

Topics arising from Scrutiny Councillor Induction

Short update arising from initial investigation on topics discussed at the Scrutiny Induction, on 16th May 2013, that were identified for the Management Committee.

Topic	Overview	Officer Consulted	Suggestion
Improving the experience of customers making complaints to the Council.	<p>The Complaints team were restructured last year, becoming one corporate team. They deal with both corporate and statutory complaints, of which there are two different procedures. Statutory complaints cover Children's Services and Adult Care. Complaints are not shared with Councillors due to data protection – unless copied in to the complainants local Councillor, and have given permission. Currently not many include their Councillor in the email.</p> <p>An Annual Report is being worked on as required by law on the statutory side. There is also the implementation of a complaints database in the Council, which will be used by the team to monitor data protection and performance (tracking and deadlines). This is in the very early stages, and will, in time, show where any problems are arising.</p>	Sarah Butler, Complaints Manager	<p>There is reluctance at this stage for Scrutiny involvement, as they are currently going out to teams, waiting on the software, and improving the experience naturally.</p> <p>It may be appropriate to seek a report but the Council standards committee monitors the complaints process.</p>
Increasing the public's trust in politicians and public engagement with local democracy	<p>This issue has come to the attention of scrutiny due to there being 6 unopposed unitary councillors, some parish councils with no candidates, and some with insufficient numbers to form a quorum.</p> <p>There has been some debate on whether this is an issue for scrutiny, or the political parties. However, the focus from a Democratic Services perspective would be the future electorate, engagement with schools, 6th forms and colleges.</p>	John Quinton, Head of Democratic Services	<p>There is possibility that scrutiny could do a piece of work around methods of increasing engagement, looking at other Councils throughout the country.</p> <p>The draft business plan also makes reference to increasing democratic participation, voter turnout and encouraging people from a wider range of backgrounds to stand as unitary and parish councillors, and therefore could be regarded as a priority.</p>