

AGENDA ITEM 12

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

1 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CORPORATE ISSUES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief members on matters of corporate interest which have occurred since the last meeting of this Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that: -

- 2.1 **The Action Plan for Customer Services Excellence be presented to the Community and Social Affairs Committee at its next meeting.**
- 2.2 **This Committee receive reports as appropriate concerning recommendations from the Investors in People Action Plan.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Customer Service Excellence

As Members are aware during week commencing 12 October 2015 the Council underwent a joint inspection for the Investors in People (IIP) award and the accreditation for Customer Service Excellence. It was the first time that these two accreditations had been offered through one inspection and the Council took advantage of this both in terms of reduced costs for the dual inspection and efficiency of the organisation in dealing with the inspection requirements.

- 3.2 I am pleased to advise Members that the Council was successful in both retaining the "IIP" award and also gaining full Council accreditation for Customer Service Excellence. The Council determined to pursue the IIP award as this has been held by the Council for several years, indeed the Council reached Silver Level at its last inspection. However, in these difficult financial times it did not seem appropriate to pursue Silver or Gold Level but to obtain reaccreditation to give confidence to the Council's employees that support, training and appropriate guidance were available within the authority to help them with their work and work related issues.
- 3.3 The Customer Service Excellence accreditation followed the preparation of a detailed Self-Assessment by the Council, together with the week long inspection and interviews with senior officers and managers, groups of staff, customers and partners. The whole Council accreditation resulted in four areas of "compliance plus". The Inspector said this was "unusual" in a first time assessment. Of the 57 areas of examination the Council was compliant in 46 of these with only 7 being partially compliant and no areas being "not compliant". The 4 areas where the Council was compliant plus are set out in the table below, together with extracts from the Inspectors' comments.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Assessor's Comments Extracts</u>
2.1.1 There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.	<p>As previously stated, the MBC has a clear vision and values, which focuses on putting the customer first. This is supported by the Corporate Plan and specific improvement strategies to support the approach, for example, Me2E (Melton to Excellence), which encourages staff to excel personally and professionally at customer service.</p> <p>The interviews with the CEO, Heads of Service and Strategic Directors (Senior Leadership Team) demonstrated a high level of commitment and passion to putting the customer first and improving the resident's lives of MBC. The CEO spoke about how the senior leadership team had focused on the key priorities of Place and People in order to create an Agile Council, implementing a clear customer focus with integrated services rather than a silo based delivery approach.</p> <p>All services relevant to customers are co-located to provide a single point of contact approach, either within the Council premises or Phoenix House where Me and My Learning is based. The MBC focus has shifted from 'smiley faced' exit measurement to outcome based results, for example, the reduction of outstanding Council taxes, reduction in outstanding rent arrears, as well as reduction in anti-social behaviour, crime rates, re-offending, etc.</p>
3.4.1 We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.	<p>MBC has excelled at setting up partnership arrangements with other providers and co-locating these services within the main Council premises and Phoenix House. In the main building there are a number of partners equipped to provide a range of services, creating a one stop service for customers, for example, debt management, money advice, citizens advice bureau, etc. This has proven highly successful as if a customer is experiencing a problem paying rent and / or Council tax they can be immediately referred to an appropriate service. In addition, other services are available, including JobCentre Plus, parole management, etc.</p>
3.4.2 We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.	<p>Clear lines of communication and accountability have been created with partners to ensure a coordinated approach to providing the services to the customer. Sign posting processes are in place and partners are expected to respond to the needs of the customers within a realistic timescale, and in most cases this is instantaneous.</p> <p>Whilst MBC do not set targets for partners it does manage the quality of the services provided, and encourages their customers to give feedback; complaints, compliments and comments regarding the service received from the providers through the Council's complaint, compliment and comment facility.</p>
3.4.3 We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.	<p>Whilst MBC works well with co-located providers and partners it also works closely with the wider community, for example, police and fire, probation management officers and the youth offending service in an effort to reduce crime in the Borough and once again these are co-located within the main Council offices in an effort to increase collaborative working and work in partnership to address the integrated strategies, for example, reducing crime rates, re-offending and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>In addition, MBC work closely with minority groups in the Borough and have been an integral supporter in creating a Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transsexual Group (LGBT) in the Borough.</p> <p>The development of the Business Improvement District has created a great business community, which engages town centre owners and managers to contribute to the development of the town to attract customers, including visitors to the town, contributing to other integrated strategies within the Borough.</p>

3.4 Of course as with all inspections there are areas of improvement and particularly for Customer Service Excellence, the Inspector highlighted extending our excellent consultation methods to other service areas, improving our feedback loops to the community and key organisations engaging with us, developing further our internal customer relationships and gave us tips on improving data collection. Plans will be developed following both inspections to deal with the recommended actions and the Inspector will return in a years' time to assess the Council's progress. The plan for meeting the recommendations from Customer Services Excellence will be reported through the Community and Social Affairs Committee and any matters appertaining to liP will be considered by the Joint Staff Committee with any required matters being reported to this Committee as appropriate.

3.5 Me and My Learning

Against the background of the Council's success in relation to the two areas set out above, it is with regret that Members are advised that the Council's Thematic Objective 9 "Building Better Opportunities"/ESIF Bid to extend the ethos of Me and My Learning County wide in a partnership approach, has been unsuccessful. As Members would expect, officers will be working on plans and proposals for the service to present to the Council as part of the budget process for 2016/17. At the time of completion of this report, the successful bidders to move to Phase 2 of the process were not known. Officers will be mindful in relation to the work that they carry out of the importance of the support Me and My Learning offers the most vulnerable in the community, in line with the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, but also how the work impacts on demand management and reduction for the Council by supporting customers towards social, financial and digital independence.

3.6 The work the Council carries out in supporting its Tenants as part of the Me and My Learning programme gained recognition at a regional level recently with the Chartered Institute of Housing Awards where the Council was nominated in the category for Social Impact of the Year. The successful Council being a large metropolitan borough focussing on rent sustainability for its Tenants. This latter programme the Council has just commenced and therefore useful learning from their bid on the evening was gained.

3.7 Finally, the Council's sustained approach to co-location and integrated working was recognised in the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors and Property Managers ACES Awards held recently in Edinburgh, where the Council was the winner of Strategic Asset Management and Collaborative Working. This is a significant on-going achievement for the Council and recognises the sustained focus on partnership working within Parkside and latterly Phoenix House.

3.8 Combined Authority

As Members are aware the 9 constituent authorities of the proposed Combined Authority covering the sub-region of Leicester and Leicestershire are in the process of considering and approving the proposal for submission to Government. This Council will consider the proposal at its Full Council meeting on 16 December 2015.

4.0 **FINANCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Policy and Corporate Implications

The successful accreditation for Customer Service Excellence endorses the Council's customer focussed approach as well as its supporting Value of Customer Care. The Me and My Learning Programme of the Council underpins many of the Council's Corporate Priorities in Supporting Vulnerable People in the community. As indicated above in the context of the budget discussions, officers will develop plans and proposals for Members to consider with respect to this important facility and programme.

4.2 Finance

Me and My Learning is fully funded for this financial year 2015/16. The officers will prepare plans and proposals for Members consideration as part of the budget process taking account of the financial constraints on councils which will arise from

the Autumn Statement and the Councils Settlement.

5.0 EQUALITIES

5.1 Any proposals with respect to the Me and My Learning Programme will be subject to appropriate Equalities Impact Assessments.

6.0 RISKS

6.1

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High			3	
	C	Significant			2	
	D	Low			1	
	E	Very Low				
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Proposals for Combined Authority not acceptable to all parties.
2	Corporate Risk: Challenge of cultural issues which could undermine our ability to transform the Council and delivery of the required savings.
3	Uncertainty and risks over the future government funding and the resultant impact on the Council's finances

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 The work of Me and My Learning is an integral part of the Council's Community Safety Response and Approach.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

9.0 **CONSULTATION**

9.1 Staff and Trade Unions will be engaged in the preparation of the Action Plans arising from the liP Award and those relevant arising from the Customer Services Excellence Accreditation.

10.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

10.1 All

Contact Officer Lynn Aisbett – Chief Executive

Date: 18.011.2015

Background Papers: Customer Service Excellence Report
Investors in People Report

Reference : X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\PFA\2015-16\01 Dec 2015\Item 13 – LA Corporate Issues