

Time commenced – 18:00  
Time finished – 19:20

## **Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board**

12 March 2020

Present: Councillor Naitta(Chair)  
Councillors Pattison (Vice Chair), A Pegg, McCristal, Nawaz and Dhindsa

In Attendance: Mick Styne – Electoral Services and Land Charges Manager  
Andy Brammall – Director of Digital and Customer Services

### **27/19 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Barker.

### **28/19 Late items introduced by the Chair**

A Late Item on responsible tax conduct was introduced by the Chair. The Board considered a statement from the Director of Financial Services on responsible tax conduct. The Chair commented that after considering this statement, he believed that a sensible course of action was to request that the Council wrote to the government; asking them to take action around the issues raised in the original motion from Council. The Chair commented that discussions at the previous Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board meeting had lead to a consensus that responsible tax conduct could be enforced more effectively by the national government.

#### **Resolved:**

**To recommend that the Council writes to the government, asking them to take action around the issues raised in the Responsible Tax Conduct motion.**

### **29/19 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

### **30/19 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### **31/19 Land Charges – Update on Official Search Requests**

The Board received a report of the Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services. The report outlined the current position in relation to turnaround times for official Local Land Charges property search requests. The report also provided an update on progress made with the service improvement plan since May 2019. The report was presented by the Elections and Local Land

## Charges Manager.

It was noted that the Local Land Charges team used both computerised and manual records to provide responses to property search requests. It was reported that in February 2019 the service had transferred to a new computer system and since then there had been issues with the migration of data. The Board noted that there had also been resilience issues and single points of failure in the delivery of the search process. It was noted that these factors had had an impact upon turnaround times for the service.

It was reported that in May 2019 the turnaround time for official search requests was 38 working days and that concerns had been raised by stakeholders including: The Minister for Housing, Local Estate Agents, Personal Search companies, conveyancers and the press. It was noted that in order to help turn things around the team had engaged with other colleagues including: teams within the Council, those in other authorities and colleagues at Land Data and the Council's software supplier. It was noted that this had allowed the team to understand and plan, in order to improve the efficiency of processes and turnaround times.

It was noted that Official Search turnaround times had significantly improved and now stood at approximately 9 working days. The Board noted that the Government's expected local authority response time target for search requests was 10 working days or less. It was reported that private search providers could also request to view records so that they could compile search information for their customers. The Board noted that they were able to access and inspect Local Land Charges Register information by appointment, free of charge. It was reported that the wait time for an appointment had reduced from around 42 working days in May 2019 to approximately 12 working days in February 2020.

The Board noted that the Land Charges team were also working closely with their system supplier, IDOX, to identify what had gone wrong with the initial migration. It was reported that IDOX were helping to make changes to the system in order to assist with the automation of responses. It was noted that the Land Charges team were planning to start limiting the amount of planning history revealed in search responses to 20 years (back to 1 April 2000) from 1 April 2020. It was noted that currently, planning history was revealed up to 1 April 1974.

A councillor questioned whether the Land Charges team and the Elections team were made up of the same staff. The Board noted that although they were a combined team the Land Charges team only helped out the Elections team during elections and that they worked separately most of the time. A Councillor asked whether Land Charges search times had gone up during election periods and was informed that this had previously been the case but would not be going forward.

A Councillor questioned why the team had experienced issues with the new software and was informed that in hindsight both the provider and the Land Charges team could have done things differently. A councillor asked whether the software was now working and was informed that there were many positive aspects to the new software and that it was completely different to the software that had been used previously.

A councillor asked whether the supplier was working to fix any problems with the new software. The Elections and Local Land Charges Manager informed the Board that the Land Charges Team now had regular meetings with the provider to discuss any issues and that colleagues from IT were also holding conversations with the provider.

The Chair asked whether records were digitalised and was informed that records back to 2003 were digitalised and that Section 106 agreements were digitalised and were automatically pulled through by searches. The chair questioned whether there were any plans to increase the amount of records that were digitalised and was informed that achieving this would depend upon future funding. The Chair praised the Land Charges team for reducing the search turnaround times from 38 down to 8 days.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To note the background on official search requests and other information contained within the report.**
- 2. To note the progress made on: improving record management, increasing resilience in the Land Charges team, improving turnaround times and keeping customers and stakeholders informed about future progress.**

## **32/19 Gender Representation Task Group Update**

The Board considered a set of draft notes from the first meeting of the Gender Representation Task Group. Members commented that they looked forward to receiving a future report setting out the task group's findings and recommendations.

**Resolved:**

**That upon the conclusion of the Gender Representation Task Group's work; the Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board would consider a report setting out the task group's findings and recommendations.**

## **33/19 Digital Transformation – Impact and Direction**

The Director of Digital & Customer Management presented the Board with an update on the Digital Transformation.

It was noted that one of the strands of the digital transformation was 'Digital by Default / Digital Citizen'. It was reported that this consisted of:

- Having all public services in one place and through a single secure account to manage relationships with the council
- Fulfilling modern citizen digital service expectations
- Giving citizens easy 24/7 access to services from any device or location
- Staying informed and engaged with the council
- Receiving updates on service through to completion
- Enabling end to end fulfilment in a single transaction, and digitally join

- up city and regional partners
- Providing assistance and facilities to citizens who can't use digital services to get the benefit from the new services and develop their digital aptitude
- Helping the council reduce costs and protect services
- Releasing resource from administration to deliver complex citizen needs

It was noted that the project used 6 key pillars to support delivery:

- Digital Innovation Centre - To join up all stakeholders in designing the new services, to high standard, and focus on outcomes.
- Prioritised Programme - To identify the things that matter most.
- Rapid Build & Consolidated Technology - To speed up the building of services, integrate and simplify, and remove duplication.
- Organisational Change - To ensure the organisational processes work in conjunction with new services.
- Community Behaviour Change - To help citizens understand and benefit from new services, and support them to do so.
- Single Front Door & Assisted Digital - To remove duplication of face to face transactions, support citizens who need it, and prevent digital exclusion.

