

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thriving & Vibrant Economy Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday, 4 February 2020
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Meeting Room 11, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Clarke, Fielding, Gollick, Green, Higginbottom, Hunt, W. Johnson, Lodge, McCarthy, Noble, Richardson, Smith and Tattersall together with co-opted member Ms. G Carter

5 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

6 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2020 were received.

8 Barnsley Council's Digital First Programme

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Andrew Frosdick, Executive Director – Core Services
 Dave Robinson, Service Director, Customer Information & Digital Services
 Kay Deacey-Coulton, Head of IT Service Improvement

Members of the Committee were provided with a report informing them of the reasons for establishing the Council's Digital First programme; the structure and governance of the programme and the progress of the workstreams so far, together with details of the future activities and next steps that will be taken along the digital improvement journey.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge, the following issues were highlighted:

There are a number of risks associated with the programme which were discussed in detail. These include cultural aspects of the programme around change management, which can take time to embed, employee engagement and adoption of the programme by customers. Members were reassured that there is a robust risk

monitoring system in place to deal with all identified risks and dedicated Change Management Officers and change management framework in place.

It was highlighted that employee engagement and adoption of technology and new ways of working isn't controlled by the programme but extensive change management and adoption work has taken place using new approaches such as digital campaigns, the new Spotlight on Digital Skills site, Digital Support Clinics, creation of 'digital personas' and introduction of videos on the DigitalFirst YouTube channel to support the workforce through change and try to mitigate the risk of non-adoption. Introduction of the SAP system for finance (mileage and expenses claims etc.) was successfully rolled out, with a robust programme for system users and lessons were learned from this and applied to future projects.

Communication is key and there is a need to engage with everyone through diverse means, ensuring that everyone gets the right information at the right time. The programme has a comprehensive communication and engagement plan in place.

Microsoft Office is being superseded by Office 365. It was explained that previously Microsoft supported BMBC running Office 2010 on its own servers but this is now changing to cloud storage and an entirely subscription based model. Although there is a cost attached to introducing Office 365, this will bring about savings in the long term as consolidated databases will be put on the cloud, which doesn't require maintenance. Employees are being supported to migrate data and more than 3000 devices are to be upgraded at a rate of around 40 per day. Resources for refreshing existing devices have been earmarked in budgets.

There will be tangible differences for customers. The service is currently redesigning forms within the customer portal so that the processes of reporting and transacting are much easier. Customer data will be consolidated so that there is one place for everything. This will be rolled out over the next 12 months. This should create capacity in contact centres, where other improvements are being made. For example, 'chatbots' are being created, which will free up capacity in contact centres for more complex cases. Customers are at the core, with opportunities for the public to make suggestions for improvements and to ensure the system meets their needs. There is currently a mobile phone app for customers to use. The design process will involve citizens at all levels of capability. Customers will only have to log in if they want to track progress on queries but more verification will be needed for more complex transactions. A Member suggested that the house number could be used as a unique identifier for information relating to a property but this could be a problem if the information was accessed by the wrong person and could potentially compromise GDPR regulations.

Partners are also classed as customers, and it is important to consider how to work effectively with them and their systems. Services such as shared care and population health management will be looked at in the next stage.

The Council holds PSN (Public Services Network) accreditation, which it achieved on the basis of total transparency and cyber security threat protection. This accreditation ensures that the Council can access information from government departments. Endpoint protection is to be upgraded and there is a prerequisite list of similar accreditations for the cloud. The Council works hard to protect on-premise

and off-premise data. Egress, the current secure mail system, will continue to be used until it is phased out once testing has been carried out on Microsoft's equivalent system.

Bi-monthly meetings take place with Officers from the other South Yorkshire Authorities. Barnsley appears to be ahead in terms of rolling out Office 365, web transactions and process automation.

Members requested to be kept up to date with the progress of this programme and the officers advised they will plan to bring an information station to Members in due course.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution, and
- (ii) A Member briefing be held at the start of the new Municipal year to update members on progress.

9 Barnsley - Digital as a Place

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

David Shepherd, Service Director, Economic Regeneration, Place Directorate
Paul Clifford, Head of Service, Economic Development, Place Directorate
Tracey Johnson, Business Incubation Strategy Centre Manager, Place Directorate
Tom Smith, Head of Employment & Skills, Place Directorate
Dave Robinson, Service Director, Customer Information & Digital Services

The Head of Service for Economic Development introduced the report, providing Members with an overview of Barnsley as a 'digital place', describing the local picture in relation to business; infrastructure; partnership working and the digital skills of people.

The focus of work has been with local universities rather than national and a relationship has been developed with Sheffield Hallam University, creating a digital skills pathway to protect local talent and create good quality local jobs. It was highlighted that Degree Apprenticeships are an opportunity to work with businesses.

The digital journey needs to start as young as possible and local primary schools have a part to play in this. The Digital Media Campus (DMC) have an open door approach and have already built relationships with the Employment and Skills Team. Workshops have been held with young people in terms of problem solving and how best to support them.

In secondary schools, digital is embedded into the whole curriculum and is not uniformly taught as a discrete subject but as a transferable skill. There is a need for careers advice, raising aspirations amongst young people in terms of digital skills being essential and bringing with it opportunities to specialise within the digital sector.

It was highlighted that DMC2 will play a key role in providing grow-on space for existing businesses in DMC1 and also attracting new digital businesses, in collaboration with digital neighbours. DMC2 is currently going through a rebrand to attract tenants and get buy-in. Prices for DMC2 have just been agreed and a bold marketing campaign will be scaled up over the next 3 to 4 months to bring the right businesses in to Barnsley.

Barnsley has to work harder to attract businesses, keep momentum going and stay at the forefront of the digital agenda without a university, which other areas have. However, Barnsley has a lot to learn from Europe and good practice there, staying ahead of the curve and making it relevant for Barnsley and has succeeded in bringing corporate investment in from overseas partners and building infrastructure from the ground up. The Rotherham manufacturing parks provide a further opportunity for partnership working with AMRC and benefits for all.

It was acknowledged that although digital jobs in Barnsley are now growing and account for 2.1% of all employee jobs, this is behind the regional (3.5%) and national (4.8%) digital employee levels. To get to the national average as a minimum standard is challenging. The Sheffield City Region (SCR) is lagging behind and needs to be ambitious and generate as many jobs and businesses as possible. Jobs created won't just be digital, but will be cross industry, including the public sector, voluntary and health sector.

The impact of Brexit is not yet known. There are a small number of companies in the IT sector who contract at European level and have taken offices outside the UK. The long term agenda needs to be around 'growing our own' at regional and national level to minimise any risk. Barnsley has a good reputation, is forward thinking at UK level and is still engaged at EU level. Much can be learned from smaller European cities and they give an umbrella view of what smaller places can do, what works and what doesn't work. Over £2m of investment has come from SCR, with a direct link to work done in collaboration with Europe and which has generated investment.

Embryonic work is currently underway on building an inclusive knowledge economy, working with partners in London and learning from London Boroughs, linked to the Barnsley 2030. This will include building a base of digital jobs in the voluntary sector.

Barnsley needs to be more creative and aspirational going forward, exploring opportunities in how we work and what we do using an agile approach with constant horizon scanning and modifying with people who understand the landscape. Work is underway to secure a number of projects to make sure the business support offer is shored up though a number of different streams.

SCR is currently reviewing its strategic economic plan, with a dedicated digital field in there, which Barnsley is able to influence. The South Yorkshire Digital Strategy has just been adopted and all partners are behind the digital agenda. It was reiterated that it is not just about new businesses but also about drawing down funding to support existing and smaller businesses.

DMC2 will deliver the biggest impact for the smallest investment and will be on stream in June, with an expansion pack for existing businesses. There is a need to

work with commercial bodies on the digital infrastructure which is lacking in terms of fibre and future 5G provision.

There are barriers which may prevent Barnsley residents from engaging with the digital skills pathway. Some may be reluctant and may not have access to equipment at home, therefore it is essential to work with education providers such as Barnsley Council's Adult and Community Learning Service, Barnsley College, Northern College and others to offer free, basic digital skills training. Barnsley College are drawing down SCR money to redevelop the SciTech building and offer digital skills training.

Members were aware of a training programme commissioned by Dearne Area Council to get people back into work, but felt that this should also be followed up by Maths and English. Central Area Council is also looking at employability and skills with a view to commissioning a service. It was felt that all area councils need to think about gaps and needs in learning and skills and how to connect to local businesses.

Members are of the view that there will always be a core group of people who do not have any digital skills and this limits their employability and thus their quality of life. There are also isolated elderly people who would be unable to access services digitally. Work is ongoing with providers in Barnsley around increasing engagement and it is still possible to access European Social Fund money for the next 2 years for digitally excluded groups.

The Library at the Lightbox is a welcoming setting for digital learning but there are areas in Barnsley which do not have a library or suitable resources and infrastructure to offer digital learning. Communities need to be part of the conversation and come together to identify need and how it can be met, looking at other buildings and being creative in getting provision into areas that need it most.

There is no doubt that the digital agenda is contributing to the success of the Glassworks and business regeneration in many ways. Barnsley Market is embracing the 'shop appy' mobile phone app and 'click and collect', the library is very citizen centric and the wider development of the digital campus will help to unlock further potential for retail and leisure.

RESOLVED that witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution.

Chair