

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 29th October 2018 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT;-

Members:-

Councillor R.J. Bowler in the Chair

Councillors C.P. Cooper, M.G. Crane, R.A. Heffer, J.E. Smith, E. Stevenson and R. Turner

Also in attendance with the permission of the Chair was Councillor M. Dooley (Portfolio Holder for Partnership and Transformation) until Minute No. 0403.

Officers:-

J. Wilson (Scrutiny and Elections Officer), K. Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) (until Minute No. 0403), A. Brownsword (Senior Governance Officer) and L. Robinson (Finance Assistant)

0398. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P.M. Bowmer.

0399. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

0400. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0401. MINUTES – 1ST OCTOBER 2018

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held on 1st October 2018 be approved as a true and correct record.

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0402. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

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

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

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private be noted.

0403. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE; QUARTER 2 – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2018

Committee considered a report which provided performance outturns for the period July 2018 to September 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 were under the Committee's remit; 16 were on track, 4 had been flagged as an 'alert', 6 had been previously achieved and 4 had been previously withdrawn.

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

When are the Void Review recommendations being implemented? This has been mentioned in the last two updates but we are not aware of any briefings on this work now it is complete.

With regard to the reference to New Bolsover properties being excluded, we are aware that some are already complete. Should it not be the case that once they are complete they are eligible for inclusion in the figures again. Similarly if a B@Home property becomes complete and part of Council stock should it not be counted from that point onwards?

The majority of the void review recommendations have been implemented, but these take time to filter through impact on the statistics that are reported. It is our intention to provide an update on the void review at a future member development session. With regards to what to include / exclude. We use the old BVPI definitions which is The time in calendar days from the date when the tenancy is terminated up to and including the date when the new tenancy agreement starts.

Where a notice has been served, the tenancy will not count as terminated until the notice period has ended and the Local Authority has possession of the property

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Exclude properties:

- let through mutual exchanges;
- undergoing 'major works';
- the council intends to sell or demolish.
- A void should be classed as a 'major works' void only if an existing tenant would have had to be decanted in order for the works to take place.

Major works means:

- Structural works – which included floors/walls/roofs;
- Site works to remedy the safety and security of tenants (Asbestos removal etc);
- Works to basic amenities (gas/electricity/heating) only where lacking;
- Consequential works as a result of major works;
- Fire and Flood.

The void period will start from the date that the works are completed. When a void dwelling is squatted, the void period should only be counted once the Authority has regained possession of the property

When a void dwelling is taken over by the police etc, the void period up to when it is taken over should not be counted. The void period after the dwelling is handed back to the Authority should be counted provided the dwelling is not subject to major works. Where the Home Office takes over a property to use for asylum seekers the void period ends when the Home Office becomes responsible for the rent regardless of whether it is occupied or not.

B@Home properties are excluded as these are not relets.

NBMV have been excluded as we did not want to skew the figures – using the above definitions a property could have been empty for several years, but the clock only starts when the work was completed and would only be reported as 2 or 3 days void.

A discussion took place regarding the forthcoming Member Development Session and it was felt that the Committee should be updated prior to the Member Development Session.

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

Is the delay due to external contractors? How is this being monitored and challenged/improved? The commentary for this target is too minimal for us to take a judgement on progress and a full explanation would be appreciated.

This target has been included as a stretch target. I am unaware of any other authority that has a target that is less than 24 hours.

The target includes and internal and external contractors. We are carrying out an analysis and early findings suggest that the main issues are tenants not being in when the operative calls (which probably should be excluded) and a small number of repairs that are reported one afternoon (when the clock starts ticking) and completed the next day as if they were an emergency that was reported that day, which takes

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the job slightly over the limit. We are looking to see if we can use the software to differentiate.

Members requested further information on the reasons for non attendance and a list of what was classed as an emergency.

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

*At Q1 Members asked for the schedule that was due to be presented to Cabinet – I refer you to the minutes of 5th September
<http://biisapp.bolsover.gov.uk/reportsagendas/Reports/report21014.pdf>*

Based on the more recent updates is it correct that we have completed 15 sites to date? Will the Pinxton and South Normanton sites complete before March 2019? Will this target roll over to the new Plan? Members query whether the target was set too high in the first place, given the length of time needed to identify and approve sites and the associated permissions.

Yes, this is currently being finalised, and can be circulated once completed. Indicative figures, at this time, are that 14 sites have been developed or are to be developed. A further 22 sites have been identified as possible development sites. We intend to identify a number of other sites to market at the custom and self-build market, this will leave a number to be disposed of. We are hoping to work with a group of Planning students to consider obtaining planning permission on the land prior to sale and therefore maximise the capital receipt.

A discussion took place regarding the current status of the garage sites and the possibility of a small income.

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

How is Universal Credit impacting on receipt on arrears? Is there a difference in the impact between Jobcentre areas as we are aware of different roll-out dates affecting the area and that they will fall under different Group Managers (i.e. Worksop, Staveley/Mansfield). Members would appreciate it if Michelle Whetton could attend with you to update Members on this and how BDC are working with DWP colleagues to minimise the impact of benefit changes

This indicator is former tenants arrears, and is unlikely to have been directly impacted by UC to date.

The reason why we are struggling to achieve this target is the number of newly arising FTA. For example during the last financial year, the FTA administrator recovered £47k in debt (payments excluding write offs) there was also £182k in write offs across the year (within budget). However there has been an increase in the number of newly arising FTAs' that are caused by people ending tenancies and leaving arrears – this totalled £187k for the same period.

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The approach of the council is to make every attempt to recover money prior to write off, and it is unlikely that all the newly arising debt will either be recovered or written off within this corporate plan period

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.A. Heffer

RESOLVED that (1) progress against the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 targets be noted,

(2) the Joint Head of Housing and Community Safety attend the next meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee to give an update on the progress of the Void Review.

(Scrutiny and Elections Officer/Joint Head of Housing and Community Safety)

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

0404. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Committee considered their Work Programme for 2018/19.

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

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2018/19 be noted.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 1035 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 1039 hours.