

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 20 April 2011

Present:

Councillor Neil Reddin (Chairman)
Councillors Graham Arthur, Ruth Bennett, Judi Ellis,
Robert Evans, Russell Jackson, Russell Mellor and Tony Owen

Also Present:

Councillor Peter Fookes

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP and Councillor Stephen Carr. Councillor Ruth Bennett attended as alternate to Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

43 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2011

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2011 be agreed.

44 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

LDCS11069

The Committee was informed that updates around customer contact, progress against issues identified at the 'Ideas Aloud' events delivered as part of Customer Service Week, and work to identify energy efficiency and renewables projects would be provided later in the meeting

With regard to the aligning policy and finance framework, the Chairman noted that the Carelink Service had been referred to Internal Audit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

45 ENERGY REDUCTION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

ES11052

In January 2011, following consideration of reports around the Carbon Management Programme (Report ES10188) and the Carbon Reduction Commitment (Report ES10189), the Executive requested the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee investigate further ways of reducing energy consumption and look at the benefits associated with renewable energy generation, feed in tariffs and other similar measures. The Sub-Committee received a report identifying a range of projects which had the most potential to support increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy across the Council's operational property.

Members considered the benefits of the five proposed renewable energy schemes. In response to a question from the Chairman around the financial incentives offered by feed in tariffs, the Environmental Development Manager confirmed that a review was currently underway which was likely to reduce the value of feed in tariffs for all tariff bands from April 2012 and for the larger tariff bands (>50kWp) from August 2011. The business case for each proposed scheme had been based on the existing level of feed in tariff.

Photovoltaic energy schemes at the Civic Centre and Central Depot were discussed, with consideration being given to the need to retain the benefits from investment in renewable energy should parts of the Civic Centre be vacated in the long term. The current refurbishment of North Block allowed a good opportunity to install the necessary equipment. A preliminary review was being undertaken at the Central Depot which would establish the feasibility and cost-implications of installing roof-mounted photovoltaic panels to the main buildings.

The proposed small-scale photovoltaic energy scheme at the BEECHE Centre was discussed, and Members noted the potential for the Centre to become carbon neutral and demonstrate to the public how a range of renewable technologies worked. A Member highlighted recent development schemes at Bishop Justus C.E. School and Crown Meadow Court which had been designed to benefit from renewable energy generation and underlined the need to encourage similar schemes in developments across the Borough.

The solar farm scheme was considered by Members. The Chairman queried how feed in tariffs would operate. The Environmental Development Manager confirmed that as a large scale scheme this would be affected by changes to feed in tariffs but the impact of this would not be known until the review had been completed in August 2011.

The scheme to increase the energy efficiency of the Walnuts by upgrading the Boiler Plant had been assessed by consultants who had recommended a number of options including a gas-fired or biomass-fuelled condensing boiler, or a combined heat and power plant. Members queried whether the renewable heat incentive could be claimed as well as a reduction in the CRC tax liability. In

response to a question around when additional information would be available on the options for the Walnuts, the Environmental Development Manager confirmed that the full business case would be available in Autumn 2011. A Member emphasised the benefits derived from increased energy efficiency, which was often more cost effective than renewable energy schemes.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The proposed photovoltaic energy scheme at the Civic Centre and Central Depot be identified (on the basis of current capacity) for further consideration, with the North Block prioritised due to opportunities afforded by the current refurbishment and the deadline imposed by the likely change in tariffs;**
- 2) A further report around the proposed Walnuts' Boiler Plant Upgrade be provided to Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee in July 2011.**
- 3) A further report around energy reduction and renewal energy generation be provided to Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee in October 2011 to consider in greater detail the costs and benefits of the selected projects, and provide additional information with regard to the proposed small-scale photovoltaic energy scheme at the BEECHE Centre and the solar farm;**
- 4) The Development Control Committee be requested to consider the inclusion of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation measures in future developments across the Borough as part of the Local Development Framework.**

46 ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

CEO1169

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 refurbishing North Block had commenced, with a number of teams relocating across the Civic Centre site. These teams were now being encouraged to consider how they might use their office space more effectively.

Chief Officers had agreed a Records and Retention Policy which was currently being implemented by targeting as a priority those areas impacted by the accommodation changes. The policy aimed to keep both hard copy and electronic information as long as legally required, except in cases where there was a clear business need to retain information or records. A Member highlighted the difficulty in identifying those records that should be retained longer.

The Shared Services project with the London Boroughs of Bexley and Croydon was progressing. A Shared Services Board made up of Borough Chief Executives and key Chief Officers had been established and had developed a shortlist of priority shared services projects, which included Libraries, Property (including asset management and facilities management), Sold Services to Schools and Financial Systems. A number of regulatory services had also been identified as a potential shared services workstream, and a high-level analysis of current processes and activities was being undertaken by an identified lead officer in each local authority to develop a shortlist of potential service areas, and conduct options appraisals.

The Assistant Director: Organisational Improvement confirmed that the rollout of the Voice Recognition System to Officers and Members had gone live on 21st June 2010 with an accuracy rate of 80%. The delivery of the Voice Recognition System for external use by members of the public had encountered some problems during the testing phase but would go live shortly. Call volumes for other simple requests with high volumes, such as reporting missed bins, had been evaluated and considered suitable for use with Voice Recognition in Phase 3 of the project.

RESOLVED that the progress made to date on projects led by the Organisational Improvement Programme be noted.

47 PROJECT TRACKING (PRESENTATION)

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on the spreadsheet developed to support project tracking from the Senior Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness Analyst, which provided a high level overview of all proposed savings projects across the Council. The project tracking document would continue to be updated to capture all the details against each of the proposed savings, including financial data, and would be key tool for the Chief Executive in providing a high level overview of project savings being made across the Council.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

48 CORPORATE WEB UPGRADE (PRESENTATION)

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on the corporate web upgrade from the Senior Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness Analyst. The upgraded website had been launched on 13th April 2011, and made good use of space, images and links to social media sites to provide an improved offer to web users.

With regard to future work, all remaining web pages would be migrated by 13th May 2011, and online materials had been developed to train content editors across the Council. Two new e-forms would be launched on 2nd May 2011 to support reporting of missed bin collections and replacement recycling boxes, and work to update other feedback forms would be undertaken with an emphasis on increasing self-service.

The Chairman acknowledged the work of the Bromley Knowledge web team and the IT Development Team in supporting the introduction of the new website. In response to a query from a Member around income generation, the Senior Improvement, Efficiency and Effectiveness Analyst confirmed that the opportunity to advertise on the Bromley website was being promoted to local companies.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

49 CUSTOMER CONTACT (PRESENTATION)

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on customer contact from the Head of Customer Service. Since 2008/9, web volumes had increased from 1.5 to 2.3 million hits per year, and there had also been an increase in e-mail contact. The cost per contact in Bromley for face to face, phone and web contact was significantly lower than the Local Authority average.

Planned service migrations to the customer contact centre in Summer 2011 included the Landscape Helpdesk and Registrars, and work was also being undertaken around the amalgamation of Reception points across the Council. Further service migrations would be considered in areas of high call volume, and a Member noted the potential to support housing-related enquiries, such as Choice Based Lettings. The Chairman highlighted the move of Public Health officers and the Coroners Service to the Civic Centre site, and noted that the volume of contacts was likely to increase. Work to investigate delivery of shared customer services with London Borough of Bexley was also underway, and the Head of Customer Service noted that a number of alternatives were being considered, including the potential to establish a co-located Customer Contact Centre.

A Channel Strategy was currently under development which would seek to reduce avoidable contact, and support channel shift, digital inclusion and increased accessibility into the future.

A Member queried what level of analysis was undertaken between 'value' and 'fault' calls to the Contact Centre, and noted the importance of evaluating 'fault' calls to ensure ongoing improvement of services delivered to Bromley residents.

RESOLVED that the development of a Channel Strategy be supported.

50 REVISED CORPORATE OPERATING PRINCIPLES

CEO1170

The Sub-Committee received a report presenting revised Corporate Operating Principles, which reflected changes that had taken place since the original Corporate Operating Principles were introduced in 2008, including the move towards shared services with other local authorities.

RESOLVED that the revised Corporate Operating Principles be confirmed.

51 ALIGNING POLICY AND FINANCE FRAMEWORK

CEO1171

The Sub-Committee received a report detailing the framework by which it was proposed Members identify areas for review when considering how to most appropriately align policy and finance. Service areas currently under consideration included Public Protection and Safety, Highways and Transport and Finance and Procurement.

RESOLVED that the proposed framework be endorsed.

52 IDEAS ALOUD LIVE FOLLOW UP

CEO1172

The Sub-Committee received a report updating Members on progress made against issues identified at the 'Ideas Aloud' events delivered as part of Customer Service Week in October 2010.

A number of key themes emerged, including internal and external communications, operational inefficiency and IT systems, and staff training and HR, and work had been undertaken to incorporate a number of the issues raised into existing cross-cutting projects.

A Member noted concerns highlighted at the event around staff training needs and underlined the role of managers in ensuring staff had appropriate skills training. It was key to empower staff in developing efficient services, and also important to ensure managers had sufficient support to manage effectively.

The Chairman suggested that a future 'Ideas Aloud' event be held around the cross-cutting issue of waste across the Council. Another Member suggested a series of events be held to support frontline staff in addressing a range of issues impacting service delivery and develop workable solutions.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report be noted;**
- 2) Future sessions be limited to a tightly focused issue or section of staff.**

The Meeting ended at 9.36 pm

Chairman