

## **Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee**

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Minutes of a meeting of the **Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee** held via video link on **Monday 13 July 2020** at **6pm**.

A roll call was taken and the following were present:

Cllr J J Emsell – Chairman

Cllr P E Bulman  
Cllr S J Catchpole

Cllr J A Neesam  
Cllr G K Nurden

Cllr S M Prutton  
Cllr D Roper

Also present were Cllr J Leggett and Cllr S Vincent (in part).

In attendance were the Director of Resources, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support and the Democratic Services Officer (DM).

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D King and Cllr J L Thomas.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the correction of the spelling “alterative” to “alternative” in the fourth paragraph of Minute no: 12 Members ICT Provision.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

In response to requests for an update on ICT provision and related matters, (minute no: 12 refers) the Chairman advised Members that a number of issues relating to IT had moved forward since the last meeting and it was intended that a full update would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee. It was proposed to hold a meeting before the next scheduled meeting in October and IT matters would be the main item on the agenda including preliminary thoughts regarding a committee system.

In response to a question as to why the Committee had not met since 2018, the Chairman explained that detailed work on collaboration had begun around that time and had superseded the need for the Committee to meet.

Recruitment to senior management roles within the organisation and the alignment of departments had been taking place which would have made it difficult to undertake service improvement and efficiency work. It was however felt that now would be the right time to restart the work of the Committee. A regret was expressed that the work of the Committee had not continued during that time as it was part of the Committee's remit to consider transformation taking place as part of collaboration and it had been excluded from doing so.

### 5 SIEC TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

Members considered the report which had been prepared in response to a request from the Leader and the Portfolio Holder who were keen for the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee (SIEC) to be reconvened and its Terms of Reference reviewed to ensure that these were fit for purpose.

Members reviewed the current Terms of Reference and the draft proposed Terms of Reference and made the following observations/suggested changes to those proposed:

- A comment was made that, historically the Committee had been chaired by a non-cabinet member and that this had changed when, by default, the chairman at the time had become a cabinet member. Clarification was sought as to whether the Committee would be regarded in the same way as the policy development panels and chaired by a portfolio holder or be regarded as a Committee with a non cabinet chairman. The Chairman pointed out that the role of the Committee had evolved to cover a very wide range of organisation issues and it was felt this would be best supported if the chairman was a member of Cabinet. It would also assist with the aim of ensuring the work of the Committee did not duplicate the work of other committees/panels which was a concern.
- With regard to the relationship between the Committee and Cabinet, it was noted that the Terms of Reference provided for the Committee to advise Cabinet with the Committee setting and agreeing its own work programme.
- the introductory paragraph of the Terms of Reference should include reference to the need for the work of the Committee to have regard to equality, diversity, inclusivity and cost effectiveness.
- Purposes: paragraphs 1-4 of the purposes of the Committee be reordered to 3,4,1,2, and renumbered.
- Purposes: paragraph 1 of the purposes be amended to read "identify financial savings and efficiencies which contribute to the medium financial

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plan (capital and revenue)”).

- Purposes: to reflect the importance of the Council’s interface with the public and the importance of customer service, an additional purpose be added at 5 – to state “ensure the needs of customers and residents are met in all service areas”.
- Objectives: delete the objective “to oversee the operation of the Council’s performance management framework” as this was a role undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Objectives: delete “identify how the Council can generate income through developing commercial skills and knowledge to generate a greater proportion of funding” and replace with “to explore opportunities to generate income”.
- Objectives: with regard to the objective “to advise and review the performance of the Council through review of key human resource measures and the learning and development approach while identifying opportunities for improving staff engagement and provide a forum for considering the learning from engagement activities”, Members were concerned about duplication of work on performance management and also wanted to broaden the range of this objective beyond human resources and staff engagement to cover all service areas. The Monitoring officer undertook to amend this objective to reflect these thoughts.
- Membership: to confirm that the Chairman of the Committee would be the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development.

[note: the quorum of the Committee should be 4 and not 3 as stated in the proposed terms of reference]

Reference was made to a particular difficulty a Member had experienced in making contact with an officer recently by telephone and officers undertook to investigate this particular issue. It was acknowledged that there had been a series of changes in the way officers were working during the current Covid-19 emergency. A programme of installation of soft phones was underway with priority being given to staff in front line services.

The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support undertook to update the proposed Terms of Reference and circulate these to Members of the Committee prior to them being recommended to Council.

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It was then

### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND COUNCIL**

to agree the Terms of Reference as updated with the suggestions detailed above and as set out in Appendix A attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

*The meeting closed at 7.05pm.*