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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Held on Tuesday, 6 October 2009 at 9.30 am in  
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr P.D. Claussen

Mr W.H.C. Smith

**Also Present**

Mr P.J. Duigan

**In Attendance**

Robert Barlow

- Director of Governance and Finance

Stephanie Butcher

- Principal Licensing Officer

Monica Coffey

- Customer Services Manager

Adam Colby

- Senior Business Improvement Officer

Kevin Rump

- ICT Project Manager

Kevin J Taylor

- ICT/BIT Manager

Helen McAleer

- Member Services Officer

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**16/09 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following points were noted:

(a) Customer Access Strategy (Minute No 5/09)

This Strategy had been delayed as further information was awaited from Norfolk County Council to support connectivity options.

The information from BT would be discussed at Minute No 19/09.

(b) Norfolk Heads of ICT (Minute No 7/09)

KT informed the group that some positive discussions were taking place both with County and District colleagues, however, a more detailed report would be presented to the December meeting.

(c) ICT Refresh Programme (Min No 8/09b)

Some Members were experiencing problems with their printers. The Head of ICT sought approval to replace these at a cost of £70 per unit.

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**RESOLVED** to approve the replacement of Members' printers but on a 'break / fix' basis only.

The Citrix trial, with the additional security level, would be rolled out to all Members by the next meeting.

(d) **Financial Performance (Min No 9/09)**

The Director of Governance and Finance would present a quarterly report in future.

(e) **Steria Service Review (Min No 11/09)**

The full Ocella service was up and running. Availability of information was limited at the moment as the plan was to scan only new applications from early October 2009. A full launch would be agreed between Capita Symonds/Breckland and Members in due course. The introduction of Citrix for connectivity for Capita Symonds had been progressing well and this would mean that PCs/laptops would not require as frequent a refresh.

**17/09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Lady Fisher.

**18/09 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

Mr P Duigan.

**19/09 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY / CONTACT CENTRE EXPANSION**

The Services Manager updated Members on the review of the Customer Contact Centres (CSC).

There was no room for expansion at the Dereham CSC which was located in the Peddars Way Housing Offices. It was also limited to a 2Mg line which made the electronic transfer of information very slow.

Space had been offered in the reception area at The Guildhall for a CSC on condition that it would provide reception services for the whole building (including post sorting and servicing of the Robertson Suite). A report requesting approval for this move would go to CMT. If the move was approved there would be an opportunity to 'piggyback' on the existing NCC 10Mg line at the Guildhall.

It was noted that the provision of a manned reception would make the rest of the building more attractive for letting purposes.

The lease for the current Dereham CSC was due for renewal in April 2010 and negotiations were taking place to make this more open ended, to allow time for the Guildhall area to be made ready.

High sickness levels were affecting the service at other CSCs, and cover was being provided by Dereham staff. In future, Thetford job descriptions would require staff flexibility to cover other locations when needed (as

was already the case with Dereham) which would help to alleviate this problem.

The Services Manager was waiting for the economic climate to improve before reporting on the Attleborough CSC trial. However she felt that three days presence was likely to be enough.

A Housing representative was in attendance at Attleborough on Wednesdays, at Watton on Tuesday afternoons and in Thetford on Mondays and Thursdays and this was proving a popular service.

The possibility of being involved in the Norfolk County Council 'Tell Us Once' Registrar service was being investigated. When notified of a birth or death the Council could offer to cascade that information, through secure connections, to all other agencies involved, saving the notifying person the requirement of providing duplicate death certificates and contacting each agency individually. This service also had knock-on money saving potential in terms of preventing unnecessary visits by carers and the prompt cancellation of benefit payments.

NCC would be contacted and more information would be provided to the next meeting.

The Director of Governance and Finance asked if the Contact Centre expansion had any ICT issues that needed time-lining.

An application was being prepared for an improved telephony system which would be presented to the next meeting and a meeting was to take place on 7 October with Lagan, to discuss the version 7 upgrade.

The Services Manager then reported on the information provided by BT concerning the number of engaged tone calls received. These figures showed that a considerable amount of callers were receiving the engaged tone although it was likely that about a third could be interpreted as callers using the redial facility.

The figures did not agree with the Council's own information and more detail was needed on specific numbers to be able to fully understand the implications.

It was felt that the way forward was to further develop and push the internet as a route for contact. The costs for installing additional lines and infrastructure to deliver Contact Centre services might prove prohibitive. It was also important to address the number of unnecessary contacts recorded by NI 14. A lot of these calls were by people who could not understand letters sent out to them from the Council (such as Benefit related communications). Service Managers would be contacted to see if jargon-free covering letters could be used.

