

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022

Present: Councillor P J Owen, Chair

Councillors: M Hannah
S Easom
J C Goold
I L Tyler

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

6 **SCRUTINY OF TELEPHONE ANSWERING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Working Group was provided with an update on Customer Services from the Council's Head of Revenues, Benefits, and Customer Services in relation to the hunt group calls, answerphone greeting, back office calls, Planning and Environment, Customer Service contingencies, phone messages, online usage and call transfers.

Members were happy to wait for the data in relation to the back office staff answering calls and the workflow of the hunt group. Concern had been raised how Outlook and Microsoft Teams worked together and a query was raised if staff was using the integrated app Headspace within Microsoft Teams and if Managers were auditing staff, that diaries should be checked in addition for Meetings.

It was suggested that the answerphone greeting should be updated to the Officer's voice and a consistent greeting message across the Authority should be applied. The standards of best Customer Practice and what should be expected should be available on the website and communicated. The Head of Revenues, Benefits, and Customer Services confirmed that the possibility of creating a standard answerphone greeting would form part of the Customer Service Strategy including identifying the name and department of the Officer contacted, the answerphone greeting would be conducted by the individual Officer, and when the Officer was going to be absent for more than 24 hours, then their call would be forward to another Officer within their group.

It was agreed to ask the Head of Planning and Economic Development to provide further information to the next meeting on the service provided by the Duty Planners. Queries raised included, why the Duty Planner was only available between the hours of 10.30am -12.30pm, how much time was being spent out of the office, and could

additional resources resolve the issues experienced by Members of the Public and Councillors trying to contact the Officer. There was also an issue raised about the Environment department and service requests relating to missed bins. There was a need to have a better understanding of how the responses to emails and phone calls were responded to in the event of a service request. A review of the phone navigation system had taken place and some further improvements had been made to the routing of calls to improve the customer experience. Feedback should be provided to ensure the change had not reflected on more calls being generated or complaints. It was agreed that Missed bins was a separate scrutiny issue.

It was discussed that the phone message that reminds customers of the possibility of resolving issues on the Council's website, and was played during the process of waiting to be connected was not acceptable and should be removed. A recommendation to remove the phone message was put forward and agreed.

Further questions were raised of whether the data would be available from the Executive Director for the next meeting, how many staff are using CISCO and what is the timeline for transition to Microsoft teams.

RECOMMEND to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that:

- 1. 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.**
- 2. The phone message that reminds Customers of the possibility of resolving issues by visiting the Council's website should be removed from the process of waiting to be connected.**

7 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 17 August 2022 at 5.30pm