

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2017

Forum members Present: Lee Dillon, Dave Goff, Ian Morrin, Emma Webster (Chairman) and Laszlo Zverko (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present: Kevin Griffin (Head of ICT & Corporate Support) and Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Councillor Dominic Boeck (Executive Portfolio: Culture and Environment), Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor James Cole (Council Member), Charlene Hurd (Democratic Services Officer) and David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager)

PART I

11 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2016 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 Actions from Previous Minutes

The report was noted.

13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

14 Resource Select Committee Work Programme

David Lowe advised Members that they would be required to consider future topics for scrutiny in order that an 18 month programme could be developed. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to invite all Members to suggest future topics for scrutiny.

Resolved that:

1. Officers would email all Members requesting that they suggest future topics for scrutiny.

15 Consideration of Urgent Items

There were no Urgent Items for consideration.

16 ICT & Digital Services Strategy

Kevin Griffin introduced the report to the Committee and delivered a presentation to provide a high level overview of the ICT and Digital Services Strategy.

Kevin Griffin highlighted the opportunities which would help deliver the Strategy:

- 100% broadband coverage by end 2017
- 4 out of 5 adults owned a smartphone
- People were used to transacting online with public bodies (Mod.Gov services)
- Things were getting 'smarter' (Internet of things)

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However, there were a number of constraints which could affect deliverability such as reduced budgets and cyber security. In addition, meeting technological demand could be challenging if vendors did not move at a suitable pace to deliver new solutions/systems.

Members suggested that there could be similar applications in the market readily available which the Council could amend, according to the Council's specific needs, to help meet demand. Kevin Griffin advised that current systems were sufficient for performing tasks which meant that the ICT solutions were not required at this present moment. However, the potential limitation should be noted.

The key principles, set within the Strategy, focused around: cost effectiveness and cost saving; safety and security; customer centricity; and innovation and agility. It was important that innovative solutions were encouraged and explored.

Members heard that the Strategy detailed ways in which the Council could harness opportunities to partner with providers in order to maximise community benefit. The Committee heard that the provision of free WIFI (for an introductory period) was seemingly well received in other towns and this offered financial opportunities to the Council. Councillor Ian Morrin suggested that Members should be mindful of the footfall in West Berkshire versus other areas where the scheme had been introduced.

Kevin Griffin explained that a cloud based infrastructure would offer increased resilience within the Council; if core office applications resided within the internet based solution staff would have access to essential systems irrespective of whether the on-premise business systems were compromised. It was estimated that approximately 80% of staff would benefit from this proposal. Through discussions with the vendor the Council could ensure that the solution offered a suitable level of security – which would be essential considering that some of the Council's core applications could contain sensitive information.

The cloud based solution would also offer an alternative Critical System Disaster Recovery (CSDR) process. The proposal considered that the cloud would enable systems to be made available within a quicker timeframe (compared to the existing arrangement). The solution would cost more than the current process however it would be more responsive to the Council's needs.

In response to questions asked by Members, Kevin Griffin stated that the cloud project could not use capital funding on the basis that the Council would not own the cloud based solution. He also advised that Microsoft Office could not be replaced because it integrated with existing systems used within the Council.

Members heard that the Strategy considered improving communication through options such as: increased use of audio and video conferencing; increased use of social media; video streaming meetings and maximising digital customer contact channels. Kevin Griffin explained that the Council was a multi-focused organisation which presented challenges in terms of varying demand and costs for solutions. Therefore, it would have to be perfectly clear why changes were required and the benefits it would entail if agreed.

The Strategy focused on a shift towards increased use of 'self service' channels. The proposal reinforced a developing need to shorten the route between initial contact and fulfilment. Page 26 of the Strategy provided a schematic diagram of the current contact route and the proposed, reduced route. It highlighted that, through the development of

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self service systems, there could be a reduced need for specialist staff who incurred higher costs.

Members thanked Kevin Griffin for his presentation and report.

Councillor Lee Dillon asked whether there should be mention of joint procurement within the Strategy as this provided a better platform to negotiate costs with vendors. Kevin Griffin stated that this was an opportunity he would want to harness and that this was discussed with Berkshire Peers however, it was not always possible due to timing of contract reviews etc.

Councillor Dillon suggested that the strategy included a specific focus on the advanced use of social media and improved internet so that 'Tweets' and videos could be effectively shared. He suggested that it would be useful if the Committee revisited the topic in 18 months to consider its effectiveness and progress.

Councillor Morrin highlighted that the Strategy focused on customer centricity however; Kevin Griffin had explained that the Council would need to focus on 'burning platforms' first. He suggested that this approach would contradict the strategy. Kevin Griffin acknowledged the comment and advised that demand and costs were constraints that the service was aware of.

Kevin Griffin advised that the ICT Service could not wholly implement the Strategy and that it was essential to have the engagement and cooperation of the wider Council. Councillor Emma Webster asked whether the Committee could offer support to encourage other parts of the Council to engage with the ICT Strategy. Kevin Griffin advised that it would be useful if teams/staff suggested changes and felt empowered to contact the ICT Service with their ideas. Councillor Webster proposed that the staff survey incorporated questions to encourage innovative solutions from front line staff.

Resolved that:

1. The Strategy would be considered in 18 months time.
2. It be requested that the staff survey would include questions to capture innovative ICT solutions.

17 Income Generation

Councillor Emma Webster introduced the report to the Committee and advised that it detailed examples of income generation avenues utilised by other local authorities.

The report provided two recommendations which the Committee would be requested to consider: To note the report; establish a small task and finish group to understand how West Berkshire Council could implement proposals for income generation.

Andy Walker noticed that the examples in the report provided some ideas for future consideration but some schemes were not quite as successful as they appeared. He suggested that comments by return would help to highlight the output from those examples attached.

Councillor Webster considered that the Community Lottery introduced in Aylesbury Vale District Council was successful and offered a potential scheme to consider in West Berkshire. Andy Walker stated that the scheme had been raised but not fully

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investigated. In terms of strategy, he suggested that it would not deliver against saving demands but the income could be redirected towards the community/other organisations.

Councillor Lee Dillon supported the topic and recommendation to conduct further investigatory work. He encouraged the Committee to take action promptly so that the review would not be delayed any further. He stated that alternative means to generate income must be considered to avoid increasing Council Tax. David Lowe suggested that the Committee might want to invite Officers to comment on the list of examples provided within the report – to state whether they had been considered, the outcome of this consideration and what obstacles/ outcome was identified.

Councillor Ian Morrin believed that small things could be done to offset costs. He considered that the challenge was within the process of identifying opportunities and then bringing them to fruition. He explained that a review of the current mechanism to identify opportunities would be beneficial. He supported the establishment of a task and finish group but stressed that action must take place within the next six months. In response to questions asked, David Lowe advised that decisions were subject to a democratic process and staff were often subject to increased workload – both of which contributed towards the lack of forthcoming ideas. Councillor Morrin suggested that the Council should review this mechanism to encourage innovative thinking and enable small changes to take place without delay.

Councillor Dillon requested that the task group reviewed the current decision making process and worked alongside political will and staff culture.

Resolved that:

1. Officers would be emailed the examples of income generation streams and asked to comment on whether they had been considered.
2. A task and finish group would be established to consider income generation opportunities and review the decision making process. Councillors Webster, Dillon and Morrin volunteered to form the task group.
3. The report be noted

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature