

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

**Held on Friday, 17 August 2018 at 10.00 am in the
Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham**

PRESENT

Councillor E. Gould (Chairman)	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr P. M. M. Dimoglou	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mrs T. Hewett	Mr J. Newton (Substitute Member)
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr P. S. Wilkinson (Substitute Member)
Mr A.P. Joel	

Also Present

Mrs J. Hollis	Mrs A. M. Webb
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In Attendance

Sarah Barsby	- Executive Manager for Information
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Jason Tillyard	- IT Manager
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place
Zoe Webster	- Customer Services Manager (INTERIM)

87/18 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Brame, Crawford, Matthews, Nairn and Oliver. Councillors Newton and Wilkinson were present as substitutes.

88/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

89/18 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Hollis and Webb.

90/18 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

The Executive Member for People and Information presented the report to Members outlining the intended customer improvements the strategy intended to make, which would bring benefits to both the Customer and the Council.

With most people (86%) accessing the internet in Breckland on a regular basis, the strategy's key aim was to encourage and support more customers to self-serve; by improving the online services residents would choose to use them as the first point of contact with the Council.

There were barriers in allowing customers to access the online services such as poor broadband access or lack of digital skills. The strategy outlined the Council's role in helping to improve the digital skills and

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connectivity of the residents within the district.

By providing residents with a much improved online service, it would allow the Council to focus its more personalised contact arrangements (i.e. face-to-face) on those residents who needed the support the most.

Councillor Dimoglou congratulated the Executive Member on being forward thinking and energetic within her role. However, he raised his concern that the strategy gave weight to the use of online services, and excluded the use of the phone.

The Executive Member expressed that the strategy did not look to withdraw any channels of communication to the Council, but that improvements would be made to the online service which would free up resource to support to those who contacted the Council by telephone. The Customer Contact Centre provided support within the Libraries across the district and Officers were able to demonstrate how to use the online services through their mobile devices.

Councillor Kybird asked if the necessary budget was available to deliver the enhanced service. The Executive Manager for Information added that it would be discussed in the following report, and whilst there was capability, extra resource would be needed which was covered within the ICT and Digital Strategy report.

Councillor Jermy had noticed that there had been improvements in the way the Council engaged with the public, especially with social media. He went on to say that he had used the 'report it' function regularly and asked if improvements could be made to include that once a fly-tip had been cleared the reporter be informed; and, if a fly-tip had occurred on land that was not Breckland Council's, that the reporter be informed to enable them to contact who was responsible for it.

Members asked to be provided with regular information so that they could include in parish magazines. The Executive Manager for Information added that there was a function on the website to sign-up to receive news alerts.

Members were informed that residents were able to access training provided in libraries. Budget had been allocated to create a project to build on the digital skills within Breckland, and Members were assured that it would not duplicate what was already being provided.

The Chairman agreed that the information should be shared to allow Members to communicate the information to Parish Councils.

Councillor Hewett suggested that information sessions were delivered to schools to educate 15-16 year olds of the council services that were available online. The Executive Manager for Information said there would be a review of the customer service team to ensure delivery of the strategy. In addition there would be a robust communications campaign to outline what was changing and why to reassure residents.

Councillor Kybird asked for a clear understanding of the cost savings. It was confirmed that as the strategy was closely linked to the ICT and Digital Strategy, and subject to full council agreement a detailed

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business case for all key digital projects would be mapped out to outline the customer improvements and cost savings to be achieved.

Councillor Dimoglou highlighted that the digital principles outlined in the report made reference to no longer publishing telephone numbers and felt that this did not serve the customer. The Executive Director said the intention of the digital process was about signposting the customer in the appropriate direction.

The Chairman suggested that the strategy be updated to reflect the feedback the Commission had given.

Members agreed that the report would be updated to reflect the suggested amendments and return to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

91/18 ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Executive Member for People and Information explained to Members how the strategy had built on the work already undertaken as part of the ICT programme, launched in 2017, following the Council decision in 2016 to invest in:

- Creating a new ICT infrastructure to deliver ICT service improvements
- Enhancing security and disaster recovery
- A new in-house ICT service

The strategy took this a step further by setting out how the Council planned to develop and roll out digital technologies – in a way that supported efficient and cost-effective service delivery, while meeting the need of the customers.

It was suggested that the performance and progress of the strategy would be reported on a regular basis to the Scrutiny Commission, as part of the quarterly performance reporting.

Councillor Dimoglou asked if the strategy empowered Officers to work off-site as it was not clear in the Strategy. The Executive Member said Officers were able to work off-site allowing agile working, and agreed it was not clear in the Strategy.

The Chairman asked for the point to be explained clearly within the strategy.

It was agreed that the report would be updated to reflect the suggested amendments and return to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

92/18 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The first meeting of the Fly-tipping task and finish group would take place on Thursday 6 September at 2.00pm.

93/18 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting to be held on 27 September at

2.00pm in the Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham were noted.

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The meeting closed at 11.00 am

CHAIRMAN