

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priors Road, Spalding, on Monday, 6 March 2023 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A C Beal	M Hasan	G P Scalese
F Biggadike	J L King	S-A Slade
M D Booth	P A Redgate	S Timewell
C J T H Brewis	J L Reynolds	S C Walsh
T A Carter	G T D Rudkin	A R Woolf

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors B Alcock, H J W Bingham, R A Gibson, N H Pepper, J Tyrrell and D J Wilkinson.

In Attendance: The Assistant Director - Corporate, the Head of IT – PSPS, and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

- | | <u>Action By</u> |
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| <p>24. <u>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN</u></p> <p>Councillor Woolf was elected Chairman for the duration of the meeting.</p> | |
| <p>25. <u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</u></p> <p>There were none.</p> | |
| <p>26. <u>PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY OF THE DIGITAL STRATEGY AND ICT ROADMAP FOR THE SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny Task Group Chairman, which asked the Joint Policy Development and Performance Monitoring Panel to receive the Partnership Scrutiny Task Group's report and recommendations following scrutiny of the draft Partnership Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group presented the report, and thanked all officers, members and Portfolio Holders that had been part of the process. He advised that the Task Group's final report was attached at Appendix A to the report, and its recommendations were as follows:</p> <p>1) That every 2 years, the Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap</p> | |

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- should be a Partnership scrutiny topic. In the interim year, the Partnership Annual Scrutiny Review, as part of its scope, should seek assurance that the Strategy is making progress;
- 2) To use 'best practice' from ELDC in upskilling residents in terms of digital skills, with a view to rolling out a training programme to Boston and South Holland residents. As part of this model, to seek feedback from participants on digital service access and journeys;
 - 3) There should be a continued focus on cyber security to ensure it is well embedded within the Partnership and that the importance of cyber security is understood by all; and
 - 4) To add a glossary to the Strategy and Roadmap to explain any terms considered technical.

The Joint Panel was provided with a presentation by the Head of ICT (PSPS Ltd), and this was included at Appendix C to the report. It was confirmed that following this meeting, the recommendations would be presented to SHDC's Cabinet meeting on 21 March 2023.

With regard to the Scrutiny recommendations, the Assistant Director – Corporate advised that throughout the process, the three appropriate Portfolio Holders across the S&ELCP had met regularly, had been involved in the scrutiny process and also supported the recommendations proposed.

Members considered the report and the presentation, and the following points were raised:

- Under 'Foundations for Success' within the Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap at Appendix D to the report, reference was made to the principle for all business systems of 'adopt, not adapt' – did this suggest that PSPS was dictating the way forward?
 - The Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Communications explained that the proposals would not be implemented in isolation by PSPS. Rather, they were the Council's partner in providing a number of back-office services, one of which was ICT provision. The proposals had been drawn together with the involvement of an independent consultant, and with the involvement of members. The proposed governance changes to processes were to ensure that business cases came forward when required, and that relevant departments would work with PSPS to put projects together, for ultimate decision by the Portfolio Holder.

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- At Appendix 3 (Digital Transactions) to Appendix D to the report, clarification was sought as to whether this information reflected the current situation – there appeared to be a number of gaps for each authority against individual transactions.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Communications advised that the information was a snapshot of the current situation. PSPS would be undertaking an analysis of which routes were used more than others and this would drive the direction of future provision. Areas that were used more often would be developed appropriately, and any areas not already on the list could be added. In addition, consideration would need to be given to decisions around which areas were undertaken by the Partnership, and which would be undertaken by the sovereign councils.
 - The Head of ICT (PSPS) added that work was currently underway to analyse volume metrics across the councils. Not all transactions would be aligned – consideration would be given to each of the council's needs.

- It was stated that long-term, the proposals should strengthen the partnership and should be a reason for optimism.

- Clarification was sought for the following points raised in the Task Group's report (Appendix A) under 'Scrutiny Task Group Analysis and Discussion':
 - Under the 'System' heading - reference was made to removal of legacy technology – would this include recent purchases? The Head of ICT confirmed that this would not include systems currently being used, or that had recently been invested in. It related to out of date and unsupported systems.
 - Under the 'System' heading - reference was made to the roll-out of the platform across the three councils within the partnership – where was SHDC within this programme? The Head of ICT advised that where a business case came forward, if all three authorities could be rolled out at the same time, this would be done as the most efficient way forward. Where there was a technical reason for this not being possible, the authority whose system was in most need of update could be dealt with first as part of a phased approach for each authority

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- rather than an end-to-end approach one authority at a time.
 - Under the 'System' heading - reference was made to the audit of software assets but it was unclear whether this would still be undertaken by the individual service area going forward. The Head of ICT Services commented that there were two ways in which this would be approached. For 'centralised' systems that ICT managed on the authority's behalf, these would be audited by ICT who would also ensure that licences were in place. Where there was a business system, ICT would work with the service to ensure the relevant licences were in place and that systems aligned.
 - Under the 'Users' heading – the order of users was listed as staff, members and residents. The order should be changed to residents, staff and members. It was confirmed that this order would be addressed.
- Members acknowledged that technology would take on an ever-increasing role going forward however, not all individuals wished to, or could engage with the Council in this way – it was important to ensure that alternative methods of engagement were still available and sufficiently supported.
 - The Head of ICT advised that she would raise the point regarding sufficient resource for telephony with the appropriate officer.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Communications commented that the intention was not for telephone access to decline at the expense of proposed digital improvements. Work would be undertaken to ensure that telephony systems and provision were robust enough to support those that still wished to contact the Council in this way.
- For those individuals who did not or could not use technology, what work was being undertaken to assist and encourage them?
 - The Assistant Director – Corporate advised that a piece of work had been undertaken at ELDC to assist in upskilling the community in digital technology. The Task Group had realised the benefits of expanding this assistance across the S&ELCP and a bid for external funding had been made to support the roll out further. The outcome of this bid was not yet known.

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- What precautions were being taken to mitigate against future potential cyber-attacks or power failure?
 - The Head of ICT responded on both points. 1) Cyber-security - ICT sought to ensure that the authority was on the latest platforms and that all vulnerabilities were assessed and remediated where possible. In addition, with cyber-security it was important to undertake 'defence in depth' which meant there was not reliance solely on anti-virus software but that there was the facility to 'flex and adapt' by ensuring there was defence in depth, and technology in place. There was a dedicated Information Security Analyst in post who constantly reviewed the position of cyber-security and horizon scanning. 2) With regard to power loss, ICT worked closely with the Facilities department. All systems were backed up by a UPS which would provide back up for a certain amount of time, after which a generator would take over. There were multiple layers of back-up to address any power outages.

- In response to whether the proposals had been scrutinised by BBC and ELDC scrutiny panels, members were advised that the joint scrutiny panel had brought its findings to each sovereign scrutiny panel after which it would be presented to respective Cabinet meetings for approval.

- Members questioned why one of the Task Group's recommendations was that the Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap would only be considered as a Partnership scrutiny topic every two years?
 - The Assistant Director – Corporate advised that there had been some discussion by the Task Group on the frequency of review. The S&ELCP's Memorandum of Agreement stated that there should be an annual Partnership Scrutiny Review and it was suggested that the annual Task Group provide 'light touch' scrutiny and that every other year, more in depth scrutiny take place as part of a dedicated Task Group. It had been felt that there were a number of pieces of scrutiny work underway and coming forward, both jointly and at each sovereign council and it was therefore important to make these workloads manageable.

AGREED:

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- 1) That the report and associated recommendations, attached at Appendix A, be noted; and
- 2) That a Task Group meet every two years to review progress.

27. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.08 pm)

(End of minutes)