Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 13 June 2016

Time: 7.00 - 8.55 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Gaffney (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs S Adoh, Miss S Brown, H Bull, A D Collingwood, C Etholen, M Harris, M E Knight, D Knights, R Raja and J A Savage and L Wood*

Also present by invitation: Councillors D Shakespeare OBE (Cabinet Member for HR, ICT & Customer Services) and S Saddique (Deputy Cabinet Member for HR, ICT & Customer Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Ahmed, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M P Davy, A E Hill, A Lee and Ms C J Oliver

*Standing deputy

1.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

> **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 9 March 2016, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.   REPORT OF THE ICT (INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY) TASK & FINISH GROUP

Chairman of the ICT (Information Communication Technology) Task & Finish Group; Councillor L Wood presented the report of the Group by means of a power point presentation.

The recommendations fell into three categories:

1. To resolve the legacy issues following the handover from Northgate to Capita:

2. To standardise, streamline and progress the operating systems, processes and tools in use:

3. To implement a formal monitoring and review process for the ICT provision and incorporation of technology into work flow at Wycombe District Council (WDC):

Extensive evidence had been gathered and the themes of the work of the Group had been identified as:

- Accessibility and Efficiency;

- Versatility and Functionality;

- Security;

- Infrastructure;

- Economic Value; and

- Monitoring

Reference was made to the end of mainstream support and extended support regarding the various Windows Client Operating Systems and the need to put into place systems that were as far as possible 'future-proof'. Key issues identified were mentioned: the current outdated webmail and hardware security token, iPads only downloading in Wi-Fi areas, no member access to shared drives and non-receipt of all staff e-mails.

The Group had learnt that the Council was not entirely bound by the Capita contract, enabling it to set its own development pace. Capita's past and current level of performance was also referenced. The constraints of the Public Service Network requirements were referred to; and the belief that support of members' own devices would be inefficient.

Paperless working would require the appropriate digital system and training to be in place first. Importantly the Group had established that to operate at peak efficiency with technology, the Council should standardise operating systems and digital tools for both Members and officers together.

The full recommendations as arrived at by the Group (and as featured below) were explained in detail and set out in a general order of priority.

1. **To resolve the legacy issues following the handover from Northgate to Capita:**

    Recommendation 1
        To immediately clarify and resolve, potentially through third party expert review, the nature of the stability issues either caused or aggravated by 'File Server 1'.

    Reason: To resolve stability issues leading to server failures and excessive downtime.

Recommendation 2

    To ensure that suitable server power is provided to prevent logon issues during busy periods.

Reason: To resolve failures related to heavy traffic during busy periods at WDC offices.

Recommendation 3

    That adequate and knowledgeable support is available from Capita, both remotely and on-site, for specialist programmes and systems.

Reason: In order to provide IT support that maintains 99.9% operational efficiency.

Recommendation 4

    To require Capita to provide an action plan for fixing issues that have been identified.

Reason: To tackle the culture of patching.

Recommendation 5

    To ensure that where short term patches are used, they are communicated to all staff.

Reason: To resolve problem of repetitive issues across departments.

Recommendation 6

    That the possibility of implementing financial penalties against Capita for failures be explored.

Reason: To hold Capita to account for failures and ensure implementation of action plans.

Recommendation 7

    To scope out, develop and implement a modern IT infrastructure of servers and systems that will support continual growth and development in WDC's use of technology.

Reason: To end issues relating to current infrastructure and prepare WDC ICT for ongoing development as the nature and functionality of technological innovations improve our operational capabilities.

Recommendation 8

    To devise, schedule and implement a single sign-on process for Members and Officers.

Reason: To reduce inefficiencies related to constant logging in and out of software.

2. **To standardise, streamline and progress the operating systems, processes and tools in use:**

Recommendation 9
> To immediately devise, schedule and implement a plan to upgrade all council devices running on Windows to Windows 10.

Reason: To resolve issues relating to age and variance of operating systems, and to improve efficiency and consistency within the work flow.

Recommendation 10
> To immediately devise, schedule and implement a plan to upgrade all Members and Officers to Office 365.

Reason: To standardise digital tools in use by Members and Officers to improve efficiency and consistency within the work flow.

Recommendation 11
> To work with RSA or competitors to move away from hardware security tokens and introduce software based security tokens, or token-less authentication.

Reason: To modernise and streamline the necessary 2-stage authentication process.

Recommendation 12
> To implement a new Members ICT Scheme whose core elements should include:

- An end to the provision by WDC of printed documentation for meetings.

