

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2022

Present: Councillor J C Patrick, Chair

Councillors: D K Watts
S Easom
S Dannheimer
L Fletcher
J C Goold
M Hannah
E Kerry
P J Owen
C M Tideswell
I L Tyler

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M J Crow and R S Robinson

15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

16 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

17 **CONSIDERATION OF CALL-IN**

Members noted that there were no items for consideration for Call-In.

18 **MINUTES FROM WORKING GROUPS**

Members noted the Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group.

19 **HOUSING REPAIRS UPDATE**

The Committee was updated on the function of the Housing Repairs Services from the Head of Housing.

It was noted that the Housing Repairs Service had been recently transferred into Housing from Asset Management. The review was now being undertaken by the Head of Housing and the aim was to continue to increase the level of customer service experience by ensuring good record keeping, providing operatives with adequate van stock and continue to make progress to getting it right first time.

The implementation date of the National Housing Federation software was still to be confirmed but was a solution to support the process with the correct schedule of rates for jobs, allocation of times and reporting within the back office function. It was further noted a freeze on recruitment for this area had caused some work pressures especially with annual leave and allocated jobs had to be cancelled to accommodate emergencies. The freeze had been necessary to evaluate the needs of the service and to align the terms and conditions of current staff. Interim resource and recruitment of multi skilled operatives would hopefully fill the gap in the short term.

It was agreed to invite the Head of Housing for an update at a future meeting.

20 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP - REVIEW OF TELEPHONE ANSWERING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group presented the report to the Committee on the Review of Telephone Answering and Customer Services. He thanked Members of the Working Group and commented that the group had worked well together. The conclusions of the report were discussed that it had been positive that there had been improving levels of call answering but fluctuation caused further concern.

The Committee considered the recommendations to Cabinet. Discussion of monitoring calls, management responsibility and impact of planning queries ensued. Members were updated at the meeting that there would be further information provided by the Head of Planning and Regeneration on the Duty Planning availability, call answering and support to the department for answering queries from members of the public in the next Member Matters.

A suggestion to add a scrutiny topic: Service Provided by the Duty Planning Team and Acknowledgment of Calls was considered by the Committee and agreed to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy was present at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the following be RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

- 1. Staffing contingency arrangements be considered for the Contact Centre during peak times in order for residents calls to be answered, in addition to the use of market supplements to address staffing issues.**
- 2. Key Performance Indicators be introduced in relation to departmental call answering data to monitor performance and provide feedback.**
- 3. The answerphone greeting should be standardised across the Authority and be conducted by the Individual Officer. For all Officers to follow a set process of answering calls across the Authority. Officers should only use answerphone messages if they are away for no more than 24 hours and messages should be replied to the following working day. If Officers are to be away for longer the call**

would enter a hunt group to be answered by a colleague. This should be included in the Customer Services' Strategy.

4. The phone message that reminds customers of the possibility of resolving issues by visiting the Councils website to be reviewed, the length of the message reduced and repetition of the message reduced.

RESOLVED that a Scrutiny Topic: Service Provided by the Duty Planning Team and Acknowledgment of Calls be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

21 AGILE WORKING

Members welcomed a presentation on agile working from the Executive Director to assist the Committee to review the item. The presentation provided information to the Committee with Pre- pandemic data up to the current year to analyse service performance, statistical information on complaints, compliments, digital services that had supported members of public to move to making payments online, and sickness information of employees.

Some Members of the Committee requested that further information was required to answer some of the queries identified within the scoping form. The presentation provided statistical information and data but further information was required to answer further queries.

Members proposed that a working group be formed to scrutinise the topic further. The nominations were Councillors S. Dannheimer, I L Tyler, M Hannah, S Easom, and L Fletcher.

RESOLVED that:

1. A Working Group be set up to scrutinise the Agile Working topic.
2. The Working Group to be Chaired by Councillor S Dannheimer and the Vice Chair Councillor S Easom.

22 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Cabinet Work Programme.

23 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme. Missed Bins and Cost of Living was chosen as topics by the Committee. The topics would be scoped at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the work Programme be approved.

24 SCOPING TOPIC REVIEW

Members agreed for the Chair and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scope the Missed Bin topic and Cost of Living would be scoped at the next meeting.