

Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee of South Norfolk Council held on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 3.00pm.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: C Hudson (Chairman), B Duffin, J Halls, J Easter, T Holden, W Kemp, T Laidlaw and J Overton
Cabinet Member Present:	Councillor: A Thomas
Other Member in Attendance:	Councillor: V Clifford-Jackson
Officers in Attendance:	The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds) the Assistant Director Communities (S Phelan) and the Chief of Staff (H Ralph)

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee, held on Wednesday 18 November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

11 SPARK TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members considered the report from the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) and the Chief of Staff, which provided an update on the Spark Transformation Programme.

The Chief of Staff advised Members of the progress relating to the joint website project. Officers had been working with Jadu, the Council's website supplier, for a number of months developing the website. Prototypes of the website were currently being tested by officers and training was taking place for staff who will be developing content for it. Members would have the opportunity to see and comment on the website prior to its launch in June.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that amber markers indicated where there were challenges to the timescales or the resources of a project, whereas red would indicate there were serious obstacles to bringing the project forward.

After the Chairman had sought clarification on member and resident engagement to have the opportunity to see the draft form of the website before its final publication, Officers clarified that workshops would be held with both members and customers, to feed into the development of the website.

Officers took members through the report by sections stopping to allow questions and comments.

Members noted that the indicator for the joint email project was amber due to a divert on some resources to the 'One Network' tender process. However, officers explained that testing had taken place with a rollout planned to take place between April and June. Officers would also be arranging a date for a member workshop to look at both the website and the rollout of Office365 and the impact that it would have on their work as a councillor.

In response to a member's question regarding the changeover between the two systems, it was confirmed that there would be at least a six-month transition period which covered the website and the email systems.

Turning to the One Network project, Members were informed that three responses had been received from the original tender and were now in the process of being evaluated for a Cabinet decision in February. In response to queries regarding implications of the proposed new systems, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) explained that it would use a mix of cloud and physical space, but with the opportunity to go onto the cloud entirely if required. She emphasised that the new infrastructure was designed to be both flexible and future proofed.

A Member suggested that the report project numbering should be kept the same throughout the process, to allow members to see the projects delivered and track progression.

Officers gave further updates on the Strategic Approach to Systems Transformation (SATST), which was an analysis of the Council's back office systems to assess the best approach and order to upgrade them. This project was marked amber due to delayed start, but was now on track.

Work on the Business Intelligence and Governance project was at the scoping stage, with work being undertaken with Data and Systems Analysts as well as IT to help understand data storage issues in order to drive forward service improvement. An update would be brought to members on this project in due course.

Members were informed of the progress made in the New Ways of Working programme. This included the phased return of staff to the office, reopening to our customers, equipping all staff with laptops, providing IT solutions for members, the introduction of a new desk booking system, a review of our post and scanning functions, virtual customer meetings and data archiving. Following the survey completed for the Member IT project, officers were now looking into responses and seeing if they could align equipment across the two councils. It was confirmed that the results of the surveys would be shared with members of both Councils.

The Committee noted that the new approach for gathering insight into Customer Satisfaction would come to the Committee for at a later date.

Members noted work in progress to align the complaints approach across the two Councils and that General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) would be a key element of this work.

Officers gave further updates to members on the Resource Hub, the strategic aim of becoming an Employer of Choice through effective people management and leadership development.

The meeting was advised that the impact of the pandemic had been taken into account in the development of staff and a platform called SkillGate had been launched to allow staff to receive training via the internet. This resource had also recently been made available Members.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that members were required to complete two of these courses; one on GDPR and the other on cybercrime.

A member expressed concern that SPARK did not appear to have an overarching project plan, with each individual project referenced to it so that the Committee could assess the importance of any slippages in the programme. He, therefore, questioned the rationale for the Committee in positively impacting the successful achievement of the projects.

In response, the Chief of Staff advised the meeting that SPARK was the overarching programme to support the delivery of collaboration taking the Feasibility Study as the key starting point. There were three levels of projects within the SPARK Programme; Blue, which were crosscutting, major, corporate priorities; purple, which sat within Directorate areas and green, which could be identified and implemented at a service level. Each of the blue projects being reported to the Committee today had a comprehensive programme plan that sat beneath it that was managed by a programme board, with key decisions on the projects being brought to members for

determination. Today's report was an update on the key progress with the projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Focus, suggested that part of the difficulty for members was that some members had not been involved at the inception of the SPARK programme and that it could be of benefit to members to take a step back to gain a wider insight into projects and the structure/purpose of the Committee itself.

The Chairman concurred with this view and requested that officers provide the Committee with an informal workshop on the background and original outcomes envisaged for the SPARK project to allow the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee to undertake informed oversight of the programme.

During further discussion, questions were raised relating to who the customer was when reviewing the reports at the Committee and how the residents could follow the progression of the projects alongside the budget. It was suggested by officers that the workshop would be useful to help situate projects and eliminate concerns raised above. Alongside this, a review of the terms and conditions of the Committee at the workshop would also prove beneficial to Members and customers.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report which was noted by the Committee with the addition of the workshop to be scheduled before the next meeting date.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

(The meeting concluded at 3.50pm)

Chairman