

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 4th November 2019 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Rose Bowler in the Chair

Councillors Anne Clarke, Tricia Clough, Paul Cooper, David Dixon, Ray Heffer, Rita Turner and Andrew Joesbury.

Officers:- Victoria Dawson (Team Manager (Legal) (to Minute No. 0394), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) (to Minute No.0393), Clare Sansom (Tenancy Management Officer) (to Minute No. 0394), Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer) and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

0387. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

0388. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0389. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0390. MINUTES – 7TH OCTOBER 2019

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7th October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

0391. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury

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

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0392. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019 (QUARTER 2 – 2019/20)

Committee considered the Quarter 2 (July 2019 to September 2019) performance outturn for Corporate Plan targets which sat under the 'Providing our customers with excellent service' and 'Transforming our organisation' aims as of 30th September 2019. (Information compiled on 17th October 2019).

Providing our customers with excellent service

There were 10 targets in total. 8 targets were on track and the 2 targets below were on alert, i.e., they may not achieve their intended outcomes.

C07 - Install 150 new lifelines within the community each year. April - Sept - 65 new units of equipment provided to older vulnerable people.

This was slightly below the average target, however, the service was currently receiving a high number of enquiries for telecare equipment. The lead officer expected the target to be met.

April - Sept - 65 new units of equipment provided to older vulnerable people

C10 - Carry out 300 disability adaptations to Council houses each year. - 104 welfare adaptations completed.

Works completed to date were larger, complex works, i.e., wet rooms, ramps etc. A large schedule of smaller works (grab rails/handrails etc) was currently being ordered. The demand for adaptations remained high and work planning would accommodate this. The lead officer expected the target to be met.

104 welfare adaptations completed.

A query was raised as to when Members would receive void property information previously requested by the Committee. The Chair advised the meeting that a software update was currently being carried out on the Housing system and she would report on this more in the informal part of the meeting.

Transforming our organisation

There was 1 target in total which was reported as being on track.

T13 - Increase on-line self- service transactions dealt with by the Contact Centre by 20% each year.

Quarter 2 - Online transactions = 1,739 (843 Self Service & 896 - Webchats) 462 new SELF accounts created. To date 3,219 transactions. This was 80% towards the annual target.

Redesign of the BDC Homepage to make the Self Service function easier to access and more prominent to go live for National Customer Service Week (NCSW) event Contact Centre staff promoting SELF and other online services available, payments, repairs and

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benefits etc. Also registering customers with a new Self Service Account (NCSW week commencing 07/10/19) 2,875 residents had registered for a Self Service Account (2019/20 Q1 & Q2 462).

Target for on-line transactions for 2019/20 was 4,003 (this was a 20% increase on 3,336 - all online Self (2,350) 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 Andrew Joesbury and seconded by Councillor Ray Heffer
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager left the meeting.

0393. RENT ARREARS POLICY – CONSULTATION

Committee's feedback was sought in relation to a proposed Rent Arrears Policy and procedure prior to approval by Executive.

It was considered good practice to have a policy which set out the Council's approach to prevention and collection of rent arrears.

The Council owned and managed its housing stock consisting of 5,061 properties as at October 2019. All tenants of the Council had signed a tenancy agreement which set out the rights and responsibilities of tenant(s) and the Council. The tenancy agreement stated that tenants should pay their rent on a weekly basis and if they failed to do so and fell into arrears, the Council could apply for possession as set out in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as may be amended from time to time).

The proposed Rent Arrears Policy and procedure had been developed by the Tenancy Management Team in consultation with Legal Services. The procedure, which sat alongside the policy, ensured that all officers involved in tenancy management at different levels or stages, adopted the same fair but firm approach and took account of the need to consider equality and proportionality when taking any action.

Member's queried what due care was taken by the Council so a tenant fully understood their tenancy agreement before they signed up to it - also the content of any letters sent to tenants if they fell into rent arrears. The Tenancy Management Officer advised Members that 'tenancy agreement' interviews were carried out which lasted around 45 minutes to an hour and were prepared for in advance. For example, there may be a need for a language interpreter, paperwork printed in a larger font or on different coloured paper. The Team Manager (Legal) added that the same approach was taken with rent arrears letters and any other letters sent out to tenants and also where contact by email had been requested in lieu of letters. Early intervention was key and a tenant in rent arrears would be signposted to the Citizens Advice Bureau and/or the Law Centre for advice.

A Member commented that the Council had previously held customer service consultation workshops across the District with local organisations and Members in

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attendance. Residents could have their say on Council services including methods and content of communications they received from the Council. The Team Manager (Legal) agreed to look into options for Members to be more involved in this in the future.

In response to a Member's query, the Tenancy Management Officer agreed that any abbreviations in the Policy and Procedure would be removed and replaced by their full wording.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Andrew Joesbury

RESOLVED that (1) the Policy and Procedure be noted,

(2) any abbreviations contained in the Policy and Procedure be removed and replaced by their full wording.

(Tenancy Management Team/Legal)

The Team Manager (Legal) and the Tenancy Management Officer left the meeting.

0394. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020

Committee considered their Work Programme 2019/2020.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager would attend the Committee's December meeting to consult with Members on the development of new performance framework to support the Council's vision for 2019-2023. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer suggested Members look back on their June meeting papers at the Corporate Plan Targets Performance Update – January to March 2019 (Q4 – 2018/19) in order to understand the wider range of actions and performance indicators previously monitored, as preparation for discussions on the new performance framework.

Moved by Councillor Andrew Joesbury and Councillor Ray Heffer

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 1040 hours.