

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	22 January 2018
Present	Councillors Williams (Chair), Ayre, S Barnes, Fenton, Flinders, Gates, K Myers, Kramm (Substitute for Cllr D'Agorne) and Richardson (Substitute for Cllr Galvin)
Apologies	Councillors D'Agorne and Galvin.

34. 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 that they had in respect of business on this agenda. No additional interests were declared.

35. MINUTES

Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2017.

36. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

37. SCHEDULE OF PETITIONS

Members considered the report which provided information on new petitions received since the last meeting and details of those considered by the Executive or relevant Executive Member or Officer.

Resolved: To note the report and approve the recommended course of action for each of the petitions received.

38. UPDATE REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND WELLBEING PROJECT (SICKNESS ABSENCE)

Members considered the report which provided an update on work being undertaken to address staff sickness absence with a focus on attendance management and employee wellbeing. It was explained that the new digital system would provide managers with a more effective way of recording absence data and that back-to-work conversations with line managers would continue to take place as usual.

Members emphasised the importance of understanding the reasons for high levels of absence and it was reported that service areas with high levels of absence had been identified for further investigation. A staff survey would be conducted for all staff over 12 months leading to a final report but with interim results available periodically during that time. Members raised their concerns that any scheme to reduce staff absence should not cause more employees to attend work while sick as this may have negative implications for staff morale and wellbeing.

The committee asked that they receive a further report at their May meeting and agreed to provide officers with the areas in which they would like specific information. These included a breakdown of long-term and short-term periods of absence and the occupations of staff within the service areas identified as hotspots of high absence.

Resolved: To receive an update report of staff absence at the meeting of the committee in May 2018.

39. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Members considered the report which included the annual reports covering April 2016 to March 2017 in respect of Adult and Children's Social Care and the Corporate Complaints Policy. Cath Murray, Complaints Manager, was in attendance to present the report and to respond to Members' questions. In response to questions, she highlighted the following points:

- The Council continued to engage with the Information Governance Ombudsman but this did not prevent them from also working towards their own desired outcomes.
- The Ombudsman had identified area of concern in the council's practices, as outlined in Section 32 and 33, and would work with the council to tackle this.

- There had been a change in the way that maladministration was reported and this would now be reflected in the full reports of corporate compliance activity.
- The Independent Persons cost combined a quarterly static fee with an additional charge for each investigation carried out, and related only to Stage 2 and 3 investigations,
- Enquiries referred for resolution, presented in the report, related to complaints which had been settled. Enquiries not referred were likely to be those where the council was at fault or where a judgment was still required on whether the complaint should be investigated.

A request was made to include benchmarking figures in future reports to enable Members to see comparisons with previous years and with other Local Authorities.

It was agreed to circulate to Members the Annual Review Letter from the Ombudsman referred to in the report. The letter was received annually in July and could be brought to the Committee shortly afterwards.

Resolved: To note the information within the reports and the ongoing work required to ensure the Council meets its responsibilities.

To receive the annual letter from the Ombudsman.

40. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ONE PLANET YORK SCRUTINY REVIEW

Members considered the report which provided the first update of the recommendations arising from the One Planet York Scrutiny Review. Will Boardman and Josie Ozols-Riding were in attendance to present the report and to respond to Members' questions.

It was reported that good progress had been made but that more work was needed to centralise the model in all new work conducted within the city and that early application of the model would allow it to make the most impact. It was hoped that there would be increased understanding of the economic and social elements of the model in addition to the environmental focus.

Officers gave an update on the progress made on each of the recommendations of the review and Members were asked to sign off those which had been fully implemented. Members

agreed to sign off all recommendations excepting B, K, L and N which remained outstanding. It was agreed not to re-form the review taskgroup and instead to request a further update report on the outstanding actions.

The consideration of social value in corporate procurement practices was discussed and it was agreed to discuss this further under the agenda item on the workplan (minute 43).

Resolved: To sign off all recommendations with the exception of B, K, L and N.

To receive an update on recommendations B, K, L and N and a wider overview of the review's progress in six months time.

41. UPDATE REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ICT POLICY

Members considered the report which provided an update on progress against the ICT Strategy including delivery of digital projects and outcomes. Roy Grant and Amanda Clarke were in attendance to present the report and respond to Members' questions.

It was reported that work was ongoing with the voluntary sector to support people to convert to online services, though face-to-face services would continue to be available for customers coming into West Offices. The back office function for Revenue and Benefits would go live in February 2018 with other services to follow. It was reported that the Committee's earlier feedback on language and content had been taken on board.

Take-up of online services was expected to vary by service area but the overall Council target was 55%. The associated projected saving from this had been included within the current budget and future business case. Members asked to receive further information on the digital customer section of the strategy (including take-up of online council tax processing) and how far the council were in implementing this along with their future priorities.

The Chair congratulated Roy and his team for his work to make York the most connected city and for the good coverage this had attracted in the Sunday Times.

Resolved: To note the information included and to request further updates as part of the Committee's work plan.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the development of the ICT strategy.

42. SCRUTINY REVIEW SUPPORT BUDGET

Members considered the report which set out the current position in relation to available Council funding to support scrutiny review work. The committee was reminded that, should another source not be identified, funding for the youth council may come from their budget as agreed by council.

It was reported that spending by the scrutiny committees had been low in the current and previous year/s. Members felt this was partly because the work they'd have liked to do were outside of their financial capacity and spending a smaller budget effectively could be challenging.

In response to a suggestion to transfer their funds to another committee, Members were reminded that their budget was for a scrutiny function only. Officers agreed to circulate a briefing paper regarding the differences in the remits of CSMC and the Audit & Governance committees. It was agreed that use of the budget to supplement Member training could be looked into if there was an appetite for this.

Members felt that an increase in their budget would enable them to bring in the right expertise to undertake the required reviews and that this need should be demonstrated through a costed plan of work. It was agreed to request up to £10,000, with the final figure to be agreed by the Chief Officer in consultation with the Chair.

Resolved: To delegate to the Chief Officer, in consultation with the Chair, to make a request of up to £10,000 to the Executive for the committee's budget, prior to the Council's budget setting process for 2018/19.

To receive a briefing note via email on the remit and area of responsibility of the CSMC and Audit & Governance committees.

Reason: To inform the Executive of the level of financial support required for the new financial year.

43. WORK PLAN 2017/18 AND DISCUSSION ON FURTHER POTENTIAL SCRUTINY TOPICS

Members considered the Committee's draft work plan for the remainder of the municipal year and discussed further potential scrutiny topics. After discussion, it was agreed to add the following items:

- An update on any decision made about the future governance arrangements of the North Yorkshire Fire Authority.
- A report on the new scrutiny arrangements piloted within the Economy and Place directorate (March 2018).
- An update on the work to investigate and monitor staff wellbeing and attendance (May 2018).
- A six-monthly review of the ICT strategy.
- A six-monthly review of the One Planet York strategy to include a briefing on how social value is considered with regards to corporate investments and within the Council's commissioning and procurement practices.

Resolved: To approve the work plan for the municipal year with the above additions.

Reason: To keep the work plan maintained.

44. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business.

Councillor D Williams, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.05 pm]