

## **OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

**Thursday, 21st January, 2021**

Present:-

Councillor Catt (Chair)

Councillors	Blakemore	Councillors	Snowdon
	Borrell		Kelly
	Caulfield		Coy
	L Collins		Brittain
	Dyke		Mann
	Flood		T Gilby
	Fordham		
	Kellman		

Councillor Jean Innes, Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers ++

Councillor Amanda Serjeant, Deputy Leader +

Rachel Felix, Digital Programme Manager ++

Charlotte Kearsey, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

Will Rolls, Climate Change Officer +

Ian Waller, Service Director – Leisure, Culture and Community and Wellbeing +

David Wing, Head of ICT Improvement ++

+ Attended for Minute No. 23

++ Attended for Minute No. 25

### **16 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hollingworth.

### **18 FORWARD PLAN**

The Forum considered the Forward Plan.

Councillor Fordham enquired about the process of bringing an item from the Forward Plan to a scrutiny meeting. Councillor Fordham was advised that if there was an item he would like to bring to a scrutiny meeting then he should contact the Joint Scrutiny Chairs.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**19 SCRUTINY MONITORING**

The Forum considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

**20 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Work Programme be approved.

**21 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

There was no update.

**22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 19 November, 2020 and 17 December, 2021 were presented.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **23 DEPUTY LEADER - CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**

The Deputy Leader, Climate Change Officer and Service Director – Leisure, Culture and Community and Wellbeing attended to present a report updating the Committee about the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan adopted by Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC).

CBC declared a Climate Emergency on 17 July, 2019 and resolved to establish a Chesterfield Climate Change Working Group to produce an action plan.

The action plan was approved by Full Council on 26 February, 2020. The plan was developed with eight themes, each theme had a series of actions which in total amounted to thirty-nine specific actions to support carbon reduction activities.

Despite the challenges and impact of Covid-19 over the last year there had been some significant developments across key actions within the climate change action plan.

Further to comments received from scrutiny members at the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting on 17 September, 2020 the action plan had been put into a RAG rated format with comments regarding progress against each action and was included at Appendix A of the officer's report.

Covid-19 remained a significant risk to the Council as a whole in relation to capacity and the Climate Change Officer would continually review progress using the RAG rated format. The wider impact on the Council and any specific impacts in relation to the Climate Change Action Plan would continue to be monitored.

The successful appointment of the Climate Change Officer had significantly increased the capacity of the Council to drive forward its carbon reduction and sustainability ambitions but it was noted that the Climate Change Officer would be working part time until April 2021.

The communications plan which complemented the action plan would be a key milestone in supporting the wider engagement with the Borough's

communities and would be a core feature of the work of the Climate Change Officer for the first quarter of 2021.

Detailed progress for every action was provided in Appendix A of the officer's report.

Of the 39 actions in the climate change action plan:

- 6 had been completed and currently required no additional work beyond maintenance;
- 26 were rated green and were expected to be delivered as described;
- 7 were rated amber and were expected to be delivered, however, it could be later than originally anticipated but still within the period covered by the action plan;
- 0 were rated red where severe obstacles or challenges existed which rendered the action impossible to deliver on time without significant intervention or modification;
- 0 had been removed because they had been rendered moot due to changes in policy or external factors.

The following actions had been completed and did not currently require additional work beyond maintenance:

- Housing & Buildings, action point 3: Refresh planning guidance in relation to raising environmental standards for house building locally.
- Power & Electricity, action point 8: Switch to renewable electricity energy provider.
- Engagement, action point 31: Use reduce, reuse, recycle in all communications in relation to climate change.
- Engagement, action point 32: Encourage the use of local labour, services, goods and sustainable food to support a low carbon economy.
- Policy and General, action point 36; Establish formal governance arrangements to enable the use of section 106 / CIL to fund sustainable initiatives and programmes.
- Policy and General, action point 39: Engage an additional dedicated officer time to work solely on the climate/sustainability agenda.

The following actions were rated amber and were expected to be delivered but possibly later than originally anticipated:

- Housing & Buildings, action point 5: Refresh asset management strategy to focus on its operational premises to be fuelled by clean

technology.

- Land Use, action point 21: Undertake a full inventory of CBC owned land to identify how to maximise carbon capture.
- Waste, action point 25: Develop a sustainable trade waste policy
- Waste, action point 26: Develop a sustainable domestic waste policy.
- Waste, action point 27: Support and promote a community sharing and reuse scheme
- Waste, action point 28. Co-produce sustainable waste management guide and education material with local schools.
- Engagement, action point 29: Develop and implement a comprehensive engagement and communication plan.

Members asked whether the appropriate species of trees would be planted depending on the area concerned. The Climate Change Officer agreed that this was important and would be considered.

