

CUSTOMER SERVICE & TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 9 September 2019 at 10:00.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Rose Bowler in the Chair

Councillors Rita Turner, Allan Bailey, Anne Clarke, Tricia Clough (from during Minute No. 0253), Ray Heffer and Andrew Joesbury.

Officers:- Lee Hickin (Strategic Director – People) (to Minute No 0256), Ann Bedford (Customer Standards and Complaints Officer)(to Minute No. 0254), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager)(to Minute No. 0255), (Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer) and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting to Minute No 0256 were Councillors Mary Dooley, (Portfolio Holder – Partnerships and Transformation), Duncan McGregor, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder – Corporate Governance), Clive Moesby (Portfolio Holder - Finance and Resources) (from during Minute No. 0254) and Sandra Peake (Portfolio Holder – Housing and Community Safety).

247 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Jane Bryson, Paul Cooper and David Dixon.

248 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

249 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

250 MINUTES - 15TH JULY 2019

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held on 15th July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

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

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner

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

252 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS AND COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - 1ST OCTOBER 2018 TO 31ST MARCH 2019 AND ANNUAL SUMMARY.

Committee considered a report which provided detailed information on the Council's performance in relation to its customer service standards and management of complaints during the last two quarter periods of 2018/19 – October 2018 to March 2019.

Telephones - Target - 93% to be answered within 20 seconds

The report identified that 96% (in both Quarter 3 and Quarter 4) of incoming calls were answered corporately within 20 seconds cumulatively. Those departments who did not achieve the key customer service standard of 93% for Quarter 3 and 4 were;

- Housing and Community Safety 92% in Q3
- Customer Service 85% in Q3 and 91% in Q4
- Revenues & Benefits 81% in Q3 and 74% in Q4.

E-mails - Target 1 - 100% to be acknowledged within 1 working day and Target 2 - 100% to be replied to within 8 working days

4,798 email enquiries (2,355 in Q3 and 2,443 in Q4) from the public were received through enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk and all were acknowledged within one working day and 99% were replied to in full within 8 working days.

Face to face monitoring - Target – 99% not kept waiting longer than 20 minutes at a Contact Centre

Waiting times were monitored during weeks commencing 14th January 2019 and 15th July 2019. In total 1,703 customers called into the Contact Centres, 1,698 of which (99.7%) waited less than 20 minutes to be served. This exceeded the corporate target and demonstrated excellent service.

Compliments

In total 135 written compliments were received - this included 39 for Leisure, 29 for Housing and 28 for Streetscene. It was noted that some compliments received, however, cross cut with other departments. Members queried if the compliments were passed back to relevant staff and the Officer confirmed that information was filtered through to relevant departments.

Comments

Twenty six written comments were received for the two quarter periods of which 100%

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were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days.

Complaints

Frontline resolution (stage one)

Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre were recorded on the Customer Information System (Firmstep) by department. The customer service standard for responding to these complaints was 3 working days.

Formal Investigation (stage two)

95 Formal Investigation complaints were received during the two quarter periods of which 99% were responded to within the customer service standard of 15 working days. Some complaints cross cut with other departments. It was noted that this exceeded the target of 97%.

Internal Review (stage three)

Stage three complaints were complainants who had made a stage two complaint but had still felt dissatisfied. During the two quarter periods, 17 stage three complaints were received, 94% (16) of which were responded to within the standard of 20 working days.

Ombudsman

During 2018/19 as at the end of March 2019, five cases were closed after initial enquiries and the Council was awaiting further correspondence in respect of 2 other complaints.

The results would show that the Council had an easy to access complaints system as recommended by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman.

Members welcomed the report and noted the good results achieved.

Moved by Councillor Rita Turner and seconded by Councillor Rose Bowler
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

253 ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2018/19

Committee considered a report which provided an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made about the Authority for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

Committee was asked to note that the data provided by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman may not align with the data that the Council held. This was because their numbers included enquiries from people who had been signposted by the LGSCO back to the Council but then the customer may have chosen not to pursue their complaint.

The LGSCO had received 15 complaints against the Council during 2018/19, none of which were subject to a detailed investigation. The LGSCO had decided 9 complaints, of

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which 2 were incomplete or invalid, advice was given in 1 and 2 were referred back to the Council. Four were closed after initial enquiries.

Members noted that the report was a good report.

Moved by Councillor Rose Bowler and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Customer Standards and Complaints Officer left the meeting.

254 CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE - APRIL TO JUNE 2019 (QUARTER 1 - 2019/20).

Committee considered a report which provided the Quarter 1 outturns (April to June 2019) for the Corporate Plan 2019-2020, which sat under the 'providing our customers with excellent service' and 'transforming our organisation' aims as of 30th June 2019. There were 11 targets in total of which all were on track;

- Providing our Customers with Excellent Service - 10 targets in total.
- Transforming our Organisation - 1 target in total.

Providing our Customers with Excellent Service;

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

There were 54 approaches made to the Council in Quarter 1 from people facing homelessness. 28 cases were prevented from becoming homeless (52%). 7 cases were still open and receiving support.

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

There were 41 new units of Careline equipment provided to older vulnerable people in Quarter 1.

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

Quarter 1 data would not be available until the end of July 2019. The data was obtained from a system extract of which the date was determined by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

A query had been raised at the Scrutiny pre meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair and a response to the query was circulated at the meeting as follows;

Is the data available?

Officer Response;

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Quarter 1 2019/20 = 15.79 days (Actual).

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

Quarter 1 data would not be available until the end of July 2019. The data was obtained from a system extract of which the date was determined by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

A query had been raised at the Scrutiny pre meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair and a response to the query was circulated at the meeting as follows;

Is the data available?

Officer Response;

Quarter 1 2019/20 = 5.39 days (Actual).

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

There were 48 disability adaptations completed in Quarter 1. The target status was to be reviewed at 6 months. The Council responded to requests from DCC for adaptations and these were scheduled according to Council budget and resource. Larger jobs, e.g., wet rooms had been done in Quarter 1, which affected the number recorded but provided a better outcome for the tenant.

C 11 - Monitor performance against the corporate equality objectives and publish information annually.

Quarter 1 - Good progress was being made against the new equality objectives for 2019-2023. Notable actions in the quarter included holding a very positive meeting of the Equality Panel, providing equality & diversity training to Members and new staff starters, collation of draft engagement plan ready for publishing on the Council's website and supporting the organisation of transgender guidance to NEDDC Leisure staff which the BDC Equality lead also attended.

C12 - Ensure a minimum of 50% of clients experiencing Domestic Violence each year are satisfied with the support they received.

A total of 31 new referrals were received during Quarter 1 of which 11 were high risk. A total of 11 did not engage with the service. For those who did (20), all feedback forms had been completed. Positive responses (100%) were received from 20 service users.

C 13 - Reduce average re-let times of Council properties (not including sheltered accommodation) to 20 days by March 2020.

Queries had been raised at the Scrutiny pre meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair and a response to those queries was circulated at the meeting as follows;

Members are pleased to note the improved performance. Could the commentary pleased be expanded to make reference to what actions have taken place over the quarter to ensure the target was met i.e. is it just as a result of the Voids Review/

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Voids Task Group?

In addition, following Officers attending at the last meeting as part of our current review, there was a discussion as to the Members receiving additional information on number of voids/location of voids/length of time void. It would be useful to know if there could be any further detail at this stage.

Officer Response;

Revised update:- The average re-let time for Quarter 1 was 20 days. (Including sheltered housing the overall average was 55 days). The target was also achieved in Quarter 4 2018/19 – 20 days (Including sheltered housing – 47 days). So this target had shown improved performance from January 2019. This reflected the impact of the Voids Review.

The Action Plan from the Voids Review identified the following 'tools' to be used by the Voids Task Group:-

- Erection of 'For Rent' boards on low demand properties.
- The remodelling of kitchens/bathrooms on bungalows/ground floor flats as part of void works.
- The installation of wet rooms to bungalow as part of void works.
- To add all properties to the ground maintenance schedule (rather than one off cuts).
- Removal of shutters prior to viewings.
- To ensure staff communicate through the void period to identify and action potential issues.

During Quarter 1 some of these measures had not been needed, e.g. advertising boards. Relevant Housing Teams (Needs and Repairs) work closely on monitoring interest in properties and use the tools where required.

The method of collating and reporting void data was being reviewed in preparation for the refresh of the Council's corporate performance arrangements currently being undertaken.

These measures include:-

- Undertaking benchmarking work with other housing providers. (A neighbouring Council has approached us to detail our working practices as our void performance is good. We have shared the work undertaken by the Voids Review and the Action Plan).
- Utilising the facilities of the new OPEN Housing Management System being implemented to provide more detailed data.

Further to requests from Members and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, a schedule of properties allocated was being prepared detailing the number of voids, location and length of time void. This would be provided on a quarterly basis commencing Quarter 2 (June – Sept 2019). This schedule would also be amended to meet the requirements of revised performance indicators.

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The Deputy Leader felt that void accommodation in sheltered housing complexes should be included in the reporting of the number of void properties as these also contributed to a loss of rent for the Council. He added that Council properties were only let on a Monday and this further contributed to a loss of rental income. The Chair noted that when a tenant passed away, relatives had to give notice and hand keys back in to the Council within a month - this has caused distress to families in some cases known to the Chair. The Portfolio Holder for Housing noted that these were issues she would be looking into.

C 14 - Attend 98% of repair emergencies within 6 working hours.

Quarter 1 – 97.80% - The Lead Officer had requested that this target be reduced to 98% for 2019/20. As reported during the 2015-2019 Corporate Plan, performance was consistently around 97.6%. It was not feasible to attain 99% for all emergencies received during office hours due to the overlap with the 'out of hours' service. The lead officer considered 98% attainable. Recommendation to be included in the Quarter 1 Performance Report to Executive.

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

1 course had been completed in Quarter 1, 'Living with Teenagers' and out of the 5 parents attending, all completed the course and questionnaire. All 5 (100%) expressed a positive outcome and would recommend to others.

Transforming our Organisation;

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

Quarter 1 - On line transactions = 1,480 (Self Service (628) and Webchats (852))
286 new SELF accounts were created.

Implementation of the 'Do-it Online, Redesign SELF' project and the increase of forms available for the public to access had now been delivered and went live on 1st May 2019. In addition, a refresh to the BDC website homepage to make the 'SELF' facility more prominent was still ongoing. 21 additional new services were available with consideration for further forms where possible - this was an increase from 16 self-service forms, which were available in 2018/19. (2018/19 total = 2,350 on line 'self' transactions against a target of 2,600). Target for on-line transactions for 2019/20 was 4003 (this was 20% increase on 3336 - all Online Self (2350) and Webchat (986) contact during 2018/19). From 01/04/19 baseline and target measurement to include webchats also to reflect all online activity.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner
RESOLVED that progress against the Corporate Plan 2019-2020 targets be noted.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager left the meeting.

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255 UPDATE BRIEFING ON TRANSFORMATION PLAN AND SUBMISSIONS TO TRANSFORMATION GOVERNANCE GROUP.

Committee considered a presentation by the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update regarding the Council's Transformation Plan and submissions to the Transformation Governance Group.

The Strategic Director – People, provided some background information on what led to the necessity of the Transformation Plan for the Council.

The Government's austerity measures had meant cuts in Revenue Support Grant which they provided to local authorities to operate their services. The Government wanted local authorities to be more self-sufficient and create locally generated funding to stimulate growth in their areas. Partner agencies were also subject to austerity cuts and this had further impacted on the Council.

The overarching vision of the Council's Transformation Plan was to deliver a self-sustaining Council; delivering excellent services to the community, when and how they wanted them. The three key areas focused on were - Income generation, Cost reduction and Service redesign.

Council staff were encouraged and empowered to be involved from the outset and a 'one team' approach was inspired via staff briefings, posters and team meetings etc. Over a two month period, 500 ideas were submitted by staff and Members across the organisation to make savings and to work in more efficient ways. Although, some ideas submitted were similar, this showed that staff and Members had bought into the programme.

So far, since 2018/19, £119,000 in annual savings had been secured against the £1m transformation target and the presentation provided a breakdown of the areas where this had been achieved.

The presentation also outlined further transformation plans which the Council hoped to achieve by 2021/22 which would increase savings to £760k.

To build on the idea of sustainable transformation and the skills needed to put into teams to encourage growth and development, the Change Makers Programme was created. This was a leadership programme aimed at staff who wanted to achieve more and try other areas of the business of the Council. The Programme focused on the right behaviours of staff from a leadership point of view and also embedded a coaching and training programme that reflected what was needed i.e., the right skills. The Programme was more aligned to commerciality and business improvement and would equip teams with knowledge and skills necessary to achieve sustainable transformation.

