



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2017

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Commission

Councillor Gugnani (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bajaj, Cank, Cutkelvin, Fonseca and Khote
(Two unallocated places: one group and one non-group)

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to
consider the items of business listed overleaf.

Elaine Baker

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Jerry Connolly (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Elaine Baker (Democratic Support Officer),

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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Elaine Baker, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6355.

Alternatively, email elaine.baker@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The Minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 6 September 2017 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

To note progress on actions agreed at the previous meeting and not reported elsewhere on the agenda (if any).

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

7. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

8. CHANNEL SHIFT UPDATE

Appendix B

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submits a report that provides scrutiny with a summary of the channel shift programme including the vision for the programme and current key areas of activity. Scrutiny is asked to consider the report and make any comments about the current work of the programme.

9. COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

Appendix C

The Director, Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submits a report that provides an overview of the role of the Community Language Service and the services it provides. The Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission is asked to review and comment on the report.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D

The current work programme for the Commission is attached. The Commission is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
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Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Malik (Chair)
Councillor Gugnani (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Cutkelvin Councillor Khote

In Attendance

Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor - Communities & Equalities
Councillor Waddington, Assistant City Mayor - Jobs & Skills

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16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cank.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and
Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 12 July 2017
be confirmed as a correct record.

19. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

In relation to minute 11, "Portfolio Overview", the Director of Neighbourhood

and Environmental Services confirmed that the frequently asked questions referred to in the eighth bullet point had been prepared and, if not already available on the Council's website, would be published there soon.

20. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made no announcements.

21. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

22. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Chair reported that he had received a letter from the Unison trades union, which raised a legal point regarding the re-procurement of social welfare advice. He had therefore asked for an opinion on the letter and had been reassured by the City Barrister that consulting on a single preferred delivery model / proposal was lawful.

Mr A Ross was present at the meeting to make a representation regarding the re-procurement of social welfare advice. The Chair invited Mr Ross to address the Committee for five minutes to make his representation and explained that the points he raised would be included in the Commission's consideration of social welfare advice re-procurement (minute 23, "Social Welfare Advice Re-Procurement", referred).

Mr Ross explained that he represented unwaged members of Unite and made the following representation:

"Over 34,000 people in the City and County rely on Employment Support Allowance as their source of income. They are by definition ill or disabled in some way, including members of Unite's Community Branch. The City Council proposes to cut the Welfare Advice budget by £500,000 and reduce access to the service to just 8 council offices in Leicester.

Unite Community want to know what are the commission's views on this proposal? We believe that at a time of increasing need for welfare advice in Leicester the current budget should be maintained, not cut, making use of the additional £7 million for adult social care the council has received since setting this year's budget. Access to welfare advice should not be restricted. Instead it should be extended to include health centres and food banks, where those in most need of benefit support already go."

23. SOCIAL WELFARE ADVICE RE-PROCUREMENT

The Director of Finance submitted a report giving an update on the re-procurement of Council-funded Social Welfare Advice contracts and providing details of the current public consultation on the proposed model of advice provision in the city.

Councillor Waddington, Assistant City Mayor for Jobs and Skills, introduced the report, stressing that no decisions had been taken to date on how the contracts would be re-procured. She explained that the current social welfare advice contracts with external organisations were ending, so the opportunity was being taken to consider what should be provided in the future.

Councillor Waddington explained that external advice providers funded by the Council currently were managed by different service areas. This had resulted in some inconsistency in the performance and monitoring of the contracts. It therefore was important that the new service provided good quality social welfare advice for residents that was consistent, accessible and appropriate to people's needs. The re-procurement exercise also was an opportunity to facilitate closer working relationships between advice providers.

Councillor Waddington offered to present the findings of the consultation and information on the proposed new delivery model to the Commission.

It was stressed that, although savings were being sought, as in all service areas, this should not be to the detriment of the advice services provided. The Project Manager for the re-procurement exercise confirmed that the cost of the re-procured services, and therefore whether any savings could be achieved, was not known yet, as no decisions had been taken on what service model would be adopted.

The Project Manager further advised that:

- It had been difficult to bring together robust statistics by which to assess the current contracts. Different contracts contained different requirements regarding the methods and extent of data recording;
- This also meant it was difficult to know exactly how many clients were being seen, as one person could be being helped by more than one organisation. This also highlighted the need for centrally co-ordinated record keeping;
- Demand for social welfare advice was increasing, so the service could not remain in its current format. The Council therefore wanted to find a service model that ensured the continued delivery of free, quality advice across the city;
- Clients in crisis would continue to be "fast-tracked";
- Individual meetings were being held with the agencies currently funded by the Council to provide welfare advice;
- It was suggested that some agencies would need to consider changes to the way in which they delivered services, as they had been using the same delivery methods for a considerable length of time;

- The consultation on the re-procurement of these contracts had included a city-wide call for evidence, but there had been a limited response to this;
- It was anticipated that the welfare advice services would be delivered from a dedicated area in the Council's Customer Service Centre in Granby Street. This would help facilitate the provision of standardised, quality advice across the city, as well as according with the Council's Using Buildings Better programme. There was insufficient room for telephony services to be provided from there, so the lead provider / partnership could be expected to find a location from which telephone services would be offered;
- It was anticipated that advice providers would be required to introduce the channel shift aspects of the contract on a phased basis over three years from the start of the contract; and
- Advice agencies had stated that they felt they could work together more. The contract specification therefore would set out the need for formal inter-agency working relationships, as well as formal relationships with the Council. These would not be prescribed in the contract specification, (for example, whether there should be a lead provider, whether a consortium should be formed, or whether it would be a looser form of collaboration), as the voluntary sector should decide how it could best establish these relationships. However, the contract specification could state that the Council was seeking agencies with local knowledge.

The following points also were made in discussion:

- Over the last few years there had been many surveys about people's welfare rights which showed a lack of awareness of those rights and how to access services.
- Monitoring of contracts was very important, as there had been occasions when it had been found that the services being provided under some contracts, (unrelated to the ones currently under consideration), were not those anticipated. This also was important if any of the services were sub-contracted.

Reply by the Project Manager:

It was anticipated that agencies would sub-contract elements of the service, but this would be vigorously monitored by the Council through the lead agency.

- What training would be provided for those providing the advice? Training also would be useful for Councillors, especially in relation to newer benefits, such as Universal Credit.

Reply by the Project Manager:

The contract specification would include the requirement that robust training and development for staff and volunteers be provided. The

opportunity to also provide training for Councillors would be welcomed.

- The high rate of success in appeals was welcomed, but it was questioned whether it was felt that demand for Tier 3 advice had been monitored sufficiently and whether anticipated demand could be met.

Reply by the Project Manager:

Demand for Tier 3 advice had been monitored carefully and, based on an assessment of data provided by agencies, currently was considered to be approximately 2% of reported footfall. Anticipation of an increase in this demand for the next few years would be built in to the contract.

- How would the Council protect its income in respect of potential rent arrears arising when people moved on to Universal Credit?

Reply by the Director of Finance:

When Universal Credit was fully introduced in March 2018, the Council would no longer be commissioned to provide the benefits, although it would remain be an option for the Council to provide support.

The Council was aware of issues this could create. For example, housing benefit would no longer be paid to the Council, as landlord, but would be given to the tenant. Councils in areas where this was happening already were finding that high levels of rent arrears were accumulating, as some tenants had never had to pay rent themselves before.

The Council did not have the resources to support all tenants, so it needed to focus on those most in need, while providing tools for others to help themselves. The provision of welfare advice services was part of this.

The Council also had a very limited amount of funding it could use to support people, but this would only enable small amounts to be awarded to successful applicants. The Department for Work and Pensions would be providing the Council with some financial support to facilitate this, but it would be very limited and the exact amount was not known yet.

- Some concern was expressed that the specialist services currently provided by some voluntary groups would be lost.

Reply by the Project Manager:

One of the aims of the re-procurement exercise was to encourage advice agencies in the city to work together, without losing the specialist knowledge and services they currently provided.

- What assistance could be provided to those experiencing language barriers?

Reply by the Project Manager:

Support was in place for those needing language assistance. However, those experiencing language barriers would be encouraged to bring someone with them to face to face meetings to help. If this was not possible, the Council's translation services would be used where possible. It also was hoped that people who spoke community languages would volunteer to work with agencies contracted to provide advice services.

The Project Manager thanked participating agencies for their co-operation and contribution to the preparation work for the re-procurement exercise and reminded Members that the consultation would close on 6 October 2017. All Members were invited to respond to the consultation if they had not already done so.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Chair be asked to respond to the consultation on the re-procurement of social welfare advice services on behalf of Commission, asking that the points raised above to be taken in to consideration and drawing particular attention to the following points:
 - a) Partnerships are very important to the future of these services, so it is essential that all organisations involved in delivering welfare advice services maintain productive and transparent relationships, (for example, with defined roles and how they will be managed). The Council needs to manage these partnerships effectively, so a robust monitoring framework needs to be included in the service contract;
 - b) Priority groups for inclusion in the contract specification should include those whose first language is not English and those who do not have information technology knowledge and/or experience; and
 - c) Care should be taken to ensure that advice commissioners and providers are aware of the different access needs of clients;
- 2) That the Director of Finance be asked to report back to Commission on responses received to the consultation and setting out proposals for the future delivery of the service; and
- 3) That the Director of Finance be asked to provide training for Councillors on the new welfare system.

24. TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - EAST AND CENTRAL AREA

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report providing an overview of progress with the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme, summarising the results of engagement work and consultation carried out in the east and central areas of the city and setting out proposals intended to be implemented by the TNS programme in relation to those areas.

Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services, introduced the report. He drew attention to the engagement and consultation that had been undertaken on the proposals for how services in the east and central areas of the city could be reorganised to achieve the required reduction in service delivery costs. He noted that these savings should be achieved through the recommendations being made, but stressed that it was important to ensure that neighbourhood services were maintained in all parts of the city, so people did not have to come in to the centre of the city to access them.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that consultation on the proposals had been undertaken using the methods developed when considering the delivery of neighbourhood services in other parts of the city. For example, questionnaires had been available on-line and in printed format and also were produced in a community language.

The number of responses to the consultation had been lower than that received in other areas, but this could have been due to fewer changes to service delivery being proposed than had been made in other parts of the city.

Members asked whether it was proposed to revisit some of the changes made to the delivery of neighbourhood services throughout the city where it was known that issues remained unresolved. In addition, it was felt that there was some disparity between areas in which the delivery of neighbourhood services had been reviewed. For example, in some areas there had been a bigger impact on the provision of youth activities than in other areas, but unlike some other areas the proposals for the central and eastern areas impacted on housing services

In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that the Council's Using Buildings Better programme had started during the TNS programme and had expanded the range of buildings being considered. It was recognised that some boundaries between areas were "artificial", in that people living in one area visited buildings in other areas. The next phase of the programme would be a city-wide survey of how satisfied users were with the services delivered through neighbourhood buildings and an important part of closing down the project therefore would be to identify what remained to be resolved.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services endorsed this, confirming that the lessons learned from the TNS programme were relevant across all Council service areas.

The following points were then made in discussion on the report:

- The merging of services were some of the biggest changes made by the Council to service delivery, but damage had been done by a lack of understanding by some officers of communities' perspectives of the changes.
- Services offered from multi-service hubs should include provision of a "triage" process, so an assessment could be made of which services people needed to access for their particular situations.
- Multi-service hubs would require a change in culture for staff, as they no longer would be working exclusively for one service area.

Reply by the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services:
Managers were very mindful of the need to ensure that staff were kept involved in the development of new service delivery systems.

- Would there be enough space in St Barnabas Library to accommodate services relocated from the Humberstone and Rowlatts Hill housing offices?

Reply from the Director of Housing:
"Back office" Housing services would not be located at the Library, so the only space requirement would be for a small number of front-line staff. It was anticipated that an existing room would be used and that this would not restrict other users' access to library facilities.

- There was concern that people would be unable to use the facilities at the Coleman Lodge Neighbourhood Centre.

Reply by the Head of Neighbourhood Services:
A range of options for the how the Centre could be used would be considered. Officers were aware that groups using the Centre were interested in participating in these discussions.

- The proposed improvements to facilities and access to services was welcomed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the results of the engagement work and consultation carried out in the east and central areas of the city under the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme, and the resulting proposals for future delivery of Neighbourhood Services in those areas, be noted;
- 2) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to share the lessons learned about consultation and engagement through the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme with other Council service areas;

- 3) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to present a report to this Commission on the lessons learned about consultation and engagement through the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme; and
- 4) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to present a report to this Commission on how the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme will be closed, this report to include information on work needed to complete issues remaining outstanding under the programme.

25. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SPENDING REVIEW PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Director of Finance reported verbally that the two key spending reviews affecting services within this Commission's remit were Social Welfare Advice Re-Procurement and the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme.

She further reported that the Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions soon would be meeting the City Mayor to discuss spending reviews. No changes to the reviews falling within this Commission's remit were anticipated.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services advised the Commission that a decision following the DIY and Bulky Waste review had been deferred and it was not known at present when any decisions on these services would be taken. An indicative saving of £2.3million needed to be made from cleansing and waste services, so consideration was being given to how this could be achieved through various service areas.

AGREED:

That directors be asked to provide a written update on spending reviews falling within this Commission's remit for future meetings, this report to be circulated with each agenda.

26. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair advised Members that the suggestions for items to be included in the Work Programme received further to the invitation issued at the last meeting, (minute 14, "Scrutiny Commission Work Programme", referred), had been incorporated in to the Programme.

27. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm

Report to Scrutiny Commission

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement

Date of Commission meeting: 25 October 2017

Channel shift update

Report of the Director of Delivery, Communications &
Political Governance



Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
- Report author: Miranda Cannon, Director DCPG
- Author contact details 0116 454 0102

1. Summary

This report provides scrutiny with a summary of the channel shift programme including the vision for the programme and current key areas of activity.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

Scrutiny is asked to consider the report and make any comments about the current work of the programme.

3. Main report

3.1 Introduction

Channel shift is about moving as much customer contact away from expensive face to face and telephony channels as possible. In doing so improving service standards and the user experience, and protecting a core face to face service for those who really need it.

Specifically the vision for the channel shift programme is to achieve the following:

- On-line is the primary contact channel and channel of choice (for us and our customers)
- Make it easy for our customers to transact on-line
- 100% routine and high volume transactions on-line by end 2018
- Automated back office processes behind all on-line transactions
- One main customer portal (*Firmstep CRM*)
- One main contact phone number
- Face to face the exception for most complex transactions / vulnerable customers
- Harnessing and using the data we gather
- Delivering significant cash savings

Each year, Customer Services alone receives in the region of 750,000 phone calls and 90,000 visitors to the Customer Service Centre on Granby Street. Outside of Customer Services there are around 70 teams who handle their own customer contact with volumes across different types of contact channels equating to almost 100,000 contacts per week.

The cost of handling this contact is significant, yet often a large percentage are simple transactions or requests, such as “I’d like to request a bus pass” or “I’d like to report a pot-hole”. Providing easy to use, accessible options for customers to self-serve particularly for those simple transactions is a key element of channel shift.

3.2 Customer relationship management (CRM) system and My Account

In support of the channel shift agenda, the authority procured and implemented a new customer relationship management (CRM) system. My Account is the customer’s online portal into the CRM, bypassing the need for a customer services officer to handle their enquiry.

The portal is accessible at leicester.gov.uk/myaccount or through the link on the corporate homepage of the Council website.

The customer is asked to create an account, in which case they are guided through a simple registration process, or to log in if they already have an account. Alternatively, they may continue without an account but they will not be able to view their account history. Within the portal, all service areas are displayed and expand upon selection to reveal the associated forms. The forms are intuitive to use and adapt as they are completed, only asking questions that are relevant to that enquiry. When the customer submits their enquiry they are sent an acknowledgement email and the enquiry is sent as directly as possible to the relevant business area. In addition to service requests, customers may also make comments, compliments and complaints using the “My feedback” feature.

For the user, the benefits of using My Account are:

- The ability to access council services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- No waiting in queues.
- Easy to use, intuitive processes.
- Instant email confirmation including a unique reference number.
- Ability to see account history and requests made.

For the Council, the benefits of My Account are:

- Reduced operational costs.
- Solid reporting ability.
- Useful customer insight.
- Holistic view of customer contact.
- Rationalisation of back office information storage, back office databases and processes.

Should customers not wish to register and create an account, there is an option to continue without an account and have access to the forms available in My Account and continue their transaction in that manner.

My Account was launched on the 4th of October 2016. It is a core part of the channel shift vision in terms of a single customer access portal. As at 4th October 2017 which is one year since My Account went live, there are 28,161 registered My Account users and a total of 60,148 transactions have been done via MyAccount. There are 68 live eforms on MyAccount and this will continue to grow in number via the channel shift programme. The transaction types with consistently the highest usage are requesting a bulky waste collection, requesting or reporting a problem with orange bags and requesting a new housing repair. A soft launch of MyAccount was done initially but following on from that in February 2017 onwards we have been actively marketing this and seeing growth of between 2,500 and 2,750 new registrations per month.

There is a user testing group in place consisting of service users, corporate service users and partner organisations to evaluate ease of use, appropriate language, etc. of new products both on-line and other forms of communication. We have received feedback from visually impaired users, staff and volunteers from the library service, Age UK, Citizen Advice LeicesterShire volunteers, and just under 100 members of the public visiting Granby Street customer service centre. This group tested the MyAccount offer prior to 'go live', during their testing we received feedback in completing a number of tasks, from registering for MyAccount to changing their details on the system and completing eforms, their feedback was very positive, 9 out of 10 customers believe that they could use MyAccount successfully to contact the Council. We are continuing with this approach. In addition My Account actively seeks feedback ratings and comments and via this continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from customers. The current average star rating is 4.3 out of a possible 5.

Customers aged group 16-35 and 36-51 years make up the largest groups of users at 39.1% and 37.2% of all those using MyAccount, but we are also seeing a rise in users in the age group 52-70 (19.54%).

