

**EXTRAORDINARY CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 19th February 2019 at 09.15 hours in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne

Item No.		Page No.(s)
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	Members should declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Non Statutory Interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of:	
	a) any business on the agenda	
	b) any matters arising out of those items and if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting at the relevant time.	
3.	Review of Delivery of Environmental Health & Licensing – Approval of Final Report.	3 to 26

Bolsover District Council

Extraordinary Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee

19th February 2019

Review of Delivery of Environmental & Health & Licencing

Report of the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To present to Scrutiny the completed report for the recent Review of Delivery of Environmental & Health & Licencing.

1. Report Details

- 1.1 The Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Delivery of Environmental & Health & Licencing, as part of the 2018/19 work plan following consideration of a range of topics suggested at the Annual Scrutiny Conference.
- 1.2 This was agreed following the Review of The Strategic Alliance in 2017/18, as a result of the following approved recommendation:

“CS&TSc17/18 2.1 – That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-

- *Delivery of the Environmental Health and Licensing Service.*
- *The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.*
- *The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services.”*

Following discussion at the Scrutiny Conference 2018 and further analysis at Committee, this was the only topic that was ranked as ‘high priority’ via the prioritisation tool.

- 1.3 Environmental Enforcement was reviewed by Healthy, Safe, Clean & Green Communities Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18 and Members were clear that any review of this service area must not duplicate any element of the previous review.

1.4 The aims of the review were:

- To establish how the service operates across the two Councils in relation to members accessing the service.
- To identify the advantages of the arrangement.
- To identify the disadvantages of the arrangement.
- To make recommendations as to improvements in the service which will improve the service received by Members of Bolsover District Council.

The key issues identified were as follows:

- Review of existing Service Level Agreement
- Assess current protocol for Member communication/interaction
- Review equality of access to the service from both Districts – location of offices/rotation of staff at offices.
- Assessing the advantages/efficiency of the current arrangement and ensuring Members are better informed as to how the service is delivered within the District.
- Provide clarity over existing arrangements and determine whether any changes are required to this element of the Strategic Alliance going forward.

2. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

2.1 The Committee have put together three recommendations which will hopefully support further sustainability and development of the joint Environmental Health & Licensing service.

2.2 The key issues arising from the review are:

- The development and approval of a revised Service Level Agreement;
- A review of the online 'Report It' system to ensure that customer engagement remains efficient, with systems that are simple to use.

2.3 It is hoped that the recommendations set out in this review report will further improve a service that is already performing well. Given the upheaval of creating a merged service across the Strategic Alliance, Members commend that work ethic of Officers who have continued to strive for excellent and efficient service delivery.

3. Consultation and Equality Impact

3.1 All Scrutiny Committees are committed to equality and diversity in undertaking their statutory responsibilities and ensure equalities are considered as part of all Reviews. The selection criteria when submitting a topic, specifically asks members to identify where the topic suggested affects particular population groups or geographies.

3.2 The Council has a statutory duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination.

4. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the review, where they feel the course of action recommended is beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

5. Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 None from this report.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 In carrying out scrutiny reviews the Council is exercising its scrutiny powers as laid out in s.21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation which added/amended these powers e.g. the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.2.2 The Council has a statutory duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 None from this report.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Committee endorses the recommendations of the review outlined in section 2 of the attached report.
- 6.2 That Committee submits the report to Executive for approval, in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference – Part 3.6 (10) of the Constitution.
- 6.3 That following approval by Executive, monitoring of these recommendations by Committee takes place over a twelve month period via the PERFORM system with an update report to Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

7. **Decision Information**

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: <i>BDC: Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p>	Yes
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	N/A
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	<p>Aim: Transforming Our Organisation</p> <p>Priority: Maximising opportunities with North East Derbyshire District Council through the Strategic Alliance</p>

8. **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
3.1	Review of Delivery of Environmental & Health & Licencing.
<p>Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)</p>	
<p>Please contact Scrutiny & Elections Officer where further information is required.</p>	
Report Author	Contact Number
Joanne Wilson, Scrutiny & Elections Officer	01246 242385



**Review of Delivery of Environmental
Health & Licensing
July – October 2018
CUSTOMER SERVICE & TRANSFORMATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Contents

