

MINUTES of a meeting of the **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – RESOURCES** held via MS Teams on 4 March 2021

PRESENT

Councillor T A Kemp (in the Chair)

Councillors N Barker, B Bingham, J Boulton, C Moesby, C Short, J Twigg, M Wall and G Wharmby.

01/21 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Resources held on 10 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

02/21 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** There were no public questions.

03/21 **GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** Peter Handford, Director of Finance and ICT attended the meeting and provided members with a presentation on Governance and Financial Sustainability.

He reminded members of the key elements of the statutory framework and the officer mechanisms for protecting good governance.

He gave details of the Core local Governance Framework including the role of the Section 151 Officer, and details of both internal and external checks and balances and examples of financial stresses that had occurred within other authorities.

Also detailed was financial demand and cost pressures and the effects of Covid -19. Funding uncertainty remained one of the key concerns.

The Medium term outlook showed the following:

- Services to be delivered on a stable financial footing;
- Demand pressure for social care had potential to release significant savings;
- Pandemic had slowed down the savings programme;
- Additional social care grant funding must continue; and
- Council tax increases provided base budget to support delivery of services

Mr Handford agreed to circulate his presentation to the committee.

Members made a number of comments and asked questions which were duly noted or answered by Mr Handford, who confirmed that he would keep members updated moving forward.

The Chairman thanked Mr Handford for his update.

RESOLVED to note the presentation on Governance and Financial Sustainability

04/21 **CHANNEL SHIFT PROGRAMME PROGRESS** Emma Crapper, Director of Organisation, Development and Policy and Julie Odams, Assistant Director Communications and Customers, attended the meeting and provided an update on the council's Channel Shift programme, its current position, next steps and makes recommendations for the Committee's further involvement.

The Channel Shift programme began in September 2019 with the clear objectives of:

- Achieving a significant proportion of Derbyshire's residents engaging, communicating and transacting with the Council through a single online portal, significantly improving the resident experience.
- Achieving a 'single view' of the customer, improving their experience of the council and our 'one council' response.
- Delivering significant organisation efficiencies in terms of processes, feedback response, service improvement, reporting and data use.

Significant work had taken place to understand the scope of the programme, its potential impacts and benefits, the level of investment required both financially and in terms of officer time, and to create a Channel Shift strategy.

This work led to a significant broadening of the scope of the project to create a cross-council programme, delivering the above plus enabling a revised approach to complaints and resident feedback (as reported to Resources I&S in September 2020) and introducing a new booking and events system to the organisation. This expansion, also including the introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to the council and associated investment was approved by Cabinet in March 2020.

The Channel Shift programme would provide a number of benefits for both residents and the organisation and were detailed in the report.

The programme contained three main elements: The Introduction of a Customer Relationship Management system; the Creation of a new complaints and resident feedback approach, as reported to the Committee in September 2020; and the introduction of a new booking and events system.

In terms of recent progress the programme had gone through a significant procurement process, one of the largest the council had undertaken, and had established a preferred supplier for the required software systems. Contract negotiations were currently underway.

In terms of the Customer relationship management system, the programme phases had been established with 71 officers having been involved in preparing services to be made available to residents through the new systems and 25 services either currently being reviewed or having recently completed their reviews.

Whilst there will inevitably be changes to the planned programme as new opportunities arise, currently it was planned to make 208 council services available through the CRM system in the three phases of the programme, with this being complete by December 2022. Past this date, the CRM system will be embedded in the council's 'business as usual' approach and would continue to develop and offer new opportunities to residents.

Complaints and resident feedback

Work was currently underway to:

- Implement the new software system (subject to contract negotiations, as the system is part of the wider CRM)
- Understand the council's 'as is' processes in detail
- Ensure statutory compliance of new system and processes
- Establish new reporting processes, focusing on statutory compliance and Local Government Ombudsman best practice initially
- Work with staff to develop the new approach and ensure they fully trained to use the new system
- Introduce continuous improvement processes to ensure complaints and feedback and learnt from and changes are made to the way the council operates where needed.

Following the above, which was aimed to be in place in the summer 2021, integration with Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests would be explored.

Booking and events system

The system will improve how the council arranges events and how residents book on to them, will enable online payments for event

attendance and will significantly improve how both staff and residents book rooms in county council properties.

Work was currently underway to:

- Implement the new software system (subject to contract negotiations, as the system was part of the wider CRM)
- Train staff and communicate the changes internally and externally.

As mentioned above, final contract negotiations are currently underway with the preferred supplier. Whilst these take place, significant work is underway with colleagues across departments to prepare services to go on to the new systems.

Once a contract was agreed there was a significant period of working with the supplier to develop the system to the Councils requirements, to train staff and to make the services available to residents through the Derbyshire County Council website. This stage would also involve detailed analysis of the benefit opportunities on a service by service basis to ensure the council achieves return on its investment.

The Committee was asked to provide ongoing challenge and support through:

- Receiving regular progress reports on the Channel Shift programme;
- Supporting the 'resident voice' work, ensuring that the needs and voice of Derbyshire's people are truly embedded in the project as it developed; and
- Paying particular attention to the development and implementation of the complaints and resident feedback approach, ensuring that improvements are delivered and receiving regular updates.

Members made a number of comments and asked questions which were duly noted or answered.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their update

RESOLVED (1) to note the progress of the Channel Shift programme;

(2) to receive regular reports on the programme's progress, paying particular attention to the complaints and resident feedback approach; and

(3) to support the 'resident voice' work, noting progress and recommending ways in which the needs of Derbyshire's residents could be truly represented

05/21 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING**
RESOLVED that under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that in view of the nature of the business, that if members of the public were present exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed to them and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED AFTER THE PUBLIC HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING

1. People Strategy Update (Contains information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultation or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority)