



AGENDA ITEM: 8

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
31 January 2013**

Report of: Borough Solicitor

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Directors

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SUBJECT: CALL IN ITEM – ITEM REFERRED FROM CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMPLAINTS MONITORING

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the reason for the call in of the decision on the above item, as set out in Minute No. 82 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 January 2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee determines whether it wishes to ask for a different decision.

2.2 That if the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, the Committee indicates which of the options set out at paragraph 5.1 below, it wishes to pursue.

3.0 DETAILS RELATING TO THE CALL IN

3.1 The report (which was referred from the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee) attached as an Appendix to this report was considered at a meeting of Cabinet on 15 January 2013.

3.2 The decision of Cabinet reads as follows:-

“82. ITEM REFERRED FROM CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMPLAINTS MONITORING

Councillor Westley introduced the report of the Borough Solicitor which set out comments referred from the Corporate & Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 13 December 2012, when scrutinising the above item.

In responding to the comments of the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Westley referred to the vast amount of interactions with customers across the entire authority and explained that it was not feasible nor practical to record verbal complaints of dissatisfaction and that it would have a negative impact on service delivery. Councillor Westley circulated a motion which was seconded.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the comments from Councillor Westley, the motion circulated and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED: A. That due to the vast number of interactions with customers across the entire Authority it is not feasible to log/detail the number of verbal complaints received.
- B. That recording this level of detail is not considered a practical option and would also have a negative impact on service delivery. In addition, the likelihood of having to invest in new software for the purpose of recording complaints is not considered good value for money, particularly within the current financial climate.”

3.3 The following reason for call in was given in the requisition:-

“That the responses A and B chooses to ignore verbal complaints from members of the public which is not in keeping with the recommendations of Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee”

3.4 The requisition also provided a different decision which was:

“A. That the Council recognises that complaints in writing and verbal can enable the Council to improve the quality of services, reduce costs and waste. Ensuring that said services are what people want rather than what the Council will provide.

B. That the Council considers and learns from the various business models available about the importance of ensuring that services are fit for purpose by customer satisfaction interactions. That every interaction is an opportunity to improve and not a burden on the Council.”

3.5 The following Members of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee signed the requisition for call-in in accordance with the provisions of Overview & Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 15:

Councillor Fillis
Councillor Gagen
Councillor Gibson
Councillor Savage

4.0 COMMENTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION MANAGER

- 4.1 The complaints report provides data on the number of formal complaints received across the authority each year, both within Customer Services and within each individual section, therefore providing a corporate overview. Within the Contact Centre alone, there are approximately 190,000 customer interactions each year and as can be seen from the complaints monitoring report, only a very small percentage of customers choose to escalate their enquiry.
- 4.2 Clearly, the Contact Centre does not deal with all services and many calls are received directly within 'the back offices'. Therefore recording the nature/detail of any calls within Customer Services alone would not provide a full and accurate picture of the corporate position. In addition, due to the vast amount of interactions with customers across the entire Authority (i.e. both within the Contact Centre and within other offices), it would not be feasible to log and detail the number of verbal complaints of dissatisfaction. Experience shows that the vast majority of customers simply want their enquiry dealt with speedily and informally there and then, although clearly there is the option to escalate their dissatisfaction should they so wish.
- 4.3 Recording this level of detail is therefore not considered to be practical and would have a negative impact on service delivery. It is also likely that in order to introduce this policy effectively would require investment in new/bespoke IT software.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Following consideration of the decision of Cabinet, the requisition for call in and the comments of the Transformation Manager, the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide if it wishes to ask for a different decision. If the Committee does not wish to ask for a different decision then the decision of Cabinet takes immediate effect. If the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, it may:
- a. refer the decision back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration, setting out the different decision; or
 - b. refer the matter to Council. If the matter is referred to Council and Council does not object, then the decision of Cabinet will take effect immediately from that Council meeting date. If the Council does object, then the decision and the objection will be referred back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration.
- 5.2 The Secretary of State in his Guidance recommends that Overview & Scrutiny Committees should only use the power to refer matters to the full Council if they consider that the decision is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.
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Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Report of the Borough Solicitor