

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
9 JULY 2020
7.30 - 8.30 PM**



Present:

Councillors Angell (Chairman), Virgo (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Temperton and Tullett
Mark Glanville, Parent Governor representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Porter and Tracey Wright, Parent Governor representative

Also Present:

Councillors Ms Gaw, Kirke and Neil

In attendance:

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery

Bobby Mulheir, Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT

10. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 27 May 2020 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

11. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest.

There were no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

12. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

13. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

14. Customer Experience and Digital Strategies

In advance of the meeting Bobby Mulheir, Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT presented background information and outlined the key themes for the development of the new customer experience and digital strategies. Members separated into three workshops to discuss:

- Enabling a Digital Workforce
- Embracing Innovation to Improve the Customer Experience
- Expanding Multi-Channel Service Delivery

The notes collected from the first group's session were shared with the meeting and Councillor Tullett fed back on the group's discussions:

- Integrating platforms and scalability it was suggested the system should be integrated enough to adapt to the customer's experience e.g. be intuitive
- Need for digital skills training and addressing the digital divide
- Culture change and requirement for digital leadership by the Council core part of transformation plan
- Consideration of digital voting in the future
- Lone working and staff safety to be considered
- Look to private sector partners to share their experiences e.g. Royal Mail and Experian
- Need to monitor spend as this is a complex issue
- Need to respond to the future requirements of schools
- Cyber security, GDPR not to be forgotten
- Future updating and maintenance

The notes collected from the second group's session were shared with the meeting and Councillor Mrs Birch fed back on the group's discussions:

- drones could be used for trouble shooting e.g. fallen tree issue and possible link to planning issues but not to replace site visit instead enhance by sharing video of site at a meeting
- Ecard used by Customer Services and whether this could be available via mobile phones or using an App to get through all parts of the Council all the services can be displayed. Direct payments using your phone e.g. bin.
- Opportunity to use digital method of getting in touch with people to determine customer satisfaction and get feedback to improve our services
- Do not forget the elderly who are not so digitally able

The notes collected from the third group's session were shared with the meeting and Councillor Virgo fed back on the group's discussions:

- multichannel delivery to give the user many platforms to contact the council which would be a better experience e.g. put them straight through to the officer, several services linked digitally to speed up and improve the system
- use of chat bots that some councils and utilities are using but these can be very alien to the users
- IT tend to design things for ICT and don't design them for the user so important that user has a big influence on designing the system and user test the system.
- Communication to Councillors to enable them to support implementation of new IT systems and answer residents' queries.
- Both Wokingham Borough Council and Silva Homes have Tenancy Involvement Teams and use this diverse group of individuals to test system before it is implemented with the wider community.

In response to a request that disabled people within the community were not forgotten and provided with support, Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT explained that accessibility was a key element of the strategy. It was accepted that there would be some within the community that could develop digital skills and even with support others who would not be able to access services this way.

The Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT thanked everyone for participating, undertaking research in advance and providing inciteful feedback which would help shape the strategy for digital and cultural experience.

15. **ICT Performance during lockdown**

Bobby Mulheir, Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT provided members with an update on the actions taken during the pandemic. Arising from the following discussion it was:

- confirmed that the ICT team consulted professional partners when reviewing strategies and worked with others for each new element of what it delivered e.g. licensing, SharePoint and migration of services
- explained that the Council's intranet DORIS was being redesigned and the test site was available with 500 pages created already ensuring that content previously unavailable to the search function as hidden within pdfs. Members were encouraged to look at the Democratic and Member pages which were a work in progress.
- noted that it was not possible to make eye contact via video conferencing but that social activities were being encouraged amongst service teams to provide social support
- noted that work is ongoing on how to safely introduce certain activities such as workshops or find better technology and developing etiquette which allows time for interaction
- confirmed that the ICT team would provide feedback on user experience to Councillor Tullett's Isolation and Loneliness scrutiny review activity
- explained that when benchmarked with others the Council is quite near the front as evidence pack contained case studies from others but were things the Council had already done but had not been funded by LGA to undertake the activities
- reported that the Council has funding to work with Croydon and other local authorities to develop a website template in Drupal that any Council could brand and use. The Council had been invited to be part of that project.
- noted Councillor Mossom had taken part in user testing of the new intranet on SharePoint and reported it was very good
- noted that the Council was continuing to adapt to the new way of meeting remotely and could investigate electronic voting systems to capture responses
- reiterated that the Council had demonstrated an embracing of technology and continued to function even in the face of a pandemic and the opportunity should not be missed to report this

The Chairman of the Commission thanked the Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT and her team for running the workshop and attending the meeting.

16. **Overview and Scrutiny Commission work programme**

Councillor Angell, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission advised the meeting that he had suggested reinstating the meeting on 12 August 2020 so that the Commission could begin to question the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council. This could be achieved by considering the Council's Renewal Strategy and understanding the financial impacts of the national health pandemic. The following would be invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance
- Andrew Hunter, Director: Place, Planning & Regeneration
- Stuart McKeller, Director of Resources

He asked members of the Commission to start to think about the existing work programme and whether they wanted to continue with that or whether they had new ideas due to the changing circumstances facing the Council.

He suggested that an additional meeting in early September be set up to look at the current year's Council's budget.

Commission members supported the suggestions and discussed that:

- hard copies of the budget papers should be provided for the September meeting
- considering the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances would be useful before the usual budget review timetable
- the two meetings should not be filled with presentations as the information should be provided in advance otherwise it would not allow enough time for questions
- the Executive Member should be asked to lead the presentation/discussion of information

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery advised that it was anticipated that two brief presentations would be provided to cover the Council's Renewal Strategy and the national financial impact of Covid-19.

Annex Notes from workshops

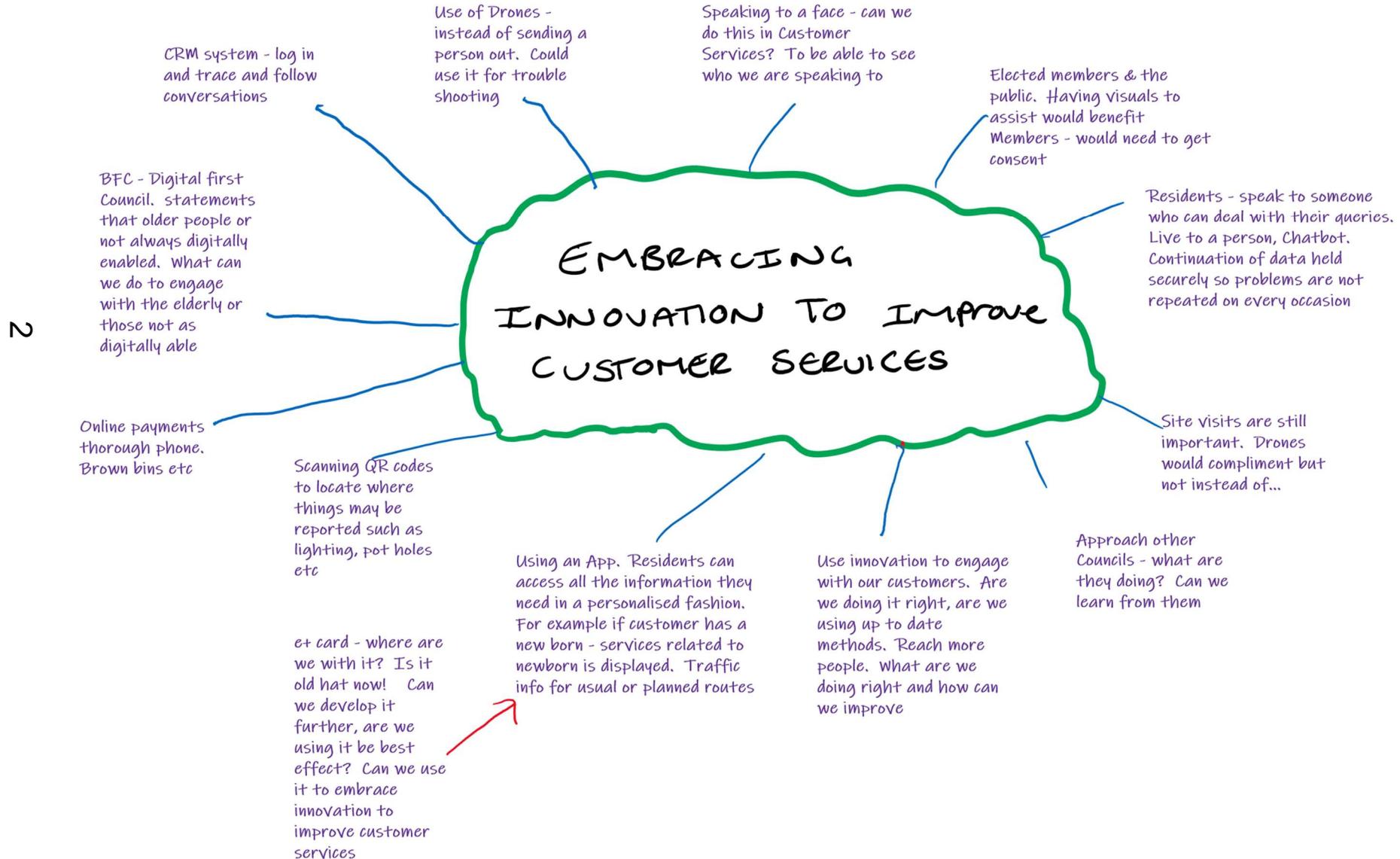
CHAIRMAN

Workshop 1: Enabling a Digital Workforce



Workshop 2: Embracing Innovation to Improve the Customer Experience

Digital Strategy Workshop Overview & Scrutiny



Workshop 3: Expanding Multi-Channel Service Delivery

Customer Experience and Digital Strategies Workshop

Have user involvement in development especially around areas such as apps.

