

**17 December 2019****Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****MEMBER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME  
QUARTERLY UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on progress with the Member Communication and Engagement programme.

**Information**

2. At its meeting of 24 July 2019, the Committee agreed proposals to establish a new cross cutting programme of work to review the Council's approach to member communication and engagement and consider where improvements can be made.
3. The Committee also agreed to receive quarterly progress updates.
4. This programme consists of four distinct but interdependent workstreams, with progress so far detailed below and in the attached Activity Plan.

**Communication with Members workstream**

5. One of members' key concerns was the lack of consistent available information about activities, services and achievements both in the Council and the wider communities of Nottinghamshire. The response to this has been the development of new "newsroom" pages on the Intranet which have been live since September and which give members a range of information from Council media releases, video releases and marketing campaigns.
6. Members also raised concern about the ability to access information on the move and to be able to direct constituents or Parish Council colleagues to relevant areas of the Council's website via mobile telephone Apps. This has now been developed as the "MyNotts" App and is currently in final testing with a proposed Go Live Launch date in January 2020. It is hoped that this App will encourage the public to engage more frequently with Council services through electronic platforms as many people prefer to access web content through a phone rather than a desktop or laptop computer.
7. In the next stage of this workstream, it is proposed to refresh and relaunch the information pages for members on the Intranet to have access to all information through a single point

of access. Further information for members on a range of specific topics is being developed with one on gritting completed and another on flooding underway. Other information will focus around key Council Plan objectives and budgetary information and will be available in a range of different formats to enable access online or in a variety of settings such as Councillor or Doctor surgeries and at local Libraries.

8. The longer-term plan is to develop a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which provides a range of information about Council systems and services, objectives and achievements in an automated “real time” way to reduce staff time in re-presenting information for a range of audiences.

### **Handling Members’ Queries and Complaints workstream**

9. A cross Council benchmarking review has been completed of the way in which complaints and queries raised by elected members are received and dealt with by each Department.
10. This has established that although the majority of areas work in accordance with the Council’s Customer Service Standards when responding to members, each Department has adopted a slightly different process for escalating and resolving such queries and use a variety of systems and procedures in doing so.
11. These departmental approaches have also been compared to those used in the Complaints and Information Team and the Customer Service Centre and in light of this work, a new approach to handling members’ general departmental queries and complaints and is being trialled by the Adult Social Care and Health Department. The new approach involves an element of triage to streamline and apply consistency to how queries and complaints raised by MPs and members are handled and to ensure a prompt and efficient response.
12. Using the insight from the trial period and from best practice elsewhere in the Council to address any remaining issues, an overarching corporate approach will be designed and rolled out as the approved operating methodology for handling all MPs and members’ general enquiries and complaints other than issues which are already addressed through specific systems.
13. In the medium term this approach will be further refined and link into the ongoing work around insight and intelligence in the transformation and digital programmes currently ongoing. The ultimate aim will be to link into the CRM system to provide easier real time access to information for members to respond to their queries and assist in supporting constituents with their complaints or concerns about service related issues.

### **Support for Members workstream**

14. A key aspect of this workstream relates to the members’ telephony and mobile ICT offer. All members will be aware of the pilot testing of new mobile phone devices which has taken place over the summer and autumn. This is now complete with all 4 of the members involved in the pilot indicating their satisfaction as to the fitness for purpose of the new devices. The most recent communication updated members on the plans for migrating email accounts to Office365 on November 16<sup>th</sup> which is the precursor to roll out of the new mobile phones in mid-December and throughout January.
15. Members are always encouraged to minimise the use of paper documentation, with a preference for electronic storage of documents where possible. However, it is recognised

that members do use paper documents in a variety of situations. In order to ensure appropriate secure storage for these papers, it is proposed that a review will commence in January to assess members' storage requirements. Once needs have been assessed, appropriate solutions will then be identified and implemented subject to available budgets.

16. During the review, members will be asked about any paper based legacy documents which they may hold to determine if they need to be retained. For any papers required over the longer term it is proposed that the Council's print services team will scan any information that the members currently hold in paper form, so that it can be stored securely in an appropriate area on the County Council servers. A further piece of scoping work will be necessary with Democratic Services Group support officers to identify appropriate folders/systems into which the legacy information can be stored for each member.
17. The above scoping work will also begin the discovery phase to better understand members' casework needs. As well as internal discussions about members' casework, best practice from elsewhere will be assessed alongside consideration of suitable systems or technology and will inform next steps to improve support for members' casework management over the medium to longer term.
18. Going forward, the intention would be for an initial solution to later be incorporated within the CRM system that would allow a more holistic provision of information for Members that relates to the query or complaint being dealt with.

