

## **SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a remote meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee of Broadland District Council, held on Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 6pm.**

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillors: G Nurden (Chairman for the Meeting), P Bulman, S Catchpole, S Holland, D King, I Mackie, M Murrell, S Prutton and D Roper
<b>Cabinet Members Present:</b>	Councillors: J Copplestone, J Emsell, J Leggett, and T Mancini-Boyle
<b>Other Members in Attendance:</b>	Councillors: N Brennan, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, S Lawn and S Riley
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	The Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Assistant Director of Economic Growth (T Armstrong), the Communities Senior Manager (K Gallagher) and the ICT and Digital Manager (C Balmer)

### **18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **19 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr J Thomas

## **20 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee held on 11 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### *Minute No: 16 – Project Update - Telephony*

In response to a concern regarding telephone call waiting times and what was being done to address this issue, the Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) explained that weekly reports were being run on the phone systems to allow managers to monitor and review performance.

A further concern was raised over officers' voicemails being full. It was confirmed that new Hunt Groups were in the process of being set up on the phone system, which would allow unanswered calls to find the next available officer in the team. Members noted that this would eventually replace the voicemail system.

## **21 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING**

The Communities Senior Manager introduced the report which highlighted the impact and opportunities a Community Connector approach could have in the Broadland area. The Connector model would further develop support for the community, alongside the COVID response while building a relationship with local GP surgeries and NHS partners. She also advised members that by enhancing community working, Broadland Council would be in a stronger position to support vulnerable residents through the COVID recovery while preventing increase demand on statutory services.

Members noted that the Community Connector roles would allow extended operating hours for the Early Help Hub and that work had begun with the future funding of the Connectors with clinical partners.

In response to a query about how the Community Connectors were going to be employed, officers confirmed that they would have fixed-term contracts initially, with the aspiration to continue the service through externally sourced funding.

In response to a request for clarification on the difference between the Community Connector role and what was currently in place, the Communities Senior Manager advised members that external partners operated within the areas and had a different approach when dealing with residents. Members noted that the Community Connector role would work inside the Surgeries on a one to one basis. She also confirmed that the current Covid advisers were in place to advise on issues arising from the pandemic.

In response to a question regarding how the Connector model would help mitigate the tensions generated in communities by COVID, Officers explained that the pandemic had impacted many people and that smaller issues left unsupported could turn into larger ones or possible crises. It was believed that having Connectors in place would prevent these issues from escalating further.

A member raised concern over the wording of section 3.8 of the report regarding the changes having a limited impact on the Early Help Hub, it was explained that the model would help take work off the Hub with additional resources being in place. Members also noted that South Norfolk's Community Connectors were already operating within the one team structure.

During the discussion a member asked about the current funding for the South Norfolk Community Connectors. It was noted the model had been in operation for six years, with funding secured through the NHS for a further three years. In response to a further question on whether Broadland could go straight to the NHS for funding, officers explained that due to the funding cycles the Council would need to fund the posts for the first year through the COVID Recovery Fund.

After further discussion, officers clarified issues around funding for the first year and timescales. The Director of People and Communities explained that there were currently two funding sources. These consisted of a COVID Response and Recovery Fund and a Containing Outbreak Management Fund. Officers emphasised that discussions had taken place, and it was believed that the work of the Community Connectors would fall as part of the Containing Outbreak Management Fund. It was noted that the Community Connectors would help with capacity levels within the NHS. Members were advised that the report would go on to Cabinet, where officers were looking to present a further report on COVID Recovery.

One member suggested that Cabinet committed to a two-year model for the Community Connectors. He noted that this would allow the newly appointed officers longer to establish themselves in the community and their roles. He explained that Cabinet could secure the second-year funding in the future budget planning, securing the appointed officers in place instead of a potential loss at the end of the year's contract of the staff.

In response to a question raised by a member regarding how far the service area would cover and if there were provisions in place when residents go across district borders for services. The Communities Senior Manager advised members that officers would want to cover all areas of the District, but at the moment, it would be where funding had been secured. She also confirmed that anyone who is a resident of the District would have access to

the Community Connectors, who could also take referrals from other organisations in the area.

The Chairman summarised the salient points of discussion which included members endorsement to Cabinet for the Community Connector model for the year with a view to officers securing funding for future years. It was then;

#### **RESOLVED**

To endorsed and recommend the Community Connector Model to Cabinet for approval.

### **22 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report which asked members to agree to an amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference. Members were advised that the newly appointed Chairman had reviewed the document and proposed the following amended introductory paragraph.

The role of the Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee is to consider *and develop* ideas for improving the *effectiveness*, quality and accountability of public services in the district with due regard to equality diversity, inclusivity *and effectiveness*. This will be achieved through learning, sharing knowledge and delivering *efficient* improvement solutions.

