

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Thursday, 1 November 2018 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf

B Alcock
G R Aley
D Ashby
J R Astill
F Biggadike
M D Booth

C J T H Brewis
G K Dark
L J Eldridge
P C Foyster
A Harrison
J L King

A M Newton
J L Reynolds
A C Tennant
J Tyrrell
A R Woolf
S Wray

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors J D McLean, E J Sneath and J Whitbourn

In Attendance: Portfolio Holder – Finance, Portfolio Holder – Governance and Customer, Executive Director Strategy and Governance, Shared Executive Manager Information, Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager, Digital and Customer Access Manager, Shared ICT Manager and Democratic Services Officer.

7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor A Woolf was elected as Chairman for the duration of this meeting.

8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were none.

9. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY AND ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY

It was agreed by the Chairman of the Joint Panel of the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel, that agenda items 4 and 5 would be discussed together, due to the similarities between the reports and their interlinked nature.

Consideration was given to the reports of the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer and the Executive Director – Strategy and Governance which sought to receive the Joint Panel's feedback on two new strategies which aimed to improve residents' experience of contacting South Holland District Council while also increasing the efficiency of the overall operating

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**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
PANEL - 1 November 2018**

arrangements.

Councillor Carter was in attendance as the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer, and introduced the two reports. It was agreed that digital strategies should aim to focus digital resources on those who would / were likely to use digital services but that non-digital access routes were maintained too for those who struggled with digital interaction, with saved resources and time dedicated to such customers.

Members asked what input CPBS had, had on the strategies. The Executive Manager for information replied that both of the reports had been to the Council's ICT and Customer Governance Board for feedback on multiple occasions and that CPBS Managers sat on this board.

Members asked why the reports did not include a business case. They felt that officers should be mindful to ensure the strategy was tailored to South Holland District Council. They also brought up the quotes from personas on page 7 of the appendix to the Customer Access Strategy. They felt that these quotes seemed unnecessary. On that point, the Executive Manager for Information stated that the strategy was in fact aimed at reaching out to a greater proportion of residents and that it was hoped it would allow the Council to be able to fulfil more complex requests, which were hard to carry out due to the limitations with the current system.

Regarding the business case, The Executive Manager for Information stated that the quoted amounts may have seemed to be larger than the quotes provided by CPBS to replace the Customer Relationship Management system because of the size of the regenerative works that the Council wanted to undertake to improve its wider business processes. It was stated that when the report went to its final decision maker, there would be checks and balances put in place to ensure that the Council would not be made out of pocket by the changes.

Members also stated that they felt that with the current age demographic of the district, the change was premature until there was a properly reasoned business case for such a change. They felt that the strategy should not yet be adopted.

Members questioned the quotes and personas on page 7 of the appendix to the report of the Customer Access Strategy, feeling that they were unrealistic. They also wanted to establish where the budget for the strategies was coming from. Members felt that

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
PANEL - 1 November 2018**

the strategy should go to further scrutiny before it went to its final decision maker. The Executive Director for Strategy and Governance stated that it had not been determined where the allocation budget would come from and that work would be done to define this over the coming weeks and months.

Councillors mentioned that they had noticed that CPBS were not mentioned within the Customer Access Strategy document and could not see the reason for not mentioning the Council's Strategic partner in the document. The Executive Director for Strategy and Governance answered that this was the case in the Customer Access Strategy document, only because it was a public facing document, but that CPBS had been involved in the creation of the documents.

Members further questioned where the budget was coming from for both strategies. The Executive Manager for Information stated that work had been done with the Finance Partner to find money in the transformation fund but that more work would be done in the coming months to locate the additional monies.

Members stated that they were worried that the strategy may not be particularly beneficial. The Executive Manager for Information stated that the benefit would come from the fact that the public interaction services would be streamlined, easier to work with and that it would be easier to guarantee that requests were followed up on in a more effective and timely fashion. The Digital and Customer Services Manager stated that the changes allowed the authority to spend more time and resources with people who had difficulties engaging digitally.

Members said they would have liked to have seen more supporting evidence behind the quotes, figures and information. They requested that officers carry out work to generate a risk assessment linked to the document in order to plan for any outcome. Members mentioned that on Page 11 of the appendix to the report of the ICT & Digital Strategy there was inclusion of Breckland District Council office locations which they felt suggested the report was not tailored specifically to South Holland District Council. At that point several members stated that they could not vote to approve the report until more had been done to generate a risk assessment, business case and costing details. The Digital and Customer Services Manager stated that the personas featured in the Customer Access Strategy were actually based upon real data gathered from the public of South Holland.

The Executive Director for Strategy and Governance stated that it

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
PANEL - 1 November 2018**

could be possible to go back with the Councillors' feedback to address the issues raised and that the reports be brought back to further scrutiny.

Fears were raised that a media and public opinion issue could occur upon the implementation of these strategies if it was not made perfectly clear that non-digital routes of interaction were not being cut. The Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer stated that people would not be 'forced' to adopt online-only interaction and that the non-digital communication routes would always be available. The Executive Manager for Information further stated that they did not want to disadvantage anyone and reassured members that there was no intention to remove non-digital interaction under these strategies and the authority would support people in using ICT if they wished to learn.

Some members believed that the same increase in customer satisfaction could be achieved by improving funding to services instead of making the reporting processes better. The Executive Manager for Information explained that the intention behind the streamlining of these services was to free up resources that could be used and reinvested in frontline services.

Councillor Coupland spoke as the Portfolio Holder for Finance, saying that he was under the impression that CPBS hadn't seen the two strategies and that he had hoped that CPBS would be let into the arrangement. He agreed with the previously expressed sentiment that this should be treated as an introductory document and be taken away for further work. He felt there was a lot of work to be done on the costs and believed that he was yet to be convinced that the two strategies would present a cost benefit.

The Chairman asked why a date of April 2019 had been given for implementation of the two strategies. He asked why this date seemed to be required. It was stated that this was due to an audit requirement for CPBS due to the need to replace the current Customer Relationship Management System and to coincide with the launch of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members asked that if the report were to be re-presented, there should be a properly detailed section on risk and that the reports should be re-presented in good time.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance asked that all costings relating to these strategies would be presented to him in the future.

AGREED:

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
PANEL - 1 November 2018**

- a) That the content of the Customer Access Strategy report and attached draft Customer Access Strategy be noted.
- b) That the contents of the ICT & Digital strategy report, together with the attached draft ICT and Digital Strategy and Digital Work Programme, be noted.
- c) That both reports be strengthened with the inclusion of further supporting evidence.
- d) That officers take away both strategies to add further details, with special attention made to including details on costing, the business case, risk assessment and ensuring that all documents are tailored specifically for SHDC.
- e) That the potential of re-presenting both reports to further scrutiny Committees in the future before the final decision is made, be examined by officers.
- f) That all future costing matters on the topic of these two strategies be passed to the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

10. CORPORATE PLAN 2019-23

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance which sought to consult with the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel on the content of the new draft corporate plan for the period 2019-2023.

AGREED:

That the content of the draft Corporate Plan be noted.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 8.26 pm)

(End of minutes)

**JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
PANEL - 1 November 2018**