

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on 8 January 2014 from 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm.

- ✓ Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Azad Choudhry
- Councillor Georgina Culley
- Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
- ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein
- ✓ Councillor Gul Khan
- Councillor Neghat Khan
- ✓ Councillor Thulani Molife
- Councillor Toby Neal
- ✓ Councillor Anne Peach
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Saghir
- ✓ Councillor Roger Steel
- ✓ Councillor Marcia Watson

- ✓ Beverley Denby (Third Sector Advocate)

✓ indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Nicola Heaton	- Portfolio Holder for Community Services
Claire Brown	- Customer Access Programme Manager
Ray Hennessy	- Citizen First Programme Manager
Tracey Laxton	- Councillor Lead for Have Your Say
Lynne North	- Customer Liaison Officer
Jane Garrard	- Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Angelika Kaufhold	- Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Councillor Georgina Culley – personal
- Councillor Neghat Khan – unwell/ medical
- Councillor Mohammad Ibrahim – unwell/ medical

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

44 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

45 HAVE YOUR SAY, CITIZEN FIRST AND THE CUSTOMER ACCESS PROGRAMME

Councillor Nicola Heaton, Portfolio Holder for Community Services, informed the Committee that there was a 2011 manifesto pledge to make Nottingham City Council the most citizen-friendly Council in the country. This had informed the introduction of the Citizen First Programme in September 2011, launch of Have Your Say in 2012 and launch of the Nottingham Promise, along with Nottingham City Transport, Nottingham City Homes and Nottinghamshire Police in 2013. During this period there has been an improvement in calls to the Council answered, from 75% in 2011/12 to 89% in 2013/14. The Council has also recently published an Accessible Information Policy.

Ray Hennessy, Citizen First Programme Manager, and Claire Brown, Customer Access Programme Manager, gave a presentation highlighting the following points:

Citizen First Programme

- (a) Development of the Citizen First Programme has been based on customer feedback.
- (b) One of the main areas of customer feedback was telephone response and therefore a common approach for telephone access and performance was introduced. This has resulted in a better telephone response to citizens on front-facing, high volume services, such as the bins and revenue and benefits services.
- (c) Facilities to respond to face to face enquiries by the public have been expanded to Angel Row Contact Centre and the Joint Service Centre at Bulwell Riverside.
- (d) A survey of citizens found that customer satisfaction that colleagues were polite and listened to the citizen's enquiry was over 90%. The team was particularly pleased with these results.
- (e) Work has taken place to support colleagues in making improvements, for example guidance on use of plain English; embedding customer care measures and behaviours in directorate plans, with individual accountabilities; and creating a Nottingham Insight Consultation Hub to help with planning and developing good practice in consultation and reporting outcomes of consultation to citizens.

Have Your Say Programme

- (f) The Have Your Say programme has introduced a single approach to dealing with comments, compliments and complaints and a single IT system for customers and colleagues to report issues on. Timescales for dealing with feedback have been agreed – complaints should receive an immediate response or within a couple of days; otherwise more complex complaints should be dealt with within 10 days.

- (g) Next steps for the Have Your Say programme include ensuring citizens are at the heart of services; expanding the Nottingham Promise and refreshing team progress through business planning; introducing mystery shopping, which has been successfully trialled; and ensuring citizens are aware of what services are available and how to access them.

Customer Access Programme

- (h) Services have traditionally been organised in a way that makes sense to the Council and the programme aims to realign this so that services are organised in a way that is easier for customers to understand and access.
- (i) Many interactions can now be done electronically, but the programme is looking at making the most of digital and self-serve options by simplifying processes and improving efficiency.
- (j) Citizens will still have a choice to access services online, on the phone or face to face.
- (k) Redesign of services will involve discussions with experienced colleagues, co-design with members of the citizen panel before being tested by colleagues and citizens.
- (l) The programme aims to deliver a single, consistent view of the customer with an individual's records kept together (currently there are 13 different case management systems in use by the Council).

Following questions from councillors, Claire Brown, Ray Hennessey and Tracey Laxton provided the following additional information:

- (m) There are statutory requirements for dealing with social care complaints. Complaints received are referred to that service and the statutory process is followed. However, the core principles of how to respond to a complaint are the same as for any other Council service.
- (n) There is training for colleagues on dealing with complaints, this includes learning from past cases.
- (o) More could be done to provide feedback to citizens on what happens as a result of complaints. This would help to increase confidence in the system and encourage more comments, compliments and complaints.
- (p) Colleagues are engaged in the three programmes. There is regular internal communication about new initiatives, for example the Nottingham Promise. In terms of individual behaviours, managers work with individual colleagues to identify and address any issues. For services receiving high numbers of phone calls, this sometimes includes monitoring phone calls.
- (q) The Chief Executive contacts colleagues who have received positive feedback to thank them, and this is also publicised on the plasma screens in Loxley House.

- (r) There are a range of reasons why citizens call the Council. The reasons are being explored to identify what triggers a call and whether some actions can be more efficiently carried out in another way for those who want/ are able to. 'Getting it right first time', for example using plain English in letters will help reduce the need for people to call to check information/ ask for clarification. However there will always be people who want to speak to a person and telephone the Council for information/ to complete a transaction so it will not be possible to reduce telephone calls completely. The important thing is to focus on adding value for those people who really do need to speak to someone.
- (s) There is a need to ensure that online services are compatible with new technologies, for example mobile technology.
- (t) At the moment an individual's interactions with the Council are logged separately. The Customer Access Programme aims to bring this information together to deliver a single view of a customer. This will help to identify whether their issue is resolved first time.
- (u) Ward councillors will be informed about complaints relating to their ward if the complaint reaches Stage 3 of the complaints process and the citizen gives permission for the information to be passed on. Small numbers of complaints about particular issues can make it possible to identify individuals, but when there are larger numbers of complaints themes can be made available to ward councillors.
- (v) The citizen survey is being used to measure progress. It is not easy to compare performance with other local authorities because comparator data is not readily available. Colleagues have visited other local authorities to learn from good practice.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Committee is satisfied with the direction of travel of the Have Your Say, Customer Access and Citizen First Programmes; and**
- (2) The Committee give greater consideration to customer access and feedback issues in developing its lines of questioning for future scrutiny activities.**

46 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the Head of Democratic Services' report about the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2013/14. Angelika Kaufhold proposed that the workshop to identify topics for scrutiny review panels in 2014/15 be brought forward to the Committee's meeting on 5 March 2013. The welfare rights item would then be postponed until April.

RESOLVED

- (1) To hold the workshop to identify topics for scrutiny review panels in 2014/15 in March and postpone the welfare rights update until April 2014; and**

- (2) To appoint Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim to sit on the scrutiny review panel looking at flooding and Councillor Anne Peach to sit on the scrutiny review panel looking at tree management.**