

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 7TH NOVEMBER, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, R Grahame,
M Harland, G Hyde, J Illingworth,
K Maqsood, R. Stephenson, K Wakefield,
N Walshaw and Wilkinson

44 Late Items

The following late and supplementary information was submitted to the Board:

Agenda item 7 – Draft report of the Scrutiny Board following its review of the development of a revised Council Tax Support scheme.

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

45 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

46 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor M Robinson.
Notification had been received that Councillor G Wilkinson was to substitute for Councillor M Robinson.

47 Minutes - 10 October 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

48 Development of a revised Council Tax Support Scheme - draft scrutiny report

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support made reference to the recent review undertaken by the Scrutiny Board on the development of a revised Council Tax Support scheme and that the Board's findings and recommendations were set out in the Board's draft report for formal consideration and approval.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 9th January, 2017

- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits

In consideration of its draft report, the Board agreed to revise the wording of recommendation 3 (i) and the supporting narrative within the report, to make it clearer that the Scrutiny Board supports the option to remove protections entirely from 1st April 2017 for the majority of protected groups and only maintain protections for War Pensioners.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Board approves its draft report on the development of a revised Council Tax Support scheme subject to the amendments set out above.

49 Update on delivery of the Community Hubs programme

The report of the Chief Officer Customer Access provided an update on the delivery of the Community Hubs programme at the request of the Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Susan Murray, Head of Customer Contact, Customer Services

The key issues raised were as follows:

- The Board was very pleased to note the positive feedback from two external assessments of the Community Hubs (The Matrix Assessment and the Customer Service Excellence Accreditation).
- Members discussed the range of services being monitored by Community Hubs as key indicators of success.
- Particular reference was made to the numbers of individuals being assisted into work through the Community Hub Job Shops (it was noted that 394 individuals had been assisted into work during October 2016).
- The Board acknowledged the continual efforts of the Council to develop real integration with a wide range of services and partners, with particular reference made to the ongoing success of the Money Buddies initiative.
- A member of the Board made reference to a utility company (Yorkshire Water) who had recently stated on their bills that customers who are not connected to service water drainage could be eligible for a rebate. As the onus was placed on the customer to apply for this rebate, this was highlighted as an example where Customer Service Officers could proactively prompt and assist eligible customers in applying for this saving.
- The Board noted the existing progress in relation to Phase 2 of the programme.
- In particular, the Board acknowledged the updated position in relation to Horsforth Museum following the Board's previous discussions during the Call In meeting in July 2016.

- The Board was pleased to note that all the Hubs had seen an increase in residents using the buildings, with particular figures cited for the 5 new Community Hubs in Kippax, Pudsey, Rothwell, Horsforth and Moor Allerton. However, particular clarification was sought on whether the recent success of the new Kippax Hub (with a 95% increase in people using the building) was having an effect on the numbers of people accessing neighbouring services based in Garforth.
- The Board was pleased to learn that Community Hub and One Stop Centre staff had already undertaken Dementia Friendly training and that this will also be rolled out to Library staff.
- Reference was made to the current progress on developing Phase 3 of the programme, with the intention of producing a Business Case by Spring 2017. It was therefore agreed that the Scrutiny Board would receive a further update report early in the New Year to help inform the development of this Business Case.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board receives a further update report in relation to the development of the Phase 3 Programme Business Case early in the New Year.

(Councillor J Illingworth arrived to the meeting at 10.20 am during the consideration of this item)

50 Scrutiny Inquiry into reducing repeat customer contacts through tackling failure demand.

The report of the Head of Governance Services and Scrutiny Support presented draft terms of reference relating to the Board's forthcoming inquiry into reducing repeat customer contacts through tackling failure demand.

The Board also received a presentation on the key areas set out in accordance with session one of the inquiry. These included:

- The general determinants of service failure and the key factors that contribute to receiving repeat customer contact (focusing on policy, people, process and information).
- The extent to which customer services can implement solutions that help identify customers who repeatedly contact the council due to service failure with the aim of mitigating the impact on their health and wellbeing.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Adam Quesne, Head of Customer Contact
- Wendy Allinson, Citizens@Leeds Development Team Lead

The key areas of discussion were as follows:

- Escalating cases - Board Members identified the need to explore the existing mechanisms in place for Elected Members to escalate particular cases to senior staff, including during out of hours, and agreed to incorporate this into the terms of reference for this inquiry.
- Priority areas for investigation – Members acknowledged the 3 key service areas that generate the greatest volume of calls and also failure demand (Housing, Council Tax and Benefits). It was noted that these would be considered in greater detail during future inquiry sessions.
- Cost analysis of failure demand - Members were pleased to note that work is underway to pull together case study evidence to demonstrate reasons for failure demand in particular service areas along with the associated costs to the Contact Centre. It was requested that this information also be made available as part of this inquiry.
- Examples of joined up working – Members requested examples of previous joined up working initiatives between Customer Services and the 3 specific service areas which had led to improved outcomes for customers.
- Geographical intelligence – Members queried the extent to which data analysis is undertaken by the Contact Centre to establish potential variances in service across the city which could assist in identifying solutions with the relevant service areas. It was agreed that this would be explored further with the specific service areas as part of the future inquiry sessions.
- General data analysis – Members acknowledged that whilst the Contact Centre is data rich, it lacks the analytical ability to turn that data into intelligence to assist in longer term planning.
- Examples of letters to customers – in acknowledging that repeat calls often stem from customers receiving confusing information, Members requested that examples of letters sent to customers are considered as part of the future inquiry sessions.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the draft terms of reference for the Board's Inquiry into reducing repeat customer contact through tackling failure demand be approved, subject to the amendment set out above.
- (b) That the additional information requested by the Board, as set out above, is considered as part of the future inquiry sessions.

51 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Governance Services and Scrutiny Support invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the municipal year.

In doing so, the Board agreed to cancel its next scheduled meeting on Monday 8th December 2016 and to hold a working group meeting on this date to undertake the second session of its inquiry into reducing repeat customer contact through tackling failure demand.

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 9th January, 2017

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Scrutiny Board's scheduled meeting on Monday 8th December 2016 be cancelled.
- (b) That a working group meeting is held on Monday 8th December 2016 to undertake the second session of the Board's Inquiry into reducing repeat customer contact through tackling failure demand.

52 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 9th January 2017 at 10 am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am).

(The meeting concluded at 11.30 am).