For a large number of our customers it is anticipated that they will self-serve on-line using their own mobile devices or computers, either on the move or in their own home. The Council has implemented free Wi-Fi access across the city centre and there is also free wi-fi available in our Libraries for registered library users, in our Leisure Centres and at the Customer Service Centre in Granby Street.

In addition there are public computers within Libraries which are connected to the internet. There are also dedicated self-service computers/customer service kiosks at Granby Street, Pork Pie Library and Community Centre, St Matthews Centre, BRITE Centre, New Parks Library and Beaumont Leys Library. These are specifically for undertaking on-line transactions. In addition these locations have Customer Service free phones. Belgrave Library and Hamilton Library are having these facilities installed and St Barnabas is likely to be the other location.

In relation to payment transactions, customers can make a range of payments on-line including via My Account.

There are also others ways in which customers may self-serve for payments as follows:

- Self-serve payment kiosks are located at Granby Street Customer Services Centre and are being rolled out to the multi-service centres in conjunction with the TNS programme.
- Automated telephone payments can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for council tax, business rates , housing (or garage) rents, customer accounts invoices, bus lane enforcement penalty charge notices, benefits overpayments
- Pay via Pingit which is a mobile app.

3.4 Current channel shift programme activity

Following analysis of contact outside of customer services, a number of key areas have been identified as high priorities for channel shift due to the volume of transactions and the way these are currently handled. The following projects relate mainly to those high priority areas. The work is being undertaken by the Customer Contract Transformation Team (CCTT). Key areas of work currently include:

Sports

The CCTT are working closely with Sports and aligning the channel shift work with the wider spending review of the service. Key strands are enabling memberships on-line and maximising take up of direct debits on-line; finding, booking and paying for activities on-line (including swimming lessons) and self-serve for enquiries by improving the website offer. The team are also looking to rationalise existing telephony arrangements and shift on-line as much contact as possible. All of this work will take place in the first 6 months of 2018, during the remaining six months of 2018 we will be looking at “Mobile Pro” to allow customers to transact with sports services via an mobile app

De Montfort Hall

De Montfort Hall (DMH) has approximately 4,750 contacts per week of which only approximately 50% is currently on-line. The channel shift programme is working with De Montfort Hall to streamline customer contact processes including booking confirmation emails, electronic management of waiting lists, and managing marketing activity. The

project will also introduce e-ticketing whereby the ticket would be distributed to customer by email and then is designed to display on a mobile device. They can also be printed by the customer if they wish. In supporting the move to e-ticketing it should reduce call volumes and face-to-face activity and options for handling these channels differently in future will also be considered.

Revenues and Benefits

Revenues and Benefits handle around 540,000 contacts per year. The service procured the Civica OpenChannel product in 2016. This project will implement greater on-line functionality via this product, and deliver a new portal for customers and in due course it is hoped to achieve single sign on to this portal via MyAccount to ensure a streamlined digital offering. There is also work starting with the service to look at implementing an on-line scheduling and bookings for council tax and housing benefit appointments which are currently done via phone with c150 contacts per week.

Planning

Planning currently receive in the region of 900 calls per week of which 60% are via telephone, 30% by email and the residual by eForms from MyAccount. The CCTT are working on development of an intelligent form, linking to existing databases, data sets or tools to enable customers to self-serve common enquiries eg identifying whether a property is in a conservation area, confirming whether a neighbour has planning permission etc. In addition the team are working with the service to automate how the current eform for pre-application enquiry contacts can be imported directly into the back office system, removing an administration requirement.

Registrars

Registrars receive over 600 contacts per week with 90% of this currently by phone The CCTT are working with the service to look at implementing on-line scheduling and bookings for registering births, deaths, marriages, nationality checking service, citizenship etc. In the first instance this is focusing on births and nationality checking service and citizenship.

Taxi licensing

The team have implemented an automated and streamlined process for taxi licensing involving an on-line taxi Licensing form, DBS checker and payment connector, replacing a process which was previously done largely face to face and for which there were over 130 contacts per week on average.

Waste management

The team has been working closely with waste management across a range of areas. Waste management requests for the areas we are looking at total around 4,400 per week or 230,000 per year. We have recently successfully integrated the on-line forms for orange bag requests and to report problems with wheeled bins directly into the Biffa system which is saving considerable administrative time. The team is now working on doing the same for bulk collections (of which currently there are approx. 40,000 bookings a year via the customer service line predominantly). Primarily through the call centre. and developing an end to end on-line process for permits to tip.

Festivals and events

The Festivals and Events team receive around 13,000 contacts per year relating to applications and bookings for parks, public spaces and city centre spaces. The current online experience involves multiple pdf forms that are printed from the website and

completed. The team also receive contact through other channels. The channel shift work will create e-forms for parks, public spaces and city centre space event applications, a pre-application advice, guidance and FAQs eform, automate the capture of the data from these eforms and digitalise the current tendering process for catering providers.

Scan-station

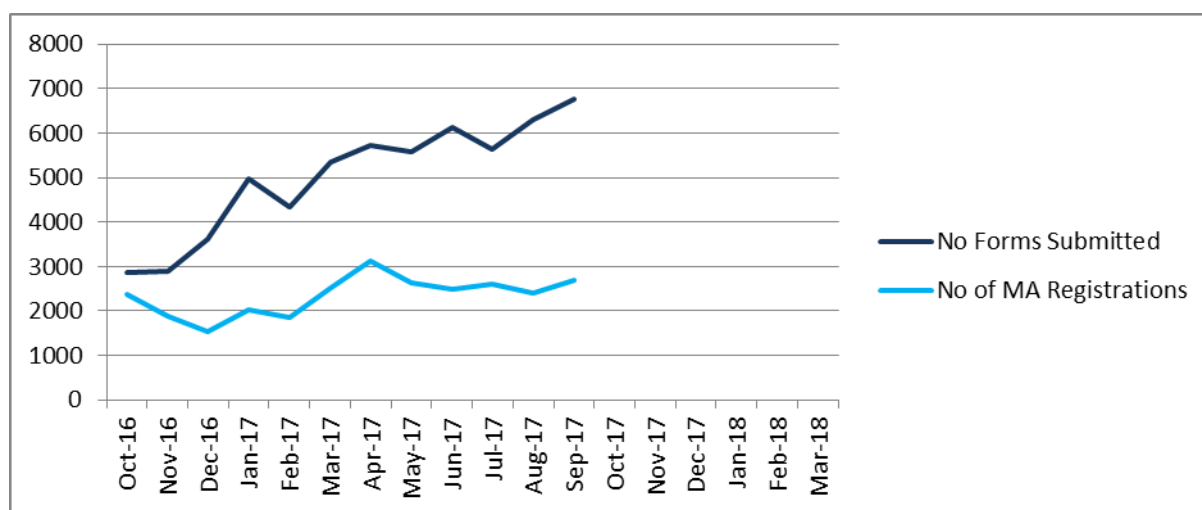
For a range of transactions, customers are required to provide us with copies of documentation eg driving licence, utility bill etc. Staff currently support around 40,000 customers a year to scan documents in the customer services centre. In early November we will be going live with 4 self-scan stations at Granby Street. These facilities will allow customers to self-scan documentation in a simple and easy manner. An assessment is underway to identify demand for this facility in each of the neighbourhood locations with a view to wider roll out.

