

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	11 October 2021
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Baker, Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hollyer, Hook, Musson, Norman, Pearson and Rowley

Apologies

22. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

None were declared.

23. Minutes

The Chair and Committee members discussed the content of the minutes from the last meeting where they focussed on the first three paragraphs.

It was proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair would meet prior to the next meeting to agree the wording of the minutes and bring them back to the Committee for approval, via Democratic Services.

Resolved:

- i. That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 September 2021 be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

Reason: To agree the wording of the minutes between the Chair and Vice Chair to ensure that the minutes can be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

The Chair raised a number of questions regarding the appointment of members to committees and the use of substitutions. The Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer explained that appointments were made by Full Council (FC) and any amendments have been carried out with the knowledge of FC, as an informed decision would go to the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee (SMU). Changes had also been made by the Monitoring Officer or the Head of Paid Service. This process had been written into the terms of reference for SMU and was part of the Constitution. The decision as to who could attend the Committee rests with SMU for the interim period and the final responsibility rests with FC. Members of the Committee could not unilaterally alter the membership of that Committee. The Council has had an open attitude towards accepting substitutions and Annual Council had confirmed the acceptance of substitutes for this Committee and all others.

The Chair reiterated his understanding that there is no requirement to send a substitute if a member is unable to attend.

The Chair also raised the issue of named substitutes and in response, the Director of Governance explained that named substitutes have been appointed by FC and these should be used. This would be an item at the next FC meeting as it was planned to return to the system where, if the list of named substitutes had been used, members must write to the Monitoring Officer or Chief Operating Officer to suggest another substitute.

24. Public Participation

Gwen Swinburn spoke on matters within the General remit of the Committee. She raised concerns regarding the quality of scrutiny procedures within the Committee, in particular the scrutiny regarding the budget, the Constitution and the Council's response to Covid. She also raised concerns regarding the operation of Democratic Services. Ms Swinburn also asked the Chair to apologise for his behaviour at the previous meeting.

25. City of York Council - Annual Complaints Report 2020 to 2021

The Annual Complaints Report 2020-2021 was presented to members by the Information Governance & Feedback Team Manager and the Complaints and Feedback Manager. This was presented to the Committee as a legal requirement. The Officers highlighted the key areas of the report highlighted the key areas of the report and explained the changes that had taken place during the year. In response to questions from members regarding the four areas of the report the following points were noted:

The department had taken on the early investigation / intervention of complaints as part of the contingency arrangements for service areas that were diverting resources into the Covid response.

There had been fewer calls logged during the time frame of the report and this accounted for the drop in the number of complaints. The team have made efforts to ensure that the procedure for making a complaint was clear and accessible to all.

It has been difficult to get staff to recognise compliments and pass them on. Officers attend management meetings and remind the teams how compliments can be spotted and recorded. This was done through email, the Have Your Say inbox and the staff commendation scheme, these were logged on the member of staff's personnel file.

The Complaints Officer attends a link network meeting with representatives from other Local Authorities where best practice is shared. Benchmarking and comparative data in the report has been provided by the local government ombudsman.

Complaints that come in via the Members inbox, have been passed to the complaints team. It was requested that complaints, comments or compliments were made through the Have Your Say inbox or via the online form on the website.

The department has procured an independent company that has investigated complaints at stages of the complaints

procedure. Increased spend on independent investigators was due to the increased complexity of cases.

The increased number of compliments recorded in Children's Social Care was believed to be due to better reporting and recording.

In Adult Social Care, evidence of improvement must be submitted to the ombudsman once decisions have been made by them. The ombudsman have recognised that, in several cases, appropriate action has already been taken prior to a complaint having been upheld.

During Covid, for both Children and Adult Services, the complaints team have investigated complaints in greater detail in the first instance so as to better understand the nature of the complaint. This has resulted in earlier detection of issues and identified points of learning that have been shared across departments with improvements embedded into systems. This has also altered the categorisation of complaints. The categories of complaints are set by national reporting conventions.

Some general points were noted, in that the time frame of the report was prior to the introduction of the 4Cs framework. Complaints advisors were now responsible for seeing complaints through from start to finish, there should be a significant reduction in the number of 'out of time' responses in future. The advisors categorised complaints based on clarification with the customer.

The EAP service area had improved responses to missed services and there has been a drop in complaints in that area. Work has been ongoing with directorates that receive the most complaints, the team have attended directorate meetings and have been included as a standing item on their agendas. Housing has changed directorate and has undergone a restructure.

Individual scrutiny chairs could request a breakdown of complaints for their own area.

The awards for financial recompense has been paid directly from the budget of the individual service areas.

Complaints made by members of staff regarding their treatment by a customer have been dealt with by a process within the HR department. They have also been logged within the Health & Safety portal. Complaints regarding staff conduct were logged by the department and dealt with by HR. The process has been explained in the Corporate Complaints procedure.

Officers were thanked for their report.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. The Information, Governance & Feedback Team Manager noted Members' suggestions for future improvements to the content of the report.

Reason: To ensure the Committee meets its legal requirements in relation to complaints.

26. Organisational Development (CMT Restructure)

Members were given an update on the Corporate Management Team restructure by the Director of Governance, on behalf of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development. She explained that the restructure was started in December 2020 and was largely implemented by April 2021 in order to achieve savings of £80,000. The restructure of Heads of Service, grades 12-13 was underway, having been overseen by the Chief Operating Officer and HR. The council has sought to appoint a permanent Director of People and a replacement for the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care. For the interim period the statutory roles of Director of Adult Services and Director of Children's Services had been appointed to Michael Melvin and Anne Coyle respectively. For the interim period, the Assistant Director of Adult Social Services would be Amanda Jones who would start on 15th November 2021.

The Director of Governance invited questions in response to the report and Annexes provided. It was noted that all statutory obligations had been covered by the interim appointments and they would be directly line managed by the Chief Operating Officer. The Monitoring Officer was satisfied that the appointments have covered the statutory requirements and that the interim Director of Children's Services would be the point of contact for Ofsted.

The salary range for a Corporate Director at CYC was £101,661-112,067, this was not the market value for DAC and DCS posts in other authorities.

The current structure has been funded to a lesser amount than the previous structure. The appointments that had been made were for posts on the current structure. The Director of Governance believed that improvements to the structure of the People Directorate have led to a greater sharing of information and a better joined up response from the directorate.

The scrutiny function would be examined once the new Constitution was in place. Scrutiny chairs had been invited to revisit the terms of reference for their committee. It was noted that it would be easier to change the terms of reference at the start of the scrutiny year.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee were kept up to date with progress in Corporate Management Team restructure.

27. Work Plan 2021/22

The Committee work plan for the 2021/22 municipal year was considered. The Chair explained that the work plan document was a centralised document and did not include all of the current committees.

The Chair drew to members' attention the proposed joint scrutiny meetings for 25th October, one with Health and Adult Social Care and the other with Economy and Place, at 14:00 and 17:30 respectively.

Cllr Pearson requested that daytime meetings be referred to the committee in the first instance due to members' work commitments.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.15 pm].