

Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee of South Norfolk Council held on Monday 21 June 2021 at 2.00pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: C Hudson (Chairman), D Burrill, B Duffin, T Holden, W Kemp, T Laidlaw and T Spruce.

Apologies: Councillors: J Overton and F Curson

Cabinet Member Present: Councillor: R Elliott

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the Assistant Director of Finance (R Fincham), and the Transformation and Innovation Lead Officer (S Crook)

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

19 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee, held on Wednesday 28 April 2021 were approved as a correct record.

20 SPARK 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 Programme and their attention was drawn to the following areas:

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 customers having issues with the new website, but these had all been resolved quickly. The Director of Resources further explained that information videos were being developed to help customers when setting up an account on the website.

Joint Email

The majority of members had been migrated onto the new Office 365 platform, and the IT team was currently collating any issues which had arisen from the previous migration. The rollout for staff devices would take place over the summer months.

Domain migration

The Committee noted that the Domain migration was ongoing and would feed into other projects.

One Network

The One Team Network contract had been signed off by both Councils and the team were now focused on planning the delivery of the project

Strategic approach to systems transformation/ Business Intelligence (BI) and Governance

Members noted that there was an item later in the agenda which explored this further. Officers were pleased to announce that the vacant post for the Assistant Director for Transformation and ICT/Digital had been filled.

New Ways of Working (NWOW) Programme

The Committee noted that the archiving and desk booking projects had been incorporated into the accommodation review project. The Director of Resources detailed other projects which fell under the NWOW programme including; the laptop rollout, Members' IT, Officers working from Home, welcoming customers back into the offices and the Canteen review project.

Organisational Development

Officers explained that this item would be removed from the SPARK Programme list as the topic area was now being managed as business as usual. Members noted that staff training was still ongoing for all officers in the organisation.

Broadland Waste Procurement of Waste Contract/ Review of Councils' Depots

Attention was drawn to the review of the Ketteringham depot, which officers explained was being undertaken to scope how the project would develop.

Best in Class Housing Programme

The Committee noted that the Best in Class Housing Programme was working efficiently across the two locations and that this project would be closed soon.

The Chairman noted that there had been some excellent progress in the projects and thanked officers for their report. It was then;

RESOLVED:

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

21 WORKING TOWARDS A FIRST CLASS CUSTOMER SERVICE;

The Transformation & Innovation Lead 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 approach had been an ambition for the Councils since the establishment of the One Team. The Team had looked at the original processes alongside exploring what other organisations had to produce the final product before Members.

The Transformation & Innovation Lead advised the Committee that the proposed new role: Customer Experience and Insight Lead, would involve data gathering as well as the independent oversight over complaints received. The role would also explore the potential for commercial growth within the District. Members also noted that the Customer Experience and Insight Lead would manage the Customer Services Team.

In response to a query, Members were advised that both Councils original policies on Customer Services were different, and the adoption of the new approach would align the two organisations. The Director of Resources further

explained that the new approach to dealing with complaints had been devised following recommendations from the Local Government Ombudsman.

The discussion turned to continual complainers and it was noted that although there was not a great number of them, they did take up a lot of Officers' time. The proposed new role and approach to Customer Services would provide extra support to monitor this issue alongside the new approach.

A member sought qualification over the funding of the new role and it was explained that the appointment would be funded through the COVID-19 budget. Members were advised that the pandemic had brought the project forward for several reasons, and the approach would help engage with customers electronically. The Committee noted that the role was a two-year fixed-term contract to allow the Council to review and adjust the position before finding extra funding.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and referred members of the Committee to the recommendations where 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

22 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC;

It was;

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

23 ICT/DIGITAL STRATEGY REVIEW;

Members considered the exempt report presented by the Chief of Staff, 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.

Officers explained the background of the report and the reasons behind the final recommendations proposed.

A detailed discussion took place and a number of questions were raised around timelines and resources. 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

24 FINANCE SYSTEM BUSINESS CASE

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

The Assistant Director of Finance outlined progress to date on the project, explained the background to the report, and the reasoning behind the proposed recommendations.

A detailed discussion took place and a number of questions were raised over the financial implications and officers' opinions. 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 3pm)

Chairman