

MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING OF BROOKE AND WHITTLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

28 JANUARY 2019

PRESENT:

Membership of Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillors Claire Edwards (Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Keeling, McQueen, Mrs New, Pacey-Day, Picker and Srivastava

Membership of Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillors Sandison, Bearne, Brader, Douglas, Leigh Hunt, Mrs O'Rourke, Roberts and Ms Watson-Merret

Leader of the Council: Councillor Michael Stokes

In Attendance: Councillors Lewis and Roodhouse

Officers: Adam Norburn (Executive Director) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Gillias (Whittle) and Mrs Timms (Brooke).

2. DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Council's Leader and Executive Director attended the meeting to answer questions on performance and future strategy. A brief overview was provided by the Executive Director.

The main points were as follows:

Self-sufficiency and the Workforce

The top risk currently faced by this Council is the ability to achieve self-sufficiency while retaining all staff to provide services in the future at the same standard that we do today. Staff recruitment and retention is becoming increasingly difficult.

It was highlighted that this Council's management arrangements are very lean compared to most other councils which at times may present a challenge. It is important for the team to maintain strong working relationships as work is undertaken increasingly across a number of different services areas.

The workforce morale is generally good but there are issues in certain areas which are under more pressure. The employee survey, carried out every two years, provides an opportunity for staff to share their views on their involvement in decision making, how they are managed and how they can shape their service delivery.

Working in Partnership

It is becoming increasingly important for the Council to work in partnership with other organisations and agencies to tackle cross cutting issues and achieve common objectives.

The Council works very closely with the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and the Growth Hub to attract inward investment to Rugby. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) provides a great opportunity to access funding streams in the future. It is important for the Council to continue building strong relationships with the CWLEP and the WMCA.

When exploring new opportunities to share or merge services, officers focus on strengths of other councils and organisations. Collaborative working provides cost savings, increases resilience and strengthens relationships with partner organisations.

Digitalisation

Digitalisation is a key tool to allow people to access the Council's services 24/7 and manage demand. Going forward, the process will lead to efficiencies and service improvements. For people who do not wish to access services digitally, other channels will remain available in a reduced capacity until such times as they may no longer be needed.

Digital tools which may be considered in the future include a chatbot which is a computer program that conducts a conversation via auditory or textual methods. The chatbot is programmed to work independently from a human operator. It can answer questions formulated to it in natural language and answer like a real person would.

Commercialisation

Commercialisation is a sensitive topic that must be considered carefully by this Council. The Council derives about £5.5 million through fees and charges which allows existing services to continue.

The top risk of commercialisation is the protection of the income derived from commercial services. Commercialisation is a source of income for many local authorities. Councils nowadays are in competition with each other to provide services across their borders.

Committee members were asked to submit questions prior to the meeting. Answers to the pre-submitted questions were circulated at the meeting. The questions and answers are as follows:

General

Q1 In your opinion what are the top three risks to this authority now and over the medium term, and how will they be managed?

The top risk we are currently facing is our ability to become financially sufficient by 2020 or, perhaps even more importantly, on an ongoing basis. We are yet to see the

outcome of the fair funding review and still have no clear visibility of what the impact of the reset of the business rates baseline may be.

We have a Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan, which has taken a reasonably pessimistic view of the level of funding the Council is likely to see from 2020 onwards and we have already taken significant steps to increase the amount of income we generate from our own services as well as building up our balances and reserves to cushion us from potential financial shocks/headwinds.

Another key risk faced by us and almost every other council/public sector organisation at present is the difficult environment we find ourselves in for staff recruitment and retention as well as their health and wellbeing.

We try to make Rugby an attractive place to live, work and play and have built up a reputation as a good place to work. We advertise more widely than ever and we have adopted market force supplements to try to attract talent to the Council. This has been pretty successful of late and is something we are likely to need to continue. Once staff come to us, we put in place a thorough induction and training programme and provide opportunities to get involved in cross-cutting projects and activities. We have a number of initiatives in place to help staff with their health and wellbeing as we are acutely aware that mental health issues have risen to the top of the agenda in recent times as the key reason for sickness absence (especially long-term).

To attempt to identify wellbeing issues as early as possible we have created 1-1 templates in which the first question is "How are you?", providing employees with the opportunity to discuss any issues inside or outside of work. We've also recently provided training to 13 employees across the Council to undertake the role of Mental Health First Aiders to provide listening and signposting support. Currently we are exploring the "Thrive at Work" initiative (led by the West Midlands Combined Authority) to help us identify other mental health and wellbeing schemes we might introduce.

In terms of specific service areas our biggest risk now and into the foreseeable future is housing. In broad terms, despite the rapid growth and success we're having with new homes, we are facing a lack of housing supply relative to demand. The growth in housing numbers we have seen in recent times puts pressure on local services and we do not yet have an adopted local plan to control our growth sustainably.

We need to adopt a local plan this year and we need to continue existing initiatives to acquire/build new homes around the borough. We will use our housing acquisition fund, section 106 monies, relevant grant funding, private sector leasing scheme and other initiatives to make sure that we increase the stock of housing available to us, predominantly for long-term rent, but also to provide temporary accommodation.

On a day to day basis we are dealing with customers with more complex needs I.e. an increase in mental health and chaotic lives. This is a further challenge and drain on resources as delivery of a fit for purpose service (including changes from the Homelessness Reduction Act) takes longer in the immediate term, however, does save in the long term. Hence we continue to adapt and update our service delivery offer to be more personalised to customer need for example merging the benefits and housing options services to facilitate further financial inclusion. We also work and

have mechanisms in place to work more closely with our health and county council colleagues to deal with wider issues and join things up.

Q2 What benefits has the Borough gained from being a member of the Coventry Warwickshire LEP and the West Midlands Combined Authority?

The Coventry and Warwickshire LEP is one of the top performing LEPs in the country according to national assessments. The Council works very closely with the LEP and the Growth Hub to attract inward investment to Rugby and there is a dedicated account manager assigned to Rugby to help us with this.

The Growth Hub acts as the single point of contact for inward investment queries and seeks to match the aspirations of companies wanting to invest in the area to available land/facilities. This has resulted in a number of large business investments into the borough bringing economic prosperity, jobs and a significant increase in funding through business rates to the Council directly.

The Council is a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). As such the Council has a seat at the decision-making table and the ability to access funding for regeneration projects. The Council will also be able to tap into project management support and advice based at the WMCA to get projects off the ground.

Although Rugby does not currently have access to integrated SWIFT travel (currently restricted largely to the West Midlands metropolitan area) SWIFT cards are available at Rugby station and there is likely to be an extension of the travel area to non-constituent member areas, such as Rugby, in the foreseeable future.

The Council has flagged its desire to be an active player in the ongoing development of the region's visitor economy, particularly given the strength of our offer and attractions, and there is a plan to build a new regional tourism strategy in the first half of this year. Rugby will be invited to participate in the consultation workshops planned for the near future.

The bottom line is that the WMCA provides a great opportunity into the future to benefit from involvement in decision making and access to funding streams that would otherwise not be available to us.

Q3 A recent survey by Warwickshire Pride found that the amount of abuse towards LGBT+ people living and working in Rugby was more than double the national average and that RBC was generally thought not to be LGBT+ friendly. What will the council be doing to address this?

In its recent strategic assessment, the Rugby Community Safety Partnership (CSP) identified hate crime as an 'area of concern' (these are themes which haven't been selected as priorities but represent a risk over the coming strategic assessment period).

This means that the CSP will monitor hate crime within the Borough and take necessary action, should statistics suggest it is necessary. RBC officers will also proactively participate in countywide and national initiatives which aim to both tackle hate crime and increase the reporting/awareness of hate crime incidents.

The survey that Warwickshire Pride carried out was commissioned and paid for by RBC precisely because we wanted to understand how the LGBT+ community felt, so that we could take any appropriate action. The results of the survey will be presented to and discussed initially with the Council's Equalities and Diversity Steering Group.

Following this an action plan will be drawn up and recommended to Council in order to undertake any necessary recommendations resulting from the survey. This will also entail working collaboratively with relevant partner organisations, improving services and access to services and addressing issues arising from the survey results.

Internally, the Council has recently introduced a staff network, which includes a wide cross-section of staff within the Council. This network will act as a conduit to raise issues, concerns and suggestions through to senior management as appropriate.

The following ***supplementary comment*** was made:

We are one of the few district councils which has achieved and maintained the 'excellent standard' with regards to equality and diversity.

Q4 Are there any examples of where a complaint has led to a change in delivery of a service?

External example:

Complaints are very important to us but we receive a lot more general feedback than specific complaints and we continually use feedback (both positive and negative) to tweak our services and how we deliver them.

To pick a specific example, we have historically received a number of complaints and general feedback about areas of grass that we have deliberately left uncut (for biodiversity purposes). As a result where this now occurs, we leave notices on site explaining that certain areas have been created as biodiversity pockets and the number of complaints has been greatly reduced.

Internal example:

Through various channels our employees have sometimes given negative comments about how they are managed. This has been in general feedback through surveys but also in complaint format via grievances. In response to this 1) to improve working relations but also 2) to prevent situations from escalating a number of changes have been put in place;

- The way we manage programme has been revamped and continues to be worked on to widen the management skills we need our managers and team leaders to demonstrate.
- templates have been produced and it has been made mandatory for these to take place on a much more frequent basis, in most cases monthly.
- Team meeting templates have been produced, with the aim of following a similar frequency to individual 1-1's.

- Regular written core briefings and face-to-face council-wide employee briefings are delivered to staff to keep them updated on key issues and decisions.

The following **supplementary comments** were made:

The Communications Team monitors all social media channels. The team actively searches all platforms, monitors any mentions of the Council and often interacts with others in a positive way. To improve the team's access, a small investment will be made in the form of an upgrade to the software currently in use and a purchase of a multimedia screen to stream live information from all social media channels.

With regards to the Council's complaints procedure, the first point of call within the organisation is Sue Birch (Communications, Consultation and Information Officer). If the customer is not satisfied with the response, they can appeal to the Executive Director.

Q5 Does the Leader of the Council believe that the portfolios are sufficiently resilient and cover all aspects of a particular service for example housing being split between three portfolios? The portfolio holder for Environment and Public Realm for example presented a report on Private Tenant Charter but at Cabinet on 7 January admitted she had no input into the report apart from reading it.

There is no doubt that each portfolio covers a broad remit of services. Over the last decade or so, the Council has moved from a structure of one Chief Executive, three strategic directors and 13 heads of service to two executive directors and five heads of service down to the current one Executive Director and four heads of service. This has saved the Council millions of pounds in senior management costs over this period and means that Cabinet and Senior Management roles are now aligned to each other. That said, it does mean that occasionally there will be some grey areas of responsibility and ownership. In the example quoted above, the private sector housing enforcement part of housing is dealt with by the Environment and Public Realm Regulatory Services Team rather than any team in Communities and Homes, but this is for reasons of centralisation and efficiency.

Teams work collectively to deal with issues that may span across different areas to ensure customers are not passed around i.e. letters of complaint from tenants referencing both a repair issue and their position on the waiting list would have historically received two separate responses. In the current set up both managers/officers, albeit in different services and portfolios, work collaboratively to put one response together for the customer to answer all queries – from a customer perspective, things are much more seamless and joined up.

Q6 If we are to look at cross cutting housing issues and lift those in social or economic deprivation out of the lower quartile would we not be better off and ensure more consistent decision making and community social cohesion if there was one lead homes and community portfolio holder who led and directed delivery rather than a many headed hydra of portfolio holders?

I don't feel it's fair to describe current arrangements as a many-headed hydra of portfolio holders. There is one portfolio holder for Communities and Homes,

Councillor Emma Crane, but there are by design some aspects of housing that fall within another portfolio. So, for example, housing property sits within the Corporate Resources Portfolio as council housing is the biggest single resource this council owns. Similarly, licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and regulation of the condition of private sector housing is covered by the Environment and Public Realm Portfolio as there are efficiencies and economies of scale to be achieved by having a centralised Regulatory Services Team.

Lifting those in social or economic deprivation out of the lower quartile is not a one service or organisation task. Joint ways of working across the whole of RBC, Warwickshire, Health, etc is key to undertaking intensive work to understand a multiple range of issues which we know are generally not just based around housing. There are joint working mechanisms in place to address this.

Communities and Homes

Q1 What impact has Universal Credit had on homelessness in Rugby?

A key impact of Universal Credit is that the delays in payment have created rent arrears, with landlords in the private sector then taking action to recover their properties, resulting in tenants being threatened with losing their home or actually losing their home. Following the initial decision to pay for temporary accommodation provided by the council through Universal Credit, some vulnerable tenants were paid their housing support direct (rather than to the council as requested). Some tenants used this money for purposes other than their rent and this in turn left them with an accommodation related debt which then affects the provision of further accommodation. It was recognised by the DWP that it was not appropriate for temporary accommodation housing costs to be paid via Universal Credit and funding is now again provided via the Housing Benefit scheme.

