

CABINET
5 APRIL 2022

Review of Continuous Improvement

Cabinet Members: Councillor Bob Deed – Leader and Councillor Chris Daw – Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement

Responsible Officers: Deputy Chief Executive (S151) – Andrew Jarrett

Reason for Report: To provide Cabinet with an update on how this process is working after its implementation in March 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet note the report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Understanding when and where services/processes can be improved is critical for any learning organisation.

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications apart from the additional budget required for the extra Cabinet post. However, it is hoped that this can be offset by the service improvements that get identified

Legal Implications: No direct issues identified.

Risk Assessment: There are no direct risk issues emanating from this report.

Equality impact assessment: No equality issues identified from this report.

Impact on climate change: No direct climate change implications are included in the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In order to introduce a more formal process for Members to deal with service and process related issues the Leader decided to create a new Cabinet post for Continuous Improvement. This addition to Cabinet was made in March 2021 and since its inception has been held by Cllr Chris Daw.
- 1.2 The new post was primarily created to act as a conduit between members and officers in order to identify service problems/delays and importantly identify how they could be remedied.
- 1.3 It is important to note that the Continuous Improvement regime was introduced as a new “value added” process, in addition and not to replace, our existing complaints procedure(s).

2.0 Continuous Improvement

- 2.1 All service related issues can be reported to Cllr Daw. These issues are then tabulated in a spread sheet, so progress can be tracked and then discussed with the senior Leadership Team on a rolling monthly basis. This then forms the basis of the structured monthly reporting back to Cabinet meetings
- 2.2 Further more focused meetings have been held with other senior managers in services that have had the highest number of issues raised (e.g. planning and housing).
- 2.3 As part of this new process Cllr Daw has provided regular updates to Cabinet and more sporadic updates to other Council meetings. In order to remind Members of the key rationale behind this new post, Appendix 1 has been attached, which summarises some of Cllr Daw's observations from the first Cabinet meeting that received a report on Continuous Improvement (CI).

3.0 Outcomes/Reflections

- 3.1 Since the introduction of the CI Cabinet post and the processes that have been implemented as a direct consequence, we have received 89 issues and the table below summarises the latest position.

As at 14/03/2022	<i>Richard Marsh</i>	<i>Andrew Jarrett</i>	<i>Jill May</i>
Total Tracker Cases	48	13	28
Open Cases	18	1	8
Closed Cases	30	12	20
% Closed	62.50%	92.31%	71.43%

- 3.1.1 The table above shows that the CI process has effectively dealt with 62 issues – which have either simply resulted in an outstanding issue being dealt with, or of even more benefit, meant a process had been improved or re-engineered to result in a long term business process improvement.
- 3.2 In addition to this more metric evaluation, we have also seen specific service changes/improvements in Planning Enforcement, car park income collection, abandoned vehicle enforcement, Public Health and Housing.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Any learning organisation reflects on new ideas and business changes after an initial implementation stage and a “bedding-in” period.

- 4.2 Having a main point of contact and an issue tracking process for all service issues identified by our membership has been an effective addition to the operation of the Council. In addition, this new process, has helped to identify a number of service improvements that have now been embedded into our “business as usual” arrangements.
- 4.3 Another indirect benefit that has emanated from this new process, which has been commented on by both officers and members, is an improved working relationship between parties and a greater understanding of the practicalities of service provision.

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Circulation of the report: Cabinet and Leadership Team

Reflections from Cllr Daw on CI made to Cabinet in July 2021

Points to make

- This is my first Cabinet update since being appointed. My role is to drive business and process improvement in services across the entire span of Council activity.
- The aim is to ensure that the responsiveness and agility demonstrated by the Council throughout the pandemic is harnessed to deliver better outcomes for residents as the council transitions to the new normal.
- This is a new role, so I have been taking time to ensure that Members and Officers are engaged in the process and understand the outcomes we are trying to achieve. I have met with Directors and Officers to understand the deadlines and Performance Indicators across the Council's activity.
- In order to ensure customers are getting a high quality service, I have proactively engaged Members on a number of issues, whilst also taken forward a number of other cases in other areas that have been sent directly to me.
- To date, I have received 31 cases from Members and the public. 5 of which are now closed, and 5 of which have been actioned and I am monitoring the outcome of. The other 21 case are with Directors for action.
- Alongside this, I have agreed to received and monitor monthly figures on planning enforcement, and separately looked at the Council's activity around Ash Die Back. Going forward I am hoping to review the number of voids in our housing stock and how quickly they come back into use and to review the Customer Service response times.
- Member engagement in this role is vital and I want to thank those Members who have sent me any outstanding cases. I would be grateful if Members could continue to pass me cases and to engage me in the issues they are hearing about from their residents. I am also grateful to the Officers who have been so helpful in the last few weeks and worked hard to resolve these cases.