

**Suggestion for Scrutiny Work Programme Form  
(To be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

**Suggestion from:**

Councillor Terry Clements

**What would you like to suggest for investigation / review?**

During the coronavirus crisis more people than ever have used the Council's website to find information about Council services and the latest measures, and undertake basic transactions such as paying parking fines, finding out what day their bin is collected, or commenting on planning applications.

This has highlighted the importance of our website as a way of communicating and supporting our residents. It is important that it works in ways that helps residents to find the information they need as easily as possible to encourage them to continue to use it.

It is therefore suggested that a small group of Overview and Scrutiny members work with officers in a workshop style to talk about how residents use our website and whether there are some simple improvements that could be made to help them.

**What are the main issues / concerns to be considered?**

Some things, such as finding out what day your bin is collected, is easy to do on the website. However, there are other things, such as notifying of a change of house, which are more difficult.

The main issues to be considered are:

- How easy is it for customers (including residents, businesses and visitors) to be able to do some of the most common transactions on our website?
- How easy is it for customers to find commonly asked for information?
- Can customers easily understand the information on the website (does it avoid Council lingo)

**Who is responsible for providing this service, or tackling the issue in question?**

Customer Services falls under the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities. Key officers are:

- The Assistant Director – Families and Communities
- Service Manager – Communications
- Service Manager – Customer Services

<b>Have you spoken to them, and if so, what was the response?</b>	
Yes. As part of the Council's desire to continue to improve the services it provides to residents, as well as increase the volume of online transactions, they have recognised it would be of benefit to to gain a councillor perspective on the website at present and identify potential areas of improvement. However, resource constraints at present limit the ability to do a wholesale review of the website.	
<b>What is the Portfolio Holders view on this issue?</b>	
This suggestion was discussed with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for customer services, Councillor Robert Everitt. He considers it is an excellent opportunity to look to see how we can simplify the website to make it easier for customers.	
<b>What would be the likely benefits and outcomes of carrying out this investigation / review?</b>	
Potential benefits are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to residents in being able to use our website more easily</li> <li>• Reduced cost / time for Council staff in dealing with queries because residents are unable to find information / undertake transactions on the website</li> </ul>	
<b>Estimated Committee and officer resource implications (eg research group, one-off report, dedicated meeting etc)</b>	
It is suggested that a small group of Councillors meet with Council officers in a couple of workshops to go through the website and highlight potential improvements.	
<b>Suggested witnesses, documentation and consultation</b>	
No further witnesses / documentation is suggested.	
<b>Will this investigation / review contribute to one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities? If so, which (please tick)</b>	
<b>Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Will this investigation / review contribute to the achievement of one or more of the commitments within the Council's West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024 Priorities?</b>	
This review will support the Council's "Ways of Working" identified in the strategic framework, specifically to become more digitally enabled	

<b>Will this investigation hit one of the essential elements of a scrutiny review when analysing potential scrutiny reviews? If so, which (please tick)</b>	
<b>Public Interest:</b> The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen by overview and scrutiny.	<b>X</b>
<b>Impact (Value):</b> Priority should be given to issues that make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area, and which have the potential to make recommendations which could lead to real improvements. The outcome must also be proportionate to the cost of carrying out the review in terms of staff and councillor time.	
<b>Relevance:</b> Overview and scrutiny must be satisfied that an issue identified for review is relevant and does not duplicate existing work being undertaken elsewhere by various Working Groups, Cabinet, partners etc.	<b>X</b>
<b>Partnership working or external scrutiny:</b> The focus of scrutiny is moving towards joint action and community leadership, so anything which offers this opportunity should be given serious consideration.	

<b>Would you like to be involved in the investigation / review?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Date of request:</b> 17/12/20	<b>Signed</b> Terry Clements

**Please return this form to the:**

Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), West Suffolk Council, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7EY

Email: [Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Update: February 2018 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020)

Update: 1 April 2019 (New Logo – West Suffolk Council)

Update: February 2020 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024)