The reputation of Universal Credit means that it is becoming increasingly difficult to engage with landlords when we are seeking accommodation for homeless clients. Many are not keen to rent to clients in receipt of Universal Credit as they are conscious of building up arrears. To counter this we are offering to pay rent in advance to landlords, with the client then reimbursing the council. However, this is now creating an expectation that this will happen in all cases and a situation whereby potential tenants are refused if that expectation is not met.

Universal Credit is also aimed at those with internet access, which means that it is difficult for rough sleepers to engage in the process. There are systems in place for those without IT access or without the required IT skills but sometimes these alternative delivery methods are not well publicised.

The Council's CAST Team continue to work with residents and tenants to help support their Universal Credit claims and produce personal housing plans with specific actions to be taken by all involved to avoid crisis situations.

The following **supplementary questions** were asked:

Last year, a report from the housing charity Shelter was picked up by the Rugby Advertiser stating that Rugby had one of the highest levels of homelessness in

Warwickshire. Are we seeing a link between Universal Credit and the rise in homelessness in Rugby?

The Leader informed the committee that he was surprised, and disappointed, with what the report showed. A satisfactory explanation was provided to the Leader by the Head of Communities and Homes together with the statistics on tenants decanted from Biart Place.

In due course, a report will be presented to Council on options for Rounds Gardens. If a decision is made to redevelop the site, the Council will try to ensure that the decant has as little impact on our current tenants and people on the waiting list as possible.

There are reports and statistics in the public domain that suggest that Universal Credit has had an impact on homelessness.

What impact does p.h.i.l. (preventing homelessness, improving lives) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) have on the homelessness figures? Are they helping to resolve some of the issues?

Stats show that CAB's interventions help people with financial sustainability. By law, p.h.i.l. is required to assist those threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days. The situation would have been worse without CAB and p.h.i.l.

In conversations with Hope4, it has been highlighted that in-work homelessness is becoming an increasing issue. Employers have a duty of care to their employees. Are conversations taking place with the local large employers? Is there a form of partnership that the Council could have with them?

In-work homelessness has been raised as an issue but not as a high priority.

Concerns raised by charities such as Hope4 were with regards to other organisations that are not working in partnership with the mainstream charities.

We can discuss the issue with our dedicated CWLEP Account Manager and with the other leaders at a Warwickshire Leaders' meeting.

The committee was informed that the Mayor of Rugby and the Chair of Whittle Overview and Scrutiny attended the annual general meeting of Hope4 on 19 January. Following the meeting, the Chair felt that scrutiny may wish to look at Hope4's figures to see whether the Council can provide any assistance.

Q2 At the last joint overview and scrutiny meeting we found out 533 council tenants on Universal Credit are in rent arrears. Does the council keep any statistics on the percentage of people in arrears who are also in work?

We keep statistics across all rent accounts that includes Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB) accounts where the tenant is in receipt of either benefit. When we separate the UC and HB accounts out we are then left with those that are deemed to be accounts where there is no eligibility for either benefit and hence would be working. We carry out analysis and work with tenants in arrears regardless of circumstances to prevent getting to crisis stage.

A report went to councillors on the restructure and way forward for the tenancy services team approximately six months ago; outlining the focus on tenancy sustainment and working with tenants to address any issues.

The following **supplementary comment** was made:

Members requested for the statistics, as mentioned in the response, to be circulated via email.

Q3 How much affordable housing has been delivered through section 106 commitments? Have any changes to initial agreements meant affordable housing has not been delivered?

- (i) 1,064 affordable dwellings have been delivered through S106 commitments in the last 10 years. RBC also spent £3.1m of developer contributions on affordable developments at: Pettiver Crescent, Grandborough, Dunchurch, Bilton and Pailton. Currently we have contributions available of £1.2m for off-site affordable provision, maintenance, etc.
- (ii) In line with the Housing Needs SPD 2012:
 - 15 Dwellings or less – no affordable housing required
 - 15-30 Dwellings – target is 33.3% subject to viability
 - >30 Dwellings – target is 40% subject to viability
 - 16 variations to the original agreements have resulted in reductions in affordable housing provision on the basis of viability.

