

MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 16 JANUARY 2015 10.30 AM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Ibis Channell
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Trevor Scott
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley (Vice-Chairman)

PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor Paul Carpenter, Deputy Leader & Portfolio: Governance & Communication

OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Beverly Agass)
Strategic Director (Daren Turner)
Head of People, Performance & Projects (Sue Griffiths)
Deployment Manager (Lee Sirdifield)
Community Engagement Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

92. MEMBERSHIP

The Group were notified that Councillor Scott was substituting for Councillor Auger for this meeting only.

93. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence were received from Councillor Cook.

94. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None disclosed.

Your council working for you

95. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2014

The notes from the meeting held on 28th November were agreed as a correct record.

96. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Members were told that the Regulation 18 Statement had gone to Cabinet on Monday and the consultation period would be starting shortly.

Member training would be coming back to the Group at the next meeting.

The Business Transformation Manager updated the Group on what IT equipment would be available to new Members following the elections in May. He referred to the many discussions that the Group had undertaken concerning ICT both barriers and issues. He also referred to the questionnaire that was circulated to Members concerning ICT. It was recognised that the current equipment was old and needed replacing. Savings also needed to be made; current printing and postage costs were in the region of £40,000 and if IT could be used more efficiently this would help save costs.

It was proposed that new Members in May would receive an iPad issues relating to the storage of documents by Members and their broadband connectivity still needed to be addressed but work was underway to ensure the smooth transition following the election.

A discussion then followed by Members giving their views on the use of tablets (some Members already used iPads and found them easy to use) the training required and elements such as security passwords and cases for the iPads.

It was confirmed that ICT training was being built into the induction of new Members in May and a skills audit would be carried out and training arranged accordingly.

Mr Nix would be back to the March meeting of the Group with a final ICT solution.

97. BROADBAND DELIVERY UK (BDUK)

Councillor Channell left the meeting between 11.23am and 11.53am

Members received a presentation from Mr Steve Brooks from On Lincolnshire on the current national initiative to deliver superfast broadband within the UK (BDUK). Money had been allocated across the UK to deliver better rural connectivity to the Broadband network. The Lincolnshire Broadband Project hoped to have 95% superfast coverage of County premises by 2017. In Lincolnshire work was being undertaken in partnership with BT. Both BT and

Virgin Media were involved in the commercial roll out of superfast broadband.

Funding costs included £14.3M from the Government, £10M from LCC and £4M from Districts with BT funding £9.2M. At the half way stage the programme was on track. Cabinets were being upgraded across the county (currently 296 cabinets had been upgraded with 349 shells made ready for upgrade). Work in South Kesteven was scheduled to be undertaken towards the latter phase of the programme although some had been carried out in Grantham. There was no emphasis on particular sites but work had been phased to get the best value for money to cover as many areas as possible especially as Lincolnshire was very rural and had lots of little communities scattered throughout. Phase 7 of the project was due to start in July. Infrastructure work was being undertaken in Billingborough although duct blockages were causing some problems, however the project should be delivered on schedule. A significant part of Lincolnshire was being covered by the commercial roll out of broadband where urban areas had been targeted to enable quick wins by both BT and Virgin Media.

The Strategic Director Corporate Focus said that SKDC was a major contributor to the project.

Mr Brooks then spoke about how the product was marketed and the money reinvested within the project. Members asked if Mr Brooks would leave his contact details.

➤ **Action**
The Strategic Director Corporate Focus to circulate

A pilot project had been completed where by a Fixed Wireless Broadband had been provided which covered the East and South East of the county. The original area of coverage had an area of 4.5K premises however the area actually included premises within a 12K area. The deployment of the pilot had been undertaken by AB Internet.

Phase 2 funding of the project would start shortly. BDUK had been granted £2.35M, LCC had set aside £1.8M Match funding and an application was going to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for additional funding to improve coverage of Superfast Broadband.

Mr Brooks concluded his presentation by speaking about the trialling work being undertaken by BT with regard to fibre optics and new technologies.

The Chairman thanked Mr Brooks for his very informative presentation.

98. WEBSITE PROJECT UPDATE

The Deployment Manager gave a progress update on the website following the

last meeting of the Group.

Users of the website only carried out single transactions and therefore a shopping basket function would not be used. The website needed to be easily navigated with users accessing the service they required simply and with ease.

Images of the new website were then shown beginning with the Home page and how the fields shown could be navigated (look for it, apply for it, pay for it, report it and contact us). The main four services that were regularly accessed were shown (Waste & Recycling, Council Tax and Benefits, Planning and Housing) with lists of the most frequently asked questions on drop down fields for each service. An A – Z of services was also shown near the top of the page near to a login area and a search area.

A Member asked about the number of words used within a search and the Deployment Manager responded that words within an article that a customer would use were weighted.

Tracking reported problems was then discussed and the phased introduction of the new Customer Relationship Management System which would help keep track of this.

On the right hand side of the page would be most popular pages and useful links to other organisations and agencies. Users who clicked on useful links would be notified that they were leaving the SKDC website.

Also on the home page would be a news and events areas where the use of graphics could help get clear messages to users of upcoming events. At the bottom of the page were the social media icons, situated where users expected them to be.

Testing of the site would be undertaken both by internal and external users including members of the citizens panel. The website would only go live once all links and aspects of the website worked.

A question was asked about registration and log-in to which the Deployment Manager stressed that it would be simple and straightforward, verification would be made against information already held by the Council. The new website also responded to the type of device used by the user, with the smaller screen only showing the core content of a screen to the user.

The Portfolio Holder for Governance and Communication informed the Group that the Website would be tested to “destruction” before it was launched and thanked Mr Sirdifield and his team for the work undertaken to date.

The Chairman of the Group also thanked Mr Sirdifield and his team for the work done to date on the website.

99. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT

The following item was discussed due to the need to get Members views on what had worked well/not so well for them during their 4 year tenure

The Chief Executive asked the Group what their views were on their Council experience over the last four years, what had worked well, what hadn't worked so well, at what stage did they feel they should be involved/informed about issues. It was hoped that their experiences could be built upon to help the new influx of Members following the elections in May.

Members discussed various issues which were more concerned with operational aspects of how the Council worked, however it was suggested that a buddy system would be very beneficial to new Members both for ICT and having someone to ask questions for information.

100. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 12.37pm.