The Climate Change Officer was asked whether there were significant differences and challenges for the trade and domestic waste policies which were action points 25 and 26 in the Waste section of the Action Plan. It was explained that there were differences in the composition of the waste but for a sustainable strategy it would make sense to keep these strategies together where possible. They had been listed separately in the Action Plan because the related to separate contracts with different obligations.

Members noted that there were areas in the borough without transport links and the Climate Change Officer advised that he was aware that this area needed to be worked on and he would learn more about the topic.

Members proposed that they would submit questions to the Climate Change Officer after the Forum meeting and the answers be provided at the next meeting.

Members asked whether there could be two meetings of the Climate Change Working Group before an Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting. The Climate Change Officer confirmed that meetings of the Working Group could be arranged before Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum to discuss and challenge information and emphasised the importance of the stakeholder groups knowledge and specific expertise.

The Climate Change Officer was asked about the timescale of replacing

vehicles with electric vehicles and whether the end dates of leases had been mapped, as referred to in action point 14. It was noted that electric commercial vehicles were not yet viable but it was also asked whether hydrogen cell vehicles would be tested. Members were advised that it was believed that the leases ended in 2023 and it was understood that conversations regarding hydrogen storage in the borough were taking place.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the Climate Change Action Plan report be noted.
2. That the Climate Change Working Group be consulted prior to Overview and Performances Scrutiny Forum meetings.
3. The any further questions would be provided to the Climate Change Officer and answers would be provided at the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

#### **24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

#### **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 it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

#### **25 CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND CUSTOMERS - ICT AND DIGITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers, the Head of ICT Improvement and the Digital Programme Manager attended to present a report updating the Forum about the progress of the ICT and Digital Improvement Programme.

Chesterfield Borough Council approved investment in the ICT Improvement Programme in 2018. The ICT service was brought in-house from the council's public private partnership arrangement with Arvato in October 2018. Recruitment to a strengthened ICT team and procurement

of the Salesforce solution also took place in 2018. Implementation of the identified ICT and digital projects began in 2019.

Appendix A of the officer's report provided a detailed and balanced scorecard which was being used within the programme and the Forum was advised that all targets set for 2021 had been achieved.

The high-level outcomes set for the ICT and Digital Improvement Programme up to the financial year 2020/21 were:

- Outcome 1 - More end to end digital services available: achieved. Eight key digital projects went live in 2020.
  - Salesforce CRM;
  - Regulatory Services;
  - Digital Services Hub – My Chesterfield.gov.uk;
  - Intuitive suite of e-forms – Revenues and benefits electronic housing benefit applications;
  - Web chat;
  - Test and trace – Self isolation payments (end to end process using Salesforce);
  - Covid-19 related business grants (end to end process using Salesforce).
  
- Outcome 2 - Increased access channels are available for our residents: achieved. The following additional access channels for residents had been implemented:
  - 'My Chesterfield' online – Almost 4500 accounts had been created to date.
  - Web chat – When live between 30-40 chat sessions daily were being averaged.
  - Online forms – the number available had increased from approximately 10 to 50.
  - Website Accessibility – The ICT team had improved the councils accessibility score on the main website Chesterfield.gov.uk from 1.3 to 9.3. The CBC website climbed from 399th place in the rankings to 6th, a rise of 393 places, the single biggest climber ever seen by SiteMorse.
  
- Outcome 3 – A stable and resilient ICT Infrastructure had been put in place and the ICT team had continued to bolster the infrastructure. The primary focus had been on the migration of core applications to supplier hosting Software-as-aService (SaaS) during

2020. PSN and Cyber Essentials accreditations had also been achieved which supported improved security levels.

ICT had delivered an upgraded and resilient internet connection. This had provided the council with 10x the bandwidth than previously available and provided better usability for employees. A second internet connection which terminated at Stonegravel Depot had been implemented to improve internet resilience and availability.

The ICT team had accelerated several key workstreams in the ICT and Digital Improvement Programme in response to the Coronavirus pandemic:

- The ICT team had issued 183 laptops in one weekend at the very beginning of the pandemic to facilitate users who needed to work from home;
- An outcome of the ICT Improvement programme, scheduled for delivery in 2021, was the replacement of the ageing, physical Mitel phone system on premise. This was brought forward 12 months, procured, implemented and deployed to all users during the first lockdown and facilitated users to take calls via the internet at home;
- Microsoft Teams was deployed to all users as part of the migration to Office365 in late 2019. A gentle migration to online meetings, with support from the HR business partners, had been planned but it became a learn by doing exercise, with online FAQs published to Aspire. The staff had adjusted and adapted to using Teams extremely well.

During the pandemic, there had been a higher demand for access to online services due to temporary closures of the Customer Service Centre. The Digital team had implemented a number of services to assist:

- Web chat had been introduced very quickly when the Customer Services team transitioned to working from home to allow enquiries to be dealt with when limited telephone services were available.
- A project to launch an online claim form for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support was accelerated. The form allowed residents to claim remotely and almost 60% of all Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support claims were now submitted electronically.
- The Salesforce platform was used to develop an end to end process to apply and process 'Test and Trace' payments for those residents that qualified for financial support during periods of self-isolation. To date, the council had received 289 applications, 84% of which have been made through 'My Chesterfield' online.

As the second national lockdown was implemented in November, 2020 many businesses had to temporarily close. Within one week of the announcement the ICT team had developed a solution which allowed businesses to apply for financial support online. To date, the council had received 997 applications for various levels of financial support and 97% of the applications have been made through 'My Chesterfield' online. Chesterfield Borough Council were one of the first Derbyshire authorities to create and launch an online process for this purpose.

Support had been and would continue to be provided for CBC staff working at home and a full Covid-19 secure ICT Service Desk at the Town Hall had operated throughout the pandemic.

Democratic Services and ICT developed a solution which enabled elected members to attend Microsoft Teams meetings via their iPad. Using a combination of a Digital to USB convertor the meeting would be streamed to the CBC website using a Teams Live Event. Following on from the success of using Microsoft Teams Live Events, a second solution using OBS Studio allowed Democratic Services to improve the production value of the meetings and stream them directly to YouTube Live.

Efforts had been made to encourage uptake of online services to make savings and as of January 2021, over 4,500 residents and business had signed up to 'My Chesterfield'. There was currently a number of online services available including online reporting forms for Environmental Health, Council Tax, Benefits, NNDR and Covid-19 Support. Further services would also be launched in 2021.

The ICT and Digital teams had worked very closely with the Communications team to ensure that any new functionality had been well publicised through all available media channels and a marketing plan had been developed.

The barriers to the Programme included:

- The ability for some service areas to balance the day to day activities alongside the demands of the Programme because transformation was intensive;
- Recruitment of officers with the rights skill set had been challenging and though it had taken time a strong team had been recruited.

- Internal training was underway but had been challenging to deliver alongside delivery of such a high volume of change activity.

The future plans for the Programme included assessing the projects scheduled for delivery in the 2021/22 financial year against several criteria, including complexity, risk and savings potential prior to beginning any development. This would ensure that the programme continued to deliver whilst taking account of the pandemic.

It was important that the approach to project delivery timescales remained flexible to allow the team to react appropriately to unplanned activities, particularly due to the pandemic.

The team would begin to consult on the development of an updated ICT Strategy for 2023 onwards to ensure that the council and residents could continue to benefit from technology enhancements following the end of the existing programme.

Members noted the hard work which had taken place to set up remote meetings under the pressures of the pandemic and asked if there could be results against the targets included in Appendix 1 of the officer's report at the next update. The Digital Programme Manager explained that there had not previously been a lot of data but now data was being recorded in a benefits tracker which would be shared at the next update.

The Digital Programme Manager was asked about the efforts taking place to prevent a digital divide because online services would not be suitable for all. Members were informed that the team were very mindful of the digital divide but online services were aimed at people who wanted to and could use them. All services continued to be provided face-to-face in the Contact Centre. All of the forms were in the same format and went to a central point so that staff had more time to work with the vulnerable people who need more assistance. The team were also looking to incorporate support from external organisations, such as Citizens Advice. The Head of ICT Improvement noted that the accessibility score calculated by SiteMorse for the council's website had been improved from 399<sup>th</sup> place to 6<sup>th</sup>.

Members noted that training to use their council issued iPads would be very useful and the Head of ICT Improvement advised that training could be arranged on Aspire and face-to-face training would be organised when the Covid-19 restrictions allowed.

Members asked for clarification about the savings targets and yearly revenue figures included in the financial information contained in Appendix 1 of the officer's report. The Head of ICT Improvement agreed to clarify this.

Members asked about what assistance could be provided for homeless people and the Digital Programme Manager advised that this would need to be handled very carefully. There was a significant digital divide in the Borough and the team wanted to get customer input which was challenging during the pandemic but they were utilising the Housing Tenant Consultation Board to communicate with customers. It was emphasised that all services could be accessed in multiple ways and no services were going to be online only.

Praise was given for the virtual Santa which had been set up in the Town Centre and it was noted that it would be good to make this event available to schools in 2021 as not all parents were able to get into the town centre.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the ICT and Digital Improvement Programme Update report be noted.
2. That a letter of thanks signed by the Chair on behalf of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum be sent to the ICT and Digital teams.
3. That a benefits tracker be included at the next update provided to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
4. That an annual update on the ICT and Digital Improvement Programme be scheduled in the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum work programme.