

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber,
Blackdown House, Honiton on 6 June 2019**

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.00pm.

1 Public speaking

There were no members of the public present.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 7th March were confirmed and signed as a true record. Subject to an amendment that the proposal attributed to Cllr Chapman was actually made by Cllr Eileen Wragg.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with requiring the exclusion of the public or press.

**6 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in
accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**

There were no decisions called in.

7 Annual report of the Scrutiny Committee 2018/19

The Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 was noted.

8 Members iPads - Services Required

Members welcomed Cllr Ian Thomas, Portfolio Holder, Finance who explained the background to the IT project for Councillors which was based around iPads, Modern.Gov and a limited number of Applications. The project had started in 2017/18 and rolled out over the last few months. However, although the hardware was fit for purpose, the software was found to be too restrictive and did not do what members wanted.

Cllr Thomas reported that he had held a meeting with Strata and they had agreed to a significant modification programme which had also been agreed by SMT. He reported

that he would work with Cllr Jess Bailey, Portfolio Holder, Corporate Services on approving these modifications.

It was expected that these would include being able to have Council emails back on mobile phones and other personal devices, moving back to a modified form of Office 365 for Councillors which would mean being able to use calendars and emails on other devices.

Members noted that Strata Service Solutions had appointed a new IT Trainer who would help train all Councillors who needed it, on the new iPads. Cllr Thomas requested that all Councillors provide a paragraph with all the IT requirements that they needed to be able to do their job. He reported that by the beginning of July he and Cllr Jess Bailey would have some significant improvements and would hope to be able roll these out towards the end of July and have a significantly better platform.

It was acknowledged that the system did not need to be as secure as originally configured as 90% of what Councillors needed was widely available in the public domain.

Comments from Councillors included:

- Would Calendars transfer to personal equipment? There was an issue for security of personal calendars.
- Members wanted emails on their personal iPads and iPhones.
- The reintroduction of Office 365 would be a step forward.
- 95% of what Councillor required was included in the comments from Cllr Ian Thomas. Consideration should be given to of setting up a TAFF to contribute to the project and cover the other 5% of issues.
- Need to spend more time with members to establish all the issues.
- What was the cost and lifespan of the devices? It was expected that this would exceed the lifespan of the Council.
- There was still the issue of insurance for the iPads. It was confirmed that that they were not covered under personal household insurance.
- What was the cost of the project so far? The cost was £48,000.
- What problems did Exeter City Council experience when introducing the project and why did we not adopt their system? The first 3 months at Exeter City Council were reported to be very difficult and there had been a number of issues.
- Why was there not a group of Councillors contacted to test the scheme before it evolved? It was acknowledged that this could have been better handled.
- Now that Councillors had gone Paperless/Paperlight, would officers be encouraged to do the same?
- Importance of working towards further reduction the use of paper in the Council was much needed.
- Any training for Councillors had to include the option of one-to-one training.
- Would there be a talking software option as some time? This would be pursued.

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director, reported that since the introduction of new printers Strata had captured who printed the most amongst the Departments. Statistics of usage were being compiled since January. A new IT Trainer had joined recently and was looking at the best ways to train people and producing a training strategy for Councillors.

Some concern was expressed over the need for Councillors to turn around to speak to others behind them at meetings in the Council Chamber. It was noted that the configuration of the Council Chamber would be considered by Cllrs Bond and Bailey.

Councillor Ian Thomas thanked all members for their positive contribution. He reported that there would be a phased programme and properly thought through.

Councillors requirements for IT improvements were as follows:

Essential

Access to emails on personal devices and mobiles.

Diary synchronisation.

Filing systems and contact groups

Printing facilities

Training to be customised to Councillor preference, such as one to one, one to three or group.

Ability to create and manipulate documents.

Desirable

Talking software

Out of office replies

When using the extranet there is a need to log in several times during a session.

Forwarding of sensitive attachments as currently these are blocked.

Taking photos and sending them to Councillors iPad's via air drop

Members were requested to send details of their required improvements to Members IT systems to Cllrs Ian Thomas and Jess Bailey and/or Cllr Dent who would forward the comments.

The issue of establishing a Members IT User Group was discussed and it was acknowledged that this could be useful, but Laurence Whitlock advised that the joint Strata Scrutiny Committee has Members from all three authorities on it so it was felt that this was sufficient.

RESOLVED that the above comments be forwarded to Strata for action.

9 **Forward Plan 2019/20**

Members gave consideration to items for the Forward Plan. The following were proposed:

- Gigaclear and Connecting Devon and Somerset to discuss Broadband.
- South West Water Capacity and its obligations to take on additional volumes.
- Service Plans & Budget
- Use of Plastics
- Council Enforcement Policy with particular regard to planning conditions,
- Police & Crime Commissioner – to discuss modern day slavery, closure of police stations, county lines and deployment of additional police officers

10 **Date of next meeting - To note that at the request of the Chairman the date of the next meeting has been changed to Thursday 18 July 2019 at 6.00pm.**

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Dent (Chairman)
K Bloxham (Deputy Chair)
T McCollum
K McLauchlan
V Ranger
J Rowland
E Rylance
J Whibley
M Chapman
I Chubb
B De Saram
P Jarvis
F King

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Kevin Blakey
Colin Brown
Susie Bond
Peter Faithful
Sam Hawkins
Mike Howe
Ben Ingham
Geoff Jung
Dan Ledger
Andrew Moulding
Helen Parr
Ian Thomas

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead - Finance
Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Adrian Smith, Strata Head of Infrastructure and Support
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

C Gardner
C Pepper

Chairman

Date: