

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 11th July, 2022.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Cllr Niall Innes), Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE.

Officers: Lorraine Dixon, Neil Mitchell, Stephen Shaw (CSE & C), Julie Marsden (FD&R), Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Judith Trainer, Rachel Harrison (CS)

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Barry Woodhouse

PEO **Declarations of Interest**

8/22

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO **Minutes**

9/22

Consideration was given to the minutes of the People Select Committee meeting which was held on the 13 June 2022 for approval and signature.

AGREED That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PEO **Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation**

10/22

The Select Committee considered a progress update, including assessments of progress and supplementary appendices, following implementation of the recommendations from the review of Digital Optimisation. Highlights included:

Recommendation 1

- The new website went live on 28 February 2022 as planned. My Council replaced My Stockton and included a number of new features.

Recommendation 2

- Since September 2019 there had been an increasing take up of online services. It was due in part due to more service availability; however, the pandemic had encouraged more people to access services online.

Recommendation 3

- Sign up and sign in options were at the top of the home page.

Recommendation 5

- Senior managers from all Directorates were represented in Digital Services Group and were actively supported to help their colleagues to understand the benefits of digital services. The group was well established and the processes and support for digital developments was embedded in service practice.
- Digital options were included as a key factor in service improvement and redesign activities. Members of Digital Services group actively supported services to evaluate digital solutions and options during service review activities and service developments.

Recommendation 6

- Digital skills continued to improve generally due to the increase in digital services. The next phase of MS365 implementation was underway which included training and support to enable the use of MS365 to improve service practices.

Recommendation 7

- The new website went live on 28 February 2022.

Recommendation 8

- Digital skills continued to improve generally due to the increase in digital services. The next phase of MS365 implementation was underway which included training and support to enable the use of MS365 to improve service practices.

Recommendation 9

- The new Learning Management System launched in May 2022. This was an online personalised learning portal which was digital in its own right and also included modules for the development of digital skills.
- The development of Digital skills was included in the Managers guide to appraisals sections 2 and 3.

Recommendation 10

- The new systems put in place resulted in new working practices involving automation of processes and information. The ongoing identification and implementation of new solutions were well established within the work of the Digital Services Group.

Recommendation 11

- The ongoing sustainability of the following is established in working progress:-
 - o Digital Services Group as a mechanism for collaboration across the Council
 - o Northeast Digital Services Group for regional collaboration
 - o Northeast SOCITM for regional and national collaboration
 - o Local Digital Declaration community for national

Recommendation 12

- Digital Services Group was well established in practice, Council services were familiar with the processes and were well supported to deliver benefits through identified digital initiatives and projects.

Recommendation 13

- No external funding was accessed between September 2021 and 2022, however, continuous monitoring was to be held for funding through Local Gov Digital and other Government initiatives.

Committee comments and questions were recorded as follows:

- Members questioned how training of Microsoft 365 would be carried out. Officers responded that training would be layered with core groups being trained first and they in turn would train others.
- Members queried if there was a way for local businesses to be

highlighted to users when searching for a service. Officers responded that through the procurement service local businesses are included.

- Members queried if any funding for Digital Optimisation came from the COVID pot? Officers responded that there had been an allocation towards the GOSS and MS365 work required to support the COVID response.

AGREED that the assessments of progress be confirmed.

**PEO
11/22** **Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future**

The Select Committee received a presentation from Neil Mitchell on Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure and how this linked with the Select Committee review.

The presentation covered:

- Why should the Council respond to Climate Change and the energy crisis?
- Influence and a Borough Wide response
- How? Four high level objectives:
 - o How? Achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions
 - o How? Protect and enhance the natural environment
 - o How? Use all resources efficiently and minimise waste
 - o How? Adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Why is energy efficiency important?
- The scale of the problem
- Government response
- What is the Government doing to improve energy efficiency?
- Challenges

Committee comments and questions were recorded as follows:

- Members questioned the use of heat pumps as an alternative to gas boilers due to there being some criticism surrounding them. Officers responded that technology was improving all the time helping to reduce the price of heat pumps to become more similar to that of a gas boiler.
- Members questioned the comment about Stockton on Tees having good air quality and where the air quality meters were placed. Officers responded that the air quality meters were placed in different areas with there being only one meter recording readings approaching the air legal limit.
- Members queried which boiler upgrade schemes were available. Officers responded the schemes available were £5,000 off the cost and installation of an air source heat pump and £5,000 off the cost and installation of a biomass boiler.
- Comments were held around electric charging points with officers commenting that the Tees Valley Combined Authority were soon visiting the area to look at the placement of new charging points.
- Members commented that Stockton on Tees needed an efficient reliant transport system to get people out of cars to make a big impact on the environment.

AGREED that the evidence be noted.

PEO **Select Committee Work Programme and Chair's Update**
12/22

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.