

MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

Present: Councillor S Lambeth (Chair)

Councillors M Ball, D Bigby, M Blair-Park, A Morley, R L Morris, S Sheahan, J Windram and J G Simmons (Substitute for Councillor M Burke)

In Attendance: Councillors P Moulton and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mr T Devonshire, Mr P Stone, Mr D Gill and Ms N Oliver

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Burke and K Horn.

37. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

38. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

39. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2024.

It was moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor S Lambeth and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2024 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

40. CUSTOMER SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Customer Services Team Manager presented the report.

A Member suggested that there was plentiful evidence of demand in the report, but that evidence on outcomes, in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), could be more detailed. In response, the Customer Services Team Manager advised that KPIs were deployed to target areas such as abandoned call rate, calls answered, customer satisfaction and customer resolution. These, she added, were benchmarked against other comparable local authorities, with the Customer resolution target lower as some resolutions were policy and legislation driven. There were also things which were hard to measure, and thus target, but which were monitored, such as talk time, wrap time and customer wait times. Soft skills and customer experience were included in call monitoring by supervisors and included in staff one-to-ones.

Several Members inquired about the role of both technology and the Customer Service Centre in addressing complaints. In response, the Customer Services Team Manager set out for Members the breakdown of complaints between the phonenumber, the digital form and the Customer Service Centre. She also set out the use of calendars, tracked emails and advised Members that Customer Services did not currently use any callback technology for when users were on hold.

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A Member asked whether provisions had been made to anticipate the budgeted reduction in funding to local charities, in the context of the rising cost of living, and also the effects of an ageing population. In response, the Customer Services Team Manager advised that Customer Services and charities served the same customer base, and efforts were made to work cooperatively together.

A Member requested a breakdown of complaints between the Services. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that Housing, Waste and Planning were the top three, with Housing some way ahead of the other two. The Customer Services Team Manager also noted that she had meetings with Officers from key services on a monthly basis to report on complaints, patterns and potential training required. Furthermore, her team were trained to holistically consider all of a customer's needs rather than simply the particular complaint which was in front of them.

A Member asked about the process for Member enquiries and the Customer Services Team Manager advised that the Feedback Officer in her team dealt with these, and they were reported to the Corporate Leadership Team.

A Member asked about the reference in the report to a complaint which had been escalated to involving the Housing Ombudsman. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that he would circulate the report to the Committee, and the Customer Services Team Manager added that it was important to note that this case referred to a historic incident, due to a two year backlog in the Ombudsman's workload.

The Chair stressed the value of KPIs and discussed the potential future impacts of demographic change. The Customer Services Team Manager advised that she would give greater consideration to KPIs in the next iteration of the report.

It was moved by Councillor M Blair-Park, seconded by Councillor A Morley, and

RESOLVED THAT:

A further annual report is to be presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in 2025.

41. APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION

The Strategic Director of Resources presented the report.

A discussion was had about the £500,000 budgeted within the report. Members felt that it was a large amount of money and seemed a somewhat arbitrary figure. The Strategic Director of Resources advised that this was a preparatory budget for the steering group, which had only met once.

A Member was concerned that asking Heads of Service did not seem that proactive, that the steering group might struggle with capacity, and that she would expect to see a clearer plan. The Strategic Director of Resources advised that Officers would develop clear intentions throughout the Transformation Programme and that the report before them was a starting point. He also clarified for Members that the process would be director-led, but Officers would be invited to contribute at appropriate junctures.

Several Members discussed the importance of monitoring the Transformation Programme, including a breakdown of how the budgeted £500,000 was spent, what the aims of the process were as they developed, and how successfully these aims were achieved. The Strategic Director of Resources concurred and repeatedly emphasised to Members the importance of having robust monitoring procedures in place. The Corporate

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Scrutiny Committee would play an important role in this process, savings would be tracked by the Finance Team, and efficiencies would be targeted with clear KPIs. The Strategic Director also advised that Officers had been and would be consulting with the Local Government Association and other Local Authorities.

A Member suggested that it was important to examine how capital could be invested to increase revenues for the Council, so the focus was not solely on cutting spending on services.

The Chair felt that the Transformation Steering Group's terms of reference were actually just aims and that greater consideration needed to be given to how performance would actually be measured and monitored.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

42. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to any items on the Work Programme.

A discussion was had around scheduling an extra meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny to discuss the Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Report.

A Member requested further information on Member inquiries and for a report concerning equalities and diversity to be considered by the Work Programming Group.

The Chair reminded the committee of the purpose of scrutiny, and he requested that this be further discussed in a meeting with the Strategic Director of Communities. The Director suggested that this was possibly a topic for a future Agenda Working Group.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was,

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) An additional meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee be scheduled for 21 March 2024.
- 2) That an item regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reporting and policy be brought back to the committee at a future date.
- 3) A note on member enquiries be circulated to members of the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.21 pm

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