

Executive

11 February 2016

Report from the Corporate & Scrutiny Management
Policy & Scrutiny Committee

E-Democracy Scrutiny Review – Cover Report

Summary

1. This report presents the final report of the E-Democracy Scrutiny Review (see Appendix 1) and asks Executive to approve the review recommendation.

Background

2. At a meeting in July 2015 the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) considered a scrutiny topic proposal on the expansion of local democracy using digital means. CSMC agreed this was a topic worthy of review and appointed a Task Group to carry out this work on their behalf.
3. The Committee subsequently agreed the following aims and objectives:

Review Aim:

‘To identify the potential for improving public engagement and take up of services through digital means and the Councils ability to respond.’

Objectives:

- i. To understand City of York Council’s (CYC) current position in regard to online services, its current digital infrastructure and the resources required to enable it to function
- ii. To examine best practice by other Local Authorities and at parliamentary level
- iii. To establish CYC’s potential for development and the additional resources it would require

iv. Identify the priorities for action in the short and longer term

4. At a Task Group meeting in December 2015 it was suggested that interim recommendations might be made to the Executive to be fed into their discussions around the implementation of the new Customer Relationship Management system at their meeting in February 2016.
5. At a meeting of CSMC on 11 January 2016, Task Group members asked the Committee to consider their interim report to be the final report as they considered the recommendations to be timely and appropriate ahead of the Executive meeting and the recommendations would no longer be pertinent once that meeting had taken place. They also believed that additional work would be unlikely to produce further recommendations of sufficient value.
6. At the meeting in January 2016 CSMC agreed and endorsed the recommendations in paragraph 9, below.

Consultation

7. As part of the review the Task Group was aware of the need to gather residents' views on their engagement with the Council and carried out an online survey as well as a survey of residents attending Ward Committees.

Analysis

8. Over a number of meetings the Task Group gathered evidence in support of the review. The final report at Appendix 1 and its associated annexes includes a full analysis of the information gathered and the recommendations endorsed by CSMC.

Review Recommendations

9. Having considered the evidence gathered by the Task Group, CSMC endorsed the following recommendations:
 - i. To make the delivery of online services a priority to enable ease of access for residents and lead to potential efficiency savings within the Council
 - ii. Identify any potential reasons which would lead to the poor take up of My Account by York residents as these could present a risk to the successful rolling out of the new system;

- iii. Carry out market research and public consultation during the My Account design process similar to that carried out for the website redesign;
- iv. Make My Account training sessions available for Members so they fully understand the features and utilisation of the system and are able to pass on this knowledge to residents;
- v. Implement a comprehensive online video tutorial outlining the key functionality of the My Account system;
- vi. Explore the strong integration of My Account so individuals can be “tagged” as a result of issue-based contact with CYC so they can then be signposted to the relevant decision session/committee with which they might have an interest.
- vii. Explore hyperlinking agenda items on CYC’s YouTube channel and the possibility of rolling this out to all webcast uploads for ease of access.

Options

- 10. Having considered the final report at Appendix 1 and its associated annexes, Executive may choose to amend and/or approve, or reject the recommendations arising from the review as set out in paragraph 9 of this report

Council Plan

- 11. This report is linked to the Focus on Frontline Services, A Council That Listens to Residents and a Prosperous City For All elements of the Council Plan 2015-19.

Recommendations

- 12. Having considered the final report and its annexes, Executive is recommended to:
 - i. Approve the recommendations shown in paragraphs 9 above.

Reason: To conclude the Scrutiny Review in line with City of York Council Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

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Report Approved **Date** 20/01/2016

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Appendix

Appendix 1 – E-Democracy Scrutiny Review Final Report