

EXECUTIVE, 13 OCTOBER 2009

RESPONSE OF THE BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 28 SEPTEMBER 2009 TO:

1. Item 11, Community Engagement Strategy

1.1 At its meeting of 28 September 2009, the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee (BT OSC) considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation, which sought Members endorsement of the 5 key principles of the draft Community Engagement Strategy for submission to the Executive.

1.2 Members of the Committee were content to support these principles and the draft strategy itself, subject to the following further **recommendations** being considered and adopted by the Executive at the same time:-

(i) **That the Executive endorses the creation of a small centralised team (pooled from existing resources at no additional cost) to support Councillors to fulfil their community leadership role, but additionally, reiterates the need for all officers (particularly those service-based) to support Councillors in that role regardless;**

(ii) **That the Executive reiterates the importance it attaches to ensuring that Councillors are kept informed of all key activities in their wards; and**

(iii) **That the Executive supports the principle of allocating individual Councillor budgets and explores the potential to supplement this with funds currently set aside for discretionary, area-based grant-activities (such as Historic Buildings Grant), where appropriate to do so;**

(iv) **That the Executive adopts a principle that community consultation should only be undertaken where there is clear evidence that the Council can respond to, and action, any outcomes flowing from such consultation.**

1.3 For information, the BT OSC also agreed to establish a Member Task Force to work with officers in formulating a robust and practical action plan to deliver principle 2 of the draft strategy, namely "enabling Councillors to be champions for their communities".

2. Item 12, Customer Services Strategy

2.1 At its meeting of 28 September 2009, the Business Transformation Overview & Scrutiny Committee (BT OSC) considered the report of the Assistant Director, Business Transformation & Customer Services, which presented the proposed Customer Services Strategy for 2009-2011.

- 2.2 Whilst BT OSC Members were content to endorse the strategy (produced by officers in partnership with a Member Task Force established for the purpose), the Committee debated at some length the customer service vision, which was “to consistently meet and exceed customers expectations through service excellence”. It was Members opinion that to attempt to exceed customer expectations would potentially focus resources on activities that the Authority could ill afford, and in practical terms, would be difficult to measure:-
- 2.3 With that concern in mind, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Executive a revised vision as follows:-
- Our vision is to deliver an efficient, effective and quality customer service.
- 2.4 The Committee also agreed that the strategy should be amended to reflect the revised vision by replacing the words “exceed” or “exceeding” appearing within the strategy with more appropriate phrases aligned to this revised vision.
- 2.5 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive be requested to adopt a revised vision for the Customer Services Strategy as outlined above and ensure that the contents of the strategy are amended to reflect this revised vision.**