Need to have a diverse group to really understand what success looks like.

Need to ensure that we design for people and not for IT. Monitoring their story and did they get the result of what they actually wanted.

Chatbots need to be able to give answers quickly and easily or people can be put off. Hand off to people where it is necessary to do so.

Making sure that we use multi-channel engagement for and with our Councillors as well.

Need to understand if people get a positive relationship with the query they approached us with even if the outcome was not as they expected?

Use of IoT such as Alexis to contact us quickly and might encourage people to contact us easier - pre-emptive approach.

Expanding Multi-Channel Service Delivery

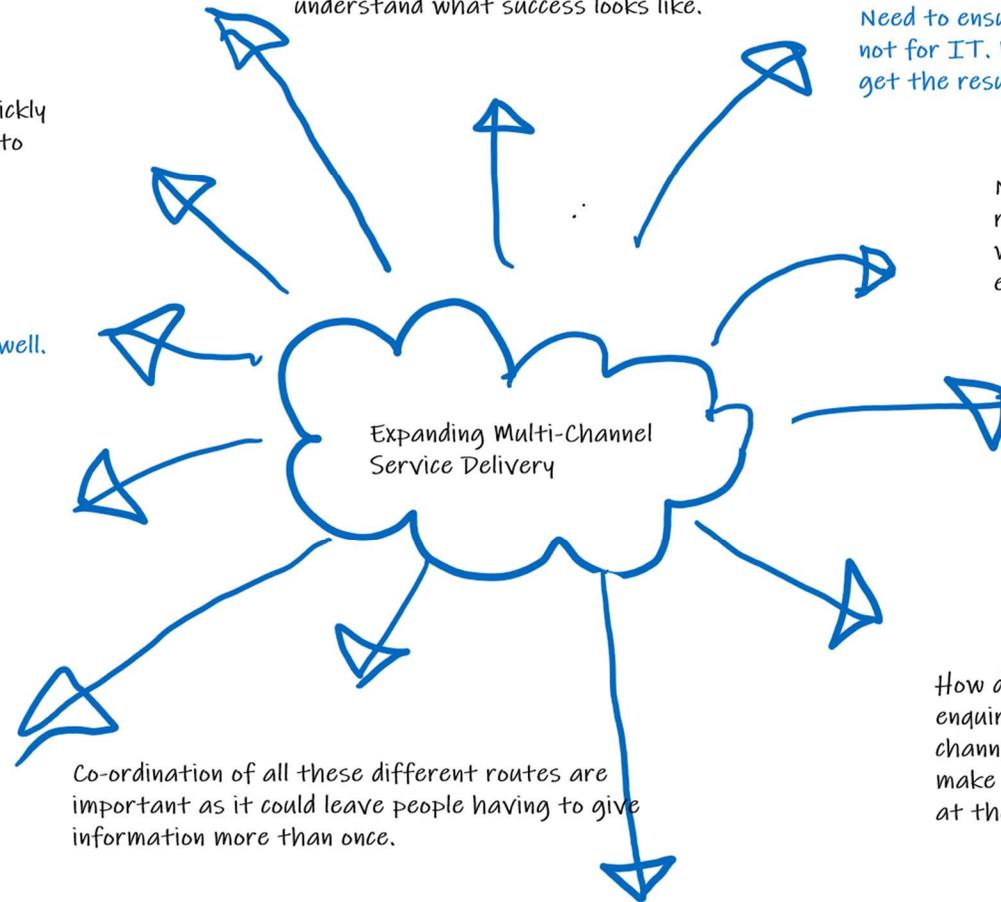
End user - acceptance testing. Do we have a big enough pool of people - opportunity to engage to possibly look at recruiting people to work and engage with service delivery. Take an early adoption approach ensuring inclusivity.

There is a potential to look at what other organisations are doing such as Wokingham with their tenancy involvement teams. They have a diverse group of people who are from the community and who are used as 'testers' to trial services to ensure they are fit for use for all.

Co-ordination of all these different routes are important as it could leave people having to give information more than once.

How do we avoid missing that subtext in an enquiry when we are using non traditional channels? If it is their first contact how do we make sure we get as much information as we can at the right time.

Use to enable people to contact us and have faith to do so early. Need to make our channels very accessible and simple to do. Sign posting needs to be clear.



This page is intentionally left blank