

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 12 JUNE 2017.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Charles Kennedy, Dave King

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Three were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 10 April 2017 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. ADVICE SHOP

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an overview of the Advice Shop service and details of service performance.

The report advised that the Advice Shop provided a free, impartial and confidential service with a focus on alleviating poverty and promoting inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. It helped individuals and families to increase their disposable income, manage debt and remain in their home and keep warm.

The Advice Shop also provided money and budgeting advice and leads on the development and delivery of the Community Planning Partnership's "Better Off" West Lothian's Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Service dealt with 13,500 customers and 60,000 enquiries generating £27.9 million in additional benefits to citizens in West Lothian 2016/17.

The report went on to advise that the Advice Shop measured a suite of performance indicators in line with the council's performance management framework using the Covalent system. These indicators were representative of a range of services delivered by the service and included measures of both customer and staff perception. Appendix 1 to the report showed a selection of indicators in full detail including current and past performance.

In December 2014 the service undertook a WLAM Assessment and was asked to report back to the performance panel in one year on People Results. The service introduced a staff focus group and developed an action plan to develop and implement improvements.

The report recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the performance report for the Advice Shop service;
2. Provide feedback and recommendations on performance; and
3. Identify any recommendations for performance improvement.

There then followed a number of questions in relation to staff survey results, best practise, CRM forecasts, costs, outputs, relationship with other agencies and how they operate. It was also explained that bi-monthly meetings with the DWP took place to discuss a wide range of issues.

There were also questions with regard to benchmarking and it was explained that this was difficult as not all local authorities and agencies were doing the same thing.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2016/17

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing the council's annual complaints 2016/17 and to provide detailed analysis of council-wide complaints closed during 2016/17

The committee was advised that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed and published a model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) on 28 March 2012. The model CHP was to ensure a standardised approach in dealing with customer complaints across the local authority sector. All local authorities were required to adopt the model CHP by 31 March 2013.

Table one provided the council's total complaints closed per 1,000 population over the past 5 years. The table showed that there had been an increase in complaints received by the council in 2016/17 when compared to the previous year from 2330 to 3414. Table two provided information on complaints closed by service and table three provided complaints information by category over the five year period.

The current service level complaint performance varied across the council and was linked to the complexity and quantity of complaints received. Housing, Customer and Building Services and Operational Services were the main complaint generators by service.

Further information was provided on the main complaint categories which were as follows:

- Standard of Service
- Policy

- Waiting Time
- Communication
- Employee Attitude

The Depute Chief Executive explained that appendix 1 contained the council wide performance against the SPSO defined measures for 2016/17 and appendix 2 provided a full breakdown of the council's complaint performance including trends and where appropriate, benchmarking information.

The Corporate Complaint Steering Board identified 4 high level indicators that provided a summary of complaint handling performance and detailed as follows:-

- Total complaints received
- Complaints closed within 5 working days
- Complaints closed within 20 working days
- Complaints partly upheld/upheld

Table 4 provided a summary of service against the 4 key indicators and table 5 provided a service trend summary of upheld/part upheld complaints as a percentage of complaints received by quarter covering 2015/16 and 2016/17. Table 6 provided indicative ratios for the number of complaints against the specific customer groups for Education Services, Housing, Customer and Building Services and Operational Services.

The report went on to advise that appendix 3 provided information on complaints that were escalated to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman by customers and that a large number of these escalated complaints resulted in a decision by the Ombudsman not to progress, not to investigate or where not upheld.

In conclusion the report advised that in 2016/17 the council received 3,414 complaints and that this represented an increase on the number of complaints in 2015/16. This increase was primarily linked to the 126% increase in complaints closed by Operational Services and an increase of 36% by Housing, Customer and Building Services.

The Service changes carried out over 2016/17 in Waste Services had led to a range of complaints linked to the 140 litre bin replacement programme, route changes and the waiting time to provide additional/replacement bins to customers.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee :-

1. Note the corporate and service complaint performance against the standards outlined in the council's complaint handling procedure; and

2. Continue to monitor complaint performance and request additional information from services as required.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.