

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Meeting held 19 April 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Peace (Chair), Ian Auckland, John Booker, Denise Fox, Douglas Johnson, Pat Midgley, Josie Paszek, Ian Saunders and Cliff Woodcraft

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mick Rooney.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. HOW SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO DO BUSINESS - ETHICAL PROCUREMENT

4.1 The Chair suggested that consideration of this item be deferred to a meeting in the Municipal Year 2018/19, to allow for further public consultation on the Ethical Procurement Strategy.

4.2 The Committee concurred with the suggestion now made.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.1 14th February 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th February 2018, were approved as a correct record.

5.2 22nd February 2018

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 22nd February 2018, were approved as a correct record.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public:-

6.2 Alan Kewley

What are the Council's main sources of customer feedback to support the developing Customer Experience Strategy?

6.2.1 The Chair stated that a response would be provided as part of the consideration of Agenda Item 7 (Customer Experience Programme – Update).

6.3 Annie O’Gara

(a) Is the Committee content with the manner of consultation of stakeholders who have offered full support in the drafting of the Ethical Procurement Policy?

(b) Does the Policy live up to the elevated rhetorical claim within it, especially if, as it stands, a large multi-national with a complex structure can effectively evade the conditions related to Discretionary Exclusion, ie not feel any consequences for grave professional misconduct which renders their integrity questionable, whilst a small, Sheffield-based local business, cannot evade the consequences of its misconduct?

(c) Is this Policy being rushed through, without proper consultation and exploration of all its implications and problems?

6.3.1 The Chair stated that written responses would be provided to the questions raised.

7. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY - UPDATE

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications, containing an update on progress, and plans for the future, in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy over the last twelve months, focusing specifically on the development of the Council's online services and changes to the Customer Contact Centre.

7.2 In attendance for this item were Martin Riggall (Head of Digital Services) and Paul Taylor (Head of Customer Services).

7.3 Martin Riggall stated that there had been a considerable amount of progress made with regard to improving the experience that the Council's customers had in accessing customer services. The Council had undertaken detailed consultation with the public on the improvements, which had included face to face discussions with residents, holding workshops and organising online surveys. As part of the Council's ongoing monitoring of customer services, residents were contacted and questioned about their experiences when contacting the Council, and a sample of residents had been recorded whilst trying to access on-line services, which helped to make

improvements.

7.4 Paul Taylor reported on the improvements made to the Customer Contact Centre, building on the successful establishment, in April 2017, of an out of hours contact centre, based at the Manor Lane site, for emergency repairs and problems with lifts. Mr. Taylor stated that, following this, the Council had insourced some of the calls being dealt with by South Yorkshire Police's '101' service, with the calls in scope including issues relating to homelessness, vulnerable adults and children, and anti-social behaviour relating to Council properties and premises. He stated that this service, effective from 1st February 2018, had resulted in an average of 96% of calls being answered, and that feedback about the service had been very positive. There were also plans for Customer Services to speak with other Council Services about whether they could benefit from having out of hours calls taken by the Contact Centre. The Council was currently looking to upgrade its telephone system, which would result in there being a number of new facilities which would help the customer experience, such as callers being informed that they were in a queue, and giving them notification of approximately when their call would be answered.

7.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The introduction of the new telephone system would enable the Contact Centre to consider introducing a number of new facilities, including giving callers the option of leaving a message, for a Customer Services Operator to ring them back at a time more convenient for them. It was accepted that when callers, having gone through a number of different options (Interactive Voice Response), and then asked to hang up and call back at a less busy time, caused major frustration to them.
- Another initiative being looked at was greater multi-skilling of advisors, enabling them to move between the different teams in order to meet demand.
- The Business Change and Information Solutions Team had recently organised an initiative where advisors had been relocated to a community centre and a library in Darnall, providing opportunity for people with sensitive problems to speak to advisors face to face.
- Introducing the facility whereby callers could save time on the Interactive Voice Response, if they knew the option needed, would be investigated when looking at the new telephone system.
- Whilst it was accepted that some users of the Council website experienced problems navigating the various options, following

the implementation of the new website, in April 2017, the majority of users were able to find what they were looking for by using the search facility.

- Whilst it would be ideal to have more staff in the Contact Centre, this was not always possible, therefore it was important to make sure that staff were properly trained to be able to assist callers to the best of their ability.
- Following the insourcing of some of the calls previously dealt with by South Yorkshire Police's '101' service, this service was now being delivered for £50,000 per year less than the sum previously paid to the police for taking these calls.
- Whilst the facility for callers to request a call back at a more convenient time had its advantages, it could sometimes be difficult for the Contact Centre to predict when the quieter periods would be.
- Satisfaction surveys were undertaken once a month, across relevant Customer Services teams, which indicated that satisfaction rates were generally very high, although the time spent queuing to get through to the Contact Centre was an issue for callers. The Contact Centre aimed for 85% of calls made to be successfully completed. At present, this figure was being substantially exceeded in the evenings.
- The Council was looking to further improve the customer experience by introduction of new technology, which would improve financial transactions between users and the Council. Such planned improvements would enable users to check their balances/payments online, and allow the Council to store customers' debit card details. As a form of income generation, which had become more relevant in recent times, Sheffield Archives and Local Studies had recently launched an online shop, featuring items from its collections. It was hoped that, by working with partners to design and specify new modern online payments functionality, such as catalogues and shopping baskets, this would offer new ways for customers to buy services from the Council. Whilst there had been some delay with regard to carrying out relevant enhancements to the Council's online payments and e-commerce functionality, it was hoped that a quote for the necessary works would be received from Capita very shortly and, depending on the costs, works would commence on the build shortly after. It was hoped that following a satisfactory quote from Capita, such works would be completed within three to six months.
- Previously, many of the calls being directed to the police around the area now insourced would be made via Council numbers, but

routed to the “101” service. All calls made to the ‘101’ number were directed to the police, but following the insource, if the call related to a Council issue, it would be referred to the Council to deal with.

- The Customer Service facility in respect of the City-wide Alarm System was currently outsourced, with the contract due to end in April 2019. Officers were currently considering options following that date, including tendering the service out again, or bringing the service back to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Martin Riggall and Paul Taylor for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) recommends that newly appointed Members, following the Municipal Elections 2018, be invited to visit the Contact Centre and to listen in to calls; and
- (d) requests that this issue be placed on its Work Programme 2018/19, with a further update to be provided at a future meeting during that year.

8. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW AND ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 8.1 The Committee received and endorsed the report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing a summary of its activities during the Municipal Year 2017/18, for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18.

9. WORK BASED DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING - UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing a refresh of the comments made by the Committee, at its meeting held on 16th November 2017, on the development of the Workforce Strategy, specifically relating to the wellbeing and development of staff. The report also contained a response from the Director of Human Resources to the Committee’s comments, which included an update on the Council’s work to support employee development and wellbeing.
- 9.2 Members identified a number of areas they would like more detailed information on, as follows:-
 - Mental health training – how many people have undertaken the

- training, and in what format
- Whistleblowing - Update
- Engagement with trade unions in developing the Strategy

9.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made; and
- (b) requests:-
 - (i) a further update on the issues identified in paragraph 9.2 above; and
 - (ii) that this issue be placed on its Work Programme for 2018/19, with a further update to be provided at a meeting during that year.

10. ISSUES TO RAISE FROM OTHER SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

- 10.1 The Committee noted information reported by those Chairs of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees in attendance, in terms of updates on their respective Committee's work.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on a date to be arranged.