

RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Tim Swinyard (Chair), Des Moffatt, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Steve Weisinger and Robert Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Allsopp, John Haines and Vera Tomlinson.

23. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members to declare any known interests in any of the matters to be considered by the Committee.
No such declarations were made.

24. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2018 be confirmed and signed.

25. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

26. Customer Access Strategy

The Committee was invited to consider the Council's draft Customer Access Strategy 2018-2021, outlining how and why the Council is transforming the way it interacts with its customers and the Council's ambition for the quality and experience it wants its customers to have. The Strategy explains how the Council will ensure that every customer is able to transact and communicate with it regardless of their confidence, capability and access to newer forms of communication and service delivery.

The Council's Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications introduced the strategy document, outlining how it would use a range of data, customer feedback data, transaction volume data and national trends to deliver services which are accessible, convenient, cost effective, reliable, simple to use and which are "right first time". It was noted that the implementation of the strategy will take a number of years and members were advised that the initial focus was to make the case for change in order that work can then be done with Council services and residents to improve the customer service on offer.

The Director explained the main drivers of the Customer Access Strategy being:

- Services will be "Digital by Design" where possible – with greater use of electronic and social media to report service issues and communicate with residents.
- All customers have fair and equal access to services and greater control over how they receive and access those services – there will be increased access

to self-service, mainly through the use of the web, but including making use of community facilities and support with a choice of services available at times and locations to suit the customer.

- Customer needs to be resolved at the first point of contact – via trained staff who are enabled to make decisions in order to ensure problems are fixed.
- Customer feedback drives service improvement and policy and procedure changes – via feedback from customers.
- Customer requirements will be fulfilled in the most cost effective way possible.

Resolved – That members of the Committee provide the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications with feedback on the Customer Access Strategy following the meeting.

27. Welfare Reform & Social Inclusion

The Head of Revenues and Benefits and the Social Inclusion and Enterprise Manager submitted a joint report providing the Committee with an update on Welfare Reform and how the Council is supporting Swindon residents through the changes to welfare benefits and on the assistance provided by Social Inclusion. The report summarised the support available currently to those residents of the borough impacted by changes brought in under the Welfare Reform Act 2012 including under-occupancy Housing Benefit reduction, Council Tax Benefit changes, the Benefit Cap and Universal Credits.

It was noted that Adult Social Care were providing support for people with mental health disorder problems who were affected by the reform changes.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Revenues and Benefits and the Social Inclusion and Enterprise Manager be thanked for a useful and informative report.

28. Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

The Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications submitted a report giving details of the progress being made towards the achievement of the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges.

It was noted that, progress in relation to the Council's Vision can be inspected on the Council website, with each goal being tracked and rated as being 'On Track, Achieved Goal, Measuring or Needs Improvement'. Performance is also published on the Corporate Scorecard which is available for Members and Senior Officers. It was noted that progress is recorded quarterly with additional performance data and a narrative provided on progress made or challenges faced.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Officers consider splitting pledge 23 "Secure a sustainable future for the Mechanics Institute. Support the redevelopment of the Corn Exchange." into 2 separate pledges for (a) the Mechanics Institute and (b) the Corn Exchange.