

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 Tuesday, 12 February 2019 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

B Alcock	H Drury	J L Reynolds
D Ashby	L J Eldridge	S-A Slade
F Biggadike	P C Foyster	E J Sneath
M D Booth	R Grocock	J Tyrrell
C J T H Brewis	J L King	J Whitbourn
G K Dark	A M Newton	A R Woolf

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors G R Aley, J R Astill, A Harrison, J D McLean and S Wray

In Attendance: Executive Director – Strategy and Governance, Executive Manager for Information, Digital and Customer Services Manager, ICT Manager, Innovation and Change Business Partner, Housing Landlord Services Manager, Head of Operations (CPBS), Head of Service – ICT (CPBS) Head of Service – Customer Contact (CPBS).

The Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer and the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation were also present.

16. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Woolf was elected Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

18. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY, ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY AND DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel agreed to take the two reports on the agenda together as one item.

Consideration was given to a report by the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation and Executive Director – Strategy and Governance which set out details of a new strategy which aimed to improve residents' experience of contacting South Holland District Council while also increasing the efficiency of its overall operating arrangements.

Action By

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Members also considered a report by the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer and the Executive Director for Strategy and Governance which set out details of a new strategy which aimed to improve residents' experience of contacting South Holland District Council while also increasing the efficiency of our overall operating arrangements.

Members recalled that at the meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel (PMP) and Policy Development Panel (PDP) held on 1st November 2019, the Panel raised a number of questions and/or concerns relating to the strategies and work programme:

With specific regard to the Customer Access Strategy, further information and reassurance was sought on:

- How/if the strategy has been tailored to the specific needs of SHDC
- The involvement of CPBS, as the Council's service delivery partner, in the strategy's development
- Consultation with East Lindsey District Council, as a shared client of CPBS, on the strategy's content – with particular regard to the proposed Customer Charter service standards The level of support that would be available to those who cannot access digital services and concern that telephone and face-to-face may not be available to those that need it

With specific regard to the ICT and Digital Strategy further information and reassurance was sought on:

- The involvement of CPBS, as the Council's service delivery partner, in the strategy's development
- Consultation with East Lindsey District Council, as a shared client of CPBS, on the strategy's content
- The business case for the Digital Work Programme, including:
 - Costs and budget
 - Benefits
 - Return on Investment
 - Risk analysis

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- The relevance of the Council's customer personas/insight – and how these help us to design more relevant services that people want as well as need.

In response to this feedback, a series of Member engagement sessions were held from 14-16 January 2019, which aimed to provide further detail and reassurance. The above points were also addressed in the two reports under consideration which were introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Customer and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation.

The Panel received a presentation by the Digital and Customer Services Manager which covered the following key areas:

- Initial Digital Priorities
- An illustration of how reporting a fly tip could work
- Information about how the proposals would be funded
- The governance arrangements for the proposals
- Examples of the benefits involved in the proposals in terms of cost avoidance
- An illustration of a tenant portal which would allow the automation of many manual housing processes
- A comparison of a current process and new process in relation to housing rent account management
- A PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technical) risk assessment

A copy of the presentation is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Councillors asked questions, discussed the draft documents and the following key points emerged:

- Councillors stressed the importance of any new systems being able to communicate with other local authorities, public bodies and government departments. It was noted that this had been built into the system and the strategy would seek to ensure that different teams would not be able to build their own incompatible systems.

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- Councillors also discussed whether moving to more automated systems would lead to more fraudulent activity and questioned what safe-guards would be put in place, particularly with regard to housing and the issue of tenancies. The Panel heard that whilst fraudulent activity could not be eradicated it could be mitigated. In the instance of tenancies, this would be done by the requirement of a log-in and password for any details to be changed. If notice had been given by someone purporting to be a tenant then a letter would be sent to the true tenant confirming the online statement at which point the fraudulent activity would come to light. There was also an officer visit built into the process which provided a further safeguard. It was acknowledged that automated systems could sometimes better support equality and diversity principles.
- The Panels were reassured that existing communications pathways would continue to be available, but it was stressed that they also needed to be just as accessible as present with telephone numbers still being prominently displayed on literature and websites for those who cannot or do not wish to engage with the Council digitally. It was acknowledged that the aim was to reduce telephone contact by 50% but that this would be achieved by being able to solve problems at the first point of contact so that further telephone calls were unnecessary. This would help to deliver financial savings. Implementation of modern systems would also provide the opportunity to redeploy staff to more meaningful work. However, it was acknowledged in the documents that telephone would remain the Council's largest source of contact. This would be closely monitored by scrutiny in the future to make sure that systems were not developed that would make telephone contact so difficult that people didn't use it. It would also be important to make signing up to 'My Account' as straightforward as possible with a simple guide for customers.
- Councillors discussed that the digital agenda was based in a large part on the use of broadband. A fast and reliable broadband connection was still not available in parts of the District. The Council needed to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to use its digital services. The Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation

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stressed that the Council continued to try to facilitate the availability of broadband to everyone in the District.

- The Panels discussed the development process for the new systems and noted that this was done in a staged process with features being added incrementally so that there was never anything substandard available to the public.
- It was noted that CPBS, as the Council's provider of services, also provided services to East Lindsey District Council who had their own strategies. CPBS would continue to look at how the services provided to the two authorities could be better aligned.
- Councillors explored whether there were potential commercial opportunities for the Council from the software being developed. Although the software was not unique, the supplier, GOSS, had a system whereby newly developed software was put into their library to be shared and the Council was credited with development time in return.
- With regard to the Council's out of hours service, this would continue to be provided for emergencies, but it was expected that as more services were available digitally for those that wished to use them, an increasing number of customers would make contact with the Council outside of core working hours in this way. It was important however to acknowledge that whilst digital reporting was 24 hour, expectations would need to be managed regarding response times.
- With regard to Governance, Councillors referred to the £300,000 implementation costs and asked for a clear idea of how this would be monitored so that the public could be assured that it was value for money. It was agreed that progress reports would be made to the Performance Monitoring Panel every six months or as appropriate.

The Panels thanked the Officers for their work on addressing their concerns and suggestions.

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AGREED:

That the Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel:

1. Notes the draft Customer Access Strategy, draft ICT and Digital Strategy and Digital Work Programme;
2. Provides comment and feedback as set out in these minutes;
3. Recommends the documents to Cabinet and Council; and
4. That progress of the strategies and work programme is reported to the performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis or as appropriate.

19. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were no urgent items.

(The meeting ended at 7.40 pm)

(End of minutes)