

Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 November 2018
10:00am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mr T FitzPatrick (Chairman)

Mr S Eyre
Mr J Fisher
Mr G Middleton

Dr C Jones
Mr T Smith

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence was received from Mr E Colman, Mr D Rowntree and Dr M Strong.

An apology was also received from Mr Geoff Connell, the Head of IMT, who was engaged on County Council business elsewhere. Mr Kurt Frary, Infrastructure Services Manager, would be deputising for the Head of IMT for this meeting.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2018 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/ Member Questions

- 6.1 There were no Local Member Issues/ Member Questions.

7 Chairman's Update

- 7.1 The Chairman reported on the success of The Things Network Conference which was held at St Andrew's Hall in Norwich on the 15th/16th October 2018 in promoting the use of long range wide area network technology, LoRaWAN. The conference was attended by over 200 people of all ages and included NCC staff, Council Members, equipment suppliers and the public. Some of the suppliers who had attended the event had expressed an interest in working with the County Council in supplying sensors to monitor road surfaces in a field trial for winter highway services. The Committee would be able to consider this issue at item 11 on the agenda for today's meeting.
- 7.2 The Chairman also said that Members of the Committee would have an opportunity at the end of today's meeting to take part in a tour of the Innovation Centre in the mezzanine area of County Hall. Members would be able to see for themselves how the Innovation Centre was a "living lab" that enabled staff to test new business systems, consumer technology, internet of things and assistive technology all from one place.

8 Finance Monitoring

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 8.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that provided the Committee with information on the budget position for services reporting to Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee. The report also provided information on the use of reserves and details of the capital programme.
- 8.3 The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services drew the Committee's attention to table 1 of the report and said that a balanced revenue budget was forecast for 2018-19. This was a better revenue position than had been reported previously. There was a strong possibility that the Committee might be able to make a small addition to reserves at year end.
- 8.4 Members were pleased to note that bringing currently outsourced services associated with the management of PCs back in house would save approximately £1.000 m per annum.

8.5 RESOLVED

That the Committee note:

- 1. The 2018 - 19 revenue position for this Committee.**
- 2. The 2017 - 18 to 2020 – 21 capital programme for this Committee.**
- 3. The 2018 – 19 reserves position for this Committee.**

9. **IMT Performance Indicators**

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 9.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that provided operational dashboard information based on the eight vital signs performance indicators that fell under the remit of this Committee. All IMT indicators were reported as on target (green) with the exception of “Incidents resolved within SLA.”
- 9.3 The Committee was informed of two further indicators that were recorded at this committee periodically and then passed onto Policy & Resources Committee. These were Better Broadband for Norfolk Coverage and 4G Mobile telephony coverage. These indicators were currently at 91% (against a target of 90% for 2018/19 Q1) and 83% respectively (which was the baseline measure). Work continued to review what other data might be appropriate to report to committee. Items under consideration included digital inclusion indicators which continued to be developed as a vital signs indicator.

9.4 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee are content with the existing use of IMT Performance Indicators and note the information provided in the report.

10. **LoRaWAN conference & Hackathon Update**

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 10.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services about how The Things Network Conference which was held in Norwich on 15th/16th October 2018 had provided an opportunity for officers to explore the technology and understand what others were doing to promote the use of long range wide area network technology LoRaWAN. LoRaWAN was designed to allow low-powered devices to communicate with Internet-connected applications over long range wireless connections.
- 10.3 In addition, the report explained how the County Council had partnered with ‘The Things Network’ to conduct a Hackathon on a series of challenges for teams to explore if the LoRaWAN technology could solve them.
- 10.4 The Infrastructure Services Manager said that the audience and a panel of judges at The Things Network Conference had awarded two prizes of ‘People’s Choice’ and ‘Best Pitch’ for those who had participated in the Hackathon.

- 10.5 In reply to questions, the Infrastructure Services Manager said that the idea behind a Hackathon was to create an environment where programmers and developers of all ages and abilities could get together to exchange ideas, develop technological breakthroughs, and create innovative new applications. A Hackathon provided an invaluable source of information to supply chain companies and gave them guidance and direction as to what areas of innovation the County Council were looking for. The challenges were set using local Hackathons to find solutions to a mixture of public sector needs that Norfolk County Council wanted to see solved utilising the Public LoRaWAN Network.
- 10.6 Because of the successful use of Hackathons at the Conference, the Committee was keen to support local Hackathons being held throughout Norfolk.
- 10.7 The Committee also gave its support to the work that was being done with schools to encourage pupils of 8-14 years of age to participate in a series of Step into Tech Hackathon challenge events where teams of school pupils explored how LoRaWAN technology could be used to find technological solutions to issues that they found of interest. This approach had already led pupils at a school in the Dereham area to successfully design a device which monitored air pollution in the vicinity of that school.
- 10.8 In addition, the Committee supported the setting up of a local digital market place which would provide a valuable new online platform for bringing together a single place for ideas and initiatives. A successful digital market place would stimulate technological solutions to issues of relevance to the County Council and when linked with other initiatives within the County Council's economic development agenda would bring jobs into Norfolk and provide for more investment in the local economy.
- 10.9 **RESOLVED**
- That the Committee note the information provided in the report and support the initiatives that were being taken.**
- 11 **Innovative Use of Technology for Highways**
- 11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 11.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services that explained how the Highways Service were exploiting digital and technological innovations that delivered efficiencies, service improvements and a better way of working. The report provided examples of these technological developments and highlighted areas of work that were being considered for the future.
- 11.3 Members were pleased to hear about a pilot project mentioned in the report that would see low-cost road surface temperature sensors embedded in roads in Great Yarmouth to gather data up until the end of the winter season in April next year.