In response to Members' queries, the Strategic Director – People noted the following; the Council held Employee Awards and also through the Strategic Alliance Management Team, awarded certificates to acknowledge good suggestions from staff. Departmental Service Reviews were currently being looked at and ideas would also come out of those reviews. With regard to being a paper light organisation, the Council would be rolling out Mod.Gov, which was a committee management software package, within the next few months further to staff and Member training sessions being held in the very near future. A Member queried if the £1m transformation target was achievable. The Strategic Director – People felt this would be achieved prior to 2021/22.

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Members thanked the Strategic Director – People for his presentation.

The Strategic Director – People and Councillors McGregor, Peake, Dooley and Moesby left the meeting.

256 POST SCRUTINY MONITORING: REVIEW OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE - OPERATIONAL REVIEW - INTERIM REPORT.

Committee considered a report which provided six month monitoring period information in relation to their Review of Standards Committee (Operational Review).

During 2018/19, Committee scrutinised the work of the Standards Committee and how it operated. Committee concluded that the following were key issues requiring further activity;

- The introduction of a more formalised approach to training, particularly at Parish Council level;
- Consideration of Article 9 of the Constitution and the Standards Committee Terms of Reference (Part 3.6) as part of the annual review process – see benchmarking exercise at 5.5 and 5.6 in the main report which highlights areas for consideration;
- Improved public information, both web-based and hard-copy, to ensure the role of Standards Committee is clear.

Committee had agreed 7 recommendations which aimed to assist the Council in improving existing approaches to Member training and engagement on Standards.

Executive had approved Committee's recommendations and the report acknowledged progress to date by officers implementing them.

To date, 2 out of the 7 recommendations had been implemented. Two recommendations required an extension due to the timing of meetings of Standards Committee before and after the May 2019 Elections. These recommendations should still be achieved during the 12 month monitoring period. Three recommendations were 'on track' and further implementation would accommodate the timing of training and the development of the new committee management system/current re-development of the Council's website.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury
RESOLVED that (1) progress against the Review recommendations be noted,

(2) in accordance with Part 4.5.17(3) of the Council's Constitution, the findings of the Review be made public.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

257 POST SCRUTINY MONITORING: REVIEW OF DELIVERY OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & LICENSING - INTERIM REPORT.

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Committee considered a report which provided six month monitoring period information in relation to their Review of the Delivery of Environmental Health & Licensing.

During 2018/19, Committee scrutinised the work of the Environmental Health & Licensing Service as a follow-up review to the Review of The Strategic Alliance. Committee concluded that the following were key issues requiring further activity;

- 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.

Committee had agreed 3 recommendations which aimed to support further sustainability and development of the joint Environmental Health & Licensing service, enhancing their existing high performance.

Executive had approved Committee's recommendations and the report acknowledged progress to date by officers implementing them. All 3 recommendations required an extension to the initial target dates but were still expected to complete during the 12 month monitoring period.

Two of the recommendations related to the production of the revised Service Level Agreement of which a significant amount of work had been progressed, however, input was required to the service provision by the recently appointed Environmental Health Manager.

The recommendation relating to the implementation of the previous Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee's recommendation HSCGC17/18 1.14, had also made significant progress and was due to complete its monitoring phase in October 2019, following the extended target date.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rita Turner
RESOLVED that (1) progress against the Review recommendations be noted,

(2) in accordance with Part 4.5.17(3) of the Council's Constitution, the findings of the Review be made public.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

258 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20 & FORMAL AGREEMENT OF SCOPING DOCUMENT.

Committee considered their Work Programme 2019/20.

Committee considered and agreed the scoping document in relation to their Review of the Re-letting of Council properties.

Committee agreed to hold an additional informal meeting on Monday 23rd September 2019 which would take place at the Riverside Depot at Doe Lea at 10am.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rose Bowler
RESOLVED that (1) the Work Programme 2019/20 be noted,

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(2) the scoping document in relation to the Review of the Re-letting of Council properties be agreed.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The meeting concluded at 1130 hours.

The meeting concluded at 11:30.