Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

18 September 2018

Digital Strategy & Implementation Task Group

Interim Report

Purpose of the report

1. To present the report of the Digital Strategy and Implementation Task Group following its first year of meetings from 17 June 2017 to 11 September 2018, so that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) can assess whether the task group is helping to add value to the Executive's work within this area.

Background and Terms of Reference

2. OSMC received a presentation on 5 January 2016 on the development of the MyWiltshire system. Following this, the Committee established the MyWiltshire System Task Group with terms of reference to consider and contribute to the development of the system, focusing on customer experience; system scope; development and resourcing; and councillor interface.

3. On 3 January 2017 OSMC agreed to a proposal from the task group; which saw the task group have their focus widened to review the Council's Digital Strategy. On 6 June 2017 OSMC re-established the MyWiltshire System Task Group as the Digital Strategy and Implementation Task Group (hereafter referred to as 'the task group'). This re-establishment also coincided with membership change, which was in part due to the 2017 Wiltshire Council local government election.

4. In light of the task group's wider remit of work and amended membership, on 28 November 2017 the task group had their new Terms of Reference endorsed by OSMC; which focused on the key areas of: 1) culture transformation 2) technology and platform and 3) service re-design. Each area would be covered during 12 months and would take the task group up to May 2021 (the next municipal elections).

5. At 5 June 2018 OSMC, the task group presented further amended Terms of Reference for endorsement, as the task group Chairman felt that the group were not helping to add value by progressing through the three distinct areas outlined above. OSMC endorsed the following Terms of Reference at their June 2018 meeting:

a) Explore their options of the Microsoft Exercise and look at learning from other councils on how to potentially use those solutions

b) Look at the list of projects and how things become projects - explore how these can be better vetted in future to ensure project meet best needs

c) Look at audit of existing software and how much we are/are not duplicating systems and costs

d) How we interface between service users/residents and the council and its digital systems

Membership

6. The task group is comprised of the following membership (as at August 2018):
    - Cllr Howard Greenman
    - Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)
    - Cllr Bob Jones OBE
    - Cllr Stuart Wheeler
    - Cllr Gordon King

Evidence

7. Since the start of this municipal cycle (2017-2021), the task group have met six times (including 11 September 2018). Apart from the meetings identified above, where the group were re-established and agreed their first set of new Terms of Reference and Forward Work Programme, the group have met four times in February, May, July and September of 2018.

8. In February, the task group looked at how other local authorities have progressed their digital strategies and whether Wiltshire could take anything away from these Councils' experiences. BANES, Wigan, North Somerset and Enfield were considered in this exercise and the task group received oral evidence from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets, Cllr Philip Whitehead, and the previous Portfolio Holder for ICT and Digitalisation, Cllr Ashley O'Neill. The Director for Corporate Services and Digital and the Programme Office also provided evidence.

9. February's meeting provided an opportunity for the task group to engage in how the framework for Wiltshire Council's Digital Strategy had been designed and the culture transformation elements associated with this Strategy. However, as the Digital Strategy was already being implemented across the organisation, it was felt that insight into other local authorities was not helping the task group to add value. Secondly, as the culture transformation element was still in its foetal stage, scrutiny input was being provided too early in the process.

10. As it was agreed between the members that the task group's programme of work was not adding value in the most appropriate places, in May the task

group discussed their proposed amended Terms of Reference with the Executive, the Director for Corporate Services and Digital, the Head of ICT and the Head of the Programme Office. An update on the Cabinet paper, which detailed the contract that the Council were looking to enter into with Microsoft as part of the Navigator Programme was also discussed. As referenced earlier, OSMC subsequently endorsed the change to the task group's Terms of Reference.

11. In July 2018, the meeting centred on a both a progress update on the Microsoft Navigator Programme and the Council's list of ICT projects. Following Full Council on 22 May 2018, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling had now taken up the position of Portfolio Holder for ICT and Digitisation. The Executive, the Head of the Programme Office and a Programme Office Portfolio Manager, as well as the Head of ICT provided the task group with evidence. Although fruitful discussion was had at the meeting, the task group Chairman felt that the evidence presented was not what had originally been requested or agreed upon; the task group were expecting evidence on how the Council's software is audited and, instead, they received evidence on how ICT's programme of work fits into the Council's Digital Strategy. In response to this, it was confirmed that an auditing system is not yet in place and therefore, scrutiny engagement at this point would not be appropriate.

12. September's meeting is for the task group to understand how the list of ICT projects is prioritised for the benefit of the entire organisation. The Chairman also feels that the task group can help to add value to the 'Value Added' section of the Microsoft contract. For example, as part of the Microsoft Navigator Programme, Microsoft have committed to working with Wiltshire's community, alongside their work with Wiltshire Council and the Chairman is confident that this presents an area where overview and scrutiny engagement would be beneficial for all parties.

Conclusions

13. The task group's aim is to act as a "critical friend" to the Executive and to help provide a quality assurance check on projects that arise as part of the Digital Strategy. Much work has been undertaken to ensure that this objective can be realised, such as, through the amendments to the task group's Terms of Reference, or via the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer attending briefing meetings with key officers and the Cabinet Member, to discuss the task group's Forward Work Programme.

14. The Digital Strategy is a vast piece of work which will enable the Council to fully embody an 'innovative and effective Council', as outlined in the Business Plan 2017-27. The Strategy is composed of an array of projects and work streams, which all share this same over-arching aim. In this sense, it could be argued that there are many avenues where overview and scrutiny

engagement could be beneficial, however, it is not practical for the entire Strategy to be scrutinised in-depth. Therefore, the task group have identified specific, targeted areas to consider such as, software licensing and the 'Value Added' part of the Microsoft Navigator Programme.

Proposal

1.   That Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:

   a) Accept and support that the task group have sought to ensure that they can add value to the work of the Executive and to work complementary to the Executive, as a critical friend
   b) Recognise that the best value of scrutiny input from this task group can be achieved by focusing on specific aspects of the Digital Strategy, such as software licensing and the 'Value Added' part of the Microsoft Navigator Programme; which is what the task group will focus on in the near future.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Digital Strategy & Implementation Task Group

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Appendices

None