

Report of:	Deputy Leader
To:	Corporate Resources & Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	1st March 2017

Review Information

Date to City Council:	04 February 2014
Member who led the original review:	Cllr Lisa Trickett
Lead Officer for the review:	Benita Wishart, O&S Manager
Date progress last tracked:	March 2015

1. In 2013/14, the Districts and Public Engagement O&S Committee undertook an inquiry into the purpose of engagement with citizens and how that engagement can be improved. The report made five recommendations.
2. This report seeks to update on progress against the recommendations.
3. Details of progress with the remaining recommendations are shown in Appendix 2.
4. Members are therefore asked to consider progress against the recommendations and give their view as to how progress is categorized for each.

Appendices

1	Scrutiny Office guidance on the tracking process
2	Recommendations you are tracking today

For more information about this report, please contact

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Appendix **1**: The Tracking Process

In making its assessment, the Committee may wish to consider:

- What progress/ key actions have been made against each recommendation?
- Are these actions pertinent to the measures required in the recommendation?
- Have the actions been undertaken within the time scale allocated?
- Are there any matters in the recommendation where progress is outstanding?
- Is the Committee satisfied that sufficient progress has been made and that the recommendation has been achieved?

Category	Criteria
1: Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.
2: Not Achieved (Obstacle)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but all possible action has been taken. Outstanding actions are prevented by obstacles beyond the control of the Council (such as passage of enabling legislation).
3: Not Achieved	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but there has been significant progress made towards full achievement.</p> <p>An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved must be advised.</p>
4: In Progress	It is not appropriate to monitor achievement of the recommendation at this time because the timescale specified has not yet expired.
5: Achieved (outcomes to be monitored)	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified. However, the outcome has not yet materialised, or “work on the ground” has yet to be seen.</p> <p>Reporting on the recommendation as part of the tracking process ceases. However, a report back on the outcome or continuing implementation will be reported back to the Committee as determined by the members in consultation with the Cabinet Member.</p>

Appendix 2 : Progress with Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R01	The Deputy Leader to secure improvements to the Council's website to address the concerns set out in Section 4.2* to be overseen by the Governance, Resources & Customer Services O&S Committee.	Deputy Leader	September 2014	2 – Achieved (Late)

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

Since the agreement of these recommendations significant improvements have been achieved with the replacement of the Council's website in August 2016. The implementation of the new website was influenced by citizens with feedback obtained from a variety of groups and individuals. This helped to ensure that interest groups and certain individuals were not seen as speaking for all people in an area or of a group.

The following user engagement and user supported testing activities were undertaken:

- Eye Tracking which informed the 2 initial design concepts this included feedback from the customer service Citizen Panel and a range of council staff. This monitored eye positions and eye movement to identify what people choose to look at in the new design options enabled preferences in design or colour to be identified. Design Testing at the Impact Hub in Digbeth, which involved engagement with local digital community influencers
- Testing of the website's accessibility using the council's Disability Action Network
- Design Testing with the Citizen Panel, visitors to the library of Birmingham and locally at Kings Heath Community Centre event
- The use of a blog to ensure that anyone interested in the project's progress or wanting to provide feedback could do so - Medium blog: <http://bit.ly/2aWa1rx>
- The blog was also promoted on the old website homepage during the project lifetime

The opportunity to make the website much more dynamic and reflective of the city was incorporated in the design and build of the website. The availability of real time information such as up-to-date information on missed bins is now on the new website. More than 50% of the traffic to the website is from mobile or tablet devices as a direct result of making the new website mobile responsive.

Content on the new website has been significantly rewritten with the focus on the reader rather than the internal service. To support this all writing for the web is now within the corporate web team in Customer Service who are focussed on making the content engaging, relevant and easy to understand. This has helped to remove duplicated information which can be contradictory and reduced the number of pages from 3,500 pre go live to 2,000 in the new website.

Significant effort has been made to involve citizens in the design and implementation of the new website, in line with the findings of the 2014 report where the Chair of the Reference Group¹ noted the importance of:

Making sure that the Council's commitment to engagement is demonstrated at every level and at every entry point to the Council including not only the first line response staff, but the website, messaging, continuing conversations, feeding back following consultations and really demonstrating that it listens, not just saying that it does.

More prominence has been given to consultations/hot topics on the home page, with twitter feeds incorporated.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R02	The Deputy Leader to draw up an improvement plan for how the Council deals with citizens as customers, which should be overseen by the Governance, Resources and Customer Services O&S Committee.	Deputy Leader	September 2014	2 – Achieved (Late)
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
<p>Since the transfer of the contact centre to Birmingham City Council control significant improvement has been achieved in citizen satisfaction and has seen an increase from 45.89% in December 2014 to 60.94% in November 2016. This measure captures overall satisfaction with the services received via the contact centre and has been achieved against a backdrop of savings which include £4.8m savings achieved in 2015-16 and further savings of £882k achieved in 2016-17.</p> <p>There is a separate report on customer satisfaction presented to this meeting and regular reports have been submitted to O&S in July and November 2015 and September 2016 updating on progress in customer satisfaction and improvements to support that increase.</p> <p>Your Views, both complaints and compliments, are managed by Customer Services and dealt with by the service against whom the complaint was made. To ensure the council continues to learn from complaints a quarterly update of key improvement actions identified as a result of complaints is provided to Customer Service by the service areas.</p> <p>To further build on these improvements the external measurement of customer satisfaction by the Institute of Customer Service has been commissioned to allow the council to benchmark satisfaction rates with similar organisations UK wide.</p> <p>A review of telephone handling teams across the council has resulted in the transfer of telephone calls to Home Options and Children's Schools and Early Years services being transferred to the corporate contact centre during September and October 2016. Early results show an improvement in call handling performance as a result of these moves.</p> <p>Roles have been created in customer service, which support the identification and implementation of improvements to service delivery. These include Resolution Champions (Senior Customer Service Advisors) who escalate service failure on the citizen's behalf and Relationship Managers who work with the Service Areas to develop longer term Action Plans to improve service delivery. These Action Plans address the areas of concern identified by feedback from the citizen satisfaction survey, feedback from Resolution Champions or Service Improvement projects initiated by the Relationship Manager to remove inefficiency and waste.</p> <p>The measurement of quality outcomes for customer interactions with advisors has supported the identification of areas for improvement, this is an ongoing activity that takes place every month and informs appraisal outcomes for individuals.</p> <p>The Customer Service Strategy has been refreshed in the form of the Citizen Access Strategy, which has central to its approach the development of more joined up services that will be designed from a citizen's perspective and adhere to the council values. This should support other initiatives such as demand reduction and where possible consider sharing the burden with partners.</p>				

The key principles underpinning the strategy are:

1. Use of quality evidence including citizen insight for decision making
2. Greater engagement and empowerment of citizens
3. Citizens should help themselves wherever possible and reasonable
4. Investment in expertise and skill building, right people in right place doing the right job
5. Sharing of personal information across services, reducing the need for citizens to provide the same information more than once
6. Not constrained by service boundaries and not expect citizens to have to navigate the Council's organisation structure
7. Closer collaboration with the private and third sectors including learning from
8. Customer service is about the contact and outcomes e.g. end to end service delivery not the initial contact and request

Birmingham's Response to the challenge of meeting Citizen Expectations

- Adopt a citizen-centric approach to designing service delivery which provides fast, simple, and efficient processes, including the availability of comprehensive online services and the transparency of information to support further increases in citizen satisfaction.
- Systematically reduce errors and timeframes relating to "behind-the-scenes" processes by applying lean management practices and automation to reduce cycle times and improve quality.
- The expectation for effective online service delivery will continue to increase in Birmingham. While we should maintain a range of channels to support citizens, investment in digital channels is likely to achieve further savings and increased citizen satisfaction. There is also a need to support the enablement of access to digital channels for citizens who may not have the skills or access to technology

The 4 action plan areas to be developed in support of the Citizen Access Strategy are:

- **Citizen Insight**
- **Culture and Leadership** – How we behave
- **Service Delivery**– what services we provide, where and how
- **Effectiveness of End to End Service Delivery**

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R03	The Deputy Leader together with the Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities to draw up and implement a cross-cutting improvement plan for consultation to address the issues in Section 4.4 and ensure consultations are consistently good quality, meaningful and influence decision-making.	Deputy Leader	September 2014	2 – Achieved (Late) Draft strategy to be shared with Scrutiny

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

This recommendation is being addressed through the work on the engagement/consultation strategy as one of the engagement strategies for the council of the future. It is owned by Corporate Communications and delivered through individuals and teams across the Council.

A draft strategy has been developed which has now been shared with Corporate Leadership Team and is shortly to be shared more widely, which will help ensure a more consistent approach to pre-consultation engagement required as part of the various implementation plans.

- In addition to this work has been completed to create a single timeline of budget related consultation and the key stakeholders for each budget proposal
- The intention is to use this information to avoid overlap of activity and better coordinate engagement activity with stakeholders

A number of the underpinning principles were built into the strategy for the latest budget engagement and consultation strategy, which helped deliver the biggest ever response to the consultation. The strategy also builds on the lessons learned from the community workshops, which took place ahead of last year's budget consultation.

There will be further engagement with officers and Elected Members ahead of full implementation later in the year.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R04	The Leader, along with Cabinet Members, Executive Members for Local Services and Ward Chairs bring forward a plan that addresses the key concerns raised and opportunities set out in the report and take on the fundamental step changes set out in Chapters 5-8.	Deputy Leader/Assistant Leaders	September 2014	2 – Achieved (Late)

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

As in recommendation 3, this recommendation is being addressed through the work on the engagement/consultation strategy as one of the engagement strategies for the council of the future. Since the original report in 2014, the Cabinet Committee for Local Leadership has been established and part of its remit, with the Assistant Leaders is to play a leading role taking forward the strategic priority of Local Leadership and conducting a review of the existing devolved arrangements consulting and engaging with the community, other stakeholders and Members.