Appendix B)
- the council's key corporate strategies (Appendix C)

## 92 **Call-in**

There had been no items called-in.

## 93 **Executive Decision Progress Report**

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2023-24 and consider whether any further information was required.

RESOLVED –

that the current 2023/24 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

94 **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair reported that she had not been able to attend the most recent Health Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED –

the update be noted.

95 **Work Programme**

Members were invited to review Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for 2023/24.

A suggestion was made for the committee to look at street drinking in the town and the strategies in place to address the issues.

The committee noted their thanks and best wishes to those councillors who were standing for election and retiring.

RESOLVED –

that the work programme is noted.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.05 pm  
and finished at 7.50 pm