The following **supplementary questions** were asked:

With 16 variations to the original agreements, what was the impact on delivery of affordable housing?

All variations would have resulted in reductions in affordable housing provision across the borough. Developers are required to produce a report stating their reasons for no longer being able to deliver the agreed amount of affordable homes.

If the developer can prove that financial viability is an issue and it can stand the robust test of an independent assessor than there is nothing further that can be done. We have no heavy sanctions that we can impose.

The following **supplementary comments** were made:

The committee was informed that Warwick District Council appears to be outperforming Rugby Borough Council in the delivery of affordable homes. The Leader of the Council will speak to the Leader of Warwick District Council at the next meeting of Warwickshire Leaders with regards to their affordable housing provision projections.

The Council is in discussions with Central Government with regards to funding for redevelopment of Biart Place and potential redevelopment of Rounds Gardens. No commitment to funds has yet been made.

Q4 How does Rugby Borough Council use data to support vulnerable residents?

There are many definitions of vulnerability and as such it crosses various Rugby Borough Council services.

In the case of Community Safety, the following definition is used in Warwickshire: 'A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others, from harm or exploitation'.

Following analysis of data provided by the Warwickshire Insight Service, the Rugby Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has adopted 'Vulnerability' as one of its four strategic priorities for 2019/20. As such the CSP will develop geographically targeted initiatives to protect those who are at risk in areas such as hate crime, children at risk, domestic abuse and vulnerable adults.

When a customer presents to RBC and completes an application for re-housing/housing if the officer completing the applications identifies (due to the data they are collecting) that the customer will need further additional support they make the appropriate referrals to the respective organisations.

In cases where there is a homeless duty under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 a personal housing plan will also be created that outlines the support and actions for both the tenant and RBC.

Growth and Investment

No questions

Environment and Public Realm

Q1 Landfill gate fees (up by 43 per cent) continue to rise and the secretary of state for the environment has indicated that he wishes all households to have access to food waste disposal systems to enable this organic waste stream to go an anaerobic digester to produce energy from waste and a soil improver. Do we have any more details on the proposed consultation? Will members of Overview and Scrutiny be involved in that process? Should there be collaboration for example across the family of district councils in Warwickshire to share and help reduce costs and standardise waste recycling and recovery systems?

The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, published in December 2018 highlights a number of ambitious objectives throughout the waste system which seek to preserve resources by minimising waste, promote waste efficiency and move towards a circular economy.

Within this strategy, is the ambition that (subject to consultation and appropriate legislation) every householder and appropriate business has access to a separate weekly food collection service. The strategy suggests an intended implementation date of 2023.

To date, we have not received any formal notification of the proposed consultation, though the strategy suggests that this will be forthcoming by mid-2019.

Where it is in Rugby's interest to do so, we will continue to work with neighbouring authorities, through the Warwickshire Waste Partnership, to find the best and most sustainable solutions to waste management.

Q2 In regard to the Green Bin charge, how much has been raised by the charge so far and what has this money been used to support?

We are currently budgeting to receive around £900,000 in garden waste charges next year. The money is utilised to support the delivery of the service and has also been used to invest in the route optimisation software the council has purchased.

Corporate Resources

Q1 In your opinion, how much capacity does RBC have in regard to staffing, has RBC any particular areas where its capacity causes a problem if someone is off ill. If so, what is being done to address them?

The Council has experienced capacity issues to a varying degree across many services, sometimes driven by overall sector changes e.g. financial pressures to reduce costs, sometime driven by market changes affecting particular service areas e.g. Planning or Financial Services. Overall however this council's staffing pressures are very similar to those faced by other councils.

Waste collection and recycling is a problem service area for us if someone is off ill; due to it being a public-facing service and public reaction when expectations aren't met but also health and safety requiring fixed crew numbers. Therefore, we have used agency staff on a regular basis to ensure the right number of staff are available at all times.

By way of mitigation, over the last 12 months we have invested a lot of time and money in training our own staff to be Class 2 HGV relief drivers for the refuse and recycling rounds.

Recently we had four drivers off through long term sickness, tree on holiday and two on a training course all on one day and even with the nine drivers missing that day, through the investment in training and commitment the service was able to 're utilise our own staff to cover this without the need to find agency drivers.

