



Scrutiny Board

Minutes - 26 November 2014

Attendance

Members of the Board

Cllr Peter O'Neill (Chair)
Cllr Barry Findlay (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Lorna McGregor
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Ian Brookfield

Employees

Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Adam Hadley	Scrutiny and Transparency Manager
Sue Handy	Head of Customer Service
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Charlotte Johns	Head of Policy
Jodie McConnell	Corporate Programme Manager
Kevin O'Keefe	Chief Legal Officer
Jonathan Pearce	Graduate Management Trainee

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hodgkiss, for whom Cllr Brookfield attended as substitute.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (21 October 2014)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

Cllr Simkins returned to the issue of appraisals from last Scrutiny Board meeting and questioned how the Managing Director is held to account and if this should have been a recommendation. It was explained that the Leader of the Council holds the Managing Director to account as does Scrutiny Board. There were no other matters arising.

5 **C3 Programme**

Councillor O'Neill introduced the report by noting the benefit of this item being pre-decision scrutiny as it allows the Board's discussion to inform the Cabinet meeting where the same report will be considered.

Keith Ireland gave an outline of five key aspects of the Confident Capable Council (C3) transformation programme covered by this report. He stressed the need for the Council to streamline its business processes and highlighted the Corporate Plan's revised three priorities:

- Corporate.
- Place.
- People.

Starting with the corporate plan, Keith explained that there was a need for a clear and concise corporate framework on a single page, with which all employees should be able to identify whatever their grade. For senior employees the more detailed second level also identifies responsibilities and managerial leads, which then work through to individual work programmes. The Managing Director then noted that the revised plan would aid the employee appraisals process.

The Managing Director also introduced the draft Wolverhampton City Council marketing strategy, which sets out how the organisation will identify, anticipate and satisfy customer requirements efficiently and effectively. He stressed the need to align the Council's marketing strategy to the City, to maintain momentum and to show the Council as an excellent place to do business. New technologies need to be continually embraced to encourage investment. Furthermore, the Council should now see its role as an enabler and co-provider of services and not solely responsible for delivery. However, this did not mean outsourcing unless no alternatives were viable.

The Managing Director then drew the Board's attention to a key recommendation to rebrand the Council's word mark and become 'City of Wolverhampton' rather than 'Wolverhampton City Council'. Changes to signage will be rolled out as required following Cabinet approval. For example, the main entrance signs to the City and Civic Centre, which are already programmed for change, will be a priority following Cabinet approval, as they are the first point of contact for the customer. It was also stressed that these changes will be funded within current budgets – extra money will not be allocated. Councillors remarked that whilst signs shouldn't be needlessly taken down, there were certain areas of the City where signage is ten to twenty years out of date and in need of changing. The Managing Director gave assurances that if Councillors brought such signs to his attention, they would be removed. He also explained there is an audit of signs underway that aims to improve signage across the City. Councillors enquired as to whether the Council's rebranding would take into account style changes to documents and reports. This is being developed by the

Head of Communications, who is in discussion with designers to fashion a style guide template which will be digitally compatible.

The Managing Director provided detail about the customer service standards report, explaining that to become a Confident, Capable Council overarching service standards are a necessity. He stated that the customer must come first when the Council is doing business. Customer processes will become more rapid and agile to meet this requirement. Moreover, customer service standards will be consistent right across the Council and communication channels. Councillors suggested that the customer service plan should incorporate a ring-back feature to reduce the number of their constituents being put on hold when phoning Customer Services. They noted how many constituents now contact the Council by mobile phone and are on limited credit tariffs - as a result, they do not want to spend long periods on hold. Sue Handy reassured Councillors that a ring-back process will be made available within the next eight weeks. She also stressed that the customer service team aims to answer calls within 90 seconds, and that customers will be given an option to be called back in future, once the technology is configured.

Councillors also questioned whether call centre advisers could work from home in a move aimed at making savings. The Managing Director explained that more agile working will be introduced, but the appropriate technology needs to be in place for the efficiency of this initiative to be monitored. Currently some employees work both from and at home, but the introduction of Office 365's cloud system and a new telephony system will allow this to be more widespread. This will happen by the end of 2015 once the FutureSpace programme has been launched.

Keith also stated the need to embrace new technologies to streamline customer care transactions. He suggested using the software, Google Analytics, to assess what people are interested in and then linking this to the Council's website, social media and email strategy. The key aim is to reduce the number of people contacting the Council and to enable them to complete tasks independently online wherever possible. This will allow the Council to prioritise resources and address the needs of people that require support.

Councillors were supportive of the efforts made to modernise the Council and improve its image. Cllr Simkins sought assurance that the community would still be put first and not business. Keith explained that everyone contacting the Council is a customer and therefore will receive the same equal treatment. He also explained the need to change culture across the organisation. An example of this is an email free day where staff should talk by phone or face-to-face. The volume of emails is perceived to be high and will be monitored in an attempt to make communication more efficient. There is a need for staff to embrace change and be held accountable in future.

Another area of culture change, which will directly impact Councillors, is the proposal to create a single point of contact (SPOC) for Councillors. By having a SPOC to manage Councillors' issues, the Council will be able to monitor performance and hold employees to account. Councillors will not be obliged to use the SPOC service, but can hold the Managing Director to account if they choose to do so, because the performance will be transparent. Lesley Roberts at Wolverhampton Homes will be

consulted for advice about how the SPOC arrangements could be delivered through that organisation.

Resolved:

(1) To note the developing proposals in respect of:

- A revised Corporate Plan framework.
- A new marketing strategy for the City Council.
- A new corporate identity for the Council.
- An internal communications strategy including a new approach to Directions Conferences.
- The Council's customer service standards.

(2) To forward comments made by Scrutiny Board about the proposals to Cabinet for consideration as part of its consideration of the report.

(3) To note that the report was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive unless there are substantive changes before the Executive considers the proposals.

6 **100:100 Programme Update**

Councillor O'Neill introduced the item by complimenting the 100:100 programme's methodology and intentions. Keith Ireland then informed Scrutiny Board of the progress being made by the 100:100 programme, which is part of the Council's strategy to becoming a Confident, Capable Council. He praised the programme which is cost effective, but can make a big difference to employees.

Jodie McConnell then provided the panel with updated figures from the 100:100 programme noting it had received 358 ideas to date and over 1200 responses through surveys and emails. Charlotte Johns expanded on Jodie's comments stating that there is a robust structure in place which informs staff about why an idea can or cannot happen. She advised Councillor Sweet is involved in the programme, agreeing decisions to go forward. Councillors on the Board were invited to discuss ideas with Jodie McConnell if they wished.

Councillors questioned whether the programme had made an impact externally. Examples were given of suggestions for volunteering and community support groups. A food bank will also run all year round as a result of a 100:100 idea suggestion. Again, Councillors were supportive of this aspect of the programme.

Resolved:

To note progress on the 100:100 programme to date.