



Date: 18 September 2017

Title: Democratic and Central Services: projects update

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with information regarding current projects, in accordance with the Committee Objectives and work plan for 2017-2018.

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Corporate Objective/s	Aim 1: To consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council.	
Implications:		
Financial		
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery	√	
Procedural/Legal	√	
Risk/Health & Safety		

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 To note the report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 19 June 2017, the Committee received information on projects and work streams completed during the municipal year 2016-17 and gave approval to a number of new/ongoing projects for the municipal year 2017-18.

2.2 The following summarises work to date and current status of a number of projects.

3.0 I.T.

3.1 At its meeting held on 21 November 2016, the Committee received a report outlining a number of proposed IT improvements. Utilising a budget earmarked within the five year financial plan, it was proposed that a programme of technological improvements be gradually implemented over a number of years.

- 3.2 Following the takeover of the Council's IT support provider (Flint IT) by Virtual IT earlier this year, a proposal was received from the new parent company, suggesting a move towards an "all in one" managed service which would see a number of changes and upgrades taking place concurrently, with no initial up-front payment but an increased monthly fee per user.
- 3.3 Analysis of the proposal by officers over the last three months has included a cost/benefit comparison and a number of discussions and meetings with our provider.
- 3.4 A final meeting held in early September has resulted in a decision, reached jointly by officers with our account managers at Flint and Virtual IT, to not proceed with the proposed package but to implement changes piecemeal, as originally intended.
- 3.5 The initial focus will be on updating our back-up solution, moving email to Office 365 and replacing hardware older than five years.
- 3.6 Thereafter, IT projects will include improving network speed and considering a server upgrade.

4.0 PAPERLESS AGENDAS

- 4.1 Further to the previous resolution by the Committee to move towards paperless meetings, research has been undertaken by contacting 30 other town councils, including other "supercouncils" (precept over £1m).
- 4.2 While 3 are still to be contacted, results from the remaining 27 indicate that around a third of councils are still using only paper based agendas, but half have moved to sending agendas by email. The remainder provide a combination of both methods – either both emailing and posting an agenda, or emailing only with paper copies available at the meeting.
- 4.3 Of the councils surveyed, none were using any form of particular document management or document sharing system – documents were simply emailed.
- 4.4 A relatively small number of councils have provided Councillors with a tablet device to view agendas.
- 4.5 The main driver for change appears to be the saving on postage costs (estimated at £100/month on average).
- 4.6 A couple of councils use a "Members only" section of their website in order to allow access to confidential papers. This is something which was a part of the previous LLTC website and could relatively easily be added to the existing website or as part of the future development plan.
- 4.7 Further research continues into potential document sharing systems and into the costs of issuing Members with tablet devices. In accordance with the work plan, options will be presented to Committee at its November meeting.

4.8 In the meantime, agenda papers will only be posted to members of a Committee/Sub-Committee – but are available to all Members on the website or upon request. Should any Committee/Sub Committee members be happy to receive email agendas or access via the website rather than receiving hard copies, please let us know.

5.0 ANNUAL REPORT

5.1 The 2016-2017 Annual Report has now been published to the website, with hard copies available at the White House and the Library. Availability of the report will be publicised via social media.

6.0 STAFF SURVEY

6.1 Members will be aware that a staff satisfaction survey was undertaken last September/October, with results reported back to the Personnel Sub-Committee. It is intended to repeat the survey during October of this year.

6.2 The percentage of employees citing that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with LLTC as a place to work was 87% in 2016. The KPI for 2017 is 90%.

7.0 BUSINESS CONTINGENCY PLANS

7.1 The White House Business Contingency plan has been updated for 2017 with copies held off-site in the case of an emergency situation.

7.2 Work is underway to create/review contingency plans for the TACTIC building and Astral Park.

8.0 POLICIES

8.1 The suite of Town Council policies is currently under review, with the overall policy index being updated accordingly. In some cases only an update of branding is required. In other case, policies may have been superseded by recent revisions to policies and procedures, or by changes in legislation. From this work, an updated list of policy review/renewal dates will be compiled and fed into the work plan.

9.0 ONLINE PAYMENTS AND BOOKINGS

9.1 The Town Council now allows payment via BACS or by WorldPay – details are available upon request and are usually sent via an email link. Consideration is being given as to whether this information can be published on the website.

9.2 At a meeting of officers on 30 June 2017, discussion took place regarding the potential for online bookings. Due to the complexities inherent in the booking of both meeting spaces and sports pitches, it was agreed that processing by officers was essential, enabling a “sense check” to take place and allowing an amount of flexibility in determining the right solution for each booking.

9.3 Online ticketing was however agreed to be a potentially useful tool, for example for Mayoral fundraising events or for the holiday activities for young people offered by TACTIC and Astral Park. Further investigation will be taking place into the viability of online ticketing for events.

10.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

10.1 Further to the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 10 July 2017, a sickness absence KPI has been set at 1.5 days per person per year excluding any long-term absence or 4 days per person per year including long-term absence.

10.2 In consultation with our retained HR consultants, we have undertaken and completed an audit of both hard copy personnel files and electronic personnel file.

10.3 We have started discussions with our retained HR consultants about the service provided, in advance of the existing contract expiring in March 2018.

11.0 RISK REGISTER ACTION PLAN

11.1 At its meeting held in February 2017, the Committee endorsed the Risk Register action plan for the year, comprising two action points.

11.2 The maintenance programme for fences, hedges, gates, footpaths etc is under development through the Grounds and Environmental Services department, alongside the planned ongoing maintenance programme for other Town Council assets.

11.3 The item in respect of till control was only applicable to Astral Park. A bar till procedure has been compiled by the Senior Centre Co-ordinator and the internal audit has confirmed he is satisfied with cash handling and till functions at Astral Park.

11.4 The annual review of the Risk Register will be undertaken during the Autumn with a view to providing the Committee with a proposed Action Plan for 2018-19 in early 2018.

End.