

Attendance

Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Barry Findlay (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Alan Bolshaw

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Angus with Cllr Bolshaw attending as his substitute and Cllr Sweetman with Cllr Philip Bateman attending as her substitute. Apologies were also received from Cllr Jaspal.
- 2 **Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting**
Resolved:
 That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 5 **Digital Transformation Programme 2017-2020**
A report was submitted requesting Scrutiny to review the contents of the report and provide feedback to Cabinet ahead of any decision to implement future phases of the Digital Transformation Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report and highlighted the fact that Customer experience was the most important element and that in most

organisations when customers rang into a customer contact centre at busy times they got left on hold. During the next phases of the Digital Transformation Programme at the City Council, customers would now have the option to be rung back.

It was confirmed that the programme would be looking to save money as the Council now had less staff and needed to find better and smarter ways of providing services. One important area where improvements would be made was by enabling different software programmes to talk to each other.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council was still focused on digital by design which meant that all channels are available still for the public to contact the Council. It was accepted that there would still be customers who wanted to visit or phone the Council but that there would also be an increase in digital functionality for members of the public who wanted to use self-service. The public needed to be brought along with the Council in a trusted way.

Some concerns in relation to staffing had been raised and it was confirmed that any member of staff in customer services who wanted to stay with the Council would be able to stay with the Council and that employees would be used more smartly and effectively.

The Digital Transformation Programme Director provided an overview of the programme which was not new but a continuation of the first phase which had now been delivered. The first phase had included the introduction of technology platforms and created a 'my account' to enable people to do self-service online. Services had been taken up over a full 24hour period with almost £2 million in payment transactions carried out outside of normal office hours.

The next phase of the programme would be looking to accelerate and deliver more digital services as there was a big requirement for more payment services to be available online. This will also help to bring revenue in quickly for the Council. Other services would also help to enhance the customer experience such as the ability to contact parents in real time when schools are closed in bad weather, or streets are being gritted etc.

Councillors considered the report and queried how many my account registrations would be needed to be advantageous to the Council. Councillors also sought reassurance from Officers that registration would not be compulsory.

It was agreed that the current number of 16000 registrations was relatively low but that the number of available transactions was still quite limited therefore when new services became available take-up would be expected to increase. Officers stated that they would like to see in the region of 50,000 registrations as a minimum. Officers recognised the need to involve the community in the process by getting feedback and involving them in the testing phases of future releases. Communication was key but it also had to be kept in mind that digital was not for everyone.

Councillors queried what translation services the Council used and it was confirmed that the Council currently used Google and that this would be carried forward to all online services.

Councillors appreciated that digital transactions were cheaper but queried whether hardware needed to be maintained and software licenced as well as whether there were any transactional charges.

Officers stated that the Council had recently changed its online payment provider and that previously the transactional fee was 1.46% of the total spend but with the new supplier there was a flat fee of 5p per transaction, officers were anticipating £200 000 worth of savings from this.

Software licensing costs – traditionally hardware and then software has been purchased and installed in the Council's data centre, with a refresh cycle of every 3 to 5 years in the past. Now services can be obtained over the internet avoiding any hardware or software costs. Licences are purchased to use the service which can be increased or decreased based on demand like a pay as you go service. This presents a greater strain on the revenue expenditure of the Council as the previous investment in hardware and software was capital funded. It was confirmed that financial modelling was being carefully looked at to account for this.

Some concern was expressed by Councillors regarding what would happen if the system went down then everything goes down and the question was raised as to whether people could come in and use the system with a member of staff?

The Digital Transformation Programme Director stated that there was already a bank of terminals in reception and floor walkers there to help members of the public and that this was already very well used. Officers were also looking as part of the libraries review into training library staff to help the public.

It was also confirmed that the Council was using companies such as Microsoft that had more than one data centre that could act as a backup. The Council would be able to utilise services that were not necessarily dependent on the Civic building.

