

Response to Scrutiny questions on the Corporate Performance Report – Q3

Scrutiny meeting date: 22 February 2018.

North Street Quarter:

1. The committee recommended to Cabinet that the risk rating for the project be amended from green to amber given the published demolition dates have passed and there is no explanation as to why these delays are occurring.
Agreed by Cabinet.
2. Members also requested more updates about the progress of the project. This request has been passed onto those leading the project.

Waste:

3. The committee recommended to Cabinet that gull bags be provided, particularly given the difficulties of space in urban areas.
Cabinet noted that officers would be bringing a further report on the subject which will consider provision of bags, either free or chargeable.
4. Scrutiny committee also raised problems with reference numbers when people are trying to use the online system. This was passed onto Scot Reid:
“It is the case that when reporting an issue online that you receive a generic automatic response. This is because W360 (online forms) were designed this way. We are looking at whether or not the system can be changed to include the request for a reference number but this will not be looked at until July/August 18 at the earliest “

Local Plan

5. The committee asked what is happening now that the consultation on the Local Plan has concluded and requested that there was further communication with the public about this. This was passed onto Tondra Thom whose response is below.
6. *“We are now considering the consultation responses, reviewing and updating the Plan and evidence base accordingly. There will be a further round of public consultation in the summer. The formal timetable for the remaining stages of plan production is documented in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which is available on our website, and this will be updated slightly and re-published in the next few weeks. It is at the next stage of consultation that the public have the opportunity to request to attend/be heard at, the Examination in Public. A Statement of Representations Procedure will be made available to the public at the start of the next consultation, which is anticipated this summer and will likely run for 8 weeks (rather than the statutory 6 to account for the school summer holidays). Members will be briefed in early summer prior to the July Cabinet.”*

Neighbourhood Plan

7. Committee members also asked why Lewes Town Council was not referred to in the Neighbourhood Plan project update. This will now be included on the project update however for clarification please note the response below from Tondra Thom:

8. *“The Lewes Neighbourhood Plan area is entirely within the South Downs National Park and therefore the Lewes NP will not be adopted, or ‘made’ by Lewes District Council....When the Lewes NP reaches a key stage of consultation or referendum (Lewes District Council would be responsible for running the referendum) then a short note to this effect is likely to be provided in the commentary.”*

Telephone call response times

9. The committee discussed the telephone call answering times. Questions and responses to them are below. Scot Reid would be happy to attend a future Scrutiny meeting to discuss this further.

Q i. The length of the phone menu was a concern – it was felt that there were too many options and it took too long to listen to.

A. As we move through JTP transition the number of options will reduce considerably. Later this year the majority of options will be gone with one or two only.

Q ii. Can the website publish the telephone number and options menu?

A. This would go against the principles of channel shift which aims to encourage people to use the website and online options rather than telephone. Once on the website, users should be able to easily self-serve. We agreed to not publish individual numbers.

Q iii. There is only one option at EBC –with JTP changes, will we be moving to a smaller, or no, menu at LDC in future?

A. Yes, as per answer to Qi, later this year the majority of options will have gone leaving only one or two options.

Q iv. How is the ‘average time taken to answer customer calls’ measured? Is it from when the recorded menu message starts, or from when the customer choses an option in that menu?

A. This is measured from when the customer presses an option and it moves into the correct area’s queue. Please also remember that this PI relates only to the Customer Service hub area and not the whole council. Call answering times

vary considerably depending which area you contact. When we have one contact centre in place then callers hold time experience should be much better.

Website

10. Responses to queries raised at LDC Scrutiny Committee regarding the new joint LDC/EBC website and at an informal follow up meeting with some members of the committee the following day.

Q i. Web addresses (urls) for committee papers and councillor information are too long and not plain English.

A. It is agreed that these urls are indeed too long and are not in plain English. Work is underway to move committee information away from the current platform, CMIS to a new platform called Modern.Gov. This will be an opportunity to address the issues with urls identified by members.

Q ii. Members felt that it should be made easier to find information about councillors, committee meetings, and the full council webcast.

A. Following discussion at the Web Governance Board on 1 March 2018 it was agreed that navigation to this key information should be easier and a link directly to the 'Councillors, committees and meetings' landing page will be added to the top-right drop-down menu which appears across the header of the entire site.

Q iii. In the 'Planning and building control' section of the website there could be earlier mention of the different planning authorities within the district.

A. This feedback has been shared with colleagues in planning and building control who have confirmed that they will review the pages in light of this content with a view to mentioning the different planning authorities at an earlier stage.

Q iv. Members queried whether the Planning Policy section is difficult for the layperson to understand and asked whether a short 'about Planning Policy' page be added to this section of the site.

A. A request was been made to the Planning Policy team to review this content and decide whether adding such a page would be possible. It was agreed that this would be helpful and this work will be undertaken by the team.

Q v. Members commented on an imbalance between the number of LDC Chair pages and EBC Mayor pages on the 'Councillors, committees and meetings' landing page.

A. The page will be reviewed to create greater parity between the two sets of pages.