

Ward: N/A

Interview of the Cabinet Members responsible for Customer Services

Report by the Chief Executive

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 As part of their work programme, the Committee have agreed to interview Adur & Worthing Councils Cabinet members on their portfolio responsibilities and priorities for 2014-15.
- 1.2 At this meeting, members of the Committee are asked to consider the responsibilities and priorities for the Cabinet members responsible for Customer Services, Councillors Mary Lermite and Jim Funnell.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A copy of the Councils' Corporate Priorities are included in the attached annex, with the sections which are relevant to Customer Services highlighted. Customer Services, through '*Becoming more adaptive Councils*' and '*Cultivating Enterprising Communities*', is also one of the key priorities in the Councils' new strategic corporate programme *Catching the Wave*.
- 2.2 As part of their 'Challenge' role, Joint Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider both the information contained within the annex in respect of Customer Services and, in particular, the delegated functions listed at paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 below. It is part of the Scrutiny role to challenge, in the form of questions, the progress that has been made in respect of Councillor Lermite and Councillor Funnell's portfolios and their priorities for 2014-15.
- 2.3 The Committee are entitled to ask for further investigation into items that they may not be satisfied with progress.
- 2.4 The *Adur District Council Cabinet Member for Customer Services* has responsibility for the following delegated functions:-
 - Customer contacts and services, including Help Points.
 - CenSus IT partnership.
 - Housing and Council Tax benefits (Adur).
 - Housing - Housing Revenue Account, ACF Tenants' Services, anti-social behaviour / neighbourhood disputes in relation to tenants, sheltered housing, leasehold administration, Adur Housing Voice, Adur Talkback, Choice Based

Lettings, Community Alarm, Grounds Maintenance and Building Cleaning, Adur Home Service, Temporary Accommodation Management.

- Housing strategy and housing enabling role; affordable housing provision; housing register need options and advice.
- Housing - non Housing Revenue Account - including homelessness and advice (prevention and management), private sector housing and other housing services - choice based lettings, grants (disability and housing).

2.5 The *Worthing Borough Council Cabinet Member for Customer Services* has responsibility for the following delegated functions:-

- Customer contacts and services, including Help Points.
- Public consultation, including community engagement and citizens panels.
- Affordable Housing Provision.
- Benefit Fraud Detection/Prevention (Worthing).
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits and Adjudication (Worthing).
- Disabled Facilities Grant and other Housing Grants.
- Empty Properties.
- Housing Strategy Development & Review.
- Non-Domestic Rates (Worthing).
- Revenues and Benefits (Worthing).
- Strategic Housing and Enabling.
- Supported People (Other).
- Worthing Cultural Assets; Museum, Art Gallery, Ritz Cinema, Assembly Hall, Pavilion Theatre and Connaught Theatre. (NB. Worthing Pier is with the Regeneration Portfolio).
- Homelessness and Advice (Prevention and Management), including Choice Based Lettings, Bed & Breakfast.
- Housing Need, Options and Advice and Housing Register.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions of the two Cabinet Members with responsibility for Customer Services, based on their functions as outlined in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 above and the relevant Councils Corporate Priorities in respect of Customer Services.

4.0 Legal

4.1 The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee follow the procedures outlined within the Councils Constitution.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications to consider within this report.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 **Members of the Committee are asked to question the two Cabinet Members with responsibility for Customer Services.**

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2014-15

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 The relevant Council Priorities are highlighted within the annex to this report

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 Any specific action plans will be considered within the context of the annex to this report.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 The Council delivers its services in accordance with the Equality Policy.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

7.0 Reputation

7.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

8.0 Consultations

8.1 The Cabinet Members for Customer Services and key senior officers were consulted during the drafting of this report.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Any areas of risk are identified within the annex to this report.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

Corporate Priorities

Supporting and improving the local economy

- 1) Promote and support projects and ideas that attract new and retain existing businesses, and generate investment in the area.
- 2) Enable new homes to be built to help meet the housing needs of our communities.
- 3) Support high quality developments.

Protecting front line services

- 1) Provide and develop customer driven cost effective services.
- 2) Fulfil statutory obligations for delivery of front line services.
- 3) Adopt more sustainable ways of delivering services.

A mixed economy of Partnership working

- 1) Work actively together in partnership to deliver cost effective services whilst retaining separate identities and seek to extend partnerships with others.
- 2) Work more closely with and commission our communities, the voluntary sector, public organisations, business and commercial sectors to:
 - Develop and deliver services.
 - Reduce crime, fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and support the Early and Family Intervention projects.
 - Deliver interventions that improve the health of our communities.

Ensuring value for money and low Council Tax

- 1) Keep council tax increases low.
- 2) Generate financial capital, increase income and seek external funding sources.
- 3) Drive continual improvement and efficiencies in services particularly in procurement and contract management.
- 4) Reduce costs through 'Digital by Default' - getting more transactions online to ensure access to services is straightforward and convenient to the customer.