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| Meeting | Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee |
| Date | 3 October 2022 |
| Present | Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Hollyer, Norman, Pearson and Rowley |
| Apologies | Councillors Baker and Musson |
| Officers Present | Patrick Looker, Finance Manager Ian Cunningham, Head of Business Intelligence Helen Whiting, Head of HR and OD Corporate Services Pauline Stuchfield, Director of Customer and Corporate Services David Walker, Head of Customer and Exchequer Services Roy Grant, Head of ICT Bryn Roberts, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer Dawn Steel, Head of Civic, Democratic and Scrutiny Services |

6. Declarations of Interest (5.30 pm)

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

Cllr Crawshaw declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 7, as his mother was a member of the Steering Group for Digital Inclusion.

7. Minutes (5.31 pm)

The Chair noted that an agreement from the Leader to write to the relevant minister had been omitted from the draft minutes and that the following should be added to the bullet points on page 4 of the minutes:

That the Leader would write to the relevant minister to express Members disappointment in hearing about the Devolution Deal via a press release and to request that Members were in future notified in advance of any information being released to the press.

Resolved: Subject to the inclusion of the above wording, that the minutes of the last meeting held on 05 September 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

8. Public Participation (5.32 pm)

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Councillor Kallum Taylor addressed the Committee and raised concerns relating to items 6 and 7 on the agenda. He highlighted the difficulties residents had in accessing council services, through the call centre and digitally. He reported that there were lengthy waiting times and out of date web content.

9. 2022/23 Finance and Performance Monitor 1 (5.36 pm)

The Finance Manager, and the Head of Business Intelligence, presented the 2022/23 Finance and Performance Monitor 1 report. The Finance Manager highlighted a forecast gross overspend of £8.7m, which with £2m mitigations, was expected to be £6.7m net. Several additional financial pressures were identified including the pay award, price inflation and the increase in interest rates. Within Corporate Services, the expected overspend was £1.2m and there was expected to be a slight underspend in Treasury.

The Head of Business Intelligence noted a slight increase in staff sickness and an improvement in the response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and complaints.

Officers were asked a number of questions covering: FOI requests; an analysis of complaints performance; loans made by CYC; sickness data; government financial support for local authorities (LA); the budget deficit and increased costs; reducing costs; reserves and contingencies and local businesses.

Following discussion, the following action points were agreed:

- To provide further detail on the cost of FOI's and the types of individuals and businesses who request them
- To provide a link to complaint data, comparing the percentage of complaints that were responded to entirely against the number of complaints received
- To provide validated customer satisfaction data (paragraph 31 refers),
- To request the Children, Education and Communities (CEC) and Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Scrutiny Committees have a close watching brief on the overspend and mitigations in the areas of their remit.

Resolved:

- To note the finance and performance information and the actions needed to manage the financial position
- To action the points outlined above.

Reason:

To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

10. Progress of the Organisational Development Plan (6.12 pm)

The Head of HR and OD Corporate Services gave an update to the Committee on progress of the Organisational Development Plan.

The Officer responded to a variety of questions from Members covering hybrid working and communicating the new way of working to staff, behaviour change management, recruitment difficulties, staff absence, exit interviews, HR support for managers and reasons for staff turnover.

During the discussion it was agreed that this item should return to the Committee in six months' time to measure progress. The Head of HR agreed to include comparable recruitment and retention metrics as well as the results from the employee survey / focus groups.

Resolved:

- That an update on the progress of the Organisational Development Plan be added to the Committee Work Plan for six months' time.
- That the progress made to date on the OD plan, as outlined in Annex 1, was noted.

Reason: To allow the Committee to scrutinise the delivery of a resilient, skilled, and capable workforce to achieve the Council Plan.

11. Customer Centre Performance (6.51 pm)

The Head of Customer and Exchequer Services presented a report on the current telephone performance pressures in the Customer Centre within the Customer Services Team. He explained the difficulties in recruitment and retention and noted 7 vacancies existed currently. This had resulted in longer wait times for customers and an increase in abuse to staff. It was reported that improvements had led to a decrease in phone traffic and a rolling recruitment programme was in place.

Members asked a variety of questions covering the call back facility, the working location of the customer service team, support for staff, access to workflow calendars and dealing with abusive calls.

Following discussion, actions were identified for the Head of Customer and Exchequer Services and/or Head of Business Intelligence:

- A breakdown of the number of calls that went direct to Customer Services and the number of calls that went directly to the Parking team to be provided for the Digital ResPark Scrutiny Review in December.
- Details on the length of calls to the Customer Centre to be circulated to Members.

Resolved:

- i. To provide a further update to the Committee in the next 3-4 months.
- ii. To formally recognise and thank the Customer Service team for their continued hard work.
- iii. That the report be noted.

Reason: To secure scrutiny of council service performance where it impacts on customer experience.

12. Digital Inclusion Update (7.37 pm)

Members received a report from the Head of ICT which provided an update on Digital Inclusion. He highlighted the workstream priorities and noted

that since the publication of the report, Project Gigabit, to which paragraphs 27-29 referred, there had been a recovery of slippage in the timeline.

Barbara Swinn, Head of Strategy and Engagement for York Explore, explained York Explore's role in leading and supporting partnership development. She welcomed the funding received from CYC (City of York Council) which had provided for a part time post to co-ordinate these activities.

Members asked questions including, learning that had taken place and how this could be shared with other areas, the scope for free Wi-Fi networks in areas of social housing and the timescale for Project Gigabit.

[19:51, Cllr Rowley BEM left the meeting]

Resolved: That the report and its content be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on digital inclusion activities and to inform future scrutiny work in this area.

13. Work Plan (8.02 pm)

Members considered the corporate scrutiny work plan covering the next meeting of this Committee and the meetings of the other Scrutiny Committees up until 07 November 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.

Cllr J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.04 pm].

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