

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 8 March 2018, County Hall Worcester - 10.00 am

Present:

Minutes

Mr C B Taylor (Chairman), Mrs M A Rayner (Vice Chairman), Mr A D Kent, Mr R C Lunn, Mr R J Morris, Prof J W Raine, Mr A Stafford and Mr R P Tomlinson

Also attended:

Ms K J May, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning
Dawn Brandt, Worcestershire County Council

Dawn Brandt (ICT Commercial and Contracts Manager), Jo Charles (Head of Commercial), John Gladman (Interim IT Manager), Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Samantha Morris (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2018 (previously circulated).

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

212 Apologies and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr J A D O'Donnell.

213 Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip

None.

214 Public Participation

None.

215 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

216 Councillor IT

In attendance for the discussion were:

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning

The Head of Commercial
The ICT Commercial & Contracts Manager
The Interim IT Manager

The Panel received a presentation which outlined:

- The Member allowance for IT and the equipment that councillors were entitled to in order to carry out their role effectively. The allowance was currently £1000 per term and then £240 per annum (paid monthly) to fund internet connection
- The balance between ease of use against security, given the sensitive data held by the Council
- The improvements made to date and how access had been made easier
- The support available for members
- The rules in respect of Data Protection Act 1998 (and soon to be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and the Freedom of Information Act
- The next steps to enable calendar sharing for Councillors who were both district and County councillors
- The enhancement of device management to ensure continued protection against cyber threats.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- Diary sharing for councillors, who were both district and County councillors was a logical step forward. The Panel were advised that work in this area had already been started
- As councillor's knowledge and experience of IT was variable, it was suggested that a handbook for councillors' IT which covered all aspects of what councillors needed to know in a 'plain English' easily understandable format would be welcomed. The Panel was advised that work had started on this but any suggestions from members were welcome
- In response to the question about within the constraints of the budget what would be an ideal scenario for the councillor IT provision, the CMR advised that there was an aspiration for one computer system for the whole of the County and discussion with some district councils had already commenced. Realistically, it could take 12 months to introduce once all councils were in

agreement. It was suggested that an added complication may be political agreement as to the email address domain

- The Interim IT Manager further advised that at other Councils where he had previously worked paperless meetings had been a priority
- During the November 2017 and January 2018 meetings, the Panel had spent a considerable amount of time delving into the detail of the current year IT services budget. There had been a forecast overspend of £900k which the Panel was advised was due in the main to the IT support costs (laptops, licences etc) still being incurred as a consequence of a forecast reduction in headcount across the County Council not being realised as quickly as first estimated. Subsequent to this discussion, however, the Chairman of the Panel had discovered that the overspend was for very good reasons, involving supporting other services. If this had been explained fully to the Panel at the time it could have saved the time spent delving into the reasons
- The preparedness of the County Council for cyber-attacks was discussed and the Panel were reassured that the Council kept up to date with fixes and advisory notices from Government
- Some district councils allowed the use of personal emails for Council business, which reduced the number of email addresses that Councillors had. It was suggested that this could be a possible way forward for the County Council too
- The Interim IT Manager responded that the County Council was a data controller and had to register as such and if councillors used their personal email account for corresponding for business reasons, they would need to register as an individual data controllers otherwise they would put themselves at risk
- To demonstrate the importance of using the County Council email addresses as opposed to personal email addresses, the Panel was advised that 4 million emails had been blocked from entering the County Council during February and 5.6m internet attacks had been prevented in the last 5 days
- In response to the point made that some councillors have various different devices for different councils, plus personal email addresses making daily working cumbersome, the ICT Commercial & Contracts Manager advised that it was possible to have multiple email accounts on

multiple devices, however the use of a personal email address for business emails wasn't secure or protected and should be avoided. The County Council were risk averse in this area and operated a one size fitted all approach. The GDPR effective May 2018 would make this even more important

- Councillors found My IT and the IT Helpdesk a very useful resource
- It was suggested that one to one support was more valuable to councillors than group training events given that councillors' level and knowledge of IT varied considerably
- The Council was moving towards Cloud implementation of Microsoft Office 365.

It was agreed that:

- Councillors Kent, Tomlinson and Morris would provide some input into the Councillor IT manual being worked on by the IT team
- Clarification would be sought about the policy in respect of the use of personal emails in district councils
- Consideration would be given to offering one to one sessions for councillors to look at their individual IT needs
- Consideration would be given to councillors having the option of either paper or electronic versions of papers for meetings.

In addition,

- The Chairman would write on behalf of the Panel to the CMR to request clarification on costs and savings of having a county wide email address domain.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

Chairman