

**Scrutiny Topic Suggestions for 2018/19 – Customer Service & Transformation**

Review Topic	Source of Suggestion	Service Area	Score at Conference/Priority Ranking	Members Comment from Conference	Officer Comment
Review of Delivery of Environmental Health (including Licensing)	CS&T 2017/18 Review	Environmental Health & Licensing	9/9 High Priority	<p>Members reviewing the suggested topic noted that communications was a key issue, including knowledge of staff roles and who to contact. There was concern that if the Alliance were to cease, the service is solely employed by NEDDC.</p> <p>When discussing direct contact with the service rather than Councillors to report an issue, Members queried whether residents have confidence in the contact centre as the core route for service enquiries.</p> <p>Key issues identified were as follows: Is the current resource for the Dog Warden service sufficient? (Members felt it was not) Is the current mechanism for report issues to the</p>	<p>Environmental Enforcement has been reviewed by Healthy, Safe, Clean &amp; Green Communities during 2017/18. Any review of this service area must be clear not to duplicate any element of this previous review. Resourcing of the Dog Warden provision has been addressed by the review.</p> <p>Environmental Health Management are aware that there is inadequate communication with Bolsover Members about the work done by the service and have introduced Member “drop in” surgeries at The Arc every Wednesday morning. Other update reports will also be introduced on service activities and enforcement work. The EH Annual Report will provide further service detail when available. Over the 5 years of the joint service, managers have been building relationships within various teams, aligning processes, investing in staff</p>

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				<p>service adequate? (Members felt it was potentially unclear) Do staff feel the current structure of the service and operational management is efficient? (Staff Survey)</p>	<p>development and new computer systems in order to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. The joint service allows for a greater pool of expertise, knowledge and resource to be available to meet service demands.</p> <p>Out of the 45 staff in the joint service, 20 are new having been recruited over the last 4 years so many may not have had any contact with Members.</p> <p>Arrangements can be made for Members to meet relevant staff. Information on team duties and service areas is available in the Service Plan but this can be provided separately if required.</p> <p>However, to avoid duplication of effort and ensure proper recording and allocation of service requests to the correct team, the service can be contacted via the Contact Centre access channels or direct via <a href="mailto:environmentalhealthadmin@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk">environmentalhealthadmin@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk</a>. The service is not aware of any reporting</p>

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					<p>difficulties experienced by service users.</p> <p>A recent customer service survey revealed that 96% of respondents (both public and businesses) were satisfied with the service provided by environmental health. The service also receives many compliments from customers on their experience.</p> <p>The service handles around 9,000 service requests annually for both Councils and there is ongoing review of service delivery to ensure resilience and flexible working such that staff can be deployed to meet specific service needs and peaks and troughs in demand. There are currently 1.5 FTE vacancies which are going through recruitment. The Environmental Enforcement team and the Licensing Team are now fully resourced with new line managers and all processes are being reviewed and more enforcement work is being undertaken.</p>

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					<p>There is service information on PERFORM which shows good performance in areas such food inspections, prescribed process inspections, support provided to new and existing businesses and good response times to enquires.</p> <p>Note: There is a Service Agreement for the Joint Environmental Health Service (BDC Council - 20th June 2012) which may need review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both BDC and NEDDC.</p>
Review of the Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services	CS&T 2017/18 Review	Strategic Alliance	5/9 Low Priority	Members felt there was sufficient evidence to support a review but were mindful of the May 2019 Elections and the impact this could have.	<p>Ideally any review of this nature would look to consider achievement of efficiencies in delivery and equality in outcomes across both authorities.</p> <p>However, due to the forthcoming Elections in May 2019, it is likely that any agreed criteria would need to address a much wider range of issues which could differ depending on the outcome of the Elections. While there is merit in looking at this I would</p>

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					recommend delaying until 2019/20 when the review can have greater impact.
Review of Discretionary Rate Relief	Scrutiny Councillor	Finance	5/9  Low Priority	Members reviewing the topic queried whether this was simply a communication problem and that publicity to businesses was more regular, than that to the VCS. It was noted that there was a 20% discretionary element which the VCS were eligible to apply for.  This was a possible topic for Mini-Review.	Could be undertaken as a mini review to ensure Members are happy with the current processes/procedures in place.  Currently, new requests are reviewed by an Officer and Member group.
Review of Re-letting of Council Properties from Void	Scrutiny Councillor	Customer Services/Contact Centre	9/9  High Priority	Members looking at this topic noted that this had been highlighted previously, in particular by a Cabinet Member.  It was agreed this would be suitable for Mini-Review.  Queries were raised around the use of a	The problem that Scrutiny have identified is to do with the interface between two computer systems, the housing system (Academy Housing) and a finance system (Banking automation).  How the system works, is that a tenancy is created on Academy Housing, and there is a daily interface with the finance system – this passes tenancy and

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					<p>payment the following day (at any contact centre). There are potentially options of making payments into a suspense account, but this is not without risk and I suspect this would not be acceptable to Audit.</p> <p>Potentially, we could make the kiosk software supplier aware of the issue, and ask them for a solution.</p>
Review of Communications by Revenues & Benefits team	Discussion group at Scrutiny Conference	Revenues & Benefits	Not ranked.	<p>Members queried the letters sent out and noted the language was not always simple and easy for the resident to understand. Members were made aware that this was already being looked at.</p> <p>In relation to Council Tax letters/communications, in particular when dealing with a deceased resident, again the language used was not always deemed to be appropriate. Members questioned if</p>	<p>A review of letters sent by R&amp;B was undertaken by the Chief Executive and Cabinet member during the last 18 months.</p> <p>The CEO gathered letters from all Derbyshire &amp; Nottinghamshire Councils and undertook a comparison with ours. It was found that letters were in line with other authorities.</p> <p>Not to rely on system generated letters would also increase staff involvement significantly and would undoubtedly require an increase in staffing numbers.</p>

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				our approach was satisfactory and whether there was over-reliance on computer generated letters dictating the format of communication.	I understand that a review of letters was also undertaken by a group of members during the last 5 years and that current letters reflect what was agreed by this group.
Review of The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the two Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.	CS&T 2017/18 Review	Human Resources	Not ranked.	Members briefly discussed but existing Members of CS&T acknowledged that a range of information had already been looked at, as part of the 2017/18 review (no conclusions have been drawn on this – only to investigate further).  The CEO also noted that an examination of pay, (as a result of the different JE schemes) and the T&Cs was taking place.	HR have not received any further instruction to review pay and grading across both Councils at this stage. I would need to check with the CEO and Directors as to whether this is a priority over coming months. This would be a significant undertaking as Harmonisation would be a major project similar in capacity to implementing Single Status. We are reviewing reward initiatives (non-monetary) and will look at the BDC paycales as a result of the new pay award over the next 12 months.
Review of Recovery and Prevention of Debts	Cabinet	Revenues and Benefits/ Finance	7/9  Low Priority	Members felt this could be suited to an in-depth review.  Whilst this scored highly, there were concerns that there had been a review	Within R&B and Rents, there are recovery processes in place for all types of debt. These follow national guidelines and in the case of council tax, we have very little discretion.



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				<p>by Growth Scrutiny Committee on debt and that CS&amp;T wouldn't get to this for another year as they had a lot of work on already.</p> <p>Cabinet Member present in the discussion group suggested a review could take place at a Cabinet level with a report then back to Scrutiny.</p> <p>In terms of the recovery and prevention of debts the Cabinet reports should maybe go into more detail as to the procedure, or a briefing note should be produced that can be referred to by Cabinet when looking at writing off debts.</p> <p>There is a potential link between this topic and 'Review of Communications by</p>	<p>Presentations and discussions have taken place at scrutiny meetings in recent years on this topic in order to highlight the difficult and complex nature of this process.</p> <p>Prior to presenting the next write-off report to Executive, we are looking to review what information is included.</p> <p>In terms of prevention, we work with external partners within the voluntary sector as well as using our own money advice workers and visiting officer to assist where there is a need. There is a member and officer advice agency meeting which is for both BDC and NEDDC. Next one will be set up shortly.</p> <p>In order to aid residents with the introduction and transition to Universal Credit we have set up an officer working group which is also attended by the DWP. Very aware of the impact this could have on residents and</p>

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				Revenues & Benefits Team'.	<p>tenants therefore R&amp;B and Housing working closely to identify those who are impacted and when so that contact can be made. Council communication and website up to date.</p> <p>CAB have been engaged as our partner for delivering personal budgeting support to those identified by the DWP as in need of this.</p>