

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, the Arc, Clowne, on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 1000 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor R.J. Bowler in the Chair

Councillors Mrs P.M. Bowmer, M.G. Crane, R.A. Heffer, A. Joesbury, D. McGregor, J.E. Smith, E. Stevenson and R. Turner.

Officers:- K. Drury (Information Engagement & Performance Manager)(to Minute No. 0787), J. Wilson (Scrutiny and Elections Officer) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor M.J. Dooley (until Minute No. 0787).

### **0781. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor P. Cooper.

### **0782. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **0783. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **0784. MINUTES – 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2018**

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer and seconded by Councillor A. Joesbury  
**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### **0785. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer and seconded by Councillor R. Turner

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**RESOLVED** that the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private document be noted.

### **0786. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JANUARY TO MARCH 2018 (QUARTER 4 – 2017/18)**

#### **C 01 - Retain Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation year on year.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: Electronic evidence submitted in readiness for the onsite visit by the CSE Assessor on 17th & 18th April 2018. Timetable scheduled and issued to those taking part. Information had been placed on the weekly bulletin to raise general awareness. Practical arrangements were in hand for the onsite visit.

#### **C 02 - Achieve an overall biennial external satisfaction rate of 85% or above for services provided by the Contact Centres.**

This target was reported as being on track.

2017/18 - Overall CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) of 93.8%

#### **C 03 - Achieve an overall annual satisfaction rate of 80% or above for leisure, recreation and cultural activities and services.**

This target was reported as being on track.

2017/18 - A full customer satisfaction survey of the Go Active facility was undertaken during the latter part of October running for 3 weeks into November. The Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) for the Go!Active facility in November 2017 was 80.77%.

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*When comparing this information to the in PERFORM it is clear that the current figure of 80.77% is a significant drop of previous satisfaction rates. Is there any explanation for this?*

*Officer response;*

In a new approach for 2017, this survey used a range of new measurements to ascertain importance of individual requirements; satisfaction with these requirements as well as assessing customer loyalty.

The questionnaire also included open-ended questions allowing customers to freely give their views. This was the first customer satisfaction survey conducted in the new Go!Active facility and therefore gave a good base to move on from. It was also worth noting that the survey had gone from a quarterly to an annual survey and the questions and analysis were more

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robust now the consultation team were assisting and to a wider audience than previously consulted.

### **C 05 - Implement the new EU Regulations on Data Protection within the timescales stipulated by the Information Commissioners Office.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: Good progress continued against the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) work plan. A three year rolling programme of desk top audits had commenced on a refreshed template. Most recommendations had been implemented from the first round of desk top audits. Privacy Notice guidance had been issued and departments advised of work required through the Service Managers' Forum on 26/03/18 together with a general GDPR refresh. Information on contracts with suppliers processing personal information on our behalf passed to Legal for contract variations to be issued. A dedicated GDPR page had been set up on ERIC and targeted information was being sent to Service Managers to keep awareness high. The Data Protection Officer was providing advice to officers and service areas on a regular basis. (GDPR to take effect from 25th May 2018).

The Information Engagement & Performance Manager noted that she would be providing a verbal briefing to Members at a Member Development session to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> May, which would be an overview of the new regulations, what the Council had done in response to make sure the Council was ready for the new regulations and what Members needed to be mindful of when representing their constituents. The Information Engagement & Performance Manager would also provide targeted communication to staff, managers and Members on the new regulations.

### **C 06 - Prevent homelessness for more than 50% of people who are facing homelessness each year.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: April 2017 - March 2018 - 251 approaches of people seeking assistance, of which 150 cases were prevented from becoming homeless, 60%. 2017/18 – Achieved.

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*When comparing the Quarter 4 data with that in PERFORM, Members asked for clarity over the figures. Of the 251 people approaching the Authority, were all eligible for assistance, or only the 150 cases where prevention was achieved? Members are concerned that this leaves up to 40% who are eligible for assistance, who we are subsequently failing in our duty to assist. The commentary makes no reference to the % that approach us for assistance but do not then meet the criteria.*

*Officer response;*

All 251 people who approached the Authority for housing/homeless advice were 'eligible', i.e., had the right to reside in the UK and not subject to immigration control.

