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The Chair and Members of
Community, Customer and
Organisational Scrutiny Committee

25 June 2020

Dear Councillor,

Please attend a meeting of the COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE to be held on THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2020 at 5.00 pm, the agenda for which is set out below.

This meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams software, for which members of the Committee and others in attendance will receive an invitation. Members of the public will be able to access Part 1 (Public Information) of the meeting online by following the link [here](#).

AGENDA

Part 1(Public Information)

1. Declarations of Members' and Officers' interests relating to items on the Agenda.
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January, 2020.

4. Cabinet Members for Governance, Business Transformation & Customers, Health & Wellbeing and Town Centres & Visitor Economy - Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Recovery

Presentation to be given at the meeting.

5. Forward Plan

The latest version of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions is available via the link below:

[Forward Plan](#)

6. Scrutiny Monitoring (Pages 11 - 18)

Scrutiny Committee Recommendations – Implementation Monitoring Schedule attached

7. Scrutiny Work Programme Arrangements for 2020/21

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Randy', written in a cursive style.

Local Government and Regulatory Law Manager and Monitoring Officer

COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30th January, 2020

Present:-

Councillor P Innes (Chair)

Councillors Borrell
L Collins

Councillors Kellman

Councillor J Innes, Cabinet Member for Business Transformation +
Councillor A Serjeant, Deputy Leader +++

Mick Blythe, Client Manager +
Clare Fowkes, Operational Benefits Manager +
Donna Reddish, Assistant Director – Policy and Communications ++
Carolyn Szadura, Head of Revenues +
Brian Offiler, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

+ Attended for Minute No. 32

++ Attended for Minute Nos. 36 - 37

+++ Attended for Minute No. 37

29 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

No declarations of interest were received.

30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dyke.

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November, 2019 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**32 CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION -
IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

The Cabinet Member for Business Transformation, the Client Manager, the Head of Revenues and the Operational Benefits Manager presented a progress report on the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) in Chesterfield since the previous report to the Committee in March, 2019.

The report referred to the continuing work by the benefits team with partners and stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for claimants and the Council, including the following issues:

- The assisted claiming and budgeting support in most cases having been provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) since April, 2019, although data on its use was not currently available. It was unclear whether CAB nationally would continue to provide this support in 2020/21.
- The managed migration of existing claimants from legacy benefits to UC which had been scheduled to start in January, 2020, had been delayed, and a further report on this to parliament was not expected until Autumn, 2020.
- The Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) had been managed within the reduced budget for 2019/20, although this had necessitated payments to claimants being lower in order to maintain the numbers of claimants supported. The DHP budget for 2020/21 had not yet been announced.
- A higher proportion of UC claimants had been subject to sanctions (reducing or stopping payment of benefit) than claimants of other benefits, mostly for failure to attend work focused interviews.
- Availability of IT in various locations for claimants to access their records was currently adequate, although this may need to be reviewed when managed migration was implemented in the future.

The report included the latest statistical and financial information in respect of UC claims, including:

- Average rent arrears of Council tenants affected by UC was £459 in January, 2020 (having taken account of managed payments received by the Council direct from DWP), which was significantly higher than the average arrears of other Council tenants on Housing Benefit;
- Approximately 75% of tenants claiming UC were in rent arrears, and the number of such tenants had risen from 840 in February, 2019 to 1,330 in January, 2020;
- The total level of rent arrears was expected to rise as the number of tenants claiming UC increased in the future;
- The impact of UC payments being based on 52 weeks despite 2019-20 being a 53 week rent year was being monitored, although it was expected this would increase the level of rent arrears.

It was noted that the Benefits Team continued to support individual claimants and liaise with DWP including in respect of issues of underpayment of the Severe Disability Premium, the Carer element not being included in UC awards, sole occupiers with others named on a tenancy who were no longer resident, tenants whose housing costs were still being calculated on a 48 week rent year.

The report referred to the Citizens Advice (CAB) / Local Government Association Council tax protocol, although officers' advice was that this would not currently add significant value to the Council's operation of UC.

Members expressed concerns regarding:

- The lack of current data from CAB on the use of the assisted claiming and budgeting support;
- The 5 weeks waiting period leading to increased use of foodbanks and increased levels of child poverty;
- The application of sanctions, some of which had been successfully appealed;
- Vulnerable people having been defrauded by others persuading them to claim advances, there having been a few cases locally;

- Whether there would need to be additional IT capacity and support when managed migration was implemented;
- The difficulty for the Council to manage budgets given the impact of UC on rent and Council Tax arrears.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work being undertaken in supporting claimants, and the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation, the Client Manager, the Head of Revenues and the Operational Benefits Manager for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the ongoing work on the implementation of Universal Credit be supported.
- (2) That progress of the implementation of Universal Credit be reported to the Committee in the summer / autumn of 2020, subject to the issue being included on the Committee's work programme as part of the annual scrutiny work programming for 2020/21.

