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Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	13 November 2017
Present	Councillors Williams (Chair), Galvin (Vice-Chair - present until 6.30pm, prior to the vote in minute item 31), Ayre, S Barnes, D'Agorne, Fenton, Flinders, Gates and K Myers

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## **26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they had in respect of business on this agenda. No additional interests were declared.

## **27. MINUTES**

Resolved: To approve and sign the Minutes of the meetings held 31 July 2017 and 4 September 2017.

## **28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's scheme of public participation.

## **29. SCHEDULE OF PETITIONS**

Members considered the report and had the opportunity to ask questions of the officer. The report provided information on two new petitions which had been received and on petitions considered by Executive Members since the previous meeting.

The two new petitions were:

- 88. A petition requesting inclusion in the R7 Residential Parking Zone of St John's Place and Chestnut Court
- 90. A petition to restore the full service of the Citizens Advice York.

It was confirmed that at the time of agenda publication there had been no update on the progress of the Lowther Street petition.

Resolved: To note receipt of the petitions and the proposed action.

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

### **30. 2017/18 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITOR 2**

Members considered the 2017/18 Finance and Performance Monitor Report for Quarter Two which provided high level financial and performance of Customer and Corporate services. The following points were discussed:

- Customer satisfaction with engagement in council processes had been maintained and good performance had been demonstrated in the speed with which calls were answered.
- Loss of staff time due to sickness had increased and a report on this would be presented to the committee's January meeting.
- Work to encourage use of digitalised council services continued to progress.
- The number of complaints received by the council had slightly reduced but the council's response rate to these had increased. Work was underway to understand this trend with initial suggestions being a greater staff emphasis on resolving complaints at stage one in order to minimise escalation to stages two and three. It was agreed to bring a report on this to the January meeting of the committee for their consideration.

Officers agreed to obtain answers for Members questions relating to the use of premium rate phone numbers, and the reasons for unexpected income from the bereavement service and wider under-spends across the council.

Resolved: (i) To receive and note the report.

(ii) To request a report be brought to the committee on 22 January regarding council procedures for dealing with and responding to complaints.

- Reason:
- (i) To update the Committee on the forecast position for 2017/18
  - (ii) To undertake their scrutiny function regarding the Council's complaints procedure.

**31. ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS SCRUTINY REVIEW DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Members considered the report of the scrutiny task group set up to review electoral arrangements in the city. The review had considered the volume of voter registrations and the turnaround speed of election results. During discussion of the review's findings the following points were made:

- The registration of voters including postal voters, following changes in electoral registration administration in 2005 and legislation regarding student registrations within a recent Higher Education Research Bill.
- The ambition of the council to improve the speed of counts and the size of the count venue which had been cited as a key challenge in achieving this.
- Comparisons with other local authorities with regards to speed of counts and staff to ballot paper ratios.
- The training and ongoing development of election staff outside of election periods.
- The review group felt a level of frustration with the responses they had received and felt the management of the counting process could have been covered more fully within the review. It was agreed not to reconvene the Task Group but to include additional recommendations to the existing report to encompass questions regarding the management process.

Members were reminded that all scrutiny review reports were circulated to members of the working group prior to their wider circulation and that this provided a good opportunity to ensure they appropriately reflected the group's conclusions.

Following a motion from the Chair, seconded by Cllr Fenton, it was

- Resolved:
- To endorse the Task Group's recommendations arising from the review as shown in paragraph 114 of the report and to recommend additionally that the Returning Officer:
- i. Reviews count procedures including the process of managing the count, reducing downtime and the training and instruction of count staff
  - ii. Reviews the resources available for the organisations of elections.
  - iii. Examines a targeted response time for the receipt of postal votes.

Reason: To conclude the work of this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

### **32. WORK PLAN 2017/18**

Members considered the Committee's draft work plan for the remainder of the municipal year. It was agreed to add two items to the January meeting: performance management of the council's complaints procedures; and a discussion on future topics for scrutiny review groups.

It was also agreed to move the next meeting from 15 January to 22 January 2018 to accommodate a scheduling clash with another committee.

### **33. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business.

Councillor D Williams, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.40 pm].