



## **REPORT of DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY**

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**to  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
14 FEBRUARY 2018**

### **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the Council's approach to internal and external communications making recommendations to the appropriate service committee or Council as required.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) that Members review the content of the Officer presentation, and their views and comments are sought.
- (ii) That Members' comments are taken into account by Officers when drafting a future digital strategy for the Council and introducing unified communications systems.

#### **3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 In January 2018 Members of this committee confirmed the current work plan for the year which includes a scrutiny topic of Internal and External Communications. The Member sponsors are Councillors S J Savage and M S Heard. It was agreed the scrutiny topic will include;
- the email system;
  - telephone contact via the Council's contact centre;
  - how the Council can improve the website;
  - some examples of other authorities' approach to communications;
  - the Council's Digital Strategy
- 3.2 In response this item of scrutiny Officers have prepared a presentation for Members which sets out to demonstrate the integration of the Council's Customer Strategy and the ICT Strategy which is due for a refresh in the form of a new Digital Strategy for the Council later this year.
- 3.3 The presentation updates Members on progress on delivering communication projects including voice (telephony) and electronic (email) in an integrated package of communications improvements. Officers will outline the key principles which underpin both the Customer and Digital strategies which will guide the Council's communications in the next few years, including moving to online and self-service

provision by default wherever possible. A section reflecting the current Website provision will be included, together with some performance information for Members' interest and discussion. Finally the increasingly important use of social media as a communication tool will be explored. A copy of the presentation is included at **APPENDIX ONE**.

- 3.4 In setting the content of this item of scrutiny Members made specific mention of a number of issues they wished to be included. The presentation detailed above will deal with the majority of matters raised including the question raised by Councillor S J Savage relating to Officers of this Council taking responsibility for the safe receipt of electronic communications (including individual emails sent from these offices).

- 3.4 As requested examples of current digital strategies have been provided. Examples from Chelmsford City Council & Braintree District Council are set out within **APPENDIX TWO**.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The aim of this review to consider how the Council communicates both internally and externally and seeks to give reassurance on the strategy relating to future plans for service delivery.

#### **5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS**

- 5.1 This item of scrutiny relates to the corporate goal of delivering good quality, cost effective and valued services.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Council is reviewing both the customer and digital strategies relating to providing good quality customer services. Advances in technology coupled with customer expectations on access to services are driving a re focus on our communication methods and the customer and digital strategies will set a clear pathway for the future.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – No issues identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – No issues identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – There are costs associated with the implementation of new technology. However, there are also corresponding savings which can be delivered through efficiencies and varying models of service delivery.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None identified.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – No issues identified.

Background Papers: None.

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