Chair's Foreword	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1 The Current Service Structure.....	4
2. Recommendations.....	7
3. Scope of the Review	8
4. Method of Review	9
5. Analysis of evidence and key findings	11
5.1 Assessment of the advantages/efficiency of the current arrangement	11
5.2 Assessment of current protocol for Member communication/interaction	14
5.3 Review equality of access to the service from both Districts	15
5.4 Review of existing Service Level Agreement	16
6. Conclusions	17
Appendix 1: Stakeholders	18
Appendix 2: Bibliography.....	19

Chair's Foreword

This review topic was primarily chosen as a result of Member concerns that Bolsover residents were receiving a 'lesser' service, as a result of the Partnership arrangement via the Strategic Alliance.

While it may be the case that a few Members were aware of issues, the evidence gathered has proven that the service is operating in an equitable manner. The re-design of processes following the merger of the two teams, has ensured that good practice has been shared across both authority areas. Internal evidence shows that the service has overcome a wide range of issues in terms of changes in staffing; pay structures and terms and conditions; an overhaul of supporting IT/data systems; different operating/organisational cultures; and different back office and finance systems.

Externally, statistics clearly show that customer satisfaction has not only been maintained for Bolsover residents, but has in fact improved.

Having reviewed the evidence presented, we now feel on the whole very satisfied and reassured by current delivery.

Councillor Rose Bowler
Chair of the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny
Committee

1. Introduction

The Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Delivery of Environmental Health & Licensing, as part of the 2018/19 Work Programme. This was agreed following the Review of The Strategic Alliance in 2017/18, as a result of the following approved recommendation:

“CS&TSc17/18 2.1 – That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-

- *Delivery of the Environmental Health and Licensing Service.*
- *The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.*
- *The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services.”*

Following discussion at the Scrutiny Conference 2018 and further analysis at Committee, this was the only topic that was ranked as ‘high priority’ via the prioritisation tool.

Environmental Enforcement was reviewed by Healthy, Safe, Clean & Green Communities Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18 and Members were clear that any review of this service area must not duplicate any element of the previous review.

Members assessing 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 Strategic Alliance were to cease, the service is solely employed by North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC).

1.1 The Current Service Structure

As part of the review process, Members wanted further clarity as to the current service structure. The Joint Environmental Health Service undertakes a diverse range of statutory duties and supports the wider public health agenda working in partnership with other stakeholders and agencies, to achieve effective and efficient outcomes for all. On a daily basis it investigates service requests and complaints from businesses and the general public and undertakes proactive interventions in business premises ensuring compliance with the law by way of a risk-based approach. It also provides general advice and support on a whole range of health and environment matters, ranging from energy efficiency advice, to responsible dog ownership. The range of duties and functions of the service are detailed below.

Commercial – Line Manager – (6 x Officers in total)

Commercial undertake duties associated with business premises, and public health matters such as communicable diseases. The service areas comprise of:

- Food safety and hygiene
- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Health and safety at work
- Communicable diseases
- Food and water sampling
- Animal licensing

Environmental Enforcement – (5 x Officers in total)

Environmental Enforcement undertake duties associated with environmental crime.

The service areas comprise of:

- Stray dogs
- Fly tipping and littering
- Abandoned vehicles
- Dog fouling

Environmental Protection – (6 x Officers in total)

Environmental Protection undertake duties associated with environmental conditions and the service areas comprise of:

- Air quality
- Contaminated land
- Planning consultations and development advice
- Prescribed processes
- Nuisance from commercial premises

Housing and Pollution – (8 x Officers in total)

Housing and Pollution undertake duties associated with the health, safety and welfare of the domestic environment. The service areas comprise of:

- Housing conditions
- Drainage
- Nuisance from domestic premises
- Pest control
- Public health burials

Home Improvement – (3 x Officers in total)

Home Improvement undertake duties to provide support and assistance on matters associated with the home and these service areas comprise of:

- Home repairs advice
- Support and welfare advice to vulnerable residents
- Affordable warmth and fuel poverty
- Disabled facilities grants
- Handy van Service (fixed term contract)

Licensing – (5 x Officers in total)

Licensing undertake duties around persons and premises selling alcohol and vehicle hire. These service areas comprise of:

- Taxi licensing
- Premises and persons licenses
- Scrap metal licenses
- Gambling licenses
- Charitable collections