Webchat

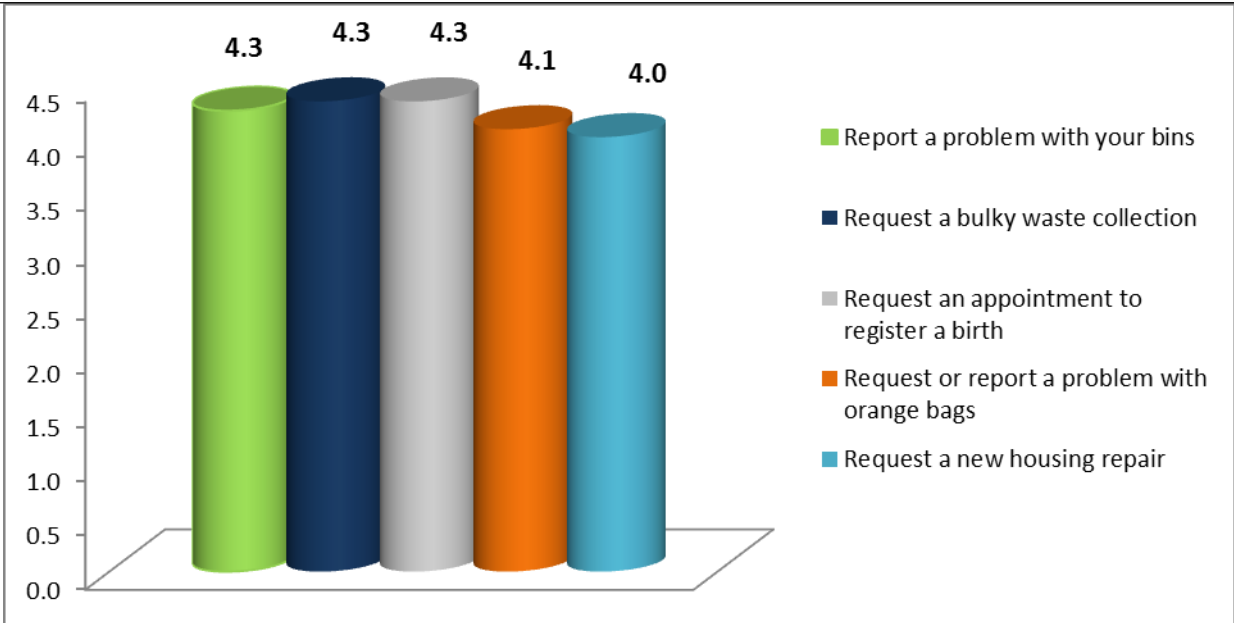
Webchat technology is being explored by Leicester City Council as part of procuring and implementing our new telephony system, and this will be looked at during late 2018. We feel that webchat offers another channel of choice for our customers, offers those new to navigating websites confidence and support. We would consider deploying webchat to assist residents navigate our Adult Social Care and Housing advice and guidance also.

3.5 Channel shift benefits

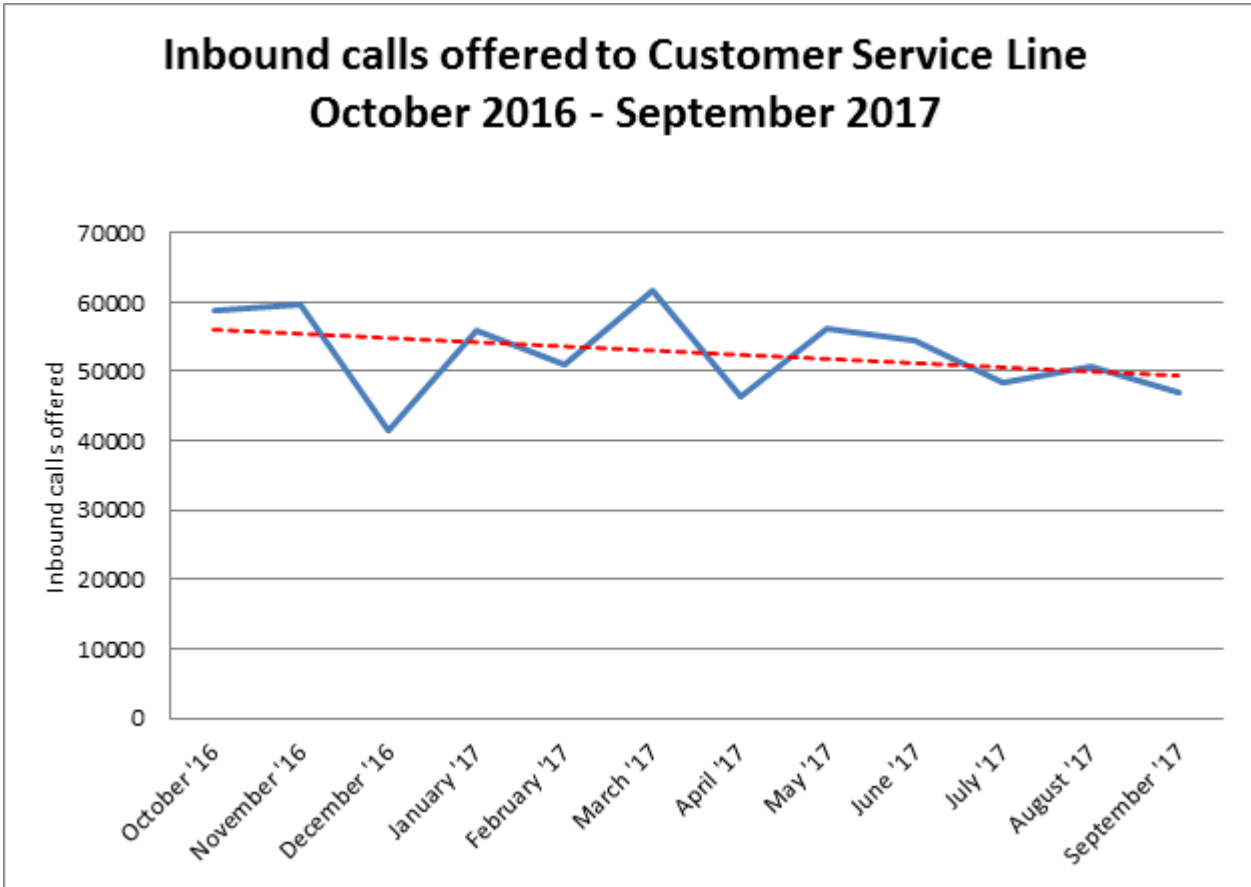
Since the official MyAccount launch in October 2016, customers have registered at an average volume of 2,300 customers per month. On average customers submit 5,000 enquiries each month. We now have over 28,000 registered users who have submitted over 60,000 transactions.



Average feedback ratings out of 5 by the top 5 forms



The positive impact of channel shift is further evidenced by the decrease in calls to Telephony at Leicester City Council. The data shows a downward trend in inbound calls offered over the 12 month period which supports the increase in submissions through online channels.



The blue line indicates the actual calls offered with the red line showing a negative trend.

To date the programme has delivered £731k of savings of which £355k is attributable to the Using Buildings Better (UBB) spending review target (because channel shift forms a part of the UBB programme) and the remainder is attributable to other spending reviews / budget savings.

We will continue to monitor closely the usage of MyAccount and feedback ratings as well as contact volumes in Customer Services over the phone and face to face. We are also looking to establish a way of measuring call volumes to other service specific phone numbers with a view to both reducing the number of service specific phone numbers and shifting the routine, high volume contact on-line, which is consistent with the vision outlined in 3.1.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The Channel shift programme has delivered total savings of £355k (of which £30k relates to the Housing Revenue Account); this contributes to the indicative savings target of £2m for the Using Buildings Better spending review.

Paresh Radia, Principal Accountant

4.2 Legal implications

There are no implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. Legal advice is being sought on a case by case basis in relation to the identified streams.

Emma Horton, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning) Ext 371426

4.3. Climate Change implications

To the extent that it reduces unnecessary customer car and bus trips to the Contact Centre or other facilities, Channel Shift will reduce city-wide carbon emissions from transport. Transport accounts for 23% of the total. The intended shift of contacts/transactions which are already on-line to a more/fully automated system is likely to have only limited carbon reduction implications. It might contribute to further reductions in the Council's own carbon footprint if automation leads to fewer staff required – and a resulting reduction in office accommodation.

Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant. Ext. 37 2249.

4.4 Equality Implications

It is anticipated that the main issues that will need to be continually addressed through the lifespan of the Channel Shift transformation programme/project are the potential barriers people with the protected characteristics of age, disability and race may have/experience in accessing council information online either at home or at a customer service centre: availability of assistive technology that enables disabled people to understand this information; support that enables people with poor English language skills to understand this information – either because of literacy levels or because they do not read or speak English; or support for those who are not confident in using or do not have ready access to online technology.

Equalities implications, across all protected characteristics, for each new initiative should be considered afresh to ensure that maximum access is afforded to all potential service users who would benefit from these channel shift actions. This should be in the form of an Equalities Impact Assessment. The report discusses volume of contact, but does not comment on abandoned calls/visits or the reasons for them. This may be useful information in identifying those customers for whom mitigating actions or additional support to access the technology may be required. This could be further explored as part of any future Equalities Impact Assessments on individual projects within the channel shift agenda. The findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment should be used to further inform the development of proposals.

Surinder Singh, Equality Officer Tel 37 4148

5. Background information and other papers:

None

Report to Scrutiny Commission

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement

Date of Commission meeting: 25 October 2017

Community Languages

Report of the Director of Delivery, Communications and
Political Governance



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards
- Report author: Rebecca Oakley, Communications and Marketing Manager

1. Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the Council's approach to provision of community languages specifically the role of the Community Language Service and the services it provides including: information about when translation and interpretation services are used; details of the demand for translation and interpretation services in particular languages and the council service areas which request language services most frequently. It also includes specific information for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits, and Housing Options which are services where there is a very high volume of customer contact.

2. Recommendations to Scrutiny

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission are asked to review and comment on the report.

3. Summary

3.1 Overview of the Community Language Services

Leicester City Council's Community Language Services provide translation and interpretation services for non-English speakers and people with visual impairment or hearing difficulties.

Braille translations, audio recordings, telephone interpretation and sign language services are also available.

The language services can be commissioned by internal city council services and also external organisations and are chargeable.

3.2 When are translation and interpretation services used?

The number of languages continues to increase as the city's population becomes more diverse. However, in line with central government policy, the council encourages the use of English as the city's main language. A copy of the city council's Interpretation and Translation Policy is appended.

The policy position reflects the importance of having good English skills in terms of participating in society including in finding work and in enabling people to communicate with one another as an important factor in supporting integration and cohesive communities. The policy does also recognise that there will always be circumstances where translation or interpretation is needed particularly on a one-to-one basis where someone does not have sufficient English Language skills and needs to be able to

understand their legal rights, medical or care advice or their financial and other responsibilities. An example where this policy practically applies is within the Customer Service Centre where a resident seeks assistance with their Housing Benefit entitlement appeal or a family require an explanation of the council duty under the Homelessness Act.