The potential impact of using E-forms was discussed. A recent survey suggested that the internet was the least favoured method of contacting the Council. A solution would be discussed with Lagan later in the week.

The Services Manager concluded by saying that eight temporary posts in the Contact Centre were due to finish on 31 March. If these were not

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**Monica Coffey**

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extended only eight staff would be left. Without the use of more technology and development of the internet channel, more people would be needed. Some money might be available in April for permanent seats and there was a Growth bid in for the Contact Centre for the next year.

**20/09 BIT / ICT PROJECTS**

The ICT Manager sought clarification of Members' requirements concerning projects. He asked if they wanted 100 day milestones for future projects and if progress was to be broken down in that way, what sort of reporting would be required.

Members agreed that project lengths would vary depending upon their complexity and urgency but that it would be nice to be kept up to date on projects given approval.

The usefulness of green, amber and red reporting was discussed. The Chairman wanted to omit amber and agreed that if a project moved into the red it should be reported immediately and not left until the next meeting.

The Director Governance and Finance thought that projects needed clearer objectives and should have set dates, costs and benefits. Each project should also have a sponsor to take ownership and an ICT facilitator. He also said that if a project was approved it should be added to the Service Area's Business Plan.

A Member suggested that if the red and green reporting was done using the TEN system it would automatically involve Senior Management and encourage them to take action where necessary.

It was reiterated that applications for projects would not be considered by the Sub-Committee if a sponsor was not present at the meeting.

The Chairman considered that all projects should be reported using the TEN system and only those flagged as red should be reported to the Sub-Committee.

**21/09 PROJECTS REVIEW**

The ICT Project Manager proposed to provide a short report to each meeting, highlighting projects that had been delivered.

He explained that he did not want to 'sign-off' on a project which had been delivered from an ICT perspective, but was failing to realise the originally proposed business benefits. In the past this had been caused by unplanned resource shortages in the service area and/or a sponsor change during the course of the project.

Members suggested that there should be some sort of mechanism included in the PID for benefits realisation. They also considered that if projects were on the TEN system they could be closely monitored.

The ICT Project Manager would report to the next meeting and a further assessment of how to monitor projects would be made then.

**Kevin  
Rump**

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**22/09 NORFOLK HEADS OF ICT / LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERING**

The ICT Manager had had further meetings with the Norfolk Heads of ICT and with other Local Authorities. He was preparing a paper for the December meeting on the viability of sharing services.

**Kevin J  
Taylor**

**23/09 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

The Director of Governance and Finance had nothing to report.

**24/09 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE / STERIA SERVICE REVIEW**

The ICT Manager presented this report.

The Chairman confirmed that it was only necessary for a representative from Steria to attend the meeting if there were any exceptions to normal service.

The report was noted.

**25/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**26/09 COUNCIL TAX REALISATION (STANDING ITEM)**

The Director of Governance and Finance had met with senior officers from Forest Heath and provided evidence of the cost savings. He had asked for their agreement to cut a post. This would be discussed at their next Joint Committee meeting on 8 October, when a decision was expected.

**27/09 LICENSING SERVICE REVIEW (STANDING ITEM)**

The Senior Business Improvement Officer informed Members that CMT had approved the new structure for the Licensing teams which would support the new processes and IT platform.

The Council was already accredited to offer training courses and a pilot scheme was running at the moment offering free training on alcohol awareness for young people. If this went well there was the potential to generate income from training at a later date, the legal implications would be checked.

**Stephanie  
Butcher**

**28/09 LICENSING SYSTEM**

The ICT Project Manager presented his report which concerned the choice of an IT platform for Licensing.

Various options had been considered including partnership and shared

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services, off-the-shelf packages and utilising existing packages.

Five Companies had been invited to tender and the results of that exercise were explained in the report.

The recommended option would allow easy working with neighbouring authorities and would also give a full mobile working capability.

The Principal Licensing Officer was impressed with the product which would make all licence information available to officers out on site once the information had been uploaded.

The December 2009 deadline to comply with the EU Directive could not be met, but the existing on-line facility would suffice in the meantime.

The cost would cover the Capital expenditure; the ICT Project Officer's time; and a six month post for data migration.

**RESOLVED** to release £25,150 for the purchase of systems relating to Licensing, plus up to £19,109 for project management, subject to the project management time being recorded appropriately and the project being self financing over five years without taking account of the saving resulting from the project management time currently charged to revenue.

**29/09 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Business Improvement Sub-Committee would be held on Tuesday 3 November 2009 at 09.30am in the Norfolk Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

CHAIRMAN