Technical Support – (8 x Officers in total)

Technical Support provide technical and administrative support to the whole Environmental Health Service and handle customer enquiries. Duties comprise of:

- Managing customer contacts and processing complaints
- Management of Environmental Health ICT systems
- Processing Disabled Facilities Grants
- Processing statutory returns
- Scanning and document control
- Stray dog invoicing and correspondence
- Licensing administration

Community Outreach – (Bolsover District Council only) – (3 x Officers in total)

Community Outreach provides support and assistance to the vulnerable residents of Bolsover District Council, which is tailored to their individual needs. The duties can include the following topics, although the list is not exhaustive:

- Support around financial hardship
- Support in tackling food and fuel poverty
- Disability or social isolation
- Support to promote a healthy lifestyle

2. Recommendations

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc18/19 2.1	That the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee keep the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee briefed on the implementation of scrutiny recommendation HSCGC17/18 1.14.	That the online 'Report It' system is reviewed and refreshed to ensure that the facility remains customer friendly and simple to use.	June 2019.	Scrutiny & Elections Officer	Officer time.	An 'Interim Report' is due to be considered by Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2019. Final implementation of this recommendation was scheduled for December 2018 and an update will be given to Members following the March report.
CS&TSc18/19 2.2	That the Council's legal team produces a revised Service Level Agreement for approval by Executive and the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee.	That the Service Level Agreement for the Joint Service remains deliverable and fit for purpose.	September 2019	Joint Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer/Team Leader (Contentious)	Officer time.	This is currently being worked on by the service following attendance at Scrutiny Committee, with a view to completion by September 2019.
CS&TSc18/19 2.3	That the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee receive the draft Service Level Agreement prior to submission to Executive for consideration	That Members are satisfied that the Service Level Agreement for the Joint Service remains deliverable and fit for purpose.	July 2019	Joint Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer/Team Leader (Contentious)	Officer time	Officers will be able to bring a draft to Informal Committee in July 2019, prior to submission to Executive/Strategic Alliance Joint Committee, for further discussion as part of the Post-Scrutiny Monitoring process.

3. Scope of the Review

The Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Delivery of Environmental Health & Licensing, as part of the 2018/19 Work Programme. This was agreed following the Review of The Strategic Alliance in 2017/18.

As part of the evidence gathering process for the Review of The Strategic Alliance, Members reviewed the existing staffing structures across the three directorates (at the time) which identified both shared and BDC only posts, alongside the employing authority. This sought to address the following issues identified in the scope:

- Which services are combined?
- Who is based where?

Members are uncertain as to what the arrangements are in place in relation to some shared services employees in terms of who employs, where they are based and how they can be contacted. As part of the 2017/18 Review of The Strategic Alliance, Members noted that as one of the only hosted, shared services, Members are concerned that BDC colleagues feel alienated from the service and feel discouraged from using the service as those providing the service are not BDC employees.

The aims of the review were:

- To establish how the service operates across the two Councils in relation to members accessing the service.
- To identify the advantages of the arrangement.
- To identify the disadvantages of the arrangement.
- To make recommendations as to improvements in the service which will improve the service received by Members of Bolsover District Council.

The key issues identified were as follows:

- Review of existing Service Level Agreement
- Assess current protocol for Member communication/interaction
- Review equality of access to the service from both Districts – location of offices/rotation of staff at offices.
- Assessing the advantages/efficiency of the current arrangement and ensuring Members are better informed as to how the service is delivered within the District.
- Provide clarity over existing arrangements and determine whether any changes are required to this element of the Strategic Alliance going forward.

The Committee comprised the following Members:

Councillor R. Bowler (Chair)	Councillor J. Smith (Vice Chair)
Councillor P. Cooper	Councillor P. Bowmer
Councillor E. Stevenson	Councillor M. Crane
Councillor A. Joesbury	Councillor R. Turner
Councillor R. Heffer	

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny & Elections Officer and the Governance Officer.

4. Method of Review

The Committee had an initial meeting to agree the scope of the review, and agreed to complete the review via a document review and presentation of verbal and written evidence by Officers to Committee.

Two evidence gathering sessions were held where Members heard from our Environmental Health Managers; the Solicitor to the Council; and the Legal Team Leader (Contentious).