33 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

34 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 February – 31 May, 2020.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

35 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the list of items included on its work programme for 2019/20.

It was noted that the annual scrutiny work programming dates for the 2020/21 work programme had been scheduled for March 24 and April 21, 2020.

RESOLVED -

That the work programme be approved and updated to include the decisions of the current meeting.

36 **CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE - ELECTED MEMBERS PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY**

The Assistant Director – Policy and Communications presented a report on the proposed policy for parental leave for elected members.

The report outlined the objective of the proposed policy as being to enable elected members to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption and to ensure that reasonable arrangements were in place to provide cover for Cabinet Members and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances during periods of leave. The proposed policy, based on the Local Government Association's Women's Taskforce Parental Leave Policy, was attached as an appendix to the report.

Arising from Members' questions it was explained that the proposed policy did not relate to cases of fostering, as separate arrangements could apply in such cases.

It was noted that the proposed policy was due to be considered by Cabinet and full Council in February, 2020, and the Committee stated its support for the voluntary implementation of the policy.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director – Policy and Communications for her contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the voluntary implementation of the proposed policy for parental leave for elected members be supported.

37 DEPUTY LEADER - IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Deputy Leader and the Assistant Director – Policy and Communications presented a progress report on the implementation of the Communications and Engagement Strategy following its approval by Council in July, 2018.

The report outlined progress against the objectives of the strategy, including:

- Four editions of the combined Your Chesterfield and Our Homes publication had been produced including use of infographics. Responses from the ‘Are you being served’ survey identified that the publication was seen by 72% of residents.
- The bringing together of all live and concluded consultation information on a consultations page on the Council’s website.
- The continued use of face to face consultation, including on changes to the allocations policy, repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour, Gypsy and Traveller consultation, the Local Plan and leisure services, with further activity being developed in respect of the HS2 masterplan project.
- Increased use of infographics, videos, graphic design and social media to present information in a more accessible and understandable format. The Digital Communications Report for October and November, 2019 was attached as an appendix to the report.
- Improved communication with staff, including the staff in bloom garden and recycled Christmas decorations competitions.

It was noted that resourcing this increased communications, marketing and engagement activity proved challenging at peak times. The agency model approach which had been piloted with Housing Services had

worked well and the potential for using this approach would be discussed with other teams.

Members welcomed the progress and developments in the activity and approaches detailed in the report. The Chair thanked the Deputy Leader and the Assistant Director – Policy and Communications for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the work outlined in the progress report be supported.
- (2) That further progress be reported to the Committee in the next Council year, subject to the outcome of the annual scrutiny work programming for 2020/21.

38 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS PROGRESS UPDATES

It was reported that the Scrutiny Project Group on Community Safety and Providing for Young People had been continuing to gather information on current provision for young people and the related community safety concerns, with a view to developing guidance for Members to enhance their understanding of services available and to support their case work relating to young people.

RESOLVED –

That the report from the Scrutiny Project Group be noted.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING SCHEDULE

Ref No	Item (Scrutiny Issue or Topic. SPG = Scrutiny Project Group work)	Decision Dates (Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, Council & its Committees)	Scrutiny Committee Recommendations and/or <i>Decision making body resolution</i> (<i>italics = Agreed by Scrutiny Committee but not yet considered by decision making body</i>) *	Completion Date for Actions	Action / Response Completed	Further Action Required by Scrutiny (6 monthly progress reports)
CCO1 Page 11	Statutory Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Ctte	CCO 29.09.11 (Min. No. 44)	Progress report on sharing information re alcohol related health problems and hospital admissions.	6 monthly wef 29/09/11.	Statistics requested for each 6 monthly meeting	Agreed on 08.01.15 that statistics on alcohol related health problems / hospital admissions be reported to each 6 monthly meeting.

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CCO4	Implementation of Universal Credit	CCO 22.05.18 (Min. No. 6) Cabinet Member for Homes & Customers 16.07.18	Re. provision of computer terminal(s) and support for Universal Credit claimants in Staveley area. Cabinet Member's response noted by CCO – 17.07.18 (Min. No. 14) – computer terminals and support available at several locations within Staveley area – provision to be monitored.	6 monthly progress reports	Cabinet Member's response noted by CCO – 17.07.18. Report considered by CCO – 27.11.18. 6 monthly progress reports considered by CCO – 26.03.19 and 30.01.20.	Monitor as part of ongoing review of implementation of Universal Credit.
CCO5	Community Rooms	CCO 26.09.19 (Min. No. 17) Cabinet 22.10.19 (Min. No. 54)	Community Rooms SPG report approved by CCO 26.09.19. Cabinet Response: 1. That the Cabinet Member for Housing initiates conversations with the Chesterfield Care Group regarding the hiring of community rooms. 2. That the Cabinet: a. Supports the refurbishment and retention of Bonsall Court as a community room.	March 2020		

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Page 13			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Notes and endorses the arrangements to lease Burns Close to the Umbrellas Cosy Group on a five year lease. c. Agree that alternative uses be explored for Monkwood Road in line with the Council's health and wellbeing priorities. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. That the website be updated and amended to include a central location for finding room hire information for all venues across the Council including the community rooms. 4. That a dedicated phone line for community room enquiries be established within the Careline and Support Service with a voicemail facility. 5. That the call centre staff be provided with up to date information on the hire of community rooms. 			

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Page 14			<p>6. That the promotion of community rooms on the Council's website be improved, making the rooms more obvious to potential hirers.</p> <p>7. That a new leaflet be produced that includes details of all the community rooms.</p> <p>8. That a promotional drive take place to coincide with the completion of the work to the sheltered schemes.</p> <p>9. That a booklet be produced that incorporates terms and conditions for the community rooms along with how to use the facilities in the rooms.</p> <p>10. That the door entry systems that have been installed at Wimborne Crescent and Winstar Court be kept under review to understand if this is the most effective way for hirers to gain access.</p>			

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EW6 Page 15	Skills	EW 05.02.19 (Min. No 48) Cabinet 26.02.19 (Min. No 110)	Skills SPG report approved by Enterprise and Wellbeing 05.02.19 Cabinet Response: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Cabinet thanks the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for the report which highlights an important area of work for the Council and reflects our commitment to driving skills development in the Borough through our support of the Skills Action Plan and continued engagement with key partners and stakeholders. 2. That the Cabinet notes and endorses the recommendations, and acknowledges that the recommendations can be accommodated within the normal work programme and through partners. 3. That the decision to co-fund the Enterprise Co-ordinator post be deferred for consideration as a 	Monitoring Action is being developed in consultation with senior officers to identify target dates for completion.		Monitor progress – April 2020

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			<p>growth request as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21. The Cabinet recognises the positive impact of the Enterprise Co-ordinator for Chesterfield and that this is currently co-funded for 2 years until 2019/20.</p> <p>See SPG Report for recommendations.</p>			
EW7 Page 16	Future Use of the Former QPSC Site	<p>EW 3.10.19 (Min. No. 20)</p> <p>Cabinet 22.10.19 (Min. No. 53)</p>	<p>SPG report approved by EW 3.10.19.</p> <p>Cabinet Response:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the use of the new sports pitch be monitored through the Council's normal management processes against the objective of balancing the need to achieve a commercial return and provide opportunities for community and health and wellbeing development. 2. That the marketing approach and pricing structure for the sports pitch be reviewed as necessary as part of the Council's overall marketing and 	April 2020		

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			pricing of its sports and leisure services.			
8 Page 17	HS2	OPSF 11.09.18 Cabinet 23.10.18 (Min. No. 48)	Cabinet Response: 1. That the Cabinet thanks the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum for the first class work that has been taken forward in looking at how the Council is preparing for HS2 and, in particular, for the Forum's efforts in broadening and deepening the understanding of Council Members of the subject matter. 2. That Cabinet notes and endorses the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. 3. That Cabinet endorses, in particular, the Forum's recommendation to establish a new Skills Scrutiny Project group and resolves to defer to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum	Following Parliament's consideration of the Hybrid Bill	Recommendations approved by Cabinet 23.10.18 Monitoring update considered by OPSF - 19.03.19	Monitor after Hybrid Bill has been taken to Parliament.

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			<p>further consideration of the merit of establishing new Scrutiny Project Groups to look at particular aspects of HS2 as part of the future work programming discussions.</p> <p>See SPG Report for recommendations.</p>			
<p><i>Abbreviations Key : OP = Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. CCO = Community, Customer and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee. EW = Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee). TBA (to be agreed).</i></p> <p><i>* Note recommendation wording may be abridged.</i></p>						