

JOINT AUDIT & GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY (TRANSFORMATION) SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 July 2019 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Paul Buckley
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips

By invitation: Peter Marsden and Tim Spiers, Entec Si

Officers:

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive; Claire Taylor, Interim Assistant Chief Executive; Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Item 8 Will Harper, Interim Head of ICT; Nicholas Brownlow, Digital Services Manager

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

15/19 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2019/20

(Agenda Item. 1)

Councillor Mike Fox-Davies moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

16/19 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2019/20

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillor Liz Brighouse moved and Councillor Tony Ilott seconded that Councillor Nick Carter be elected Deputy Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Nick Carter be elected Deputy Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

The Chairman noted that she would prefer if the Chairman and Deputy Chairman could be titled Co-Chairs but the Constitution did not allow for that. The Chief Executive responded that she would take it up with the Law and Governance Section.

17/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Carter.

18/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

19/19 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 5)

The minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2019 were approved and signed.

20/19 ICT DIGITAL STRATEGY

(Agenda Item. 8)

Claire Taylor introduced two representatives from consultants Entec Si, Peter Marsden and Tim Spiers, who have been working with OCC's Head of ICT on the ICT health check and in designing a new strategy. She described how ICT is central to the business case for transformation. With £12m per annum spent on ICT and significant capital expenditure, it is important to have a clear strategy going forward.

Peter Marsden led the presentation. Entec Si has 25 years of experience working with local authorities as well as the NHS, not-for-profit and business sectors. The development of a strategy is still in the early stages. It will tie in with the Council's values and corporate plan.

Technology changes very quickly – for example over 50% of transactions now take place via mobile phones – but it is important to get the foundations right.

Officers and consultants responded to issues raised by Members as follows:

- The ability is there to allow tracking of versions of documents but a roadmap is needed for its introduction and communication.
- The strategy will have an implementation plan to ensure that change is planned.
- The “health check” was needed to determine what equipment and systems are in place now. Then moving forward the strategy will bring order to future developments and avoid different sections going in different directions.
- Non-IT options will continue to be available to residents– primarily by telephone.
- The carbon footprint reductions indicated on Agenda Page 37 are overall reductions and are not the result of transferring carbon emissions to external providers. Providers can achieve much greater economies of scale.
- The level of security on the Cloud is much higher than the Council could achieve itself. The Ministry of Defence is on the Cloud. Tens of thousands of attempts at cyber attacks are made each day (not specifically aimed at the Council) and they are successfully blocked.
- Most security incidents are due to human actions rather than the technology. Everyone needs to remain vigilant. Training for councillors is already planned.
- Officers will check the situation regarding insurance.

Members also made the following suggestions:

- Primary schools could be a resource to help harness the IT skills of young people in helping people who are less confident – something which could also help tackle loneliness.
- The remaining maintained schools also need to be considered in the strategy. OFSTED has been critical of record-keeping for safeguarding issues. Solutions might then be sold on to non-maintained schools – even nursery schools are now spending a lot of money on IT.
- The Council's systems need to be able to talk to others such as the police, hospitals and schools to ensure that everyone has the most up to date information.

The officers and consultants thanked Members for their feedback which will be taken on board in developing the strategy.

21/19 QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (APRIL TO JUNE 2019)

(Agenda Item. 7)

Claire Taylor introduced the report which outlines the situation at six months into a 3 to 5 year programme. The focus in the last quarter has been on finance, strategic capability and the provision cycle.

A proposed dashboard is included as Annex 1 in order to get feedback from Members of the Committee before it is circulated to all Members.

Officers responded to Members questions as follows:

- It was made clear from the start that a reduction in staff numbers was part of the planned savings. Redundancies will be minimised by means of redeployment where possible and all proper HR processes will be followed. It is not possible to even put a ballpark figure on related costs at this stage.
- The first transformation changes in terms of service redesign will be the consultation on the Council's Finance function due to start shortly with a briefing for around 50 staff involved. The unions will be included in the consultation which will be completed by September.
- The Finance changes focus on development of a new customer offer, enabling the council more effectively by a greater focus on income generation and commercialisation as well as a more consistent and higher standard of financial management
- The partnership with Hampshire is not part of this but it will be re-examined when the time is right.
- Under the Finance review partnership initial opportunities with Cherwell District Council have been identified with a joint head of procurement appointed and a shared internal audit function planned from April 2020.
- Reports can show savings against costs but increased efficiencies achieved are not always measurable in pounds.
- The changes in family safeguarding have not been part of the transformation programme. Other changes will continue to be made across the organisation as opportunities arise.
- While the Council avails of consultant advice, our own staff are being upskilled at the same time. Entec Si was specifically selected as IT consultants because of their record on business engagement.

The following suggestions were made by Members for future reports:

- Reports should say more about increasing demand for services, societal change and unbudgeted new requirements such as mental health services for young people up to 25 years of age.
- Where tables and pie charts show percentages, it would be good to show the total figure as well, so the scale can be assessed.

22/19 FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item. 9)

The revised and new dates for future meetings and items for discussion were agreed as outlined in the Work Programme.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing