

Swindon Borough Council

Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 18 January 2018

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

At 6.00 p.m.

Conservative Councillors

John Haines
Timothy Swinyard (Chair)
Caryl Sydney-Smith
Vera Tomlinson
Steve Weisinger

Labour Councillors

Steve Allsopp
Des Moffatt
Robert Wright

Committee Officer: Iain Tucker, Committee Officer (01793) 463605
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Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

Access Arrangements - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 4)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2017

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

5. Wichelstowe

An update on progress with the Wichelstowe development

6. Digital Access Strategy (Pages 5 - 8)

An opportunity for the Committee to help shape the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy to ensure that all residents are able to access Council services

7. Modernising Customer Services (Pages 9 - 14)

An opportunity for the Committee to comment on ideas and proposals as to the Council's future approach to Customer Services

Date of Despatch: 16 January 2018

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website.

(<http://www5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sched=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

Terms of Reference

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- The Budget Scrutiny function, at the request of the Scrutiny Committee,
- The review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations,
- The management of performance,
- The monitoring of progress towards delivering corporate priorities, and
- The formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders.

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To have specific responsibility for (but not limited to) the scrutiny of: -

- The Council's Revenue and Capital Budget,
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy,
- Strategic Projects,
- Leisure
- Corporate Customer Services

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RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Steve Weisinger (Chair), Steve Allsopp, Des Moffatt, Caryl Sydney-Smith, and Vera Tomlinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Timothy Swinyard and Robert Wright.

12. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members at the start of the meeting to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered. No such declarations were made.

13. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2017 be confirmed and signed.

14. Public Question Time

There were no public questions

15. The Swindon Programme - Organisational Excellence workstream

The Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications, submitted a report outlining the Council's planned Organisational Excellence programme and seeking to give Members of the Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to organisational improvement is in place and that the Council's approach to improving the services it offers to its residents is robust and taking into account the needs of residents, members, officers and other stakeholders.

The Director advised the Committee that the intention of the Organisational Excellence theme is to ensure that at the completion of the programme by 2020 the Council will be offering its residents a personalised service accessible from their own homes. By ensuring that those who are able to use digital means can do so easily, the Council can best protect those services for the vulnerable who require a higher level of support from the Council and its staff.

The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

In presenting the report to the Committee, the Director expanded on the following areas:

- The Organisation becoming paper light, with an objective of :- producing less than 1m pieces of paper per year
- The anticipated £8m savings in digital services

- The expansion of the Council's Integrated digital services
- Improvements to corporate reporting systems
- The introduction of an electronic document management system
- Enhanced computer connectivity
- Sharing information with stakeholders/agencies
- Consolidating specialisations
- Learning and development
- Productivity and performance
- The alignment of pay structures
- A sustainable, forward looking workforce and more efficient ways of recruiting temporary workers
- Avoiding duplication of services
- Improving the docmail function
- Modernisation of customer services
- The role of the Digitisation CMAG, due to commence in January 2018, and, - meeting on a monthly basis

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Director of Performance, Organisation Improvement and Communications be thanked for a comprehensive and informative presentation on the Organisational Excellence workstream.

16. Communications - one year on

The Head of Communications, submitted a report concerning the progress made in the last 12 months in enhancing the capability and delivery of the Council's Communications Team.

The report advised that a restructure of the Communications Team was completed in November 2016 creating new capability and capacity to deliver more proactive communications activity in support of Council priorities. Additionally a new set of role profiles and grade mix achieved an overall net saving in staff costs. It was noted that the core role of the Communications Team is to recommend and deliver communications solutions on behalf of Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors/Heads of Service linked to their priorities including engaging communities in proposed service changes and helping Council staff to understand and contribute to the delivery of the Swindon Programme.

Resolved – That the progress made in the past year developing a strategic communications function within the Council, forging stronger relationships with service areas to better plan and deliver communications activity, be noted.

Swindon Programme – Digital Access Strategy

Resources O&S Committee

Date: 18 January 2017

Author: Cllr Keith Williams – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Digitalisation and Samantha Mowbray – Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report introduces the Council's draft approach to all of Swindon's residents are able to engage with the Council as the Council moves more of its customer services online.
- 1.2 This report seeks to give members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to modernising customer services is in place and that this approach is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that all of Swindon's residents are able to access the universal services which the Council provides.
- 1.3 The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Recognise that the proposals are currently very much in draft form and offer any views to the report author at the meeting on 18 January 2018 where a fuller explanation of the proposals will be presented

3. Digital Access Strategy

- 3.1 By 2020 the Council has committed that over 85% of resident transactions will be completed online.
 - 3.2 The accompanying paper "Modernising Customer Services" outlines how we will achieve this ambition. However, it is recognised that this approach will, if not mitigated, create a barrier between the Council and some of its residents.
 - 3.3 The Council's Digital Access Strategy seeks to outline the Council's approach to mitigating that barrier and ensuring that, while all interactions which can be completed digitally are done so, the Council has support in place (either directly or indirectly) to support residents for whom digital access is a challenge.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Swindon Programme – Digital Access Strategy

Resources O&S Committee

Date: 18 January 2017

3.4 The strategy will contain the following sections:

3.4.1 The current and projected demographics of Swindon's population

3.4.2 The barriers to digital access and the populations of Swindon particularly at risk of exclusion

3.4.3 Approaches that the Council commits to taking to ensure that residents are able to interact with us online

3.4.4 Approaches that the Council commits to working with other partners on to ensure that residents are able to interact with us online

Work already undertaken to support the development of the Council's Digital Access Strategy

3.5 The Council's first Aspiring Leaders cohort has worked hard on the initial research and ideas for the Council's Digital Access Strategy after being commissioned to do so as part of their "Business Challenge" which forms part of their leadership programme. They have presented their findings to both the Organisational Excellence board and the Cabinet Member Advisory Group on Digitalisation. A snapshot of their work will be presented to the Committee on 18 January 2018.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Council could choose not to change the way it offers customer services to its residents. However, it is considered that this would not be in keeping with the way in which modern organisations engage with their customers and residents and have considerable financial and reputational implications for the Council.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There is a likely cost for the delivery of this strategy but this has not yet been worked up.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 As described in the body of the report. There may be a desire to consult with key external stakeholders on the contents of the Digital Access Strategy once a draft is complete.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 The delivery of the Organisational Excellence workstream will lead to staffing reductions in some of our services as we reduce duplication, fix broken

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Swindon Programme – Digital Access Strategy

Resources O&S Committee

Date: 18 January 2017

processes and automate some service delivery. We are working with colleagues in HR and OD to prepare staff and managers for change and have engaged early with union colleagues to ensure they are aware of any implications of the projects for their members. We have profiled the likely change in staffing requirement within Customer Services over the life of this project and are hopeful that we can reduce numbers through natural wastage should final proposals be similar to what is suggested here and adopted by Cabinet in March.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A number of DIAs have already been undertaken in relation to Digital Services and possible changes to customer services. DIAs will be considered throughout the project scoping process and will be conducted before any business cases are developed and final proposals made.

Risk Management

- 5.2 There are a number of risks associated with this project and they are contained within the Organisational Excellence risk register which is available should members of the committee wish to see it.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

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Swindon Programme – Modernising Customer Services

Resources O&S Committee

Date: 18 January 2017

Author: Cllr Keith Williams – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Digitalisation and Samantha Mowbray – Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report outlines a draft proposed approach to the modernisation of Customer Services which forms part of the Organisational Excellence programme.
- 1.2 This report seeks to give members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to modernising customer services is in place and that this approach is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that all of Swindon's residents are able to access the universal services which the Council provides.
- 1.3 The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Recognise that the proposals are currently very much in draft form and offer any views to the report author at the meeting on 18 January 2018 where a fuller explanation of the proposals will be presented

3. Modernising Customer Services

Vision for Customer Services in the future

- 3.1 By 2020 Customer Services will be a flagship area, leading the way in using technology to manage all customer interaction, with over 85% of transactions being managed [end to end] online.
 - 3.2 We will have removed all unnecessary face to face and phone contact by providing clear information on the website to either enable customers to do things for themselves; signposting customers to other external services; or correctly routing them to the right services within the Council.
 - 3.3 Working with business areas we will have transformed business processes so that we can offer all transactional services via the Customer Portal, My Account.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Swindon Programme – Modernising Customer Services

Resources O&S Committee

Date: 18 January 2017

Customers will be able to use the account to apply, report, pay, book and feedback on services; and their requests will be automatically routed to the point of delivery, without the need for multiple handoffs en route to fulfilment.

- 3.4 Customers will be in control of their interaction, being able to track progress; avoiding the need to chase for responses. They will be able to use web chat functionality to communicate with staff both in Customer Services and in Delivery Teams; and get regular up to date information relating to their case.

Current customer transactions

- 3.5 In 2017 we successfully implemented the Customer Portal, which enables customers to transact with us on line for over 60 process, including waste services, highways, housing and environmental services. It is early days but for these processes, 47% of transactions are now being done on line and to date we have almost 17000 residents' My Accounts open and the number is increasing daily. The Council has also seen a continuing reduction in face to face contact, down a further 18% year on year.
- 3.6 Particular challenges in 2017 have arisen with our telephony service. Response times for answering the telephones have been significantly higher than in previous years; with the average speed to answer now 91 seconds. Staffing numbers are 33% lower than twelve months ago and calls volumes have only reduced slightly to date; meaning there is limited capacity to manage at peak times. However, we anticipate that this will improve as more and more services are available online.

Proposed future of face to face customer service

- 3.7 It is proposed that there will be a consolidated customer services offer on campus with fewer reception points. The Civic reception will be solely for business visitors and visitors visiting elected members or members of staff. A reception in Wat Tyler, much smaller than is currently available to reflect the reducing numbers of residents who need to visit our campus, will provide a reception for those residents with pre-arranged appointments and a guided digital service will be available to support those for whom digital access is a challenge. It is proposed that the customer reception at Waterside is closed.
- 3.8 Assisted digital support will also be available to those for whom digital access is a challenge through libraries and community hubs (please see separate digital inclusion strategy support for more information).

Proposed future of telephone customer service

- 3.9 It is proposed that telephone contact will be consolidated to reduce the number of access points into the Council and there will be smarter call routing, providing

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Swindon Programme – Modernising Customer Services

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key messages to customers while they wait which actively promote online services.

- 3.10 As services go through digital service re-design, specific telephone numbers for services will be consolidated into a single contact centre number where it makes sense to do so and where call enquiries can be fulfilled by customer service operatives. If enquiries are regularly likely to require professional expertise to fulfil then they will remain with the service and their direct line numbers will be maintained.
- 3.11 Staff answering calls from members of the public will support them to complete their transaction digitally where it is possible to do so but will complete the transaction online for residents where they struggle to do so themselves.
- 3.12 We are also currently investigating whether there is a business case for call centre staff to also be able to provide assisted digital support in the form of webchat which would enable call centre employees to answer any enquiries over the web.

Proposed approach to customer service by email or letter

- 3.13 While there may still be some services for which email contact with residents and customers is valuable, it is proposed that the generic customer services email address is removed and that any written digital correspondence is completed through the customer portal. This will allow for greater integration with our business systems and enable a more effective and efficient customer interaction which provides valuable management information without the need for additional manual data and information entry.

Involvement of members in the Modernising Customer Services project

- 3.14 The proposals are very much in draft form at this stage and are being considered by the Digitalisation CMAG which meets for the first time on 9 January. This CMAG is being led by Cllr Williams. It is intended that both the CMAG and the Resources and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and help shape the proposals before a final proposal is considered by Cabinet in March.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to change the way it offers customer services to its residents. However, it is considered that this would not be in keeping with the way in which modern organisations engage with their customers and residents and have considerable financial and reputational implications for the Council.

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Swindon Programme – Modernising Customer Services

Resources O&S Committee

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5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There is a £500k savings target associated with this project within the Organisational Excellence workstream.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal Services have been fully engaged in our reporting requirements relating to headcount reduction. As the Swindon Programme will mean an overall staffing reduction of more than 100 job losses per year, this must be reported to the Treasury and a formal 45 day consultation process must be followed. Swindon Borough Council's approach to this has been discussed and agreed with both Legal and union colleagues.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 The delivery of the Organisational Excellence workstream will lead to staffing reductions in some of our services as we reduce duplication, fix broken processes and automate some service delivery. We are working with colleagues in HR and OD to prepare staff and managers for change and have engaged early with union colleagues to ensure they are aware of any implications of the projects for their members. We have profiled the likely change in staffing requirement within Customer Services over the life of this project and are hopeful that we can reduce numbers through natural wastage should final proposals be similar to what is suggested here and adopted by Cabinet in March.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A number of DIAs have already been undertaken in relation to Digital Services and possible changes to customer services. DIAs will be considered throughout the project scoping process and will be conducted before any business cases are developed and final proposals made.

Risk Management

- 5.2 There are a number of risks associated with this project and they are contained within the Organisational Excellence risk register which is available should members of the committee wish to see it.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

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7. Background Papers

7.1 None

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – operating principles for Organisational Excellence theme

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