

## CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| <b>Date of Meeting</b> | Thursday 17th January 2019                            |
| <b>Report Subject</b>  | Member Communications – Reported Cases and Complaints |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>  | Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets    |
| <b>Report Author</b>   | Chief Officer (Governance) and Chief Executive        |
| <b>Type of Report</b>  | Operational   |

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the work undertaken in response to a Notice of Motion that was endorsed at County Council on 12 September, 2018 on managing communications with elected members. The report covers performance standards, performance, and a renewed action plan.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | The Committee is invited to review and support the action plan set out in the report.  |
| 2 | The Committee is invited to support the proposal for a Member workshop to review how members can work with the reporting systems we operate to receive the best service and support. |

### REPORT DETAILS

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| <b>1.00</b> | <b>BACKGROUND</b>  |
| 1.01        | A Notice of Motion was endorsed at County Council on 12 September 2018 - <i>“The Council calls on the Chief Executive to ensure that the Chief and Senior Officers respond to Councillors’ requests with courtesy and good manners without any undue delay”</i> . Consequently the Chief Executive |

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|      | agreed to provide Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on work undertaken in response to the Notice of Motion.   |
| 1.02 | The Chief Executive had led a review of reporting and response systems. This review has led to an action plan to improve performance. Good progress has been made on the action plan as summarised below.  |
| 1.03 | <p><b>Standards and Guidance</b></p> <p>A revised <i>County Councillor Guide to Communication and Accessibility</i> has been issued to Chief Officers with specific guidance for cascading to all managers and employees. This task was completed in November and the Guide provides information about Member and employee responsibilities, and new escalation procedures that include named officers for sensitive and complex issues. The Guide has been published on InfoNet and Members are invited to view and follow the Guide.</p> <p>To complement this work, employees have been guided to Communication Standards on InfoNet to make practical and effective use of tools such as email signatures and out of office messages to help keep Members and customers better informed.</p>   |
| 1.04 | <p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive has discussed expectations and collective ownership of the action plan with Chief Officers to ensure a shared responsibility to uphold Standards. Compliance is a performance expectation.</p> <p>Senior Officers throughout the organisation have been engaged in the action plan and concentrated work has been undertaken with the portfolios that regularly receive high volumes of correspondence, specifically Streetscene and Transportation, Planning, Environment and Economy, and Housing and Assets. Portfolios are progressing additional work which includes designated officers to monitor performance, Member Factsheets to share information about the services and key contacts, and regular performance reporting at team meetings.</p> <p>The Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) is to be developed to provide real time oversight of performance through a manager performance 'dashboard'. The intention is officers will be less reliant on the publication of performance reports and can proactively monitor performance on CRM at any point in time.</p> |
| 1.05 | <p><b>Working with Members</b></p> <p>There are specific timescales in place to respond to enquiries (10 working days). More complex enquiries can take longer to resolve and provide a response. Members have been invited to report are service areas where there are repeat problems. We have received no reports since this invitation (issued as part of the debate in September 2018). We cannot act in the absence of information and members are reminded to be fair and reasonable in making public criticism which can affect the reputations of services and teams.</p>   |

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|      | Members of the Committee are invited to support the proposal to hold a workshop to review how members can work with the reporting systems we operate to receive the best service and support.   |
| 1.06 | <p><b>Accountability and Control</b></p> <p>The immediate tasks set up within the action plan have been completed and others are in progress and on target. Chief Officers are accountable for each task within the action plan and all tasks are expected to be completed on target.</p>   |
| 1.07 | In addition to the work described above, performance between September - November 2018 has been reviewed in response to the feedback raised by some Members at County Council. The results have found that despite concerns from a small number of Members on specific cases and personal experiences, overall response times are good. There were 25,253 enquiries recorded on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System during this period which illustrates the significant volume of correspondence services are handling on a daily basis. 92% of the enquiries recorded are closed and this includes request for information and reports (e.g. Fly Tipping). The escalation procedures described in 1.03 mean those records which are open are currently subject to review by nominated contact officers within portfolios.   |
| 1.08 | CRM is used to record enquiries including requests for information, reports (e.g. missed waste collection), applications to access a service (e.g. school admission) and complaints through various channels including email, telephone, face to face and letter. Enquiries recorded on CRM are monitored and as mentioned in 1.04 the system is to be developed to provide real time oversight of performance through a manager performance 'dashboard'. The statistics are limited to those enquiries recorded on CRM and do not take in to consideration correspondence sent directly to officers e.g. emails. The relationship between Members and officers is valued and for this reason the recording of such correspondence on CRM is not compulsory. We encourage members to contact the appropriate officers direct both to maintain positive working relationships and to for reports and complaints to be actioned promptly by going direct to source. Members are advised that correspondence addressed directly to individual officers will fall outside of the usual performance management arrangements and are so reminded to alert Chief Officers to concerns about any under-performance by a team so that they can be addressed. |
| 1.09 | Similarly, performance is good when considering the correspondence received from Assembly Members and Members of Parliament. Regular performance management has led to a reduction in the volume of outstanding enquiries and as all correspondence is recorded on the CRM. Assembly Members and Members of Parliament are kept informed if enquiries take longer than 10 working days to respond.  |
| 1.10 | There will be occasions when complex and sensitive enquiries take longer to conclude than we would anticipate. This report should assure Members that a number of actions have been taken to build on the good performance that already exists, and the opportunity to add to this work is open to Members through a workshop.  |

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| <b>2.00</b> | <b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>   |
| 2.01        | The action plan aims to improve performance standards across the organisation and therefore the most efficient use of resources. |

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| <b>3.00</b> | <b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>   |
| 3.01        | <p>The action plan has been developed by the Chief Executive and Senior Officers. Action owners have been consulted to provide confidence in outcomes and to provide an update on their actions as necessary.</p> <p>Group Leaders have been consulted. Councillor Sharps as the mover of the original Notice of Motion has been consulted.</p> |

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| <b>4.00</b> | <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b> |
| 4.01        | None.                  |

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| <b>5.00</b> | <b>APPENDICES</b> |
| 5.01        | None.             |

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| <b>6.00</b> | <b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>   |
| 6.01        | <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Rebecca Jones<br/> <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702413<br/> <b>E-mail:</b> rebecca.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| <b>7.00</b> | <b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>   |
| 7.01        | <b>CRM</b> – Customer Relationship Management System is used by the Council to manage interactions with customers. This includes requests for service, general enquiries, applications and complaints. |