

# **IT & Digital Transformation Advisory Committee**

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Information Technology and Digital Transformation Advisory Committee held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

## **Present:**

Cllr. Forest (Chair)

Cllrs. Krause, Ovenden, Pickering.

## **Also Present:**

Head of IT & Digital, Digital Transformation Manager, Digital Improvement and Web Development Officer, Assistant Director HR, Customer Services, Communications & Digitalisation, Senior Member Services Officer.

## **1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

- 1.1 The Minutes of the Meeting of the IT & Digital Transformation Advisory Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

## **2 Accessibility Policy**

- 2.1 The Digital Transformation Manager gave an overview of how the Accessibility Policy came into existence. All Councils were required to have such policies in place and it detailed how the Council would ensure they complied with the regulations and that web content was accessible to people with disabilities. A recent audit had highlighted a couple of areas that required correction, this had been done within 12 weeks and he could confirm that the Council was fully compliant.
- 2.2 In response to questions the Digital Transformation Manager advised that Ashford Access Group had been involved in the initial establishment of the website, their help had been vital ensuring that it was accessible. Should a decision need to be taken on a project that was not adaptable then this would happen outside of this policy. The policy would guide a process. They had worked with the procurement team to ensure that the correct systems were in place.

## **Resolved:**

**That the IT & Digital Transformation Advisory Committee recommends the adoption of the Accessibility Policy to Cabinet.**

### **3 Digital Strategy Update**

- 3.1 The Digital Transformation Manager introduced the item and along with the Head of IT & Digital and the Digital Improvement and Web Development Officer, gave a presentation on the Digital Strategy. The first iteration of the Digital Strategy had been an ambitious action plan and had seen the redesign of the Council's website, with accessibility standards introduced. The range of transactions available online had been increased, with a new customer service system introduced that supported improved online services. Internally, the desktop environment on staff laptops had been standardised and the migration to Microsoft 365 had been successful. The updated Digital Strategy underpinned the core principles of the corporate plan to; understand and respond to the needs of our communities to ensure no one was disadvantaged and to put residents at the heart of everything we do and ensure our services were accessible.
- 3.2 They went through the five strands of the Strategy and highlighted some of the work undertaken to support each of these, including:
- A new customer service portal.
  - Website roadmap
  - Website analytics to optimise keywords
  - Development of digital dashboards
  - Phishing exercises and communications campaigns
  - Cyber audit for connection to Public Services Network
  - Multifactor authentication processes for staff and Councillors
  - Migration of services to the cloud.
- 3.3 The item was then opened up to the Advisory Committee and the following points/questions were raised:
- The new customer service portal was welcomed. It was questioned how the existing Report It app would fit in with this. The Digital Transformation Manager advised that the Report It app would remain but would be built into the new portal. The portal would link to apps and web forms providing an access point for residents.
  - There had been progress updates on the Arcus system, and further updates were requested. The Digital Transformation Manager advised that there had been changes within the Digital Team, with a focus to resolve issues that were experienced at/after go live as soon as possible, in addition to upgrades to the system are being scheduled to take place.

**Resolved:**

**That the Update be received and noted.**

## **4 Provision of IT Equipment – Post Election**

- 4.1 The Senior Member Services Officer provided an update on the provision of IT equipment for Councillor post-election. Following support from the Member Training Panel, it was intended to provide all Councillors, new or returning with a laptop and associated peripheral devices. This was a move away from iPads, which would better support the move towards hybrid meetings. Additionally, it was noted that the provision of Microsoft laptops would bring this in line with the equipment provided to officers and thus ensuring greater technical support to Councillors.
- 4.2 In response to questions from Members, the Senior Member Services Officer advised;
- All iPad devices, from returning or non-returning Councillors, were required to be returned in accordance with the agreements signed when receiving their devices. Once returned the devices would be sent to an asset disposal charity that would wipe them of all data and repurpose the devices for charitable purposes (e.g. provide to school children). The Council would be provided with a certificate of destruction, this was in line with the Council's own asset disposal policy; and would provide a clear audit trail.
  - The Mod.Gov & IT Drop In sessions would return, these would be in person and dates scheduled six monthly in advance.

### **Resolved:**

**That the IT & Digital Advisory Committee supports the provision of laptops to Councillors and the support that is to be provided to Councillors post-election.**

## **5 Future Agenda Items**

- 5.1 The Chair requested that an update on the functionality of Modern.Gov be provided to the Advisory Committee. The Senior Member Services Officer undertook to report back on this.