
Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	13 December 2021
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hollyer, Orrell, Musson, Norman, Pearson and Rowley
Apologies	Councillor Baker

In light of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Scrutiny Committees are not decision making meetings. Therefore the outcomes recorded in these minutes are **not** subject to approval by the Chief Operating Officer under his emergency delegated powers.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting, the Chair invited Members to declare any personal, pecuniary or prejudicial interests, which they had not already included in their standing register of interests. None were declared.

40. MINUTES

The Chair clarified his Declaration of Interest statement for both meetings held on 25 October 2021 and requested that the minutes be updated to reflect this.

Cllr Fenton requested that some additional text be added to the minutes of the 2pm meeting held on 25 October 2021.

The Chair requested that the minutes for the second meeting held on 25 October 2021 be updated to reflect which Cllr Taylor left the meeting between 6.32 and 6.34pm.

Resolved: That the minutes of both meetings held on 25 October 2021 and the meeting of 01 November 2021 were approved, subject to the updates outlined above, to be signed by the Chair as a correct record at a later date.

41. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

42. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Members received a verbal update and presentation from the Director of Public Health on the latest figures and information relating to the impact of the Covid virus, in particular the new Omicron variant, around the city, specifically covering the following:

- Case numbers in the city had risen, reflecting the rise in cases nationally. The majority of cases had been in the 5-19 and 10-14 age groups with a corresponding rate in parents.
- Approximately 30% of all PCR tests were sent for sequencing, detection of the Omicron variant took up to 10 days to come through, therefore press reported numbers of cases had been inaccurate. The variant was more transmissible but the impact on health was not yet known.
- The booster dose of the vaccine provided the best protection against the new variant. Boosters had been offered to all over 18's. This programme had led to a drop in cases in older people and fewer hospital admissions, however the hospital continued to be very busy. Meetings had taken place to support the acceleration of the booster programme, calls for volunteers had been made and community pharmacies had contributed to the programme.
- Covid vaccination update, including that over 70,000 residents had received the booster vaccination.
- Public safety advice continued to be to follow all prevention measures including; face masks, hand washing, ventilation as well as to minimise contacts.

The Director of Public Health then responded to a range of questions around the availability of vaccinations and lateral flow tests, the vaccination programme and new variant symptoms.

Resolved: That the update from the Director of Public Health be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee informed of the impact of pandemic across the city.

43. QUARTER 2 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Members considered the Finance and Performance report for Quarter 2 and were given a brief overview by the Corporate Finance Manager. She highlighted the continuing financial pressures in adult and children's social care which, she noted, was a national issue and not unique to the city.

The Corporate Finance Manager and the Head of Business Intelligence Hub then responded to various questions from members covering time scales for processing new housing benefit claims, the projected overspend in the People Directorate and the position regarding reserves, staff sickness absence and customer service contact rates, and the budget decision process.

The Head of Business Intelligence Hub offered to provide to the Committee some further data on staff sickness by location and customer centre statistics on calls answered within timescale or abandoned.

Resolved: That the report and actions needed to manage the financial position be noted and that further staff sickness and customer centre data be circulated to Members for information.

Reason: To ensure that expenditure was kept within the approved budget.

44. SCHEDULE OF PETITIONS

Members considered a report providing them with details of new petitions received to date, since the last report to the Committee.

The Democracy and Member Support Manager and the Chair had a brief discussion regarding the process for the Schedule of Petitions. The Chair confirmed that he had reported to the working party for the new constitution and suggested that the petitions could be processed differently, with the Committee overseeing those that do not have a set route through the council. This item would be re-examined in due course.

It was noted that petition 148 had no signatures, this had been thought to be an administrative error which would be verified and amended if necessary.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee carried out its requirements in relation to petitions.

45. SCRUTINY RESEARCH BUDGET

Members considered a report relating to the amount recommended to Budget Council in relation to the scrutiny research budget.

It was moved by the Vice Chair and seconded by the Chair to approve option 2 within the report. This was agreed unanimously by Members and it was therefore:

Resolved: That it be recommended to Executive to retain the current budgetary support of external research and consultancy work.

Reason: To ensure the availability of funding for the Committee to use for training and scrutiny purposes.

[Cllr Pearson left the meeting at 19:00, during the discussion of this item].

46. WORK PLAN 2021/22

Members considered the corporate scrutiny work plan covering the next meeting of this Committee and the meetings of the other Scrutiny Committees up until 28 February 2022.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee has a planned programme of work in place and an overview of the other Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.30 pm].