The data from those sensors would be used to determine whether the town could be treated less than currently, saving salt, fuel and driver time.

- 11.4 It was noted that due to its urban nature significant parts of Great Yarmouth were likely to be warmer than gritting areas elsewhere. Suitable locations to install the trial sensors would be identified using thermal mapping data and Google Street View. A long range, low power wireless platform would be used to provide the necessary data coverage across Great Yarmouth. Suppliers had expressed an interest in working with Norfolk County Council, including supplying sensors on loan for free, so the trial could be done.

11.5 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- 1. Approve the field trial of roadside sensors.**
- 2. Direct officers to return to Committee with the results and potential options if successful.**
- 3. Consider the results of the trial at a future meeting to decide on next steps.**

12 **Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme update**

- 12.1 The annexed report (12) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 12.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services that provided an update on progress with the Better Broadband for Norfolk project.
- 12.3 Members were informed that currently 92% of homes and businesses had access to download speeds of 24Mbps+ per second. The Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) programme was set to deliver 95% coverage across the county by the end of March 2020, but the Council was not content to stop there. The Council was committed to making sure that every home and business in Norfolk had access to Superfast Broadband. Some of the remaining “not-spots” were the most time-consuming and costly to reach, but because the County Council had secured an extra £11m of funding further steps would be taken to plug the gaps.
- 12.4 The Committee noted that activities and timescales associated with the current procurement were due to be completed during February 2019.

12.5 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note:

- 1. Details regarding the current procurement described in section 1 of the report.**
- 2. Progress of the current rollout described in section 2 of the report.**

13 Counter Fraud Hub

- 13.1 The annexed report (13) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 13.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that explained how the County Council had engaged with other Local Authority colleagues in Norfolk in reviewing the Cipfa / BAU counter fraud system and services used in London to develop the scope and cost for a counter fraud hub for Norfolk. The report explained how a soft market review had identified a new Cabinet Office Fraud Hub system as the compelling option for Norfolk.
- 13.3 Members heard from the Infrastructure Services Manager about how the Cabinet Office Fraud Hub system would strengthen existing data sets, address new risks and ensure the sharing of best practice.
- 13.4 In reply to questions about the suitability of the proposed system and its expected return on investment, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that it was difficult to accurately state how much money was lost across Norfolk due to fraud and error, however, there were huge potential savings to be made and the proposed business case that was put before the Committee was the right one for Norfolk. He said that he was confident that a Cabinet Office Fraud Hub system would pay for itself within 12 months by maximising business rates income and reducing single persons council tax discounts where this was not justified.
- 13.5 The Chairman added that the Cabinet Office Fraud Hub system would also offer good value for money by putting in place the necessary tools to reduce error as well as fraud related to Social Care payments.
- 13.6 After having carefully considered the suitability of a Cabinet Office Fraud Hub system for Norfolk, Members supported the County Council going to the next stage in the preparation of a business case.

13.7 RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- 1. Direct officers to assess the suitability of the Cabinet Office NFI Fraud Hub system for Norfolk's needs and its financial benefit potential (in conjunction with district and borough colleagues).**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Head of IMT in consultation with the chair and deputy chair of this committee, to implement the Cabinet Office System if the cost is less than £100k and has an expected return on investment of less than 3 years.**

14 Local Full Fibre Network Bid

- 14.1 The annexed report (14) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received together with a PowerPoint presentation.
- 14.2 The Committee received a report and a PowerPoint presentation about the progress being made by Norfolk County Council on behalf of the County of Norfolk to seek DCMS Local Full Fibre Network Programme funding.
- 14.3 It was noted that the information included in the PowerPoint presentation related only to rural areas of the county. Because Norwich and Kings Lynn were omitted from the most recent analysis the figures had changed in terms of the number of sites reviewed from 470 to 384. There was the potential to include an additional 150 GP and NHS surgery sites depending on additional analysis and overlap.
- 14.4 The Committee fully supported the work that was being done to develop the project and noted that the PowerPoint presentation would be placed on the County Council's committee pages website.

14.5 RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- 1. Continue to develop the bid with DCMS and keep all Norfolk partners informed of progress.**
- 2. Delegate authority to commit necessary bid development and project management resources to the Head of Information Management & Technology in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee.**

15 Use of Technology in Education

- 15.1 The annexed report (15) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Executive Director of Children's Services was received.
- 15.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Executive Director of Children's Services that explained the means whereby the County Council intended to make better use of digital technology to increase engagement with parents and provide for quicker decisions while at the same time ensuring efficiency savings and adopting to customer changing digital behaviours.
- 15.3 Members said that while they fully supported the proposals set out in the report it was important that those parents who did not use digital technology were not disadvantaged. In reply, Members were assured that the use of new digital technology would not imply the withdrawal of other forms of communication between the parent and the Council.

15.4 RESOLVED

That the Committee approve the proposal for:

- 1. Parent Portal Implementation for 2 Year old funding, Free School Meals and Education Health and Care Plans.**
- 2. Parent Portal implementation for Children Centres online registrations.**
- 3. Integration of a parent portal with My Norfolk accounts for Single Sign On phase 1.**

16 Forward Plan and decisions taken under delegated authority

16.1 The annexed report (16) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

16.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee note the forward work programme at Appendix A to the report and that no decisions were taken under delegated authority since the previous meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 pm

Chairman