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There were a number of reasons why a positive outcome could not be recorded against 101 cases;

- Failed to respond to advice given
- Failed to attend further interviews
- Failed to attend booked appointments with other support providers
- Lost contact

The main reason they were becoming homeless was, for example, the end of a private tenancy or Domestic Violence, in which case the Council still offered advice, support and in some cases accommodation.

The Homeless Reduction Act came into force on 3rd April 2018, with the emphasis being on 'prevention'. All Derbyshire Housing Providers were working together to utilise the 'Locata' IT system to help the Authority deliver the same level of housing advice service. Additionally, together with CBC and NEDDC, the Council has launched the North Derbyshire Homeless Forum where all other support providers and agencies were developing services to promote homeless prevention in the north of the County.

### **C 07 - Install 150 new lifelines within the community each year.**

This target was reported as being on track.

In 2017/18 - 235 units of Careline equipment was installed. 2017/18 – Achieved.

A Member queried if Careline equipment installed for other authorities was included in the figure of 235. The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager replied that she would follow this up with the Head of Housing and Community Safety and report back to Members.

### **C 08 - Process all new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims within an average of 20 days.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: data was not available until the end of April 2018. The data was obtained from an extract of the system. The data extraction date was determined by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). (Quarter 3 2017/18 = 18.54 days Actual.)

### **C 09 - Process changes to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support within an average of 10 days.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4 data was not available until the end of April 2018. The data was obtained from an extract of the system. The data extraction date was determined by the Department for Work and Pensions. (Quarter 3 2017/18 = 7.05 days Actual).

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### **C 10 - Carry out 300 disability adaptations to Council houses each year.**

This target was reported as being on track.

In 2017/18; there were **287** completed adaptations for the year. This was slightly below the target of 300. This was largely due to a high number of major works carried out, for example, wet rooms and fewer small jobs.

The figure did not include work carried out under the safe and warm scheme which had also provided wet rooms at sheltered housing. In the last three years, 1,047 adaptations had been carried out - this was an average of 349 per year.

### **C 11 - Fully deliver the equality objectives identified in the Single Equality Scheme by March 2019.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4. Work progressing on the Single Equality Scheme action plan - notable actions this quarter: An awareness session on Hate Incident Reporting delivered to Members. Hate incident reporting flyer developed for distribution by Environmental Health & Licensing to taxi drivers and take away workers. Continued to support compliance with the duty through the provision of advice, training and supporting customer complaints with an equalities/fairness aspect. Equality Panel meeting held also.

### **C 12 - Ensure a minimum of 50% of clients experiencing Domestic Violence each year are satisfied with the support they received.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: 47 new referrals were received during quarter 4, 9 of which were high risk. A total of 3 did not engage with the service and a total of 6 have not yet completed the feedback form. Positive responses were received from 38 service users who were asked:

- Did the service meet your needs?
- Did the service make a difference?
- How satisfied are you with the service you have been given?

2017/18 - The service received a total of 149 new referrals in 2017/18. 113 respondents replied to the satisfaction questionnaire and all were satisfied with the service. 100% satisfaction - Achieved.

### **C 13 - Reduce average re-let times of Council properties (not including sheltered accommodation) to 20 days by March 2019.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: The average re-let time for the quarter was 29.3 days. Including sheltered housing, the average was 63 days.

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As in previous quarters, the figures were skewed by a small number of properties that had been difficult to let. There were a number of measures coming from the void review to address this. Taking the year as a whole, the average re-let time was 32.7 days.

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*When can Members expect any feedback report from the Void Working Group? Does this target relate to both Standard and Major Works Voids?*

*Officer response;*

The void working group was nearing its conclusion with one final meeting at the end of May. Feedback would be provided during the summer.

The indicator used the old BVPI methodology, which meant that when major works were required (i.e. works so extensive that if the property was tenanted the tenant would need to be moved) the clock starts ticking only when this work was completed.

### **C 14 - Attend 99% of repair emergencies within 6 working hours**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: 97.80% of Emergency call outs attended to within 6hrs. This represents an improvement on previous quarterly performance and remains on track to improve performance to 99% by the end of the corporate plan period.