Reason: To continue our move towards 'digital by design'.

- The introduction of a £25 per month Members ICT allocation.

Reason: To cover the costs of digital and remote working.

- The mandatory issue to all members of a combined notebook & tablet, and a smartphone, which operate on Windows 10 and are compatible with Office 365, particularly the current version of Microsoft Outlook.

  These devices will be designated as the Members property and paid for using the £25 Members ICT allocation, so that the Members will fully own the devices at the end of their term in office.

Reason: To resolve issues relating to the variance of operating systems and devices in use, to standardise Members equipment to improve efficiency, to increase functionality and versatility of members

equipment, to resolve issues with webmail and calendars. Generally, to provide Members with effective ICT tools.

Recommendation 13

The new devices should also provide Members with access to the shared drive, and must allow sharing of calendars with third parties.

Reason: To improve work flow efficiency, capabilities and organisation.

Recommendation 14

To design and implement a mandatory training programme and set of training tools for Members on how to use their new devices. This training is to be repeated following every District Council election and all members must complete it.

Reason: To ensure that all Members have the same level of digital literacy and are familiar with new equipment and innovations within supplied software.

Recommendation 15

To allow Officers to purchase the same devices as Members on a monthly payment scheme for work and/or private use.

Reason: To provide parity and standardisation between Members and Officers to improve efficiency and consistency.

Recommendation 16

To develop a process for offering disused technology (e.g. iPads) for purchase by Members and Officers.

Reason: To recoup as much funding as possible from disused devices to roll into budgets for acquiring new equipment.

Recommendation 17

For members of the ICT Task and Finish Group to be included in any trial of new equipment as they will be able to provide an informed review.

Reason: To ensure that any trial is viewed from the wider perspective of the needs of WDC as a whole as outlined in this report, not just personal preference.

Recommendation 18

To include Members on the 'All Staff' mailing list, and to close the Members' Extranet and transfer them to the Staff Intranet.

Reason: To ensure that Members do not miss vital or useful communications.

Recommendation 19

To ensure that the highest possible Wi-Fi and Internet speeds are available throughout the Council buildings at Queen Victoria Road site.

Reason: To resolve issues around internet traffic at peak meeting times.

Recommendation 20
To install such hardware or software as may be necessary to cast presentations to Members' portable devices, ending any reliance on (but not necessarily the use of) projector screens, particularly in the Council Chamber.

Reason: To resolve issues around poorly placed projector screens, and to improve functionality and versatility.

Recommendation 21
To provide Members' payslips and certificates online.

Reason: To continue our move towards 'digital by design'.

Recommendation 22
To provide USB charging sockets in the Council Chamber and at desks in meeting rooms.

Reason: To reduce the amount of equipment Members and Officers have to carry.

Recommendation 23
Explore the possibility of using electronic voting in the Council Chamber, and having Councillors names displayed on public screens when speaking.

Reason: To improve the efficiency of meetings and the experience for the public.

3. **To implement a formal monitoring and review process for the ICT provision and incorporation of technology into work flow at WDC:**

Recommendation 24
The Cabinet Member for HR, ICT & Customer Services is requested to give an annual presentation to the Improvement & Review Commission on the state of the ICT provision at WDC, and the progress made with the recommendations of the Commission.

Recommendation 25
The HR, ICT & Customer Services Policy Advisory Group to monitor progress of ICT development in the interim;

Recommendation 26
A full assessment of the ICT provision to be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group once in each four year Council Term.

Reason for these recommendations: To ensure the implementation of recommendations and timely future adaptation of ICT provision across the organisation, continuing to drive efficiency, consistency, versatility, functionality, high quality service provision and good value.

Councillor Wood explained the Group's reluctance to attach costings to the recommendations as the Group did not wish to see the recommendations picked for implementation by the executive on a cost basis, as they were to be seen as an inter-related package of measures, whilst accepting there would need to be further work undertaken on the order of implementation. They were featured in a distinct order of priority, for example 'digital by default / no paper copies' could not be implemented before full effective IT kit was in place.

Members raised a number of issues and received clarification on a number of points as follows:

- It was confirmed that penalties had been imposed on Capita at the end of the first year of the 5 year contract, which expired 2020 with an extension option;

- Regular focused training for Members was seen as key to the successful implementation of digital by default systems;

- The involvement of ICT Task & Finish Group Members in and individual capacity for any technology trials was offered;

- It was confirmed that there was an existing budget which could be considered for the phased implementation of the recommendations by Cabinet;

- A member in supporting the recommendations; outlined that they did not represent 'the gold standard'; but merely a very good working basic for an organisation utilising technology efficiently and to economic effect.

- The recommendation of a £25 per month allocation with which Members would purchase the suggested combined notebook & tablet and smartphone, would allow functionality for members without compromising the organisation's PSN standard adherence.

- The suggestion in recommendation 1 that a third party expert review, if required, was utilised to immediately clarify and resolve the stability issues caused or aggravated by 'File Server 1', was commended.

The Cabinet Member for HR, ICT & Customer Services responded after the presentation, emphasising that his attendance at the Meeting had been in 'listening mode', commending the Group on the excellent report produced and in principle, supported the recommendations being evaluated, with a response as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Member outlined the following points in respect of his initial thinking:

- penalties in respect of the Capita contract had been rigorously applied;

- the Chief Executive did now hold personal monthly meetings with the Head of Capita in respect of the Contract;

- with most of the suggestions in the report if evaluations were positive, it was felt they could be achieved with internal resources and existing budgets;

- the need for more training and member support of such events was critical; and

- additional new Capita team members on site within the last few months had improved the situation

- the budget for ICT in the capital programme was £371,000.

- Change would need to be carefully planned and managed, given that the Council had a large number of systems (210) and there was a need to balance the need of users, the variety of applications and ensuring continuing customer service.

The Chairman thanked both the Task and Finish Group Chairman for his presentation along with the wider Group for their considerable input. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group also specifically thanked Peter Druce for the support he had given to this fast-paced review.

It was the unanimous view of the Commission that the recommendations be agreed and passed to Cabinet.

> **RESOLVED:** That (i) the recommendations of the ICT (Information Communication Technology) Task and Finish Group as outlined above be recommended to Cabinet at its meeting on 11 July 2016; and
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> (ii) the Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Customer Services be invited to attend and update the Commission in six months' time, and then annually as per recommendation 24.

4. COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The status of the current task and finish groups was considered and discussed.

Members agreed to the set-up of the Budget Task and Finish Group to be carried out in two stages as per the previous year, with reports to Cabinet In November for the input of recommendations for consideration for inclusion in the evolving 2017-18 budget, then again in February with recommendations as a result of the scrutiny of the proposed budget.

Vice Chairman of the Commission; Councillor A Collingwood agreed to chair this Budget Task and Finish Group. Volunteers to serve on the Group to be established.

It was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Planning be formally requested to attend the next Commission meeting scheduled for Wednesday 14 September 2016 to update the Commission on the progress of the Local Plan Consultation with the Local Plan Task and Finish Group to meet thereafter. Councillor Collingwood indicated that he would be happy to remain Chairman of this Group for the time being, though given his commitment with the Budget Task and Finish Group he proposed that a new Chairman to be appointed in due course.

Given that previous Local Plan Task and Finish Group members Councillors S K Raja and A Turner were now no longer able to serve on the Group in that they were now serving on the Council's executive, again new volunteer replacements to be sought and appointed.

The existence of four current Task and Finish Group in line with the limit was noted; and the suggestion of a task and finish group at a future date to consider traffic issues arising from the Handy Cross development was noted.
No topics were identified on the attached Cabinet Forward Plan for review by the Commission at future meetings.

> **RESOLVED:** That;
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> **(i)** the update on the Work Programme and current task and finish groups be noted; and
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> **(ii)** the Budget Task and Finish Group be established, with the Vice-Chairman in the chair, reporting directly to Cabinet at its November and February meetings, with cross-party membership to be agreed by the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

5.   COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

6.   CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman closed the meeting noting that this would be the last Commission meeting attended by the Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy Services; Charles Meakings, lead officer for Scrutiny.

Mr Meakings was retiring in late July, the Chairman wished to record his thanks for Charles's input, brilliant support and diplomatic advice to the Commission and its preceding scrutiny committees over some 12 or so years. Wycombe's status as an exemplar in respect of Improvement and Review and the successful work carried on by the Commission in scrutinising not only Wycombe District Council's but various public services locally, was in no small way due to Charles's input, advice and assistance.

After the Vice-Chairman's re-iteration of those sentiments, Charles responded saying that he had enjoyed serving the Commission he had been proud to work for what was an excellent Scrutiny team at WDC; he never ceased to be amazed at the commitment of both Members and officers and thanked Members for their support over the years.

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Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Peter Druce	-	Democratic Services
John McMillan	-	Head of HR, ICT & Customer Services
Charles Meakings	-	Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services