In line with the policy therefore, Council staff will not translate material into other languages or provide interpretation as a matter of course. However, our Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to ensure that there are no barriers to residents accessing services they need. This applies to information on those services as well. This has recently been applied where the Social Welfare Advice consultation was translated. The recent Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme also ensured that consultation information was provided in non-English languages where appropriate on an area by area basis to ensure all members of the community were able to understand and comment on the proposals.

The council seeks to have a workforce which reflects the population we serve to help provide support where there may be language and cultural barriers. Residents and service users will be supported to access and use council services, make informed decisions and take advantage of life opportunities in the city.

The council seeks to ensure that information is accessible to those who most need it, and will use interpretation and translation where this is required.

Where the individual user will be put at significant disadvantage without a specific piece of information, that information will be provided in a suitable format for them - as long as the council is made aware of their particular needs. For a few Council Tax Charge payers we produce their bills and correspondence in large text or transpose the information on an audio disc.

This includes decisions directly affecting people's lives, such as whether they would receive a service or not, or where there are contractual obligations on the service users' part, such as payments to be made.

The service officer will need to consider how best to meet the council's and person's information and access needs, whether through interpretation or by translating written information. The council's Community Language Services is able to advise officers on how best to meet language needs within these given situations. Plain English is used in public facing settings such as libraries and community centres to remove barriers to access. Library self-service kiosks are image driven to overcome potential translation problems. Procedures such as borrower registration have been simplified and do not involve written forms which may be off-putting for potential joiners. The network of public access library computers support Microsoft access tools and access to online translation tools such as those provided by Google. A range translation tools are available online and web browsers can display alternative scripts. A range of foreign language books and magazines dependent on local community profiles are provided as part of the library stock strategy. Under the TNS programme a number of larger buildings have been transformed to accommodate multiple services such as Adult Learning, Libraries, customer and housing self-service and reception facilities and community spaces. The project has aimed to deliver joined up services in the heart of local communities where residents feel comfortable and well supported to access a

range of services in a familiar environment.

The council's Interpretation and Translation Policy sets out when council staff should and should not translate or interpret service information into any of the numerous languages or dialects used across the city. It is up to staff to consistently apply the policy on a case by case basis in order to determine whether translation or interpretation is necessary and practicable.

3.3 Language services and work requested

Typically the Community Language Services team receives around 40 requests per day for language services.

i) Translation

Between April 2016 to March 2017, the Community Language Services received requests to translate various documents such as: assessments, care plans, annual reports, letters, emails, feedback sheets, leaflets, booklets, court/legal documents, certificates, written agreements, fostering reports, questionnaires, survey reports, statements, WhatsApp and text messages, minutes of meetings, review reports, various forms, posters and signs.

ii) Interpretation

During the same period, the team received requests for situations and settings (from both internal and external organisations including: home visits, contact sessions, Occupational Therapy assessments, Physiotherapy (NHS), education welfare issues, schools (including academies) and colleges (parent evenings, school appeals, welfare rights related matters), homelessness and housing issues, case conferences, court cases, birth and death registrations, marriage ceremonies, coroner courts, benefit issues, licencing, pace interviews, solicitors, Department of Work and Pensions work, unannounced visits, police stations, prisons, medical visits, fly tipping and nuisance issues, domestic violence, local authorities (including London boroughs) and housing associations.

iii) Languages requested

During 2016/17, the Community Language Services handled requests for language services in around 60 different languages. The most frequently requested languages were:

1. Gujarati	11. Pushto
2. Urdu	12. Kurdish
3. Punjabi	13. Romanian
4. Bengali	14. British Sign Language
5. Somali	15. Tamil
6. Arabic	16. Portuguese
7. Farsi	17. Tigrinya
8. Polish	18. French
9. Slovak	19. Hindi
10. Chinese	20. Russian

3.4 Number of requests for different language services from internal council

services and external organisations during 2015 to 2016 (financial year) and 2016 to 2017 (financial year)

i) Requests from internal council services

Service requested	Year ending 5 April 2016	Year ending 5 April 2017
Telephone interpretation	2637	3129
Face to face interpretation	5698	6123
Translation	115	177
Braille	8	0
Audio	0	1
British Sign Language	108	77

ii) Requests from external organisations

Service requested	Year ending 5 April 2016	Year ending 5 April 2017
Telephone interpretation	69	84
Face to face interpretation	730	473
Translation	44	64
Braille	1	0
Audio	0	1
British Sign Language	16	1

The decrease in requests for face-to-face interpretation from external organisations between year ending 5 April 2016 and year ending 5 April 2017 can be attributed to two main reasons. In previous years, the Community Languages Service provided face to face translations for University Hospitals Leicester. The NHS subsequently made the decision to create a contract for the whole of the East Midlands region and the Community Languages Service was unable to bid for a contract on this scale. Leicester hospitals are obliged to use the company that provides language services under the contract.

Secondly, several years ago the Community Languages Service provided face to face interpretation to Job Centre Plus when immigration from eastern European countries was at a peak. The demand for these services has slowly declined and in recent years,

interpretation has been delivered in these settings via video link rather than face to face.

