

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2010

Present:

Councillor Neil Reddin (Chairman)
Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Graham Arthur, Eric Bosshard, Judi Ellis,
Robert Evans, Russell Jackson, Russell Mellor and Tony Owen

Also Present:

Councillor Peter Fookes

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Doug Patterson, Chief Executive. Apologies for lateness were also received from Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JUNE 2010

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2010 be agreed.

18 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report LDCS10125

The Committee were informed that an update regarding the joint-bid submitted with Bexley Council to secure funding for web development would be provided later in the meeting.

The Chairman advised the Committee that work towards negotiating a reduction of costs with providers of out-of-borough placements for those with learning disabilities was being taken forward by Adult and Community Services and

progress would be reported in due course.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

19 ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report CEO 1062

The Sub-Committee received a report updating Members on the progress made on the first phase projects within the Organisational Improvement Programme.

With regard to the workstream around Civic Centre Accommodation, the Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that work was ongoing to set out a high level options appraisal for Civic Centre office accommodation to Members, and that an externally commissioned report was nearing completion of its final draft. A Member asked whether converting existing office space to open plan had been explored. The Head of Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness confirmed that this was being considered as part of the options appraisal but that there were significant cost implications. A work style analysis that had gone forward with a Public Protection and Safety team had identified a range of different ways of working that could reduce use of office space whilst accommodating the work of the team flexibly.

The Customer Access programme was progressing. A project to add capacity for approximately 16 additional customer service agents by utilising office space in the Rochester Building had been commissioned, and the additional capacity would be available by early September 2010. It was expected that some of this additional capacity would accommodate temporary customer services agents to deal with a predicted increase in Environmental Services calls and expansion of Bromley Social Services Direct.

Following completion and testing of the integration between the CRM and Uniform systems, the Street Service calls went 'live' in the Contact Centre on 15th June 2010 as planned. No technical or business change issues had so far been reported and the service was operating successfully. Further service areas that could be handled within the Customer Contact Centre were currently being investigated and migration work would commence subject to an appropriate business case being developed. A Member was concerned that vulnerable callers receive an appropriate level of service when contacting the Council, such as being allocated a named contact. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement explained that a higher number of professional staff would be placed in the Customer Contact Centre specifically to support more complex calls. Another Member was concerned that transferring aspects of the Registrars Service to the Customer Contact Centre might subtract from the highly personalised service offered. The Chairman suggested that Members take the opportunity to visit the Customer Contact Centre to see the excellent customer service that was being delivered.

With regard to the joint-bid submitted with Bexley Council to secure funding for

web development, Capital Ambition had confirmed on 21st June that they would be unable to support the match-funded bid for £500,000. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement highlighted the need to invest in the Bromley website to offer more transactional services and modernise its look and feel, and noted that the Organisational Improvement Board was still progressing with the investigation into whether web investment and development could be shared with the London Borough of Bexley, and the bid be resubmitted.

Following the recent work with officers at Bexley, an opportunity to discuss the potential for closer working between the two organisations had been identified. A joint board made up of both Borough Chief Executives and key Chief Officers had now been constituted, as had a joint project team supporting the work, and future progress on this work will be reported to Members. The Chairman queried whether the joint project team had identified any service areas where cross-working with Bexley might be taken forward. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement explained that a mapping exercise was currently being undertaken to identify the current position of both organisations, but that back office functions might provide initial opportunities for cross-working. Another Member underlined the need for Members representing both Councils to work together to support future cross-working.

The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement was pleased to note that following successful testing of the Voice Recognition system, the technology went live for staff and Members on 21st June 2010. The accuracy rate of calls was currently 82%, with the remaining 18% of calls connected through to Switchboard. Failed connections and feedback would be evaluated on a planned basis with grammar being added to the system's vocabulary in order to improve its accuracy. Roll out of the system to external customers was planned to take place on 20th September 2010.

A Member asked for an update on progress regarding the planned accommodation of Primary Care Trust (PCT) staff. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that a strategy had been developed to ensure office space sufficient for 50-60 people would be available within a short time frame without making significant investment in the Civic Centre site, but the PCT had yet to confirm whether the move would go forward. In the event of the PCT not taking up the space, there were alternate plans to accommodate Children and Young People Department teams. Another Member expressed concern at the relocation of teams from satellite offices to the Civic Centre site as there were significant benefits derived from social services teams being based together in a community setting.