## **Members' Training and Development workstream**

### Internal Offer

19. Currently, members are offered a detailed induction and refresher programme following their election to the Council at the local County Council elections held every 4 years. The take up of this offer has been variable and has been affected by members' other commitments, including the impact of a general election shortly after the last County Council elections when the bulk of the training programme had been planned.
20. The development offer for new members elected through by-elections is rather more ad hoc and depends on whether the member has experience from another Council and which Committees they are appointed to sit on. In addition to induction training, Councillor Development days are earmarked throughout each year, however which subjects are covered has been rather ad hoc and largely driven by topical issues such as GDPR and Modern Slavery as recent examples.
21. In future it is proposed to develop a more comprehensive rolling programme of development for all members. This would include a number of mandatory topics for all members as well as a range of other subjects which may be of interest to be delivered in both face to face and online settings. It is felt that this should better address a range of member development needs.
22. Members of the Committee have previously flagged the need for Recruitment and Selection training for relevant members and Social Media training for all County Councillors. At the recent Independent Persons Training held on 18 September 2019 and attended by the majority of this Committee's Members, members also suggested that it would be helpful to offer further training to all County Councillors on Conduct and Complaints. In light of this, the emerging topics for the initial internal offering will include:

- a. Members' Personal Safety – 28 January 2020
- b. Information Governance Refresher – 28 April 2020
- c. Social Media – (Date in February/March 2020)
- d. Recruitment and Selection – (Date TBC)
- e. Standards/Code of Conduct – (Date TBC)

23. In the medium term, further discussions between Democratic Services and Human Resources colleagues will look at the most appropriate format and contents of the planned internal rolling programme of training and development for members. This will include the availability of an extensive set of e-learning packages through the Learning Pool portal "My Learning My Career". Committee will recall having previously piloted such training in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations and agreeing that this was an appropriate approach for members going forward.

24. All members have been allocated a Learning Pool licence and can access any of the training available within the portal. It is proposed that colleagues in the HR workforce and organisational development team (HRWOD) will create a dedicated audience space in the portal which will clearly sign post members to learning and development opportunities relevant to their role. Work is currently being undertaken to identify appropriate opportunities that will take members through from induction to role specific opportunities.

25. It is envisaged that development opportunities (which may include toolkits, guidance and other materials as well as online and face to face training) will be identified under the following headings:

- a. Induction
- b. E-learning catalogue
- c. Council and Committee training
- d. Personal development

The programme will be a mix of in-house delivery and external opportunities, as well as access to the e-learning catalogue.

26. The draft programme will then be shared with the Committee as part of the next quarterly update. In the meantime, a simple survey to gather views about other training needs will be conducted alongside discussion with Group Business Managers to inform the programme.

### **Other Options Considered**

27. None - updates on progress of the Member Communication and Engagement Programme are scheduled to be submitted to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

28. To enable the Committee to be updated on progress with the Programme.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

29. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below.

Where appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

30. At present work is being contained within current resources but work on longer term objectives such as the development of systems is likely to require dedicated resources. During ongoing discovery phases, further clarity about any resources required will emerge and any need for additional budget required will be reported at appropriate stages. To date no project manager support has been called upon but given the wide-ranging nature of the programme with multiple streams and cross council working, some part-time support will be sought from within the programmes and projects team to maintain focus on programme timelines and deliverables.

### **Human Resources Implications**

31. At this stage no, additional staffing resources have been identified but this will be kept under review and further information provided as necessary in future reports.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the update on progress with the four workstreams be considered and members agree the actions set out in respect of each workstream and consider any further actions required at this stage.
- 2) That a further quarterly update report be submitted to the Committee meeting on 4 March 2020.

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**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (HD 22/11/2019)**

32. Governance and Ethics Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments (RWK 04/12/2019)**

33. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report. Work on longer term developments is continuing and any requirements for additional budget allocation arising out of this work will be addressed in future reports to the Committee.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All