Members also reviewed the following documents:

- Environmental Health Joint Service background information and duties of each team July 2018
- Customer and Elected Member Contact Details
- Environmental Health operational Risk Management Review 280917
- Environmental Health Structure Chart for Commercial Protection Enforcement Licensing 30 04 2018
- Environmental Health Structure Chart for Housing Pollution Home Improvement and Community Outreach 30 04 2018
- Environmental Health Structure Chart for Technical Support 30 04 2018
- Environmental Health Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015/16
- Environmental Health Customer Satisfaction Survey Manager checklist 2017/18
- Environmental Health Communication Strategy Dec 2015
- Environmental Service Review, Strategic Alliance Joint Committee, 26 October 2011
- Legal Agreement for an Environmental Health Shared Service Partnership, June 2012
- Minutes of Strategic Alliance Joint Committee, December 2011.
- Officer Authorisation Scheme – DD 122 – 17 – JA.

The shared service delivers Statutory functions. The review aimed to establish whether the Service Level Agreement referred to in 2012, is still fit for purpose to effectively comply and deliver the requirements of relevant statutory functions.

Originally, Members were also keen to establish how NEDDC Members view the service and whether the shared service is delivering as they expect. It became apparent during the course of the review that the NEDDC Organisation Scrutiny Committee had also identified concerns with this area of delivery. As the offer to attend evidence gathering meetings was not practical due to meeting clashes, Officers endeavoured to keep the NEDDC Scrutiny Chair briefed during the course of the review.

Members also considered possible attendance at NEDDC Licensing Committee; a joint meeting with NEDDC Members (potentially at Mill Lane site) and a visit to Mill Lane Offices (to view the Licensing application process). However, the information gathered during the course of the review, led Members to conclude that these additional measures were not necessary and would not provide any further clarity to their queries.

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of the review, the Committee has taken into account the impact of equalities. Key considerations have been:

- Equity of access to the service by residents from both Districts.
- Equity in access and communications with Members of both Districts.

5. Analysis of evidence and key findings

5.1 Assessment of the advantages/efficiency of the current arrangement

Initial set-up of the Joint Environmental Health Partnership

The Joint Environmental Health Service provides services to both Bolsover District Council (BDC) and North East Derbyshire District Council (NED) and following agreement in 2012, was formally established in March 2013 with the appointment of staff. This was a particularly tense time with staff from both authorities reapplying to posts in the new service, which also naturally led to some staff departing the service.

There were two completely different computer systems, however as the BDC system was chosen, alongside the appointment of two BDC staff as managers, it was perceived as a BDC takeover. Staff had to cleanse and migrate all the data into one system, this was essential as initially there was no access to NED data for managers to address performance or workload. As the newly appointed managers they took on two different councils, two different ways of working and two very different cultures, with NED underperforming service and BDC a high-performing service.

Initially all work was duplicated with reporting to two different back office services – particularly separate finance and customer services at both BDC and NED. The required job evaluation process resulted in 80% of staff receiving a decrease in their salaries, with a long appeal process which knocked morale.

In order to ensure success and re-instill a positive outlook there has been a continued focus that the formation of a joint service has allowed the two authorities to combine their resources and expertise, providing flexibility and resilience such that it can shift its resources to accommodate demands on the service.

The service currently receives around 9,000 queries a year, which filters through the Technical Support Team. 98-99% of this contact is via telephone and email. The Technical Support team ensure work is allocated to the correct Officer. This reinforces the need for Members to ensure all calls are logged via the correct channels to avoid any duplication. It also shows that Members concerns regarding lack of access for face-to-face service is unfounded as our customers do not use this as a core means of communication/service request.

Financial Arrangements

The service is hosted by NED with the costs of the service split 50/50. NED recharge BDC for 50% of the service costs, however all income goes straight to the respective Council. As such there are two different income budgets (BDC and NED). The only exception to that is the Community Outreach Service, which only operates for BDC.

Due to the savings required by NED at the time, it was felt they were better placed to accommodate the service. Officers have worked together to ensure that a well-balanced service is created drawing on the positives from both areas. It's a continuing ongoing transformation and efficiencies are being found all the time. It was only when the service went to Mill Lane that everyone was all together and managers could truly begin to re-build the teams.

A key consideration for Members was whether the service would have continued to work well if it had remained separated. Officers acknowledged that it was working very well. However, a lot of savings have been made by becoming a joint service.

