

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Meeting held 1 December 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Tony Damms (Chair), Ian Auckland, Steve Ayris, John Booker, Douglas Johnson, George Lindars-Hammond, Pat Midgley, Josie Paszek, Ian Saunders and Steve Wilson

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Helen Mirfin-Boukouris.

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. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1 There were no petitions submitted, or questions raised by members of the public.

5. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Human Resources and Customer Services on the Customer Experience Strategy, which focused on delivering the part of the Council's Corporate Plan which refers to the Council being 'an in-touch organisation', and set out the Council's intentions and direction to achieve an improved customer experience.

5.2 The report was supported by a presentation from Tina Keyworth, Business Change Practice Manager, and Sue Palfreyman, Head of Customer Services.

5.3 Ms Keyworth reported on the aims of the Customer Experience Programme, the key aim of which was to help the Council become 'an in-touch organisation', which would help the Council deliver a consistent customer service, and making it easier for customers to access the various Council Services, using more up to date means, such as smartphones and other similar devices. Reference was made to the background in terms of the need for a new Strategy, together with the progress made to date. Ms Keyworth reported on the reasons for change, referring to the current elements of the Programme, together with feedback from customers. At this point, Members were shown a video clip of a Sheffield resident trying to perform a task on the Council's website, which highlighted some of the difficulties currently facing customers when trying to find information on the Council's website. Ms Keyworth referred to a specific example where improvements had been made

to the Council's systems in terms of members of the public registering deaths. Members viewed a further video highlighting the benefits of the new service to register a death – "Tell Us Once", which had gone live in July, 2016, where the Head of Adults Social Care Access talked about the benefits of the new service to both the families of individuals and to service providers, in terms of both resources and efficiency. Reference was also made to proposed changes to the process for applying for residents parking permits, which it was hoped would go live in the new year.

5.4 Sue Palfreyman reported on the process with regard to embedding the Strategy, referring to a new set of commitments which would replace the Council's existing Customer Service Charter, and concluded by referring to the consultation on the new Strategy, which would take place during December 2016 and January 2017.

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

- A considerable level of research had been undertaken in connection with looking at a new design for the Council's website, which had included engaging a specialist organisation to undertake this piece of work. As part of this work, a number of different Government websites had been reviewed. This had included Gov.uk, the main Government website, which was considered, by some, to be one of the clearest and simplest websites to use. As part of this work, officers had also looked at the clear principles for designing public service websites, provided by the Government Digital Service – clear, simple and focused.
- It had been decided to use the term customer, as opposed to another term, such as citizen, as customer was deemed more holistic in that the Council was there to assist everyone.
- It was still the intention to keep all the usual access channels open for those people who either did not have on-line services, or chose not to contact the Council in this way. As more and more people were using on-line services, this provided the Council with more capacity to operate, and assist customers using the other access channels.
- It was accepted that the wording in terms of the new set of commitments, which would replace the Customer Charter, was fairly similar. This document was more about making a public statement rather than specifics in terms of its wording. It was also considered important that the language of the document was refreshed every few years in order to remind both new, and existing, staff of the Council's commitment to customer service.
- Around 300 on-line responses had been received as part of the consultation, which officers were pleased with, and which provided a representative sample of the City's population, as well as a good baseline in order to make improvements.

- Customers would still be able to call into Howden House and speak to a Council officer if they chose to do so.
- Whilst there would be initial costs in terms of the redesign of the website, it was considered that the improvements made, together with an expected increase in the number of customers using the on-line services following the improvements, would result in savings being made in the long-term.
- There was a need to manage expectations in terms of the redesign of the website, as well as ensuring that there were clear messages with regard to exactly what was going to happen, and why. It was appreciated that not all the improvements will be visible from day one, with the majority of the improvements being visible over time.
- Officers would ensure that the recorded message used on the telephone service was user-friendly. Every effort was always made to ensure that telephone enquiries were either resolved, or action was taken to start resolving the issue raised. One method used to save customers waiting on the phone would be including a recorded message, indicating that they could leave a message, and an officer would ring them back.
- As part of the redesign of the website, one of the planned improvements was to limit the number of clicks required by a customer when trying to find what they were looking for.
- In terms of timescales for the redesign of the website, whilst it was accepted that it would be a major piece of work, specifically in the light of the number of pages of content on the website, and the fact that the last time it was updated was 2010, considerable progress had been made to date, and it was hoped that improvements would start to be made from April 2017. It was still envisaged, however, that work would continue after this date in terms of improving the Council's on-line services.
- Work in terms of publicising the proposed improvements would commence early in the new year, with increased publicity prior to the launch.
- There was a robust testing regime in place in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the proposed changes to the website will be successful. There was now more capacity, in terms of personnel, working on the planned improvements and redesign. If it was found that something wasn't, or wouldn't work, it would not go live on the website.

