

Notes

of an informal meeting of



Five Councils Partnership Corporate Services Joint Committee members

Wednesday 7 July 2021 at 2.00 pm

This will be a virtual, informal meeting of committee members

View the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=722RBEuTkmw>

Attendance

Councillors:

Neil Fawcett, meeting chair, Vale of White Horse District Council

Debby Hallett, Vale of White Horse District Council

Pieter-Paul Barker, meeting vice chair, South Oxfordshire District Council

Sue Cooper, South Oxfordshire District Council

Ken Crookes, Hart District Council

Lulu Bowerman, Havant District Council

Ros Wyke, Mendip District Council

Liz Leyshon, Mendip District Council

Notes

1. Opening announcements

The Lead Officer, Matt Goodwin, opened the meeting. He offered apologies for the absence of Claire Hughes, the outgoing Client Relationship Director. Claire is due to retire and this would have been her last meeting of this committee.

The reasons for holding an informal meeting were outlined to Committee Members. This followed advice from Monitoring Officers.

It was confirmed that the formal decision to elect the chair could not happen today, so the current chair was asked to nominate a chair for the duration of the meeting. Formal appointment of the Chair would then happen at the October meeting. The current Chair expressed a concern with the communication of this arrangement, which was noted.

Previously elected chair, Cllr Ros Wyke, thanked Claire for her work. Cllr Wyke noted the significant achievement of migrating services that had taken place.

2. Election of Chair for this meeting

Cllr Wyke nominated Cllr Neil Fawcett, from the host authority, Vale of White Horse District Council, to chair this meeting.

3. Election of Vice Chair for this meeting

The chair nominated Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker to be vice chair for the meeting.

4. Chair's announcements and urgent business

Chair did not have any additional announcements to make.

5. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Alex Rennie and Cllr James Radley.

6. Capita Performance Report: Nov 2020 to May 2021

The Lead officer opened the item with the headlines of the report, which was in the usual format.

The Lead officer then welcomed questions / queries from Committee Members:

- The ongoing poor performance against Revenues and Benefits PI 001 (Accuracy of Financial Assessments) was challenged. Officer explained that 10% of claims were checked. Most authorities sampled complex cases, creating challenges for Capita. They had previously sought inclusion of automated cases in the count, which was refused by SMB. Capita representatives will be present in October for further clarification and explanation.
- Concern was raised over the lack of resilience expected from the Capita services. Peaks and troughs should be looked at; it was expected that Capita should be able to plan ahead. The clear view was they had difficulty providing sufficient staff when most needed. This was particularly in relation to contact centre performance. Officer explained that under a commercial contract, the pricing model was based on achievement of economies for the supplier, which placed limits on flexibility, and the ability to up-scale. It was agreed this merited further discussion, which would be tabled at the October meeting. Capita would be invited to consider this matter.
- Concern raised about services affecting individuals, some vulnerable, and it was very important to get this right.
- Compliment given for the handling of land charges.
- The impact of issues with bin collections in Havant was noted. On that, the matter of issues with data on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was raised. The Lead Officer indicated awareness of work to improve that for Havant but would brief further. The current system involved work arounds but work with the Somerset Waste Partnership demonstrated the possibilities for alternative arrangements.
- A query was raised over the format of call answering performance. Seemed to indicate a high rate of abandoned calls. This was not so. Resolved that the performance dashboard would make clearer the full measure concerned.
- A further query was raised over customer satisfaction, which was high despite difficult circumstances. How representative is this? It was confirmed that the score is only for those who spoke to an agent; a measure in relation to the wider customer group is under consideration. Cllr Wyke noted a previous possibility for user of "Mystery Shopper". Resolved that this would be explored further.
- On recent service exits, parameters for the heads of terms were referenced, which did not include consideration of Revenues and Benefits.

7. Review of Performance Measures

Lead officer opened this item, with reference to the briefing paper supplied. This outlined the key contact parameters relevant to any review of performance measures.

Questions and suggestions:

- A clear suggestion was made for introduction of a measure to assess the quality of service provided by the IT Helpdesk.
- A point was made regarding e-mail traffic and responses, and call handling, further to ensuring that Capita staff were adequately trained and briefed by Authorities.
- A question was asked on Customer Services PI 003. Officer confirmed that this referred to “out of hours” call handling performance. Table to be amended for clarity.
- The frequency of reporting on revenues and benefits was raised, as this was annual. Consideration of regular in year reporting is required.
- The matter of Capita’s performance against customer services PI 004 was revisited. This again spoke to the need for resilience and more accurate forecasting, as discussed in the previous item.

8. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 6 October 2021 and the venue will be confirmed closer to the time.