There wouldn't be the same pool of expertise with the same level of flexibility. Staff can be moved between areas as they have transferable skills – the principles of working are the same. To cease the joint service would undo a huge amount of development work and efficiencies.

Officers were keen to emphasise that what isn't recognised is what a success the joint service has been although it has been hard work. The service is seen as a role model for other councils – Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley Officers have gone around with our Environmental Enforcement Officers to see how we do our work and we are held in high regard. Despite the size of our service we are lean on staff but still have the required flexibility and resilience.

Customer Satisfaction

As part of the evaluation, Members wished to understand if the move to a Joint Service had impacted satisfaction levels. When reviewing satisfaction levels under the current Corporate Plan (2015-19), the results from the Customer Satisfaction Surveys show an overall improvement:

- 2015/16 – 89.1% of customers satisfied with service received
- 2017/18 – 92.4% of customers satisfied with service received

Table 1: Joint Environmental Health Service Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015/16

	Number of questionnaires posted.	Number of questionnaires returned	Number of customers satisfied	Percentage of customers satisfied
Businesses	154	46	43	93.5%
General Public	546	146	128	87.7%
Totals	700	192	171	89.1% (overall)

Table 2: Joint Environmental Health Service Customer Satisfaction Survey 2017/18

	Number of questionnaires posted.	Number of questionnaires returned	Number of customers satisfied	Percentage of customers satisfied
Businesses	150 (BDC) 188 (NEDDC)	30 (BDC) 59 (NEDDC)	29 (BDC) 57 (NEDDC)	96.7% (BDC) 96.6% (NEDDC)
General Public	436 (BDC) 265 (NEDDC)	125 (BDC) 64 (NEDDC)	115 (BDC) 56 (NEDDC)	92% (BDC) 87.5% (NEDDC)
Totals	1039	278	257	92.4% (overall)

Whilst the sample size was small for the 2017/18 survey it was larger than the previous survey two years ago. Overall the level of satisfaction with Environmental Health service provision remains quite high and has improved from the last survey. This provides reassurance to Officers that the Joint Service is being run in a manner that ensures good satisfaction levels across both Districts.

When looking at figures solely relating to BDC, Officers are aware of previous surveys prior to the joint service and there has been no impact on customers and no impact from the joint service. Satisfaction levels have changed as follows:

- Pre Joint Service (2013) – 90% of customers satisfied
- 2017/18 – 92.9% of customers satisfied with service received

Key learning points for the service, as a result of the 2017/18 survey are as follows:

- Keep customers updated on their complaint/service request as much as possible.
- Get back to customers when we say we are going to.
- Do not use jargon/communicate using simple terminology.
- Ensure the same Officer inspects businesses to reduce burden and save time.
- Provide a pro-active Environmental Health Service.
- Avoid busy periods when inspecting businesses.
- Consider automated application forms where possible.
- Speed up the Disabled Facilities Grant process.

Current Challenges for the Service

As part of the review, Members wished to understand the current strains on the service. Managers noted a current increase in demand on advice for planning applications, which was having an impact on the Environmental Protection Team – the number of consultations officers are having to respond to for large, complex applications has really increased.

Also, the Housing and Pollution Team were providing increased support to the Building Resilience Programme, delivered in the Shirebrook area. In addition to this, the team was experiencing an increase in public health funerals, filthy and verminous premises and hoarding cases – these are complex cases with vulnerable people. Nevertheless, Managers feel that the flexibility and resilience of the service, is a strength enabling delivery via a pool of people with the required expertise, who can be move to cover demand across the service, when required.

Further challenges involved responding to Freedom of Information requests (both Councils), legislative changes, HMO Licensing and Abandoned vehicle reports. An internal review is taking place on the process for Abandoned vehicles due to a substantial increase in numbers.

Members concluded that over the five years of the joint service, managers have been building relationships within various teams, aligning processes, investing in staff 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. It was noted that information on team duties and service areas is available in the Service Plan, which could be provided to Members as and when required.