It was noted that the project had so far delivered:

- Foundations: Digital by Default Standards
- Creating re-usable building blocks
- Agile and Iterative development approach
- New Citizen Account
- Citizen promotion campaign
- Staff flu vaccine booking management
- Fostering Recruitment
- Deployment of assistive technology
- Children's Social Care Online Referral
- Adults Social Care Online Referral
- Digital Handy Person service

It was reported that the second strand was the 'Digital Workforce'. It was noted that this would provide everything the 21st Century Worker needed on a single device, at any location and at any time. It was noted that the Microsoft technology suite, alongside Skype for Business, would provide colleagues with secure, modern, flexible and connected devices.

It was noted that the Digital Workforce would lead to the following cultural changes:

- Meeting virtually by default
- Collaborating online
- Travelling by exception
- Switching to multi-channel communications
- Presence checking and alerting

- Instant messaging communications
- Video calling and conferencing
- Working from the best, most effective, cheapest and most environmentally friendly location

It was reported that the Digital Workforce had so far delivered:

- Migration of all 5000 mail accounts Decommissioning failing infrastructure
- Moving 4000+ phone lines to digital ready
- Building the new software
- Creating advanced security
- Building “modern management” tools
- Skype enablement of meeting rooms
- Rollout ready public access services for libraries, community libraries, and customer centres
- Creation of support network
- Commenced Social Care rollout

It was noted that the third strand was 'Digital Connectivity' which included providing secure and compliant connectivity networks for today and the future. It was noted that by April 2020, delivery would include:

- Redesigned local internal network
- Enhanced wide area network to wider world
- Universal Wi-Fi to Council buildings
- Increased and Expanded Mobile Networks
- Shared Gov Wi-fi across all public sector partners
- Improved resilience and performance
- State of the art cyber defence improvement
- Readiness for integration with emerging networks

It was reported that the fourth strand was 'Future Infrastructure' which included flexibly and intelligently right-sourcing the Council's Computing and Storage in a changing world. It was noted that essential to success was a blended approach of the right technology, as it reached the right level of maturity and value including:

- Hyper-Converged Infrastructure - During 2018/19 the majority of the Council's business systems have been moved to cutting edge 'Hyper-Converged' infrastructure on a 'Hybrid Cloud', affording the council unprecedented levels of flexibility and resilience, bringing costs under control and around £500K per annum saving.
- Microsoft 365 - as part of the Digital Workforce project, mail, and desktop based systems have been moved into the Azure cloud intrinsic to M365, similarly bringing costs under control.
- Commodity Cloud - Backup and security services have been maintained in the Microsoft Azure cloud, for resilience and to quickly reconstitute services should a major incident befall the primary services providers.

- Private Cloud - where appropriate and of value, applications which are adequately hosted by their provider are also employed, with appropriate provisions for resilience and security.
- Zero 'On-Premise' - Legacy on-premise models will no longer be employed due low value, and the associated risks to continuity of onsite solutions.
- Right-Sourcing / Hybrid Model - moving forward, the hybrid model will be managed to use a combination of the most appropriate sourcing from the options above, and similarly identifying emerging sourcing options as they become viable.

A councillor questioned what the main risk was with the digital transformation and was informed that inaction was the biggest risk as existing technology was at risk of no longer being secure. A Councillor questioned whether the Council had looked into how other Local Authorities were updating their technology. The Director of Digital & Customer Management informed the Board that he had joined the Council from another Local Authority where he had helped to implement a digital transformation. It was noted that the Council were sharing technologies with other authorities and were reusing other authorities' technologies that worked well.

A councillor questioned whether any projected savings had been produced and was informed that an initial broad forecast was that fully digitalising half of the Council's transactions would save the Council approximately £5-6m per year. A councillor asked whether the digital transformation would link in with the superfast connectivity that was coming to Derby. The Board noted that the digital transformation would take full advantage of this and that the Council were engaging with Microsoft and others to develop a smart city vision.

A councillor questioned whether security would be improved as part of the digital transformation and was informed that the Council had a state of the art shield to protect it both internally and externally. It was noted that 'digital by default' was being built with GDPR in mind and that the Council also used AI to prevent internal data breaches.

A councillor questioned whether the Council's systems had faced attacks in the past and was informed that there were approximately 1 million attacks on the Council's systems each month. It was noted that the Council's systems would automatically shut down if its shield was ever breached in order to prevent data being stolen.

A councillor asked how long it would take to complete the digital transformation. It was noted that the digital workforce would be completed by the end of 2020 and that the rest of the digital transformation was being rolled out depending upon priorities. It was noted that the digital transformation roll out was iterative and could theoretically last for an indefinite amount of time.

The Chair questioned whether the 'Citizens Accounts' could be accessed in different languages and was informed that new technology would allow this to happen. It was noted that digital assistants would ensure that no one is excluded from the benefits of the digital transformation.

**Resolved:**

**To note the latest update on the Digital Transformation, as presented at the meeting.**

MINUTES END