A member raised concerns over the whole Committee structure of the Council. In response, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) noted the concerns raised and informed members that a review had started of terms of reference of Committee's, with Policy Panels being agreed at the last Council meeting. Further work would then been undertaken on the other committee terms of reference to ensure work was complimentary and effective. It was then;

#### **RESOLVED**

To recommend that Council approves the amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

### **23 MEMBER IT**

The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report which asked members to consider future options for Members' IT. The report proposed the following three options; to keep the

current provision of iPads, to provide laptops for all members, or that all members use their own IT equipment.

The report followed on from the update at the 11 January meeting, which provided the Committee with the results from the members IT survey. Members noted that there had been a good response with 34 out of 47 members contributing.

Members were advised that work continued with the Office 365 rollout, which was intended to replace the current Blackberry operating system in April. Members noted that training would be provided to ensure everyone was up to date with the new software.

The Committee was reminded that the current iPad provision was not at the end of life stage and would be operational for a further two years. It was noted that if members were to choose to go over to laptops, the iPads would be surplus, as the Council did not use the devices in day to day operations.

One member queried whether, given that the report shows three different options regarding members' IT, it would be possible to use a mix of the three, allowing members to decide which option was best for them. It was explained that a lot of the problem's members were facing were down to software issues. Members were also advised that it was likely that the remote format would be ending soon, and meetings would revert to the office.

A member suggested that using their own equipment was not appropriate, as previously members had been given an allowance for IT provisions that was no longer available. It was noted and understood that there would not be an allowance now if members were to pick option three. Concerns were raised over the storage capacity of the current iPads alongside difficulty when composing long documents, with some members having to transfer onto other devices to work.

During the discussion, it was reaffirmed by some members that when the committee meetings returned to the office the issues raised by some members regarding the virtual meetings would not exist.

It was noted by the Chairman, that in two years the current iPads would need replacing, and it would be more appropriate to wait to review the current provision until then, allowing time to see if the new integrated software solved issues.

Several members supported the Chairman's comments, agreeing that they should evaluate the new software first before making a decision. One member added that money would be wasted on new devices if the software solves members' issues.

One member indicated support for the new software but raised concerns over the reading ability within the iPads, adding that it was hard comparing documents on the iPads to a laptop. The ICT and Digital Manager confirmed

that he understood members' concerns but was hopeful that once the Council's operations moved back to normal after the pandemic, they would be solved.

Officers answered further questions where it was confirmed members would be able to print documents from the iPads.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development added that he was keen for all members to be comfortable with the equipment they used. He showed support with fellow members that delaying the decision until Office 365 had been installed would be the favourable option.

During the discussion, both A and B options were proposed and seconded amongst the Committee. A roll call vote was undertaken, which saw five members voting for option A, three for B and one abstention. It was then;

## **RESOLVED**

The Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee recommends that Cabinet keeps the current provision of iPads.

## **24 ECONOMIC GROWTH TEAM- APPOINTMENT TO VACANCIES AND RESTRUCTURE**

The Director of Place introduced the report which drew members' attention to the proposed changes to the Economic Growth Team. Members noted the Economic Growth Team had been divided into two key functions. One area covering; growth delivery, community assets and housing delivery. The second area covered under the Business Support Team including inward investment and tourism alongside other areas.

Members were asked to note the proposed changes set out in the report to the Growth Delivery Team, alongside the principles applied to the proposed changes to the Business Support Team. The committee were also asked to provide comments on the finalising of the team's structure.

A member queried why the Council was planning to fill the vacancies with the Growth Team but not the others in the Business Support area, highlighting the need under the current COVID business support. The Director of Place acknowledged that the team had done well in supporting businesses during COVID, but officers wanted to make sure the jobs were placed correctly within teams before recruiting. Members also noted that the Council was looking to develop a new Economic Strategy in the coming months.

Several members expressed concerns over how long the vacancies had been unfilled and why there were so many. During discussion, the Director of Place confirmed that the vacancies happened over time, and that a number of officers had moved on through promotions to other organisations. The

Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) also confirmed that a Time and Task Panel was currently looking into staff turnover at the Council.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development was involved in the discussions from an early stage. Considerable discussion followed where it was noted that staff structures were part of the Transformation and Organisational Development Portfolio. The Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) added that a review of the Council's Constitution would be undertaken in the future to best align where processes fell.

One Member queried whether the restructuring of the Business Support team would increase costs and If this was not the case would be best to invest further into the structure. The Director of Place confirmed that could be one option but was mindful that extra budget would take resources away from other projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development showed support for the report and explained that she had worked closely with the Cabinet Member at South Norfolk Council and were keen to recruit into the vacancies as soon as possible.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development explained that the report was brought in front of the Committee to gain wider member engagement. It was suggested by a member that the final structure should be published in the *Members' Bulletin* to inform all members. It was then;

## **RESOLVED**

To note

1. The proposed changes to the Growth Delivery Team and the intention to fill the current vacancies and;
2. The principles to be applied to the proposed changes to the Business Support Team and provided comments that could be taken into account in finalising the team's structure.

(The meeting concluded at 8.05pm)

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Chairman