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*When comparing the quarter 4 update to previous detail within PERFORM, it is clear that we have yet to get close to the target of 99%. What procedures have been put in place to ensure this target is met?*

*Officer response;*

The target is designed to be challenging. We are not aware of any other organisation who offer such a target, most use 24hours as the target.

Performance is improving and is approaching 99%; there are a number of steps being taken:

- a) Reduce the number of emergencies – working with contact centres to ensure that priorities are correct
- b) Removing errors – i.e. there are occasions when the tenant is not at home when the operative calls.

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### **C 15 - Ensure a minimum of 50% of clients receiving parenting support each year express a positive outcome.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: Since April 17/18, 2 courses had been completed and out of the 19 people attending, 18 people completed the courses and returned positive outcome feedback questionnaires making a cumulative figure of 94.7%.

In February 2018, a new course had been started with a total of 5 out of 5 attending, this course had another 7 weeks to run before any feedback could be completed.

One to one support - the Parenting Practitioner also delivers a one to one support service and since April 17/18 there had been a total of 73 referrals. Each person was asked to complete an exit questionnaire when the referral was closed and from the people that sent them back, all expressed a positive outcome with the service. 2017/18 – 94.7% Satisfaction achieved.

### **T 06 - Introduce alternative uses to 20% of garage sites owned by the Council by March 2019.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: Additional garage sites for being used for B@Home schemes around Pinxton and South Normanton other site form part of pipeline B@Home developments. (Baseline data - 152 sites of which 20% = 30 sites).

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*It is not clear from the commentary what progression has been made to date against the 20% target. The baseline indicates that we aimed to address 30 sites in total – how many have we moved to an alternative use to date?*

*Officer response;*

To date 14 sites had been used for B@home developments (completed, started, or committed). There were outline plans for some others looking forward but these would be subject to Member approval.

The first option for all unused sites was to consider for development and this needed to be assessed. For sites that were considered unsuitable for development other options would now be considered.

A Member raised concern and felt it took a long time for 'unsuitable' sites to be put to Members for consideration of other options and that the timeline was slipping backwards. Members agreed and requested an update be provided at the next meeting by relevant officers.

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### **T 08 - Fully deliver the electoral changes to District and Parish wards as a result of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: Delivery of the electoral changes to wards as a result of the LGBCE review on are track to be delivered by 1 December 2018.

### **T 09 - Reduce the percentage of rent arrears by 10% through early invention and effective monitoring by 2019.**

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 4: The baseline figure (April 2015) was £562,328 (2.7% of the annual rent roll) and a reduction in Council Housing Tenants arrears by 10% by March 2019. If 10% reduction the figures would be £506,095. At the end of quarter 4, 2018, the figure stood at 2.4% (£507,099), which was a decrease from the baseline figure of 11% meeting the corporate plan target. This target was also achieved at the financial year end 2017. To continue to monitor this target until March 2019.

The impact of Government policies on welfare reform were likely to make maintaining rent arrears at this level challenging.

(Note: this target is a reduction in the percentage rather than the monetary value - this is common in measuring rent arrears and allows comparisons with other and over time. A reduction from 2.8% to 2.6% is measured as  $((2.8 - 2.6) / 2.8) \times 100 = 8\%$ ).

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*Members were very concerned re the current levels of arrears and wonder how we compare to other authorities with similar stock levels? It is noted in the comment that the figure at quarter4 is £507,099 this is slightly off the target of £506,095, yet the comment states this is meeting the target and a decrease of 11% - these figures do not add up if the baseline figure is £562,328 (an 11% decrease would be £500,471.92).*

*Officer response;*

The corporate target had been met for rent arrears.

There had been a reduction from rent arrears of 2.7% to 2.4% this represented an 11% reduction.

It is common practice to measure rent arrears as a percentage of rent roll rather than an absolute figure, this allows a better comparison over time and place.

