

# People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 16th July, 2018.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chair), Cllr Louise Baldock (Vice-Chair), Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Eileen Johnson and Cllr Mick Moore.

**Officers:** Gary Woods, Peter Bell (DCE), Lorraine Dixon (Digital Transformation & Customer Service Manager).

**Also in attendance:** None.

**Apologies:** None.

**PEO  
23/18**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

**PEO  
24/18**      **Minutes of the meetings held on 19 February 2018 and 26 February 2018 - to follow**

AGREED that the minutes of the meetings held on 19 February 2018 and 26 February 2018 be deferred for consideration at the next meeting.

**PEO  
25/18**      **Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation**

Members noted a covering report in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation which included website links to relevant background papers to enable Members to familiarise themselves with the topic. A copy of the agreed scope and plan for this review was included for information.

The Council's Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager was in attendance at the meeting and provided information in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation. The presentation covered the following key areas:-

- The Council ambition
- Council Plan objectives
- Government Digital Services
- Customer Engagement
- Stockton Council website
- My Stockton take-up
- Customer Services - Contact Analysis
- Digital Customer Services - Delivery Plan 2018
- Digital Opportunities

Members were reminded that this review has a particular focus on the customer experience of the Council's digital services.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

- Technology is more mainstream now – customers increasingly expect to carry out their business online. As such, the Council must consider if it is doing things as efficiently as it can.
- Need to ensure that the Council invests the money it has in the people

who need it most.

- Should be increasing digital provision for those who want it, but digital services are not necessarily the answer for everything the Council does.
- Challenge in getting end-to-end delivery and maintaining the optimum delivery of services. Number of IT vacancies in the North East noted – Members queried whether the Council could develop the skills of its staff itself, something which is currently being looked at internally through apprenticeship schemes and Local Authority partnership working.
- New Universal Credit online service implemented – Council has taken on a lot of responsibility for customers accessing their account.
- Digital Assistants in Customer Service Centres – recognise that not everyone has the required technology at home, and that the Council can help them if they come to us.
- Work with other North East Council's on customer management systems, sharing resources, best practice, how to achieve more with less, etc.
- Council does pick up service requests through its social media sites, though does not actively encourage requests to be made via these channels.
- Increasing My Stockton take-up encouraging, though Members expressed concern regarding the layout of the My Stockton home page – could the look be improved/streamlined/self-configured? Also, it was felt that the bulky waste process needs to be tighter – feedback following requests can be very slow.
- My Stockton survey (January 2018) and customer services satisfaction survey (2017-2018) headline information noted – survey results to be circulated to Members following this meeting.
- Confidence in using the technology is key for all.
- People who contact customer services are informed of digital options.
- Has the Council explored how people can report things anonymously (e.g. enforcement for fly-tipping)? Noted that people do not need to log into My Stockton to report issues.
- Digitisation can enhance local democracy by increasing engagement with Members online, further encourage people to vote, and help Members access their constituents.
- Members questioned whether increasing digital services would equate to job losses – whilst this could not be ruled out in the future, development and delivery of digital options requires the re-direction of resources which would need staff input/oversight.

The Committee requested the following further information:

- Age profile on who is currently using the Council's digital services.

AGREED that:-

1. The information be noted.
2. The further information be provided as requested.

Consideration was given to the People Select Committee Work Programme 2018-2019. The next meeting would be held on 17 September 2018.

AGREED that the People Select Committee Work Programme 2018/19 be noted.

**PEO  
27/18**

**Chair's Update**

The Chair had nothing further to report.