3.5 Volume of language service requests by service area during 2016 to 2017 (financial year)

The information below reflects very much the policy position of interpretation/translation where there are more specific needs. The lists below are typically those services dealing with more complex and sensitive matters where it is important individuals understand their situation, their rights and the nature of the service intervention, with Children's and Adult Social Care generating the largest volumes.

i) Requests for telephone interpretation (starting with highest)

1. Children In Need Team
2. Looked After Children Team
3. Contact & Response
4. Housing Options
5. Care Navigators
6. Occupational Therapy
7. Revenue & Benefits
8. Persons From Abroad Team
9. Duty & Advice
10. Adult Mental Health
11. Hostels
12. Enablement Team
13. Adult Learning Disabilities
14. Early Help and Family Support
15. Children Learning Disabilities
16. Outreach Team
17. Single Assessment
18. Kinship/Fostering
19. Youth Offending Service
20. Education Welfare & Psychology

ii) Requests for translation (starting with highest)

1. Children In Need Team
2. Single Assessment Team
3. Youth Offending Service
4. Learning Disability Team
5. Neighbourhood Services

iii) Requests for interpretation (starting with highest)

1. Children In Need Team
2. Looked After Children Team
3. Occupational Therapy
4. School Appeals
5. Care Navigators
6. Early Help & Family Support
7. Single Assessment

8. Housing Options
9. Adult Mental Health
10. Learning Disabilities (Adult & Children)
11. Contact & Response
12. Hostels
13. Welfare Rights
14. Youth Offending Service
15. Enablement Team
16. Education Welfare & Psychology
17. Hospital discharge team
18. Persons From Abroad Team
19. Street Enforcement
20. Kinship/Fostering

iv) Requests for Sign Language (starting with highest)

1. Care Management
2. Special Education Needs & Disability
3. Neighbourhood Housing
4. Occupational Therapy
5. Intermediate Care
6. Enablement Team
7. Contact & Response
8. Revenue & Benefits
9. Coroner's Service
10. Tourism, Culture & Investment

3.6 Experience in high volume customer contact areas

Appendix B provides data on translation and interpretation within Customer Services including Revenues and Benefits, and also in Housing Options for 2016/17. These are areas with high volumes of phone and face to face contact. Annually approximately 750,000 calls are taken by the customer service line and 90,000 visits are made to the main customer service centre. This puts into context the comparatively small volumes of translation and interpretation provided through consistent application of the Interpretation and Translation Policy. In 2016/17 for example 304 telephone interpretations were provided, 6 face to face interpretations and 2 British Sign Language.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The 2017-18 Gross budget for the translation unit is £372k, with budgeted income of £425k, leaving a net credit budget of £53k for the service.

Paresh Radia, Principal Accountant, 37 4082

4.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Claire Sinnott, Solicitor, 37 1408

4.3. Climate Change implications

There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team, 37 2251

4.4 Equality Implications

As part of our public sector equality duty under the Equality Act the council has a duty to ensure that the residents of Leicester City can access our services effectively. The interpretation and translation of our services helps to ensure that we are meeting the duty placed on us, across all protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act, with particular emphasis on the protected characteristics of age, disability and race, with individuals whose first language may not be English or in alternative formats such as BSL. We have met the duty by providing consultation material in alternative formats when necessary, as well as ensuring we meet our statutory obligations across our service areas, such as housing and adult social care when providing information or services.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 37 4175

5. Background information and other papers:

- **Written statement to Parliament
Translation into foreign languages**

From: Department for Communities and Local Government and The Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles

Part of: Council Tax reform and Community integration

Published and delivered: 12 March 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/translation-into-foreign-languages>

6. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix A - Interpretation and Translation Policy
- Appendix B - Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits, and Housing Options data for 2016-17

Neighbourhood Service and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2017-18

Meeting date	Meeting items	Actions Arising	Progress
12th July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio Overview 2. Leicester City Council Service Plan for Food Law Regulation 2017/2018 3. Spending reviews 4. Work programme 		
6th September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TNS East & Central 2. Social Welfare Advice consultation 3. Response to written questions presented to July meeting 4. Spending reviews 5. Work programme 		
25th October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Channel Shift Update 2. Community language service 3. Work programme 		
7th December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Welfare Advice Final Report 2. Spending reviews 3. Work programme 	Subject to progress through Executive	
24th January 2018			
28nd March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Involvement 2. Gambling impact task group report update on recommendations 3. Update on spending reviews 4. Channel shift 		

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Appendix D

17th October 2017

Neighbourhood Service and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2017-18

FORWARD PLAN / SUGGESTED ITEMS		
Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Apps and digital offer	Love Leicester app and digital inclusion	
Budget		
CAB		
Children Services (TNS)	Children services (TNS and using buildings better)	
City Warden Service	Communication of role to public/powers. Proposal from July 2017 meeting	
Cleansing Services review		
Communications Strategy		
Cold calling and doorstep loans	Proposal from July 2017 meeting	
Community Asset Transfer		
Community Safety	Public Spaces Protection Order (New Psychoactive Substances & Street Drinking): broad review	October 2017?
Council tax reduction:	Public consultation with interested parties (eg SWAP) Re DHP discretionary housing payment) and CSG (crisis support grant)	Alison Greenhill to schedule in context of policy review
Emergency food: City's Food Banks	Overview and forthcoming developments Update report on volunteering numbers on food banks Voluntary action LeicesterShire	
Enforcement	Residents parking	
Fly tipping	Data from each ward City Wardens service	
Food Action Plan	Emergency food survey	
Gambling Impact Task Group report		
Knife crime	Task group review	To be confirmed
Libraries	Which community groups use this space?	
Neighbourhood Policing and Community Safety	Government's modern crime prevention strategy	

17th October 2017

Neighbourhood Service and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2017-18

Payday Lenders		
Private Landlords.		
Regulatory Service review		
Social Welfare Advice Partnership	Report on advice provision and Council's response SWAP representative to be invited Single male claimants seeking help and crisis support	
Standards review		
Taxi Drivers	Child Safety/ screening process/ air quality	
Taxi Penalty System	12 month review – recommendation from NSCI August 2015	
The Furniture Bank Pilot Scheme: Evaluation & Future Options	Evaluation of pilot scheme and future options	
Trading Standards	Legal highs	
Using Buildings Better	Overview of the programme	
Voluntary and Community Sector	Voluntary Action Leicestershire	
Ward Community meetings		
Waste Management	Biffa contract 2028 Recycling figures and orange bags. Flats and terraced houses. Jan / March.	
Welfare reform	Briefing Impact and roll-out.	
Community Language Service	Briefing (requested at meeting on 12 th July 2017)	
halal desk top study	Briefing (requested at meeting on 12 th July 2017)	
Cold calling and doorstep loans	Request from members	Scoping document to be prepared?
KEY DECISIONS		
Community capacity spending review.	Published 24 th April 2017	Previously consulted on 25 th Jan 2017