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### **T 10 - Reduce the level of Former Tenants Arrears by 10% through early intervention and effective monitoring by 2019.**

#### **This target was flagged with an alert.**

Quarter 4: The baseline figure was £570,254 and a reduction in former Council housing tenants' arrears by 10% by March 2019. If 10% was collected then that would be £513,227.

At the end of quarter 4 the figure was £627,485.63 which was an increase of 9% - the majority of these were newly arising (i.e. people being evicted or leaving their tenancy with debt).

Since the start of the Corporate Target, £158,524.52 former tenancy arrears had been collected and £291,246.72 written off, which has been a reduction of £449,771.24

Additional information regarding this target was circulated at the meeting further to a query raised by the Chair and Vice Chair at the Committee's pre meeting.

*Members are very concerned regarding the current levels of arrears and wonder how we compare to other authorities with similar stock levels? The 9% increase indicates current procedures for securing arrears are not effective – how is this being addressed?*

#### *Officer Response;*

The level of former tenants arrears are difficult to compare. Some authorities take the view that arrears should be quickly written off, others such as Bolsover make a real effort to recover money and only writing off when other recovery options have been unsuccessful.

We include information of both recovery and write-offs in the commentary on perform to illustrate this.

Members should also be aware that at any times there are a number of reasons what people leave arrears. These include:

- a. Death of a tenant
- b. People who have been evicted or absconded prior to eviction. – often people with multiple debts
- c. Relationship Breakdown

These are often people/estates with little or no money.

In relation to T9 and T10 above, Members requested that relevant officers and the Portfolio Holder attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide them with an update on what had been put in place for dealing with possible delays in processing housing benefit claims under Universal Credit, which would be phased into the District later this year.

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### **T 11 - Through successful delivery of projects within the Transformation programme achieve total income/savings of £600,000 by March 2019.**

This target was reported as being on track.

The current Transformation Programme had achieved a total of £515k across both councils, with £260k attributable to Bolsover and £255k attributable to NEDDC. Items within the plan that had potential for budget savings had been completed and the savings built into base budgets. A review of the plan was taking place by the Strategic Director - People.

### **T 13 - Increase on-line self-service transactions dealt with by the Contact Centre by 20% each year.**

This target was reported as being on track.

2017/18 total = 2,227 on line transactions against a target of 1,100. Achieved above target. 1,435 residents now have SELF accounts. (Q4 2017/18 - On line transactions = 680 transactions and 188 new SELF accounts created).

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler  
**RESOLVED** that (1) the report be noted,

(2) the Head of Housing and Community Safety, the Head of Property and Commercial Services and the Portfolio Holder attend the next meeting, in relation to Target T06, to provide Members with an update on the review of garage sites.

(3) the Head of Housing and Community Safety attend the next meeting, in relation to Targets T09 and T10 to provide Members with an update on what had been put in place for dealing with possible delays in processing housing benefit claims under Universal Credit, which would be phased into the District later this year.

(Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

Councillor Dooley and the Information, Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

## **0787. REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE – INTERIM REPORT**

Committee considered an interim report in relation to their review of the Strategic Alliance.

The report contained five recommendations with a target date to commence from June 2018 onwards.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer advised Members that the report was the final draft version and if Members agreed, would be presented to Executive on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018, for their consideration and endorsement of the recommendations in the report.

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Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer and seconded by Councillor R. Turner

**RECOMMENDED** that (1) Executive endorses the recommendations of the review as outlined in section 2 of the report,

(2) Members of this Committee monitor the recommendations over a twelve month period via the PERFORM system with an update report to Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

(Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

### **0788. WORK PLAN 2017/18**

Committee had come to the end of their Work Plan for 2017/18.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer advised Members that as part of their Work Plan for 2018/19, she would be liaising with the Strategic Director – People, to bring forward Transformation updates to Committee and also, Human Resources on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which would be programmed in for early on in the new municipal year.

At the 29<sup>th</sup> May committee meeting, Members would take a detailed look at topics with a view to choosing one for review.

A training session would be held at the June meeting, with a representative from Legal in attendance, which would focus on looking at evidence analysis and techniques for identifying key details supporting the scope of a review.

Moved by Councillor R.A. Heffer and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

The formal meeting concluded at 1040 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 1055 hours.