5.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information reported as part of the presentation, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) welcomes the Customer Experience Strategy, as detailed in the report now

submitted, particularly that element regarding the redesign of the Council website, and requests that officers note the points and suggestions now made; and

- (c) thanks Sue Palfreyman and Tina Keyworth for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised.

6. PERFORMANCE REVIEW - QUARTER 2 2016/17

6.1 The Committee received a presentation from James Henderson, Director of Policy, Performance and Communications, on the Council's performance in respect of Quarter 2 2016/17.

6.2 Mr Henderson referred to the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings on the Council's 144 performance measures, highlighting the ratings and referring to key performance questions in respect of each one of the five Council Priorities – In-touch Organisation, Strong Economy, Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities, Better Health and Wellbeing, and Tackling Inequalities.

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

- The Council always took a robust risk management approach, which helped to mitigate against any major adverse effects following the introduction of new Government policy, or other changes.
- Officers would be happy to discuss the issue of including more detail, in future performance reports, regarding specific areas of concern raised by Members.
- It was appreciated that it would be helpful to highlight those areas, particularly those showing an all red rating, where the performance measure was one that was clearly outside the Council's control. It was also accepted that, in certain cases, there may be a need for an explanation in terms of those ratings which had reduced.

6.4 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) requests that its comments now made, in terms of the contents of future performance reports, be noted; and
- (c) thanks James Henderson and Ben Arnold for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised.

7. ISSUES TO RAISE FROM OTHER SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

7.1 The Scrutiny Chairs provided an update in terms of the items discussed/issues

raised at meetings of their respective Scrutiny Committees, as follows:-

(a) Children, Young People and Family Support (Councillor Ian Saunders)

- Attainment 2016 Provisional Results and Support and Services for Young Carers discussed at its last meeting on 21st November 2016.
- The Committee agreed that the Chair would write to Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families) and the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, to support the identification of Young Carer Leads in schools.

(b) Economic and Environmental Wellbeing (Councillor Steve Wilson)

- Very positive meeting held on 30th November 2016, focusing on the Flood Risk Programme, following which a number of recommendations were agreed.
- Proposed establishment of an Economic Landscape Task Group in the new year.

(c) Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care (Councillor Pat Midgley)

- Commissioners Working Together Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19th November 2016.
- South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Sustainable Transformation Plan was a key topic.
- The draft Sheffield Plan (Shaping Sheffield) was considered at the last meeting, at which some concerns were raised regarding the late circulation of this document.

(d) Safer and Stronger Communities (Councillor Tony Damms)

- Hate Crime Task and Finish Group to present its recommendations to the Committee's meeting in February 2017.
- Further to the Government scrapping the 'Pay to Stay' policy, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Service has been asked to provide an update for Committee Members in terms of the current position with regard to the Housing and Planning Act 2016. This will also be circulated to members of this Committee.

7.2 The Committee noted the information now reported.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer (Diane Owens) submitted a report attaching

the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2016/17.

- 8.2 In response to a query raised by Councillor Douglas Johnson, regarding the issue of Ethical Procurement being considered at a future meeting, Diane Owens stated that the Committee met four times a year, with there being one remaining meeting in the current Municipal Year, to be held on 23rd February, 2017, with the main agenda item being the budget. A further schedule of meetings would then be arranged from the next Municipal Year, from May, 2017.
- 8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made, and approves the draft Work Programme for 2016/17.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 23rd February 2017, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.