

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Community and Corporate Organisation Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 7th November 2017

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm Meeting Concluded: 5.10 pm

Councillors:

P Terry Porter (Chairman)

P Sarah Codling (Vice-Chairman)

P Peter Burden

P James Clayton

A Bob Garner

P John Ley-Morgan

A Jerry O'Brien

P Mark Canniford

P Peter Crew

- Colin Hall

P Richard Nightingale

- David Oyns

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Councillors in attendance: Peter Bryant, Donald Davies, David Jolley

Officers in attendance: Nicholas Brain, Simone Davey, Philippa Penney, Howard Pothecary, Samantha Usher, Kieran Warren (Corporate Services), Mandy Bishop, Colin Russell (Development & Environment)

Others in attendance: Brian Ashby (Biffa Regional Manager), Genevieve Branch (Service Manager, Registration Services, Somerset County Council)

CCO Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 3)

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None

CCO Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th July 2017 (Agenda Item 4)

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Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

CCO Register Office and Registrars Service (Agenda Item 6)

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The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (and Proper Officer for Registration) presented the report, highlighting the operation of the shared registration service and the delivery of service enhancements since 1st April 2016 when North Somerset Council delegated operational responsibility of its Registration Service to Somerset County Council.

All of the service developments had been delivered ahead of schedule, and the General Register Office was pleased to note the good level of service achieved during the first year of the new arrangement.

The Service Manager for Registration Services at Somerset County Council referred to the positive customer feedback, which showed that 98% of users were happy/extremely happy with the service. 93% felt that the ceremony service offered value for money, and there was a good response to using the on-line appointment booking facility.

A Marketing Officer had been recruited to advertise, showcase and encourage new venues, and there were moves to extend the on-line facility to include the booking of ceremonies.

Concluded: that the Panel supported the progress made in developing the Registration Service and congratulated officers on the successful operation of the shared service arrangement with Somerset County Council.

CCO Crime and Disorder Profile (Agenda Item 7)

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The Community Safety Manager presented the report and supplementary presentation, a copy of which is filed on the minute book. The Crime and disorder profile contained recorded police crime data for North Somerset in 2016/17 and, where the data was available, provided analysis to show specific hotspots and the nature of the crime/disorder.

Members were informed of the recent HMIC inspection of the integrity of police recorded crime across all 43 police forces in England and Wales. This had resulted in a change in recording methods, with a subsequent effect on recorded crime levels.

Members received detail of the crime levels in North Somerset, broken down by crime type and by neighbourhood.

Questions were raised by members in relation to the need for proactive policing and an effective court system to address the issues around crime and disorder, and the difficulties facing law enforcement agencies due to reduced resources. It was considered that these factors may be having an adverse impact on willingness to report more minor crimes. Members were reminded of the forthcoming Appreciative Inquiry into anti-social behaviour, and it was agreed that similar opportunities should be considered for other crime issues.

Concluded: that Members received and commented on the Crime and Disorder Profile, and agreed to consider opportunities for future inquiries.

CCO 12 Review of Libraries and Children’s Centres – Community Access Review (Agenda Item 8)

The Assistant Director of Development and Environment presented the report highlighting the progress that had been made with regards to the delivery of the agreed outcomes of the Community Access Review.

A significant staffing review had now been completed and the new structure was now successfully in place. The IT solutions had been delivered, with self-service arrangements due to be implemented shortly. The financial savings for the year had been achieved.

Local communities had seen significant improvements in service provision, and feedback from service users had been very positive. This feedback was supported by the ward Councillors.

Next steps included: implementation of self-service arrangements in six identified localities; the future of the vacated children’s centres at Yatton and Pill; the sale of the vacated Worle library, and early consideration of options for Clevedon library.

Members discussed their support for the Review and thanked the Assistant Director for the efficient and engaging way in which it was being progressed.

Concluded: that the Panel considered the progress and next steps of the Community Access Review.

CCO 13 Waste Services Contract (Agenda Item 9)

The Recycling and Waste Services Manager presented the report providing progress regarding the concerns raised by Council in September 2017, the overall performance of the contract to date, and the joint work being carried out between North Somerset Council and Biffa to reduce waste and increase recycling.

Members and the public were being kept regularly updated regarding work undertaken to get the contracted service to a steady state, including: better use of photographic evidence as to why certain collections were being prevented from taking place; recruitment of over 50 staff by Biffa; investment in supervisor training; training to maximise efficient vehicle usage; and a daily review of missed collection, which was also sent to the relevant Ward Member.

The Regional Manager for Biffa confirmed that the biggest issue had been posed by the recruitment and retention of staff. There had been regular

meetings with unions, the establishment of an apprenticeship scheme with Weston College, and the instilling of an attitude of continuous improvement, all of which had contributed to improving the work force.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the use of residents' permits at household waste recycling centres was not being progressed due to the complexities of administering the scheme.

Discussion was of future options to assist with service improvement, such as the use of different coloured boxes to assist residents with kerbside recycling, and introduction of a facility to 'track your truck' so that residents could see the route progress for their awaited collection.

Members noted an improvement to the service and a reduction in complaints over recent weeks, and had experienced largely positive feedback from their trips with the recycling crews. Any specific issues had been fed back to Biffa and would be addressed.

Concluded: that the Panel supported the progress being made in improving the waste collection service, and would continue to monitor performance through the scrutiny steering group and future Panel meetings.

CCO Switchboard and Council Connect (Agenda Item 10)

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The Customer Services Manager presented the report highlighting the current arrangements regarding the switchboard and Council Connect. The automated switchboard had been operating for approximately 18 months, with 75% of calls being routed via the Interactive Voice Response (IVR).

Members received detail of how each service worked and the link between the switchboard and Council Connect. Members discussed the largely positive performance levels, and that the abandonment rate had proved more challenging due to the spike in calls regarding the waste contract. Members were reassured to hear of the robust training programme undertaken by contact centre staff, and the regular meetings held with services to update on changes. Whilst the web chat facility was already in place for the waste and Council Tax and Benefits pages, plans were in place to extend it to a greater number of services very soon.

In response to specific issues raised, Councillors were informed that all calls to the automated switchboard and Council Connect were recorded. This gave the ability to listen to any complaints and provide feedback to the customer and also to identify if there were any staff training requirements. Members were encouraged to note the time and date of any call for concern in order that this could be investigate.

Members were informed that My Account would shortly be able to deal with linked accounts via a business portal, mitigating the need for multiple accounts. The new telephony system being introduced next year also had the capacity to facilitate call-backs so that the caller did not have to wait in a telephone queue. Members asked that the order of services in the IVR

message could be changed to reflect call volumes, and also that contact centre staff were more aware of the identity and role of the Ward Councillors so they could better assist when reporting a problem on behalf of their residents.

Members were invited to visit the contact centre so that they could witness it in operation. Members thanked the officers for a detailed explanation of the current service and the improvements that were due to be introduced.

Concluded: that the Panel considered the information regarding the switchboard and Council Connect, and supported the improvements that were due to be introduced.

CCO 15 **The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Specialist Practitioner presented the work plan and updated Members with progress to date with the Waste Scrutiny Steering Group and the Community Safety Scrutiny Steering Group. Members were reminded of the Appreciative Inquiry being held to review anti-social behaviour in North Somerset and how partners were working together to tackle this issue.

Concluded: that the Panel's work plan be updated accordingly.

Chairman