RESOLVED that the progress made on the first phase projects within the Organisational Improvement Programme be noted.

20 CUSTOMER INSIGHT PRESENTATION

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on developing customer insight from the Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness Team Business Coordinator. The

presentation centred on how customer segmentation could be used to design services and effectively communicate with different segments of the borough's population, and provided some examples of segmentation in Bromley using Experian's Mosaic tool. Other key partners such as the Police, Fire Brigade and Primary Care Trust had also been using customer segmentation to identify 'at risk' areas and help to target services and initiatives.

Members discussed the importance of customer segmentation. Services continued to be increasingly personalised and it was important to find tools to support this. A Member was concerned that by utilising segmentation software there was a danger that the information provided would be out of date and over-generalised, and underlined the need to ensure services were developed to be effective and efficient. The Chairman highlighted the need to consider how customer segmentation could be delivered in Bromley by utilising the information already held.

In terms of communicating with customers, there were a range of different channels that could be utilised such as SMS and social networking sites such as Twitter. Bromley residents had two major contacts with the Council; as service users and as customers. A Member highlighted the value of the information already held by teams across the Council in relation to Bromley residents needs, and underlined the importance of evaluating information coming into the Customer Contact Centre. Another Member agreed it was possible to map the needs of Bromley residents by looking at the services currently accessed.

The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that data analysis would be an integral part of the new Contact Centre Manager's role, and that this had been emphasised during the recruitment process. One-stop shops delivered a range of services directly to local residents and would also take a key role in understanding the needs of our customers. It was important to ensure there was cross-working between Council services and other partners in one-stop shops to maximise efficiencies and ensure a comprehensive offer continued to be delivered.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the presentation be noted;**
- 2) the proposal to purchase a Mosaic Software License not be pursued at this time;**
- 3) further consideration be given to utilising customer information already held within London Borough of Bromley.**

21 THE PHILOSOPHY OF EFFICIENCY (DISCUSSION)

The Sub-Committee conducted a discussion around the philosophy of efficiency. The Head of Improvement and Efficiency and Effectiveness gave a summary of how the improvement and efficiency agenda had developed across the Council. Following initial work to increase efficiency of services across the Council, there was now an increased emphasis on service transformation and cross-working to

support high quality, efficient service delivery into the future.

A Member defined efficiency as producing the same or better service at lower cost. In terms of embedding future efficiencies at Bromley Council, a Member highlighted the need to ensure workflow processes were efficient. A previous analysis of procedures in the Planning Service had identified that qualified planners spent a significant amount of time on phone calls. In response to this a telephone enquiry team had been established to handle routine phone calls which had enabled qualified planners to be more productive.

A culture of change was needed across the organisation to empower both managers and staff to implement service change, although it was acknowledged that much good work was already going on. A Member highlighted the importance of empowering staff to analyse their processes and identify areas where efficiencies could be applied. This should be supported by zero-based budgeting. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement underlined the need to facilitate 'invest to save' opportunities where there was a strong business case.

A Member stressed the need to tackle smaller examples of wastage, as the cumulative effect of this wastage could be massive. There should also be a drive to make customers more aware of the costs involved in service delivery, particularly where Bromley residents were being consulted on proposed new investments in local services.

There was an opportunity to utilise Customer Service Week in Autumn 2010 to promote improvement and efficiency. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement explained that the Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness Team would be offering managers and front line staff the opportunity to work through their processes and identify any waste with a view to becoming more efficient. There was also potential to facilitate a more general efficiency debate across the organisation during this week by delivering a staff engagement event.

Improvement and Efficiency Sub committee had a major role as a 'critical friend' in supporting teams across the council to transform their services. A Member noted the importance of identifying which services needed to be delivered, considering if they needed to be delivered directly by the Council and ensuring they were being delivered effectively, with an emphasis on innovation. The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement highlighted a range of work already being undertaken with teams across the Council towards greater improvement, efficiency and effectiveness. The London Efficiency Challenge had also shown the benefits that could be derived from external challenge to our processes.

RESOLVED that the issues raised in the discussion be noted.

The Meeting ended at 10.10 pm

Chairman