

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 18 January 2012

Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Julian Benington, Nicholas Bennett J.P., Judi Ellis,
Robert Evans and Russell Mellor

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eric Bosshard and Councillor Stephen Carr. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Judi Ellis

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

26 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 26 OCTOBER AND 2 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 26th October and 2nd November 2011 be agreed.

27 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report RES12004

Following discussion, Members agreed that in future, meetings of the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee would be scheduled to start at the earlier time of 6.30pm.

Updates on progress in energy reduction and renewable energy projects and aligning policy and finance reviews would be provided later in the meeting.

RESOLVED that matters arising be noted.

28 CHANNEL SHIFT PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from the Head of Customer Service providing an update on the channel shift programme and requesting that the remaining funds allocated for customer service improvement be released.

A number of service migrations to the customer contact centre had now been completed, including Registrars, the Fostering Helpline and Green Space. Contact centre staff were also working to support anti-fraud measures developed following changes to the Blue Badge scheme. Further services with high call volume being considered for potential migration included Housing and the Planning Service. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP queried whether school admissions would be prioritised for channel shift. The Head of Customer Services confirmed that the number of online applications received in Bromley for school places was lower than in some other boroughs. Staff in Children and Young People Services were working to improve this and the customer contact centre would be happy to provide support where appropriate.

Work to co-locate Liberata and Housing reception points was continuing, and the co-located reception was likely to open in April 2012, with Liberata moving into the provision in late June 2012. An appointment system would be used for general housing queries and it was hoped that a queue management system could be introduced to support self-service check in. Internet linked PCs would be made available to customers applying to the Housing Register, and four PCs had already been introduced to main reception. Following the closure of the cashier's office, customers were being encouraged to pay using chip and pin, and a payment machine in main reception was currently handling 2,000 cheque and cash payments a month.

The Voice Recognition System had now processed over 300,000 calls, which represented a 75% channel shift. Phase 3 of the Voice Recognition project was currently in development which would support the automated reporting of missed bins and recycling box requests. There was potential to roll out this system to manage other requests, including tip permits, green waste stickers and application forms for blue badges and parking permits.

Development of web-based services included missed bin and recycling box e-forms, Twitter Gritter and an Amazon link installed as part of the approve revenue principle for the website. A new look complaints form had been launched, and use was being made of Friendly Links and Quick Response codes to direct people to service specific areas of the website. Work was also being undertaken with search engine providers to ensure users of Bromley website were directed appropriately. Potential future developments for self-service on the website included user registration, mapping, increased use of social media and development of a mobile web option for portable devices. Additional e-forms were also being developed for areas including tip permits, free school meals, rolling registration and trade waste enquiries.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett queried whether there had been a move to print on

demand for customer information leaflets. The Head of Customer Services confirmed that the co-located reception could display copies of leaflets which customers could request as printed copies.

RESOLVED that the request to release the remaining funds allocated for customer service improvement be agreed by Members

29 CARBON MANAGEMENT FUND: PROGRESS REPORT 2010/11

Report ES12006

In October 2008, the Executive agreed to establish a ring-fenced Carbon Management Fund to invest in energy efficiency projects, with the aim of reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 25% over five years and avoiding unnecessary energy costs. The Sub-Committee received a report providing an update on the progress of Carbon Management Fund projects.

Members considered the report. In response to a question from Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP around the potential use of solar panels and LED lighting, the Environmental Development Manager confirmed that it was possible to use solar panels to power some lit street furniture, but that there was a significant cost implication to installing solar panels. LED lighting used significantly less energy than standard lighting and the use of LED in both street lighting and on Council owned-sites was currently being investigated.

Councillor Evans highlighted the proposed SON Lamp Replacement Dimming project, which was still at the feasibility testing stage. High Pressure Sodium (SON) Lamps were typically used for street lighting, car parks and other similar environments, and the Environmental Development Manager confirmed that if this project proved to be viable under the Fund's rules, it should avoid significant energy use and spend.

Councillor Julian Benington queried what progress had been made in the proposed photovoltaic energy schemes at the Civic Centre and Central Depot. The Environmental Development Manager confirmed that the proposed schemes had not yet been agreed, and that a recent change in the value of Feed-in tariffs would impact the feasibility of investing in renewable energy schemes.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The progress of completed, current and proposed Carbon Management Fund projects be noted.**
- 2) A further update report be provided to the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee in January 2013.**

30 ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report CEO1189

The Sub Committee received a report updating Members on the progress of the Organisational Improvement Programme.

With regard to customer service improvement, Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted a number of recommendations made by the New Technology Working Group, which included generating savings through the rollout of tablet PCs to all Members, installing a wireless internet connection in the Civic Centre committee rooms and Council Chamber and undertaking improvements to the Council Chamber to enable it to be marketed as a conference venue. The Director of Resources noted that a wireless internet connection had been installed in North Block during the refurbishment process and that the opportunity to expand these works to include the committee rooms and Council Chamber was currently being explored. The costs of introducing presentation equipment to the Council Chamber and committee rooms could also be reviewed. Councillor Ellis underlined the need to provide improved access for people with disabilities as part of any improvements made to the Council Chamber.

Following the success of the shared services conference in October 2011, a further conference was proposed to be held in Spring 2012 to ensure that projects in the shared services workstream were progressing. The libraries shared service went live on 1st January 2012, and back office and managerial savings were in the process of being realised. There was potential for further savings through a Libraries' trust (Bexley and Bromley) and this was currently being explored. The Legal Team now provided a property lawyer to Bexley for 2 days per week which generated salary cost savings and was working well. The Chairman requested an update be provided on shared services at the next meeting of the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee.

In considering organisational design, Members noted that services for adult social care, children social care, education and commissioning would be brought together in the new Education and Care Services Department. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted the potential to generate transport cost savings by bringing together transport services for adults and children. There was also an opportunity to utilise the commissioning model used for adult social care for all social care functions across the Council, allowing increased use of e-procurement and joint commissioning with key partners such as Health and other local authorities.

The workstream on civic centre accommodation was progressing, with the refurbishment of North Block now reaching the space planning stage for the new accommodation. All Directors had signed up to a 0.7 desktop provision per full time employee (FTE), and the possibility of moving towards 0.5 desktop provision per FTE was being considered. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement noted that smaller workspaces would be provided to employees, but that existing furniture would be reused where appropriate. In discussion, Members

highlighted the importance of considering how documents should be stored in the future.

RESOLVED that the progress made to date on projects led by the Organisational Improvement Team and the new work projects that members of the team were currently supporting be noted.

31 LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

32 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 26 OCTOBER AND 2 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the meetings held on 26th October and 2nd November 2011 be agreed.

33 ALIGNING POLICY AND BUDGET REVIEWS - UPDATE

Report CEO1190

The Sub-Committee considered progress made across a range of services following the Aligning Policy and Finance reviews, which had been commissioned by Cabinet in Spring 2011.

RESOLVED that the progress made to date on the reviews led by the Organisational Improvement Programme Team and the Future Leaders cohort be noted.

The Meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman