

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 Wednesday 5th September 2018 at 1400 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor R.J. Bowler in the Chair

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

Officers:- S.E.A. Sternberg (Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer), A. Bedford (Customer Standards and Complaints Officer), K. Drury (Information Engagement & Performance Manager), J. Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

0142. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors P. Cooper and R.A. Heffer.

0143. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0144. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0145. MINUTES – 23RD JULY 2018

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R. Turner

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

0146. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Committee considered the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in private document.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R. Turner

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

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0147. ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2017/18

Committee considered a report in relation to an annual summary of statistics on complaints made about the Authority to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for the financial year ending 31st March 2018. The Annual Letter and supporting information were appended to the report for Members information.

The Customer Standards and Complaints Officer advised the meeting that the LGSCO would like scrutiny committees to be more involved in complaints against their councils and regular reports would be presented to this Scrutiny Committee to keep Members informed of volumes and trends regarding LGSCO/ Housing Ombudsman complaints.

Members were asked to note that the data provided by the LGSCO may not align with data held by the Council as LGSCO numbers included enquiries from people who had been signposted by the LGSCO back to the Council but who may have then chosen not to pursue their complaint.

The LGSCO had received 5 complaints against the Council's services during 2017/18 with only one of the complaints being subject to a detailed investigation. The LGSCO had decided the 5 complaints – 1 was referred back to the Council, 2 were closed after initial enquiries, advice was given in 1 case and the remaining 1 was not upheld.

In relation to benchmarking information the Council had received the second lowest number of complaints in 2017/18 when looking at the six closest neighbouring authorities.

In addition to the five complaints directed to the LGSCO, the Council had received 2 complaints via the Housing Ombudsman (HO) for the same period – 1 of which had a decision made of 'no maladministration' and with regard to the second one, further information was being provided to the HO.

Committee would be pleased to note that against a background of the LGSCO upholding 57% of complaints submitted to them, neither the LGSCO nor the HO had upheld a complaint against the Council during the financial year 2017/18.

In response to a Member's query, the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer advised the meeting that the report was in relation to LGSCO complaints only and not other complaints received by the Council. Committee was advised that they would receive six-monthly updates in relation to the other complaints information at future meetings, as part of a move to improve scrutiny of complaints received by the Council.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Customer Standards and Complaints Officer left the meeting.

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0148. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE; QUARTER 1 – APRIL 2018 TO JUNE 2018

Committee considered a report which provided performance outturns for the period April 2018 to June 2018 in relation to Corporate Plan Targets under the Committee's remit of 'providing our customers with excellent service' and 'transforming our organisation'.

30 targets sat under the Committee's remit; 19 were on track, 1 had been flagged as an 'alert', 6 had been achieved previously and 4 had been withdrawn previously.

With regard to two of the performance targets, queries had been raised at the Scrutiny pre meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair and responses to those queries were circulated at the meeting as follows;

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

Members were advised that a period of long-term absence had affected Q1 figures but that this should be rectified for Q2.

In response to a Member's query, the Information Engagement & Performance Manager advised the meeting that since the introduction of Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims took a little longer to process.

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

Having reviewed the full detail of this Target in PERFORM, it is clear that at the end of 2017/18 performance was 32.7 days average. This is significantly above the target of 20 days average. How does the performance at end of 2017/18 compare with the baseline for this target, as this is not on PERFORM? What measures are currently in place to improve the performance for this target?

Officer response;

The department had been working with Members and had recently completed a review of the void processes. Officers would be happy to update Scrutiny of the outcome at a future meeting. The Information Engagement & Performance Manager confirmed that the baseline from 2014/15 (28.96 days inc. Sheltered Accommodation) was not a directly comparable figure as the calculation method for this target changed when this target was agreed as part of the Corporate Plan 2015-19.

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

The comment at Quarter 4 noted that 14 sites had been achieved against a target of 30 (see baseline for target). How many additional sites could be realistically achieved this year? Would this target continue forward to the new Corporate Plan given that there were a number of sites identified as unsuitable for development?

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Officer response;

The focus on this target had been looking at sites to develop, i.e. the favoured option was to use the sites to build Council properties. Whilst building work had started on a number of sites (and there were plans for more) alternative options for sites that were not developable by the Council now needed to be looked at as some may be suitable for single plot developments.

It had been agreed with Cabinet that a full schedule would be produced for the next quarterly meeting and this could be shared with Members. A Member queried if the schedule of garage sites was available as reported. The Information Engagement & Performance Manager agreed to follow this up with Cabinet.

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

Members queried what level of additional savings were scheduled to be achieved up to March 2019. The Information Engagement & Performance Manager agreed to follow this up with the Strategic Director – People and Finance Officers.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that (1) the report be noted,

(2) the Information Engagement & Performance Manager provide clarity on the full schedule of garage sites for the next quarterly update,

(3) the Information Engagement & Performance Manager enquire for further detail in relation to additional savings expected from the outgoing Transformation Programme.

(Information Engagement & Performance Manager/Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The Information Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

0149. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Committee considered their Work Programme for 2018/19.

Moved by Councillor R.J. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2018/19 be noted.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 1425 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 1500 hours.