Councillors considered that the following comments needed to be fed back to Cabinet for consideration:

- 1) That the Digital Transformation Programme needed to be carefully monitored and available resources prioritised in relation to the programme delivery.
- 2) That the transition to agile working needed to be carefully managed and regularly reviewed.

Councillors queried whether areas relating to digital transformation were ringfenced and it was confirmed that the capital budget was under constant review and that there was a high-level capital programme monitoring board chaired by the Deputy Managing Director. It was also confirmed that the recent LGA Peer review had been very complimentary about how the Council was managing the capital programme.

Councillors queried whether work done by the capital budget monitoring groups was something that should be considered by scrutiny but it was stated that the group in question dealt with very technical information and that reports would still go back to Cabinet at the relevant level. The whole capital programme was already open to scrutiny. There needed to be a proactive management of the capital programme which is what the officer group did.

Councillors queried what just in time development was and it was stated that officers did try to forecast what would needed to be done but that there would always be things we could not predict and that was just in time development.

Councillors were impressed with how the local authority was moving towards digital but that it was the role of Cllrs to monitor that we were within budget and to keep an eye on the implications.

Some concerns were expressed in relation to possible future legal implementations linked with digital transformation considering that the process was now moving at speed. Councillors queried how much extra legal advise would be required and whether there was a plan in relation to the future legal implications for the authority which could be costly. Councillors were keen that the Council did not find itself looking at this area retrospectively. It was agreed that a response be requested from, Kevin O'keefe, Director of Governance in relation to this.

Councillors also queried the security of the digital data that the Council would hold. Officers stated that there was a new piece of legislation due in May 2018 but that this would still apply regardless of whether digital transformation was happening or not. Officers were therefore looking at how the Council could use digital technology to help the data protection process such as the requirement that consent would now need to be given proactively.

Officers stated that people could request their data now and that information would still be redacted accordingly regardless of digital transformation. There would be a portal for people to see what general information is held about them and this would only be accessible to them.

Councillors stated that they were pleased with the responses from officers and that there would need to be some more work with the lawyers. There was however still some concern regarding what guidance and training would be provided for the new legislation especially considering that the local authority was propelled by 60 Cllrs making decisions and acting on behalf of the electorate. All Cllrs had a degree of information that related to individuals/constituents. The concern was that the legal implications of this had perhaps not been fully recognised and that councillors were not protected as much as they could be.

Officers confirmed that a lot of work was being done prior to the introduction of the new GDPR legislation and that this would involve providing training to councillors and staff.

Recommendations to Cabinet.

- 1) That the Digital Transformation Programme will be carefully monitored and available resources prioritised in relation to the programme delivery.
- 2) That the transition to agile working needs to be carefully managed and regularly reviewed.

- 3) That Scrutiny Board to have a presentation from the Director of Governance in relation to the new data protection legislation.
- 4) That 6 monthly update reports be provided to scrutiny on the delivery progress of the Digital Transformation Programme.

6 **The Youth Council**

Make your mark was an organisation that collected data in relation to the issues that were important to young people. There had been an election in Wolverhampton and the turnout was the highest it had ever been and was the largest consultation of young people in Europe. The national results would be published on 18 October 2017

The vote showed that the main issue for the youth in Wolverhampton related to work experience hubs for 11-18 year olds and improving the ways in which young people could access work experience. On 10 November the top 5 national issues would be discussed during a youth parliament debate.

The Board agreed that it was important to consider how the Council could help the Youth Council to make even more progress on top of the considerable progress it had already made over the last year.

The Board noted that the Votes for 16 campaign had been a high priority for many years and had been backed by Full Council last year.

Only 2 schools had not taken part this year which was an excellent result and turnout had been high. It was noted that 13.76% of the participants thought that work experience hubs were top priority with mental health issues also being considered very important.

The Board thanked the Youth Council and stated that with 13.32% of the vote it was clear that mental health issues needed to be higher up on the agenda. It was noted that the Council was currently scrutinising services that were provided for people with mental health concerns and the Chair of the Review Group agreed to forward the survey to members of the Youth Council for completion.

