

Minute from Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 6 July 2023

Reigate & Banstead 2025 Annual Report 2022/23

Councillor James King, the Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources introduced the Reigate & Banstead 2025 Annual Report 2022/23.

This report is the annual report on the Council's progress in delivering the Corporate Plan. It also includes an update on delivery of the Council's equality objectives. Both reports cover the year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Information is provided on the work undertaken by services across the Council and how it has contributed to delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities across the three corporate themes of People, Place and Organisation. This includes the delivery of new affordable homes and a range of support for vulnerable residents, including those facing cost of living issues; ongoing place delivery projects to deliver improvements in Redhill, Horley and Merstham; benefits secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy and continuing provision of very high quality neighbourhood services; positive outcomes from the first year of the Financial Sustainability Programme and progress in securing more income from fees and charges and the Council's commercial lettings.

The report also sets out some of the challenges faced over the past year; these have included the impact of the rising cost of living on residents and therefore Council services, and a continuing need to do more with less, given the financial challenges facing the local government sector.

Updates are also included on the commitments set out in the Corporate Plan; these principles apply right across all the work that the Council carries out.

A range of contextual indicators are reported, which provide some background about the environment in which the Council operates and the situation within the borough.

Annex 2 reports on the Council's Equality Objectives; information is provided about the work that has been undertaken in 2022/23 to progress each of the objectives, ranging from the use of data through to supporting good community relations and making sure that the Council is a fair employer. The report also includes a look at how the Council will continue to progress towards these objectives in the future.

The Council's current Equality Objectives cover the period 2020 to 2024; the report recommends that the objectives be continued for one additional year so that they and the Corporate Plan can be reviewed on the same timing. This will allow future work on both to be fully aligned and coordinated.

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources invited any comments or questions from O&S members.

The following clarifications were provided:

Objectives – People - Housing

It was confirmed that residents in the Council's new affordable homes at Wheatley Court would be eligible to buy under the Right to Buy Scheme.

Residents' Survey

There was some discussion over the potential to carry out a borough wide residents' survey. It was confirmed that while a borough wide residents' survey had not been carried out, specific surveys had been undertaken and a range of data collated by the Data Insight Team was in use. There was a wealth of potentially new and different ways to collect information from residents. Officers assured Members that communication with residents took several forms, not just digital methods, to ensure inclusivity.

It was also confirmed that as part of the new Corporate Plan, which would commence in April 2025, KPIs and their success measures would be reviewed. Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee felt that a borough wide residents' survey would be beneficial.

Objectives – People – Leisure and Wellbeing

It was confirmed that the Council knows that leisure services meet residents' needs through data collected from customers of the leisure centres and the Harlequin Theatre. It was confirmed that the Council held monthly meetings with GLL, the leisure centre provider.

It was confirmed that although the initial funding for the community development work in Preston had ceased, alternative funding had been secured. Funding for the East Surrey Youth Hub had also come to end, but this had continued to be funded by the Council during the year. Projects were underway with health colleagues to provide further youth services. All-Member briefings would take place over the coming months on health, community partnerships, Raven Housing, and housing, homelessness, and refugee schemes.

Objectives – Place

Members commented that it would be good to monitor the vacancy rates in town centres and actions taken to combat the vacancies. It was confirmed that information would be provided by the Economic Prosperity Team after the meeting.

General Comments

Members commented that it would be good to add a section at the end of the Corporate Plan Annual Report outlining challenges and possible objectives for the future, similar to that in the Equalities Objectives Progress Report. It was noted that the future plans to deliver the Corporate Plan objectives are presented across a range of different reports that the Committee receives.

Members suggested that the report might also consider the contextual indicators, reviewing their implications in regard to the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Equalities Objectives Progress Report

Members suggested that the Council could consider autism, dementia, and income inequality as areas of equality/inequality to investigate further.

RESOLVED that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- i. Noted the Reigate & Banstead 2025 Annual Report for 2022/23 and made observations for consideration by the Executive.
- ii. Noted the Equality Objectives Progress Report for 2022/23 and made observations for consideration by the Executive.