

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2015

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ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor B Wright	Chair
Councillor T Mansbridge	Vice-Chair
Councillor J Barry	Councillor R Welton
“ A Dale	“ J Windle

Also Present

Jane Foley – Asst Director – Customer Service and Improvement (Min Nos 272 and 273)
Scott Chambers – Communications Manager (Min No 272)
Councillor A Powell (Min No 274)
Paul Hackett – Executive Director Transformation (Min Nos 276 and 277)
Sara Gordon – Acting Human Resources Manager (Min No 277)
Sue Broadhead – Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Sarah Cottam – Governance Officer

269 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Lewis, B Ridgway and S Peters.

270 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

No declarations of interest were received at this meeting.

271 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

272 Customer Services Transformation

The Committee considered a presentation from Jane Foley, Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement on Customer Services Transformation. The Department was now split into two parts:-

- Customer Service – Customer Contact Service (BDC and NEDDC)
- Improvement Team – Joint Service from June 2015

The Department's work was linked to the Corporate Plan with a vision of supporting continuous improvement and excellent customer service across the organisation. Customer Service and Improvement contributed to all Corporate Plan aims in particular providing our customers with excellent service and transforming our organisation.

The Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement advised the Committee of the overall responsibility of the Department and talked about all the achievements over the past 18 months. The achievements of the Contact Centre Service were:-

- New Firm Step Customer Information System and Replacement of Back Office Systems;
- Review of Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure;
- Introduction of Customer Service Standards;
- Move to Mill Lane and Retention of Saltergate;
- Procurement for new payment machine at Mill Lane (installation October 2015);
- New Customer Service Induction Training.

The Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement set out the visitor figures over the last month to both Saltergate and Mill Lane.

This month, Saltergate saw 225 visitors to date whilst Mill Lane received 392 visitors compared with the previous month, Saltergate had 275 visitors whereas Mill Lane had 519 visitors.

At present, staff were still working at Saltergate on cash desk and on the phones for the time being.

The Committee were advised of the Improvement Team's achievements over the last three years:-

- Reviewed and harmonisation of Policies/Strategies eg, single equality scheme, service planning, policy template, equality impact assessment;
- New performance management systems;
- New Intranet development;
- Improved data protection processes;
- Freedom of Information role;
- New Consultation Plan etc.

The Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement advised the Committee of her own role within the Authority which was seen as a 'hands on responsibility'. The Committee were advised that she was responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Growth Strategy, reporting on Corporate Plan to members, producing Strategic Alliance Annual Reports and also overseeing the Customer Service Excellence.

The Committee were advised that £600,000 of savings needed to be found throughout the Authority and in the opinion of the Assistant Director –

Customer Service and Improvement, not having a dedicated Transformation Team in place could have a detrimental effect over the long term. A dedicated team with good project management skills was beneficial to deliver the necessary savings throughout the Authority.

The Committee were advised of the challenges and opportunities for the Customer Service and Improvement Team. There were risks from data protection breaches and pressure over the new EU Regulations which were expected sometime next year. There was the need for a dedicated Transformation Team to meet the savings targets and to drive the businesses to continuously improve and re-design services. There had been recent changes to the Senior Management Team. The new Chief Executive Officer was due to join the Authority on 1 October 2015 and it wasn't yet known what direction he would take the Authority.

A question was raised on what the timescale guidelines were for complaints received by the Council. The Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement agreed to send over the requested information to members regarding response timescales for complaints received by the Council.

RESOLVED – That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee notes the presentation and that the information requested by Members would be supplied.

(Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement)

273 Revenue Strategy

The Committee considered an update on the Revenue Strategy by Jane Foley, Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement. In June 2013 members at both Councils approved a Revenue Strategy. The Revenue Strategy identified the policy, process and procedural changes which were necessary in order to support efforts to bring more revenue into the two Councils. A wide range of measures were identified including the introduction of a consistent corporate approach to annual fee/charge revenues, the establishment of clear advertising/sponsorship policies and the introduction of an Invest to Earn Fund. In the first year progress was regularly reported back to Members through reports. Much of the Action Plan was successfully delivered and reported by June 2014.

Since July 2014 the following had been achieved:-

- Approval to introduce payment machines at both North East and Bolsover to save on staffing resources and to provide more choice to customers. These would be operational at North East in October 2015;
- An Advertising and Sponsorship 'Media Pack' had been designed for each Council and was now on the website. The packs were different for each Council and illustrated what opportunities could be utilised by local businesses through the Council.
- In addition to this, under the recent organisational review of the Improvement Team additional hours had been allocated to a post to promote the 'Media Pack' further. The Marketing and Design Officer

within the Customer Service and Improvement Department would be responsible for taking this piece of work forward including the delivery of briefing sessions for employees;

- The 'Media Pack' had been published on the website over the last two to three weeks and set out what could be advertised within the Council and also included pricing;
- Available to businesses were:-
 - Advertisement banners on the website, for example British Gas pay to advertise on the Council's site through a banner.
 - Sponsorships of roundabouts, vehicles and events were available and options to hire Council venues.

A concern was raised that the Media Pack was quite difficult to find and needed to be more clearly visible on the website.

The Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement advised the Committee that all local businesses had been sent the 'Media Pack' through the Economic Development department.

RESOLVED – That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee noted the update on the Revenue Strategy and noted the achievements to date.

(Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement)

274 Media Communications

The Committee considered how the Council communicated with the Media. Scott Chambers, Communications Manager and Councillor Alan Powell attended the meeting.

The issue of how the Council communicated with the Media was raised in a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting by Councillor Powell. It was considered by Organisation Scrutiny Committee for discussion as it fell within their remit.

The Communications Manager outlined his role within the Authority and advised the Committee that the Communications Team would attend Committees to gather any necessary information for press releases. They would also judge if any other issues going on within the Authority would necessitate a Press release.

The Committee were advised that the Authority had a good relationship with the Media 95% of the time. The Communications Team would respond through newspapers and TV/Radio only but would not respond through Social Media.

Councillor Powell was a Journalist by profession and had been the editor for the Sheffield Telegraph and the Sheffield Star and more recently a consultant on 'Media Relations'.

Councillor Powell felt that positive results could be gained from good relationships with the media.

The Committee were advised that the Induction session given to Members in May in Councillor Powell's opinion, came across very negative and seemed to portray the Media as the enemy. The Council seemed to take a reactive rather than pro-active role with the media and it was felt that Social Media was foremost the largest form of communication and the Council should utilise this much more than at present.

The Communications Manager advised the Committee that the Team had limited budgets and resources in the department. The Committee discussed the issues at length and it was suggested that the Authority should look more strategically at how the media was utilised and look at how the departments within the Council communicated stories to the Communications Team. Stories could be brought through the District and Parish Liaison Group from Town and Parish Councils and possibly briefing sessions be provided to staff on 'Media Relations'.

It was also recommended that 'Media Relations/Communications' should be a standing item on SAMT.

RESOLVED – That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee recommends

- (1) That further consideration be given to how staff could be briefed on dealing with the Media both Councillor Powell and the Communications Manager offered to assist in this.
- (2) That a regular item be included on the SAMT agenda regarding Media Relations/Communications.
(Communications Manager/Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

Councillor J Windle left the meeting at this point.

275 Change of Order of Agenda Items

RESOLVED – That items 8 and 9 on the agenda be considered before item 7.

276 Scrutiny Review – Performance Related Pay

The Committee considered a scene setting presentation from Paul Hackett, Executive Director – Transformation.

The Council aimed to become more commercial as a whole and to contribute to the Growth and Transformation Agenda. The Authority was constantly looking at transformation and needed to find £600,000 worth of savings over the next four years. The Transformation Programme was seeking ways in which to generate income to meet this target.

Performance related pay could be seen as an opportunity to motivate employees, improve performance and reward high performance employees without impacting on jobs and services. The Economic Development -

Transformation believed that performance related pay could reduce stress management of staff, thus delivering services adequately.

Key issues in the review:-

- What benefits would it bring to the Council; and
- Members and staff views on the introduction of a scheme and how would equality within the workforce be protected.

Through the Scrutiny review Members would need to ascertain what performance related pay was and what were the most common types. The Committee would consider the advantages and disadvantages of the performance related pay and consider if it would be suitable for implementation within our own Authority.

Councils such as Oxford and Bedfordshire had already implemented performance related pay schemes and felt it was appropriate to undertake a site visit to an Authority operating a scheme and send out questionnaires to collect views from other authorities.

Members felt it would be useful to have a list be compiled of all the authorities who had already implemented performance related pay schemes.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Scene Setting Presentation be noted by the Committee.
- (2) That the Project Plan and Timetable be altered to include a site visit prior to stakeholder interviews being held.

(Executive Director – Transformation/Overview & Services Manager)

277 Human Resources

The Committee considered an overview of the role of Human Resources within the Organisation. Sara Gordon, Acting HR Manager was in attendance.

The Committee was advised that Human Resources was a support service which included Payroll and Health and Safety. The staff undertook work for Bolsover District Council with interim arrangements in place and also provided Payroll services to Rykneld Homes and a number of Parish and Town councils.

The Human Resources Team were based at the District Council Offices on Mill Lane and Payroll was based at the Riverside Depot at Doe Lea and overseen by Bolsover's Payroll Manager.

Human Resources were involved with Policy Development within the Alliance and liaised with Members and the Council Joint Consultative Group, this also included the union reps. The Committee were advised that Human

Resources led on the employee surveys and had recently co-ordinated the Investors In People jointly with Bolsover. The silver accreditation was achieved.

A question was raised as to whether a learning and development agreement was in place with the trade unions. The Acting HR Manager advised the Committee that the trade unions were not usually forthcoming with training, but it was acknowledged that it would be beneficial. The Committee were advised that no apprenticeship schemes were in place at North East Derbyshire but there were funded schemes in place at Bolsover.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the overview of the role of Human Resources within the organisation.

(Acting HR Manager)

278 Extract from Standards Committee

The Committee were advised of the recent report of Professor Alexis Jay OBE into the sexual exploitation in Rotherham which described how vulnerable people had repeatedly been failed by the Council. The Secretary of State appointed Louise Casey to carry out a statutory best value inspection of Rotherham Council.

The report highlighted failures in relation to high standards of conduct and governance arrangements in particular:-

- A prevailing culture of bullying, sexism and misplaced political correctness;
- A failure by members to hold officers to account through Scrutiny and to represent the interests of the local people;
- Serious weaknesses in the Council's Taxi Licensing Procedures;
- Whilst North East Derbyshire showed no signs of the sorts of issues identified in Rotherham, the report highlighted lessons from which all Councils could learn.

The Standards Committee recommended that all Scrutiny Committees examined their remit to ensure robustness through the Council concerning safeguarding.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that this issue was specifically in the remit of the Communities Scrutiny Committee although all Scrutinies had a role to play. It was noted that the Communities Scrutiny Committee would be looking into the issue in more depth and had decided to undertake a review into 'Safeguarding Arrangements' within the Council. A previous review had been undertaken in 2012 but in light of the report further work would be done.

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the recommendation from Standards Committee regarding safeguarding children.

(Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

279 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 38

The Committee considered issue No 38 of the List of Key Decisions which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions – Issue No 38 be noted.
(Governance Team)

280 Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme for 2015/2016 which set out the items that the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that any issues within the Committee's remit could be added to the work programme in consultation with the Chair subject to the workload of the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the Investors in People would be added to the Work Programme and would be brought to the Committee in January next year.

RESOLVED – That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2015/16 be noted.
(Members/Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

281 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items to be considered at the meeting.

282 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 11 November 2015 at 3.00 pm in Chamber 1.