

Agenda Item 3

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday 24 June 2021 at 6pm at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Thomas (Chairman), P Bulman, S Catchpole, S Holland, K Kelly, I Mackie, M Murrell, G Nurden, S Prutton and D Roper

Cabinet Member Present: Councillor: J Emsell,

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the IT and Digital Manager (C Balmer) and Democratic Services Officers (LA, JH)

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

None made.

30 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee held on 6 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

31 SPARK TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members considered the report from the Director of Resources, which provided the Committee with an update on the projects processed under the SPARK Transformation Programme.

The Committee was asked to note the positive progress made across the SPARK Transformation Programme and the following areas were highlighted:

Joint Website

The new joint website went live successfully on the 2 June 2021 following final content checks. The Committee noted that there had been a small number of issues with the new website, but that these had all been resolved quickly. The Director of Resources further explained that there had been a development change since the website went live which replaced the inbuilt Jadu search function with Google.

Joint Email

The majority of members had been migrated onto the new Office 365 platform, and the IT Team was currently assessing any issues which had arisen from the migration.

Domain migration & One Network

The Committee noted that the domain migration was ongoing and would feed into other IT projects. The One Team Network contract had been signed off by both Councils with the team now focusing on the delivery of the project.

Strategic approach to systems transformation

This item would be explored in more detail later in the meeting.

Business Intelligence (BI) and Governance

Officers explained that the project was currently sitting at an amber indicator, due to the lack of available resources needed to deliver the pilot. Members noted that additional funds had been requested to take the project forward.

New Ways of Working (NWOW) Programme

The Committee noted that the outstanding projects of archiving and desk booking had now been incorporated under the accommodation review project.

After discussion, during which some members raised concerns over the speed that the accommodation review project was occurring and the impact that it would have on the organisation. The Director of Resources explained that officers were working to future-proof the organisation and that a business case would be brought to Cabinet in September to review different options. Members noted that the timescales were in place to help collaboration to move onto the next stage. Surveys had been carried out over the past year to determine how officers wished to work going forward, and results had seen that staff wanted to work in a hybrid model. This would include a mixture of working from home and in the office. Further

concern was expressed regarding the long-term implications of the project if the organisation would need to increase office space again. Officers explained that there had been a move in how workplaces operated over the last year, which had led to more agile working that would require less office space.

In response to a question members were advised that there was no canteen provision at either site as they had become financially unviable with the reduced number of officers in the offices. A staff working group had been created which had identified local traders from which staff could order food for delivery. Officers also explained that due to the ongoing COVID restrictions the communal spaces in the office were still closed, but microwaves, fridges and kettles were available for staff to use.

Organisational Development

Officers explained that leadership and management training was currently being rolled out, alongside a further training programme open for all staff. Members were also advised that work was being undertaken for a recruitment and apprenticeship drive within the organisation. It was also reported that this project would now be managed as business as usual.

A member stressed the importance for all members to complete assigned training offered to them.

In response to a question regarding the next review date for the organisational effectiveness of the One Team, the Chief of Staff explained that it was considered best to wait until current demands on the organisation caused by the pandemic decreased, before a review was carried out. The Director of Resources added that part of the transformation progression was looking into different services when a review of systems was taking place.

In respect of the role of the Committee, officers explained that policies would follow through the relevant panels and the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee would review any structural changes. Several members suggested that higher-level summaries, which included performance data and KPI's needed to report to the Committee.

The discussion turned to the Culture Development project where questions were raised over the completed status of the project and staff exits. The Chief of Staff agreed that the Culture Development of the organisation was continually evolving, and further surveys were being developed to capture this. Officers explained that an ongoing live survey was being investigated, which would allow quarterly reviews to keep in touch with staff. Officers also confirmed that a Time and Task Panel was currently reviewing staff turnover, and all leavers were offered an exit interview.

In answer to a query about staff recruitment the Chief of Staff explained that it had been a difficult time, but she was hopeful that a push for apprenticeships and a recruitment drive would see the vacancies filled.

Broadland Waste Procurement of Waste Contract/ Review of Council's Depot

Members noted that the waste procurement contract was on track and a decision would take place over August and September. Officers explained that a review of the Council's depot would take place after the waste contract had been awarded.

Best in Class Housing Programme

The Committee noted that the Best in Class Housing Programme was working efficiently across both locations and would shortly be closed and no longer reported upon.

It was then;

RESOLVED:

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

32 MOVING TOWARDS A FIRST CLASS CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Director of Resources gave members an overview of the progress and findings of the Customer Satisfaction and Complaints projects. The report set out the proposal for the Council's Customer Strategy and Customer Charter alongside the creation of:

- A Customer Experience and Insight Lead
- A New Complaints Handling Policy incorporating an Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.

Members noted that delivering a First-Class Customer Service would allow engagement with customers in multiple ways to help capture as many people as possible. The data collected through the new approach would give a clear insight into the key demand areas of the Council. Officers gave further background on the report highlighting that the complaints policy incorporated a two-stage approach following a recommendation from the Local Government Ombudsman, ensuring the correct procedures were in place and keeping track of progression.

In answer to a question regarding the two-stage approach, it was confirmed that if a complaint was made against a Director it would be escalated to the Managing Director.

A member of the Committee requested that the Customer Services Team had up-to-date contact details made available to allow residents calling in to be directed to their required service efficiently.

Several members expressed the need for communication channels to be accessible to all residents, highlighting that some people would have difficulty accessing information online. The Director of Resources advised members that work had begun to investigate a Hub and Spoke model which would offer residents support and engagement within their communities. Further concerns were noted over the older generation's access to the Council if all communication were to move online.

Officers confirmed that any information or data collected through the new approach would comply with General Data Protection Regulations.

In response to a question raised around repeat complainers, officers confirmed that these were dealt with appropriately and that they were small in number, however were time consuming.

During discussion, a member raised concerns that there were no performance standards within the document and the wording was too vague on its approach for a first-class service. Officers explained that performance standards were reported in the Council's Delivery Plan, which went to Cabinet and then onto Council. It was noted that the Strategy was in its first stage, and was a work in progress with more data needing to be collected.

The Committee was advised that the proposed new role of the Customer Experience and Insight Lead, would work gathering data from the new approach and provide independent oversight over any complaints received.

Officers gave further clarification on points raised in the report and confirmed that the next Delivery Plan including performance measures was scheduled for after September i.e. quarter two reporting.

In response to a query raised around the setup of a resident focus group to look into the document, the Chief of Staff confirmed that external feedback had been received. Officers would also look into establishing a customer focus group.

Voting was carried out separately on the recommendations, with four members voting for, three against and two abstentions for the first recommendation. Nine members voted for recommendation two and one abstained. The third recommendation received nine votes for and one against. It was then;

RESOLVED

To recommend to Cabinet;

1. The adoption of the proposed Customer Strategy and Customer Charter

2. The Adoption of the proposed Complaints Handling Policy
3. The adoption of the Unreasonable Persistent Complaints Policy

And

Note and comment on the appointment of a new Customer Experience and Insight lead role

33 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

34 ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY REVIEW

Members considered the exempt report from the Chief and Staff and IT and Digital Manager, which provided a review of the ICT and Digital Strategy. It sought approval for the direction of travel and action plan for the ICT & Digital Strategy alongside proposals for delivery of the digital services for customers.

The Committee was informed by officers of the background of the report and the reasons behind the final decision.

A detailed discussion took place and a number of questions were raised, as set out in the exempt appendix to these minutes. Members then voted on the recommendations contained in the report, and it was,

RESOLVED

To recommend to Cabinet,

to support the recommendations set out in the exempt report

35 FINANCE SYSTEM BUSINESS CASE

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Director of Resources regarding the Finance System Business Case.

The Director of Resources outlined progress to date on the project, explained the background to the report, and the reasoning behind the decision.

A detailed discussion took place and a number of questions were raised, as set out in the exempt appendix to these minutes. Members then voted on the recommendations contained in the report, and it was,

RESOLVED

To recommend to Cabinet,

to support the recommendations set out in the exempt report.

(The meeting concluded at 8pm)

Chairman