5.2 Assessment of current protocol for Member communication/interaction

A key issue identified during the 2017/18 Review of The Strategic Alliance was communication in relation to the Alliance and its achievements. A survey completed by BDC Members indicated a clear need for better communication with Members as to current working arrangements, key projects and ongoing achievements. Members concluded that as an interim measure prior to the agreement of further areas for review, improved communications was critical. A programme of Member's Briefings, either written and/or group presentation was recommended, alongside improved publicity as to the effectiveness of the arrangement:

“CS&TSc17/18 2.4 – A programme of Member's Briefings covering the Strategic Alliance, our shared services and the achievements to date, either written and/or group presentation, is developed for the 2018/19 municipal year, with a commitment to evaluate the programme following the 2019 elections.”

During the course of this review in September 2018, a presentation was also given to BDC Council, following this recommendation from the 2017/18 Review of The Strategic Alliance.

When hearing from Officers in the service, they acknowledged that Environmental Health Management were aware that there were concerns over 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 from 9am to 1pm. When Members queried the current success of the Members' Surgery, Officers acknowledged that it had not been widely used to date. It would continue in

its current guise but could be adapted to different times/days if Members felt this would help.

Officers were clear that Member contact is very important. They appreciate the difficulty of not being formally based at The Arc but can be located there whenever needed. Staff are regularly located on the first floor hot desks at The Arc on Thursdays and regular meetings also take place with both Portfolio Holders. Managers also noted that out of the 45 staff in the joint service, 20 are new having been recruited over the last four years, so many may not have had any contact with Members. Arrangements can be made for Members to meet relevant staff.

Other update reports will also be introduced on service activities and enforcement work. The Environmental Health Service Annual Report will provide further service detail when available.

As the Committee has already made this previous recommendation for improved communications, no further recommendation will be made at this stage pending the implementation of the 2017/18 recommendation.

5.3 Review equality of access to the service from both Districts

One of the key areas of investigation for Members was how residents accessed the service, particularly as all staff were based at Mill Lane as their primary office base.

Officers noted that for all environmental health service requests, communications should be sent to:

Bolsover: enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk or 01246 231111

NEDDC: Ext. 7873 or Environmentalhealthadmin@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk

Officers were keen to re-emphasise the need for all communication to be via the Contact Centre/main enquiries email address to ensure that requests for service were managed equitably and that calls were not duplicated in the system as a result of separate communications with individual Officers. They noted that they were still experiencing a number of situations where Members were contacting Officers directly rather than logging issues centrally using the system. In terms of performance managing response times of the service, it was important that all calls were logged in the same manner.

With specific reference to Licensing services, Members were very conscious that Bolsover customers were required to go to Mill Lane. The key issue for Members was the distance travelled outside the District and why we could not offer the service within the District to limit travel and increase access by public transport.

In response, Managers noted that any of the services requiring face-to-face contact could be offered at The Arc or a Contact Centre, but they had their own concerns that this could create an under-used resource if we were to have an Officer sitting waiting for someone to come in. It was clear from the information

provided that a number of service requests could be handled over the phone. Officers also noted that they had not received any complaints in relation to accessing services.

Members suggested that an improvement would be to offer pre-arranged appointments at both The Arc and Contact Centres to ensure that Officer time was not unduly impacted. Officers agreed that this would be possible with current resources and they were also currently looking at additional options for online applications. In addition, should a customer present at a BDC Contact Centre, it is possible to speak to Environmental Health Officers over the phone with support from customer service staff. Furthermore, the 'Report It' function can be accessed within the main reception area at The Arc within the Digital Services area.

Officers requested that where Members come across a situation where customers cannot access our services, to let Managers know so adjustments to delivery can be made. All routine requests however would need to be put through the contact centres.

During the course of reviewing evidence, a number of Members commented on the process of accessing the service as a member of the public. Where members had had to do this as a resident they had found the process complicated and confusing. There was resounding agreement that a guide(s) would be beneficial which explained each element of the service; how to register a request for service. It was noted that a recent review by Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee had made a recommendation that the Report It system be reviewed:

“HSCGC17/18 1.14 – That the ‘Report It’ system on the website is fully reviewed, with ‘user’ testing, alongside the wider recommendation to improve publicity on communication channels and how to report incidents.”

Recommendation:

That the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee keep the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee briefed on the implementation of scrutiny recommendation HSCGC17/18 1.14.

