

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL
27TH APRIL 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)
Councillors Charles, Hamilton, Needham and
Seaton

Councillor Rollings (Cabinet Lead Member for
Transformation)

Head of Customer Experience
Communications Manager
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gerrard

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerrard.

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

22. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

23. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

24. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

25. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, updated following the previous meeting of the panel (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

AGREED that the scrutiny scope document be noted.

26. PANEL UPDATES

A report of the Head of Customer Experience to provide the panel with information on previously discussed items (supplementary item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

AGREED that the panel notes the contents of the appendices.

27. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Manager at Charnwood Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss marketing and communications in relation to digital transformation (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Communications Manager highlighted the work of the Communications team within the council, which included the management of internal and external communications, social media, press releases, email alerts, website content management, newsletters, a 'What's On?' information page, design and liaising with external partners.
- ii. The Communications team created an average 160-70 press releases and responded to approximately 160 media enquiries annually.
- iii. The Communications team issued 900 email alerts annually and there were approximately 15k members of the public subscribed to receive email alerts.
- iv. The council's social media accounts achieved a reach of approximately 20k people. This was considered to be a good rate in comparison to other local authorities of a similar size. Information on the number of Charnwood residents that used social media in general was not known, although it was estimated that the vast majority of residents did use social media, in line with national trends.
- v. The number of social media followers of the council's accounts had increased by 13.5% on Facebook and 4% on Twitter, during the last 12 months. There was a substantial increase in social media followers during the Covid-19 pandemic, of approximately 400%.
- vi. The area within Charnwood with the most social media followers was Loughborough. The most common age group was 35-44 and most of the council's followers on Facebook were female.
- vii. It was highlighted that the average reach for a post on social media from the council's account was 1k (likes, shares, etc), although this varied substantially depending on the nature of the post and engagement activity can be as high as 20-30k reach. The council engaged residents with posts on high interest events such as the Queen's Jubilee and the Loughborough Fair.

- viii. The Communications team did regularly promote the council's online services via their social media pages.
- ix. It was highlighted that some members were not confident in using their personal social media accounts to communicate with their residents, and that some members were unsure of how to share content. The Communications Manager stated that the Communications team were able to provide advice and guidance to members that were unsure.
- x. It was stated that by tagging Charnwood Borough Council on social media posts, an alert would be generated and the Communications team would be made aware of the post. This would provide an opportunity for the Communications team to share the content to reach a wider audience in Charnwood.
- xi. It was acknowledged that it was not possible to reach some customers through online channels. It was difficult to ascertain who and where these customers were, although the council had methods of attempting to communicate. The council attempted to reach these customers through offline channels, such as through partner agencies that work closely with communities, print media and by highlighting online services during phone calls with customers.
- xii. It was highlighted that the council encouraged Digital Champions to support residents that were not confident in using digital channels. Many members of staff at the council used IT and digital portals in their day-to-day work. This was valuable because these members of staff were able to support residents, family and friends in using online systems if required.
- xiii. It was acknowledged that members were a valuable resource in enabling the council to connect with residents in the community, enabling information to be communicated. It was suggested that the panel recommended that members could consider becoming digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available. In order to enable this, members would need to attend a member development session which would cover information on the online services provided by the council and a guide on using social media to reach members of the community.
- xiv. The council's approach was to post interesting and engaging information for residents to acknowledge and share. This would increase the reach and the council's online presence and provide a large audience for further posts containing important information.
- xv. It was suggested that another way to make contact with hard to reach members of the public was through parish councils and parish council clerks.

AGREED

1. That the panel notes the information.

2. That the panel consider a recommendation to encourage members to become digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available.

28. DEVELOPING SURVEY

In accordance with the scrutiny scoping document, the panel discussed the development of a survey to identify customer needs and preferences (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that work was being undertaken to ensure transformation of services was involved in all areas of the council. It was also highlighted that the online services offered by the council were good and that the panel had previously decided there was not a need for an app.
- ii. Online services were promoted through various channels and the Communications team at the council was actively creating content to increase followers and the number of residents engaging with online services.
- iii. The panel agreed that through the discussions of the panel at the previous meetings and at the present meeting, a resident survey was no longer required. Members were content that residents were receiving an appropriate online service and that was being undertaken to improve this further and to encourage and support residents to use online services where possible.

AGREED that the resident survey on digital transformation of services was no longer required.

29. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

To schedule the key tasks in the scrutiny scoping document to be considered at the next meeting of the panel and to consider any work to be allocated to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The panel had agreed that a residents survey was no longer required which meant that there would be no items on the agenda for the next meeting of the panel.

The panel were satisfied that no further information was required and that they felt that they were able to make recommendations at the next meeting of the panel.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 4th July 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication

of these minutes.

2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.