

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 21st July, 2022 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr L. Jeffers
Cllr Prabesh KC
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr S. Trussler

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th June, 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

Cllr Makunura requested to be removed from the Educational Improvement Task and Finish Group due to other commitments. Membership of this Group would be considered at the next meeting of the Progress Group.

8. CABINET CHAMPION - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 2022/23

The Committee welcomed Cllr Mara Makunura, who had been appointed as Cabinet Champion for Equalities and Diversity for the 2022/23 Municipal Year. Cllr Makunura provide an overview on the priorities for the year.

Cllr Makunura advised on the purpose and role of the Equalities and Diversity Champion. The purpose had been to support the delivery of the Equalities and Diversity Action Plan and work with partners to address issues for people with disabilities.

The roles and priorities of the Champion would be to:

- Work to identify and promote cultural, religious and heritage festivals and events in the Borough - This would be done through the establishment of a Rushmoor Cohesive Communities Group (RCCG), made up of two representatives from each community group settled in the Borough. The Group would work together to support each other's communities/events and support Council lead events throughout the year. The Group aimed to

promote under reached communities across the Borough and engage them with a wider range of local events.

- Work to improve awareness of Members and Officers of equality, diversity and disability issues in the Borough - It was advised that Cllr Makunura had been the Health and Wellbeing Champion during 2021/22 and part of the work undertaken had been to establish the Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group (RAAG). The Group would be addressing access issues across the Borough and working with the Police and Crime Commissioner to help tackle related hate crime and antisocial behaviour issues.
- Promoting culture – a plan was in place to work with the Rushmoor International Association (RIA) to help promote the different cultures within the Borough to the Council's Twin Towns/Sister Cities.
- Monitor the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and influence proposals for future phases of its delivery – It was planned that regular meetings would be held with the Assistant Chief Executive, Rachel Barker, to highlight issues that had been raised at both RCCG and RAAG to help guide the work moving forward and support existing projects.
- Updates on the work would be provided to the Cabinet and Committee as appropriate.

The Committee discussed the report, and the following was noted in response to queries raised:

- It was advised that the recommendations made following the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, that took place as a result of the Black Lives Matter motion in June 2020 had, in the main, been achieved
- Cllr Makunura advised that the RAAG were currently looking into options to address the availability of Makaton friendly signage, signing at official Council meetings, audio recordings of Council publications such as the Arena magazine and QR codes for blind people to read signage.
- Consideration be given to obtaining funding from the Levelling Up Fund for events etc.
- Consideration be given to how the Committee would measure the success for the Champion roles

The Chairman thanked Cllr Makunura for her report.

9. **CORPORATE CUSTOMER CONTACT INDICATORS**

The Committee welcomed Marybeth Quintmere, Customer Services Manager and Mary Timmins, Customer Services Team Leader who were in attendance to give a presentation on current customer contact data in relation to calls to Customer Services, walk in arrangements and demand through other access channels.

The Committee received an overview of the Customer Services (CS) team. The team consisted of 18 members of staff, currently, two males, four with English as their second language, four part time, one six-month fixed term contract and one vacant post.

During the pandemic it was noted that many changes had been made on the way the service had been delivered. These changes had shaped the way the service was offered going forward, including where work sat within teams/services. Examples of work that had shifted from individual services to the CS team included:

- Local Tax - work transferred included copy bills, discounts, direct debit enquiries and other low complexity work – more complex issues and recovery were still dealt with by the Local Taxation team.
- Housing – during the pandemic it was highlighted that duplicate contacts were increasing with customers contacting both Housing and CS. A six-month trial was being undertaken to understand demand and identify non specialist housing work, to allow for a process to be designed to respond appropriately to different enquiry types. The outcomes so far, had allowed CS to respond to customers who had criteria based or update enquiries, a dedicated officer had been appointed with three additional advisors trained to pick up any overflow work as required.

The Committee reviewed call data since the beginning of 2022. The data showed calls answered and abandoned and other contact streams, such as email, Love Rushmoor, various webforms, PCN's, etc. The data related to use of the Council's reception area had also been reviewed and this had shown a significant drop in numbers using this drop in, face to face offer. As an example, 63 customers had attended reception to make a payment since January, 2022, pre pandemic this figure had been 2,849. Data had also been provided on digital take-up in relation to waste and environmental services, this had shown an increase per quarter for these services.

Moving forward the Committee noted a number of areas that had been identified that could impact on the service provided by the CS team, these included:

- Move of off-street parking to the CS team
- New telephony systems
- Replacement of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and developments thereafter
- Housing trial (three months remaining)
- Post and print project
- Council tax digital offer
- Recruitment
- Office move

Following a discussion, a number of queries were raised by the Committee, these included:

- Demand and management of staff - it was advised that demand could be identified on a half hourly basis if required, and resource shifted to accommodate as necessary. In general, demand predictions and actuals were aligned
- Consideration be given to a dedicated Councillor enquiry line – this would be taken away for consideration
- Warm handovers would be available on the new system ensuring customers reached an appropriate officer
- Consideration of a multilingual receptionist – this would be taken away for consideration, however a translation service was available, and connection was usually very quick
- CRM funding – it was advised that funding was in place
- Reference numbers could be used as part of the new system to help track calls and responses
- How could the Love Rushmoor App be used more effectively?

The Chairman thanked Ms Quintmere and Ms Timmins for their presentation.

10. **WORK PLAN**

The current Work Plan was noted.

It was noted that potential items for the meeting on 15th September, 2022 were Community Safety and Policing and Farnborough Airport.

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)
