

CITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Notes of meeting held on: 2nd July 2012

Present: Cllrs Stephen Bonallie (Chair), Michael Essl, Steven Foster, Neville Padgett, Stuart Porthouse, Kath Rolph, Lynda Scanlan, Peter Wood
Also Present: Cllrs David Tate and Ellen Ball.

Jim Diamond, Les Clark, Martin Lancaster & Liz Craig

Apologies: None received

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chair introduced everyone to the panel and introductions were made.</p>	
2.	<p>Introduction to the New Scrutiny Arrangements and the Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>Councillor Bonallie welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the City Services Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>He noted that the main purpose of the meeting was to set out the background to changes in the Council's governance arrangements, whereby there will be only 1 Scrutiny Committee and 6 Scrutiny Panels. It was intended that the Panels would be more focused in their work and direct their attention on the policy reviews considered at the Scrutiny Conference and agreed by the Scrutiny Committee. They should also have the opportunity to operate in a more informal and flexible way.</p> <p>JD introduced the report on the new arrangements for scrutiny and the operation of the new scrutiny panels.</p> <p>Cllr Rolph asked if the co-opted members could be other elected members.</p> <p>JD stated there was provision for members to come along to panel meetings if interested in that particular area for the duration of the review.</p> <p>Cllr Rolph asked if there were any guidelines on what constituted "significant expenditure" as mentioned in the report.</p> <p>Action: to clarify the guidelines in relation to "significant expenditure"</p>	JD

3.	<p>New Issues Referred from the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>No issues were raised.</p>	
4.	<p>Spotlight Policy Reviews – The Year Ahead</p> <p>JD reported that potential policy review topics had been discussed at the Annual Scrutiny Conference. The two priority topics that emerged were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Tell Us Once for Bereavement</i> - the review would entail evaluating the Tell us Once for Bereavement service from a customer perspective 2. <i>Waste Management and Refuse</i> - the review would give an overview of current arrangements and consider the challenges for 2014 given large efficiencies in refuse and recycling budget <p>These two topics were formally commissioned by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14th June 2012.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Panel may wish to begin with a policy review into the “Tell us Once for Bereavement” service. It was the intention to come back to the July meeting with the scope and further details to set the scene.</p> <p>Cllr Bonallie introduced Martin Lancaster; Martin gave an update on the Tell us Once Service, which was a 2008 pathfinder project with the DWP.</p> <p>The idea behind the service was that customers were only required to Tell us Once about a bereavement and the council would then inform everyone else on the list below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWP – Pensions, Disability & Carers Service, Jobcentre Plus and Overseas Health Team • MOD – War Pensions Scheme • HM Revenue & Customs – Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit & Working Tax Credit, Personal Taxation • Identity & Passport Service • Local Councils – Housing Benefit & Council Tax Offices • DVLA <p>The following council departments could also be notified if the customer wished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Blue Badges 	

- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Collection of payment for Council Services
- Electoral Services

Suspending benefits once a person has died should help to save the Council having to reclaim the money back at a later date. In 24 months the service should have an example of money saved in benefits by suspending them.

Cllr Padgett asked if there had been any problems with the service to date.

Martin reported there had been a few teething problems with the ICT infrastructure to start with, however this had now been resolved.

Cllr Porthouse asked if the service could be extended to banks, building societies, utilities – and whether the Council provide a family with any advice and guidance?
Are they given a list of other services to contact?

Martin noted that while the Council are unable to make local amendments to the TUO process, we could include this as a prompt list within the Bereavement Guide we're developing to be launched on our web pages. We're not intending to publish this in order to save costs. This will also enable us to make amendments as and when the contact details of the various support groups change so that the guidance remains accurate. If customers require a hard copy, it is intended that a print version could be downloaded. Anyone without access to the internet could be provided with assistance at any of our CSN facilities or upon specific request, a print copy could be provided.

Les reported that the service seemed to be popular with customers and that the panel might like to look at how other council services could learn from this.

Cllr Bonallie suggested that it might be useful to visit the service and view its operation at first hand. Martin confirmed that it should be possible to visit the contact centre at Moorside where the calls are answered to make an appointment with the registrar to register the death. He also suggested that members might like to visit the new Coroners Court as part of the evidence gathering process.

In order to evaluate the popularity of the service, members felt that it was important to receive feedback from the service users. However, it was recognised that this was a potentially very sensitive area. Cllr Rolph suggested putting an advert in a local

	<p>newspaper to say if you have used the bereavement service in the past few years and want to tell us your experience then please contact us – that way you would identify volunteers who want to talk about their experience of the service.</p> <p>Cllr Scanlan asked if there was now a dedicated telephone number for bereavement. Martin replied there was and it would be launched on all the new material.</p> <p>Cllr Padgett asked if there could be a dedicated number for the floods/environmental changes.</p> <p>Martin reported the Tell Us Once process is intended to assist with matters connected to bereavement, it does not lend its self to emergency and contingency arrangements such as flooding, that would be the responsibility of the Emergency Planning Team.</p> <p>Cllr Foster asked if the panel would be looking into the upkeep of cemeteries as part of this review. It was noted that the review did not cover this theme but that there would be an opportunity to include this as a policy review topic at a later date.</p> <p>Les Clark noted that the panels next policy review would be into refuse collection and examining issues such as the uptake of new blue bin system, recycling, bulky items and different approaches. It was suggested that the panel may wish to look at this issue during the late autumn/early winter period.</p>	
5.	<p>Issues to feedback to the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Cllr Tate reported that any issues raised by the panel could be fedback to the Scrutiny Committee via the Scrutiny Panel Lead or directly through himself.</p>	
6.	<p>AOB/Member items</p> <p>JD noted that the Council's Food Law Plan would be shortly considered by Cabinet. It was agreed that JD investigate whether the Plan would be referred to the main Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny or whether it would be referred to this Panel.</p>	
7.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Monday 23rd July 2012 at 5pm in Committee Room 6</p>	