

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 19 JUNE 2018

SUBJECT OF REPORT: FIELD ACTIVITY

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MANDY BISHOP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(OPERATIONS)**

KEY DECISION: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Panel note the content of the report
- Note and comment on the pilot proposals and
- Feedback on matters to be considered as we develop and improve front-line services

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides an update on field activity and proposed next steps.

2. POLICY

- Corporate Plan - the council ambitions include a transformed council: modern and accessible, skilled and motivated staff and excellence in resource management. Outcomes include empowering communities to provide their own solutions
- Medium Term Financial Plan

3. DETAILS

3.1 Background information

This Panel has previously received a presentation on field activity undertaken by a range of officers across the organisation.

The field activity in scope is as follows:

- Planning Enforcement
- Environmental Protection
- Licensing
- Trading Standards

- Food Safety
- Area Officers
- Community Response
- Waste
- Parking Services
- Housing
- Council Tax and Business Rate collections
- Electoral Registrations

Officers have gathered information on current levels of service requests and methods of delivery with a view to looking at:

- How we manage demand
- How we use resources more efficiently and
- Use technology to support delivery

The project aims to improve customer access and resolution of complaints. Specialist and technical functions are not in scope.

The data indicates that there are variations in demand between services, including:

- Geographic
- Seasonal
- How services are prioritised and
- Response times and nature of response

3.2 Feedback from Team Managers

Some initial feedback on current provision has been obtained from D&E Team Managers.

In response to the question 'what is working well', key themes emerged:

- A single point of contact is valued by Ward Councillors and Town and Parishes
- Response rates
- Channel shift is generally working well
- Use of social media
- Problem solving between teams
- Skills, flexibility and response of staff
- Out of hours arrangements

The managers identified the following areas for improvement:

- Differing performance information and standards
- Fragmented and duplication of some work activity
- Mobile working, on line functionality
- Resilience within services
- Greater engagement of contractors
- Enforcement actions
- Resource planning across services

The following opportunities were identified by team managers:

- Coordination of complaints handling
- Development of our on-line functionality for customer enquiries
- Further sharing of resources over any 12-month period to help address service priorities and service resilience
- Move to 'one job'/data base integration
- Increase enforcement activity
- Earlier engagement of councillors on priorities and risks

3.3 Progress

There are a number of service improvements that have been put in place during the last 12 months. These will support the continued transformation of our front-line services, to ensure that they are relevant and accessible for residents.

Digital. The council has continued to invest in a range of on-line and back office systems. This has included the new Uniform data base in planning, the 'Noise App' in environmental Health, software to monitor service complaints and on-line forms and payment mechanisms.

Evidence Gathering. Officer availability has been pooled across services to gather evidence for a range of specific matters.

Enforcement. This Panel has provided clear direction of its' desire to see an increase in enforcement to address anti-social-behaviour/environmental crime. The Panel involvement in the development of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) ensured that the powers adopted by the organisation met local needs and are relevant and proportionate. There has been significant increase in enforcement activity following the authorisation of additional council officers and the provision of support from Avon and Somerset Police colleagues.

PSPO	Pending	Written Warning	FPNs paid or due to be paid	Prosecutions pending (non-payment of FPN)	Direct Prosecutions pending i.e. FPN not appropriate	Total
Smoking in a smoke-free place	9	6	0	1	0	16
Smoking in a children's play area	0	1	0	0	0	1
Behaviour in NSC Gateway	0	5	0	0	0	5
Littering	13	1	8	7	0	29
Urination	0	4	0	0	0	4
Dogs off lead	3	8	0	1	0	12
Dog Fouling	1	0	0	0	1	2
Alcohol surrender	0	1	0	0	0	1
Skateboarding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distribution of advertising material	1	0	0	0	0	1

In addition to the use of PSPO powers 40 Criminal Protection Warnings have been served, 3 Notices and 24 Criminal Behaviour Orders. One waste prosecution has been forwarded to the council lawyers to progress.

Out of Hours Arrangements. Resources are pooled across D&E services to ensure out of hours resilience.

3.4 Next Steps

Officers are proposing to pilot different ways of working in the field in two areas of North Somerset, a rural and an urban location. The aim would be to deliver service improvements in:

- **Planning Enforcement.** Aim: reduce the time taken to undertake initial investigation and gather evidence for planning professional to make the decision on whether there is a planning breach. This area of non-statutory work is a medium/high priority for residents and key partners.
- **Electoral Registration.** Aim: to increase electoral registration in areas of lowest uptake.
- **Council Tax and Business rates.** Aims: Improve the accuracy of information stored on our data base and reduce the number of void properties.

Feasibility work has commenced on the digital workstream and key officers from across the council are engaged in the project.

As this work is at an early stage there is an opportunity for the Panel to identify priorities for ward councillors/residents, help prioritise activities and inform methods of delivery.

4. CONSULTATION

Informal consultation has taken place to date.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report. There may be future costs associated with developing on-line functionality for residents and data base integration. These and any other project costs will be reported back to the Panel at the relevant time.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The services covered by this review are a mix of statutory and non-statutory functions. There will be a requirement to re-consider officer authorisation, in accordance with the Council Constitution.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this project is to improve and enhance service resilience by taking a more holistic approach to council wide resource to deliver statutory and priority services.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The pilots should improve customer access and experience. We will continue to review the impact of any changes on delivery models. At this time there is no intention to remove any front-line provision to digital only.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The field activity pilot supports both the Corporate Plan and ambitions and will only be rolled out further once the pilots have been evaluated. A robust business case will ensure that future work streams are in keeping with the council's financial plans.

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

To pilot some changes to field activity or proceed to a broader change programme.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

One Council Board Papers.