The Board stated that the results were very insightful and that they were proud to see concerns regarding the protection of LGBT rights and mental health. The Board felt lifted by this report and the fact that 8000 young people had taken part to express their views. This was a brilliant and insightful piece of work and would greatly help Councillors in their roles.

Officers stated that one of the interesting things was that the Youth Parliament would vote off the back of the debate and take issues forward to Central Government; it empowered the young people to ensure that their voices were being heard. This was a landmark achievement for the Youth Council and an excellent turnout.

There had been a huge improvement in participation with schools that had not previously taken part now getting involved. Officers stated that they had done a lot of work with schools that were not previously involved and were now hopeful that all except the 2 listed would nominate.

Resolved:

That Officers work with the Youth Council to set up a mini mental health review and a mini transport review with the recommendations from the transport review being fed back to the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7 Information Governance Performance Report - Quarter 1 2017

A report was submitted requesting the Board to comment on the quarter one performance for Information Governance and to identify and feedback any further actions required.

Officers stated that this was a positive report and highlighted the fact that there was a 100% response rate for the quarter in relation to requests for data protection and a 99% response rate for Freedom of Information and Environmental Information.

Feedback on internal deadlines was included in the report for the first time and had a 60% response rate which officers did want to improve to at least 80%.

The number of information incidents reported for the quarter was 9 which had decreased and was 11 less than the numbers reported in the previous quarter and 10 less than the same quarter in the previous year.

Officers recognised that they also needed to improve training on data protection for new starters and that there would need to be more reporting and monitoring regarding this to make sure that there was accountability. The Finance Director stated that she would raise the issue with SEB.

Resolved: That the comments and feedback of the Board be noted and fed back to SEB and the Information Governance Board.

8 Annual Corporate, Social Care and Public Health Complaints Report

The Customer Engagement Manager introduced a report providing a summary of the complaints, compliments, Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman enquiries received by the Council during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

There had been 3 Public Health complaints, 1 in relation to quality of services, 1 disagreeing with the policy regarding fluoride in water and 1 in relation to the non-availability of services. None of the complaints were upheld.

In relation to Adult Social Care there had been a rise of 9 complaints. With a total of 90 covering 33 service areas.

It was stated that the Service looked to provide a written response in 10 working days and that the figure was down to 11 from 19 so moving in the correct direction and painting a positive picture.

In relation to Children's Services there had been 96 complaints which was down from 128 and covered 26 separate service areas with an average response time of 14 days (one day up from previous year) but given the complexity of complaints this was

also seen to be quite positive. There had only been 2 requests for independent investigation and 1 final stage panel request.

Officers confirmed that the number of compliments was up and that there had been a good outcome from OFSTED with the complaint function forming part of this.

The Board noted Pg. 87 of the report that referred to Bradley Resource Centre and listed the compliments but with no detail and it was requested that detail be included in future reports. The Board needed to ensure that the complaints procedure was accessible and that people understood that it was anonymous.

The Board thanked the Officer for the report which was very detailed but queried the fact that officers responsible for services were missing from it.

The Board were pleased that that compliments were fed back to staff.

The Board referred to page 50 of the report regarding an older person not having transport from hospital and noted that this did not convey the distress caused by this problem.

The Board also referred to Page 57 and 'NRPF' and requested that officers put words in full.

The customer Engagement Manager stated that there was a huge amount of evidence regarding learning from complaints the Council did not currently do enough with and agreed that this needed to be fed back into the organisation and the responsible managers.

The Board queried how concerns were being addressed with managers as they could provide a valuable insight into how services could be planned and delivered with the right productivity and resources.

The Board stated that it was also important to have feedback about what has happened since a complaint, what learning has come out of it, what did we do and how did we follow through.

The customer Engagement Manager agreed and stated that outcomes would be added to future reports.

The Board thanked the Customer Engagement Manager for the report.

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Work programme

Resolved: That the work programme be noted and agreed.