



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 1st October 2018

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Hawthorne (Spokesperson),
Dee, Hilton, Lewis, Morgan, Pullen, Taylor, Walford, Wilson, Lugg,
D. Norman and Stephens

Others in Attendance

Corporate Director

Head of Communities

Customer Services Transformation Manager

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Finnegan, Haigh, Hampson and Toleman

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

90.1 There were no declarations of interest.

91. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

91.1 There were no declarations of party whipping.

92. MINUTES

92.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

93. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

93.1 There were no public questions.

94. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

94.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

95. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

95.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan. The Chair informed Members that, in order for options presentation to be available and so that the Cabinet Member for attend, the Tourist Information

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Centre Service Development would be considered at the 29th October meeting.

- 95.2 Referring to an item on the Cabinet Forward Plan asked what the Key Cities Group was. The Corporate Director advised that it was a lobby group hosted by the Local Government Association and that it was hoped Gloucester would become a Member to better influence government.
- 95.3 **RESOLVED that:** - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the work programme.

96. PLANS FOR ACCOMMODATION MOVE

- 96.1 Councillor H. Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, introduced the presentation and clarified that they were conceptual plans. She stated that design briefs would be drawn up and that she was happy to answer queries and receive feedback on the plans.
- 96.2 The Customer Services Transformation Manager presented the conceptual plans for the accommodation move which were included in the agenda papers. He advised that the move was a part of process redesign which included a shift towards more self-service on the part of residents.
- 96.3 He stated that the team would 'design out' conflict and that the reception would be open plan and self-surveilling. He further stated that the plans had been informed by visits and discussions with a number of other local authorities including Bristol, Wiltshire and the Forest of Dean.
- 96.4 Councillor Pullen welcomed the opportunity to examine the plans and stated that he appreciated the desire to make the reception welcoming. He expressed concern that the space was smaller than the current reception and the apparent lack of a customer waiting area. Councillor Pullen also shared his concern regarding a potential lack of confidentiality.
- 96.5 In response to the query regarding confidentiality, the Customer Service Transformation Manager stated that there were several semi-private booths included in the design that other Councils are utilising successfully for conversations around homelessness and housing benefits. He went on to explain that the design also included a number of private rooms for sensitive conversations and furthermore that we will be able to utilise rooms available to us at Shire Hall and that creating a space that was both relaxing and confidential was currently being examined.
- 96.6 With regard to the size of the reception, the Customer Service Transformation Manager advised that there would be an appointments system but if a resident presented without an appointment, they would be triaged and, if more time was required, an appointment would be booked. In the case of emergencies, residents would be seen quickly that same day as is the case now.

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- 96.7 The Head of Communities outlined that, presently, a resident would be met by both an officer and a ticketing machine and then have to wait to be seen by a specialist officer. Under the new proposals, he advised, the resident would be met by a triage worker who will be trained to be able to deal with the high volume low level queries that form the majority of our contacts. Triage Officers would also be tasked with encouraging residents to self serve and it is planned to have for a temporary period of time a number of digital enablers that will assist residents to interact with the council (where it is deemed appropriate) via the online portal.
- 96.8 Councillor Wilson shared his concern that the plans did not include staff safety and queried whether it had been considered. The Customer Services Transformation Manager advised that it had been considered and staff had undergone conflict resolution training which they had valued. He also stated that it was the intention to design out conflict and that there would be shorter waiting times for residents.
- 96.9 Councillor Ryall asked what was meant by the incorporation of Psychologically Informed Environment best practice. The Customer Services Transformation Manager explained the concept and advised that the intention was to consult with appropriate specialists.
- 96.10 Councillor Hilton shared his concern that the space was too small and that there was too much to be housed in the smaller space. The Head of Communities stated that the vast majority of residents if they have a PC, laptop, I-pad or smart phone will be able to transact with the Council without the need to visit a reception, freeing up our specialist officers to meet face to face with those residents who are our most vulnerable and in need.
- 96.11 In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton, the Customer Services Transformation Manager advised that the Head of Policy and Resources was looking at the new payment system which was well progressed. He also advised that the transformation programme was an 18 month plan and that it would not be appropriate to wait this long to move premises.
- 96.12 Councillor Stephens stated that he welcomed new ways of working but that not everyone would be able to use new digital technologies. He further stated that such new methods needed to be communicated effectively. Councillor Stephens also asked for an estimate of how many 'in-person' interactions there would be.
- 96.13 Councillor H. Norman advised that she would be meeting with the Communications team to publicise the transition timetable. She also stated that an important part of the transformation programme was spending more time with those who needed it. The Head of Communities advised that there were no estimates for interactions at present but consulting with the public had begun and information would be shared where required.
- 96.14 Councillor Stephens asked a number of specific questions relating the capacity of the waiting area, the number of officers on duty, process and waiting times for those without an appointment, timescales for the move and

