

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Cllr Ben Proctor	"In response to a question I asked to Cabinet on 25 th April Cllr Gandy informed me that the Housing Solutions phone line should be moved to an improved system within a couple of weeks. Can the Cabinet confirm that this has now been done and advise what information is now collected on call volumes, call patterns, failure demand, rework and latent demand for this service?"	Cllr Carole Gandy
<p>Response: The response I provided in April was on the basis of information made available at the time that the pilot scheme would be trialled by Housing in about two weeks following the Cabinet meeting. Since then, the Housing Solutions Team has been in dialogue with Hoople to implement the new telephone system. Unfortunately, due to annual leave and other diary commitments, the implementation has been delayed. As originally stated, Housing Solutions is piloting the new system and as a result, a number of teething problems have been identified which have needed to be worked through. For example, one issue was the system struggling to link with mobile phones which the outreach workers use as they are frequently away from the office working with individuals.</p> <p>I am pleased to confirm that all these issues have been resolved and the work has been agreed and signed off by the Housing Solutions Team. It is estimated that the setup will take around two weeks to put in place and I am assured that it will be operational by the end of July. If, for any reason the project is further delayed, I will update Cllr Proctor accordingly.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question: If the work to move to a new telephone system is completed by the end of July this will be 12 weeks later than anticipated in the response to my question to Cabinet in April and this is in an area that Cabinet apparently have significant concerns about. When people need this support they are facing one of the most stressful situations most of us will ever have to deal with, the loss of a home. I've heard from people in my ward that not knowing when or if they will be able to speak to someone in housing support is an incredibly difficult addition at an incredibly difficult time. My original question in April was actually how can Cabinet assure itself that this service is adequately resourced to meet demand if this fairly trivial technical change actually is implemented at the end of July, when does the Cabinet anticipate being able to assure itself that this service is adequately resourced to meet demand?</p>			
<p>Supplementary response:</p>			

Thank you Councillor Proctor. Like you I am disappointed that the system has not yet gone live and I recognise that the reasons for the delay should not have stopped the implementation of the system. Therefore I have asked the Chief Executive to take this up with Hoople because like you, I recognise that this is a vital service for some of our most vulnerable people and I will try to keep you updated with the progress.