5.4 Review of existing Service Level Agreement

As part of the review process, Members heard evidence from the Council’s legal team in reference to the original creation of the Joint Service. Previous reports, including the Legal Agreement, allude to a Service Level Agreement (SLA) as being a required document to be produced as part of the creation of the Environmental Health Service Partnership. Further investigation has shown that due to the numerous changes in staffing since the creation of the ‘Partnership’, a final version cannot be found on file. Due to the time elapsed since the creation of the Partnership and the changes in delivery, Members agreed that it was appropriate to go ahead and produce an SLA based on the current requirements of the ‘Partnership’.

Members considered a range of potential clauses that could be incorporated in to a revised SLA and agreed that legal Officers should take account of the following:

1. Statement of relationship to Environmental Health shared service agreement and business case.
2. Outline of developments since the service commenced.
3. Outline of services to be provided. This to include section on communication with members and how to access the service. May include services not provided.
4. Delivery/service standards
5. Performance management arrangements and reporting arrangements
6. Responsibilities of the 2 Councils in relation to the service.
7. Funding arrangements. (Income/expenditure/recharge arrangements)
8. The current staffing structure including management arrangements. Host or employing authority/base location and flexible mobile working
9. SLA review date.
10. What procedures to follow if procuring services or goods.

Members concluded that the SLA should be complimentary to both current business and the original Legal Agreement from 2012.

It was agreed that Officers from the legal team should share the proposal with the Chair of NEDDC Organisation Scrutiny Committee, as part of their ongoing briefing on the review work.

Recommendation:

That the Council's legal team produces a revised Service Level Agreement for approval by Executive and the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee.

That the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee receive the draft Service Level Agreement prior to submission to Executive for consideration.

6. Conclusions

The Committee have put together three recommendations which will hopefully support further sustainability and development of the joint Environmental Health & Licensing service.

The key issues arising from the review were:

- The development and approval of a revised Service Level Agreement;
- A review of the online 'Report It' system to ensure that customer engagement remains efficient and effective, with systems that are simple to use.

It is hoped that the recommendations set out in this review report will further improve a service that is already performing well. Given the upheaval of creating a merged service across the Strategic Alliance, Members commend that work ethic of Officers who have continued to strive for excellent and efficient service delivery.

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

Stakeholders engaged during the Review:

- Portfolio Holder – Housing and Community Safety
- Joint Strategic Director – Place
- Joint Head of Housing & Community Safety
- Environmental Health Managers
- Joint Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council/North East Derbyshire District Council
- Team Leader (Contentious)/ Deputy Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council/North East Derbyshire District Council
- BDC Members
- NEDDC Members

Stakeholders impacted by the Review:

- Portfolio Holder – Housing and Community Safety
- Joint Strategic Director – Place
- Joint Head of Housing & Community Safety
- Environmental Health Managers
- Joint Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council/North East Derbyshire District Council
- Team Leader (Contentious)/Deputy Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council/North East Derbyshire District Council
- BDC Members
- NEDDC Members

Appendix 2: Bibliography

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (2011), Minutes of Strategic Alliance Joint Committee December 2011.

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (December 2015), Environmental Health – Communication Strategy 2015/16.

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (2017), Operational Risk Management Register – Joint Environmental Health (Reviewed & Updated Sept 2017)

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (April 2018), Environmental Health Structure Charts.

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (July 2018), Customer and Elected Member contact channels for the Joint Environmental Health Service.

Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, (July 2018), Joint Service Background Information.

Joint Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health, (2017), DD-122-17-JA Authorisation of Officers – Environmental Health, North East Derbyshire District Council. <http://www.bolsover.gov.uk/images/LIVE/DelegatedDecisions//DD-122-17-JA---Authorisation-of-Officers-Environmental-Health.pdf>

Joint Directors of Development and Health & Well Being (Jointly with the Chief Executive), (2011), Strategic Alliance Joint Committee: Agenda Item 7(b) – Environmental and Planning Services Review (Exempt Report), Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council

Solicitor to the Council, (2012), Council: Agenda Item 11 – Legal agreement for the Environmental Health and Licensing Service with North East Derbyshire District Council, Bolsover District Council.

<http://web.bolsover.gov.uk/reportsagendas/Reports/report12882.pdf>



**We speak
your language**

Polish

**Mówimy Twoim
językiem**

Slovak

**Rozprávame
Vaším jazykom**

Chinese

我们会说你的语言

If you require
this publication in
large print
or another format
please call us on
01246 242424