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how it will be communicated to customers, proposed performance measures and targets and any contingency arrangements. The Head of Communities agreed to respond to the questions in writing.

- 96.15 Councillor Lugg asked about both provision for children while parents would be using services and for those who were not as digitally capable as others.
- 96.16 The Customer Services Transformation Manager stated that he appreciated that there would often be children in the reception and that, with regard to the use of technology, officer time would be focused on those who needed more assistance.
- 96.17 The Customer Services Transformation Manager stated that he appreciated that there will continue to be children in the reception but with a reduction in footfall this will decrease. He confirmed however that both the semi-private and private spaces will have space for a resident to be accompanied.
- 96.18 Councillor Morgan asked what analysis had been undertaken with existing customers. He also asked about why there was a lift in the concept design. The Head of Communities confirmed that a lift was required for Westgate Street in order to make the building compliant as the upper floors were going to be used by our IT and Revenues & Benefits contractor CIVICA.
- 96.19 The Customer Services Transformation Manager explained that through engaging Ignite in the Spring, 180 processes had been identified for redesign and that where customers were likely to experience a change, the focus would be on communication.
- 96.20 Councillor Hilton expressed concerns and questioned whether a different approach would have been taken if there was an opportunity to move to a location with more space available.
- 96.21 In response to a question from Councillor Lewis about changes to IT, Councillor H. Norman advised that laptops had been ordered, with different devices allocated for different roles, and the Customer Services Transformation Manager confirmed that the main IT infrastructure would be in place on day one, with other changes introduced to coincide with process redesign and implementation.
- 96.22 In response to a question from Councillor Stephens regarding the timeline for the move, Councillor H. Norman advised that there would be a transitional period, but that the new reception would not open before staff were moved to Shire Hall.
- 96.23 Councillor Hilton asked stated that it was necessary to market and sell the HKP warehouse complex quickly to prevent the Council from continuing to incur costs while the buildings were empty.
- 96.24 In respect of the office space in Shire Hall, Councillors Hilton and Taylor raised concerns about the amount of space available for specific tasks such as inspecting plans.

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- 96.25 The Customer Services Transformation Manager explained that the space would be used in different ways by different officers and that by further reducing use of paper there would be more space available. Services had been consulted on their needs and there would be a range of desks sizes available.
- 96.26 Councillor H. Norman added that there would be two meeting rooms available for use in addition to the ability to book other meeting rooms in the building.
- 96.27 In response to concerns raised by Councillor Ryall about how individuals are affected by hotdesking and the importance of accommodating staff with specific needs, the Customer Services Transformation Manager advised that due diligence had been carried out and that equality requirements would be met. He noted that there were arguments for and against hotdesking.
- 96.28 Councillor Lewis asked how confidentiality would be maintained in the open plan space.
- 96.29 Councillor H. Norman advised that a clear desk policy would be in place and while this would represent a culture change, it was necessary for confidentiality and would also have a positive impact on productivity.
- 96.30 In response to questions from Councillor Pullen and Taylor regarding the staff to workspace ratio, the Corporate Director advised that the exact ratio could be circulated, but that 8:10 was the approximate aim. She stated that an Agile Working Policy was being prepared.
- 96.31 Councillor D. Norman highlighted that Health and Safety was everyone's responsibility as well as being a legal requirement, and that equipment provided would be adjustable.
- 96.32 Councillor H. Norman offered to bring the plans back to the Committee when more detail was available.
- 96.33 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted and that more detailed plans be presented to the Committee when available.

97. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 97.1 29th October 2018 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.25 pm hours

Chair