Q2 Why is it taking so long to develop and have available the updated Performance Management System, and if Rugby Borough Council is a member led organisation why haven't members been involved in developing targets?

Work is ongoing to review and refine our performance measures with services – challenging what we measure to ensure it enables the Council to demonstrate its efficiency and effectiveness.

Whilst many measures exist already in the council, it is taking time to develop with services measures that allow us to truly demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness, in large part this results from the fact many key service systems and databases have

been in place for a significant period of time and do not lend themselves well to data monitoring. Major service systems are currently undergoing either whole scale replacement or significant upgrade e.g. Housing, Asset Management, Planning, Council Tax, Environmental Health, etc.

Around the start of the Corporate Strategy, two years ago, all members were invited to attend a workshop to develop measures that would be meaningful to them. 4 different workshops were held and across all of them only five members attended.

The following ***supplementary comment*** was made:

The updated Rugby Performance Management System is in its final stages of development and anticipated to be ready for member engagement in April 2019. The new suite of indicators will draw together measures that are appropriate for this Council to demonstrate its delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

Q3 In light of the pressure on finances over the medium term what is Rugby Borough Council doing about looking to merge services with another authority?

We already have a number of shared or merged services with other councils and organisations:

- Homelessness PHIL project (with Warwickshire councils)
- HEART home adaptations project (with Warwickshire councils)
- Crematorium (with Daventry)
- Town Centre CCTV and management (with Rugby BID)
- Building Control (with Warwick and Daventry)
- Procurement (with Nuneaton and Bedworth)
- Data Protection and GDPR (with Nuneaton and Bedworth)
- Environmental Enforcement (with Warwick and Harborough)
- Economic Development (with Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub)
- Safety and Resilience (with North Warwickshire)
- Regulatory Services IT system support (with Nuneaton and Bedworth)

Potentially the next step for us is to merge some larger service areas or to share some management capacity (although our management arrangements do already seem very lean compared to most other councils) and we are always open to conversations with neighbouring councils to see whether there may be any opportunities.

The following ***supplementary comments*** were made:

The committee was informed that the Leader is scheduled to meet with the Leader and Chief Executive of Harborough District Council in February to share experiences and discuss services provided by both councils, for example.

Shared services are a topic discussed at Warwickshire Leaders' meetings. In addition, an officers' group was set up to focus on what can be done short term between the five districts. Quarterly meetings between Rugby Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council have also been reinstated.

Q4 What opportunities do you see for Rugby Borough Council over the medium term with regards to income generation?

We have identified a significant number of service areas which either already have the ability to generate income, and may be able to generate more, or from which we do not currently generate any of our own income but could if we wished to enter the market.

Around 80% of the services identified look viable/feasible in the medium term. Some of these are likely to be more lucrative than others, e.g. private lettings agency and/or could fill a current gap in the market, e.g. packaged subscription of domestic/commercial services, while some run the risk of operating in direct competition to local small businesses, e.g. MOTs and vehicle repair services.

We can discuss the list in more detail but there is likely to be commercial sensitivity around any proposals we may wish to progress.

The following **supplementary comment** was made:

The focus should not only be on gaining new customers but also retaining existing customers.

Q5 What plans does Rugby Borough Council have to provide more of its customer services online?

The Council is currently developing online services for a number of suitable services. We can provide a list of ones that are now live and those that are in development if needed.

There is a programme of reviewing the services that are fit for online delivery and a digitalisation/customer access strategy being developed which will come to councillors for consultation and eventually approval.

In the mean time we continue to update our systems to provide more modern functionality, which will enable the delivery of further online services. It is not a one-off project but in fact now become business as usual to look continuously at how we provide/deliver services and how they can be adapted or digitalised to empower our customers.

The following **supplementary comments** were made:

Members requested for the list of online services (live and in development) to be circulated via email.

The committee was informed that the Rugby Lotto launch with Rugby-based good causes is scheduled for 12 February at the Benn Hall. The scheme will launch in line with the promotion of the next round of grant applications and is anticipated to go live in May.

The proposal for a local-led lottery scheme was first scrutinised in July 2018 by Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At a subsequent meeting, in October 2018, the committee agreed to review the progress and outcomes of the local-led

lottery in 12 months' time. The item will be included in the 2019/20 scrutiny work programme.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council and Executive Director for attending the meeting.

CHAIR