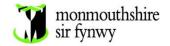Public Document Pack

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

County Hall
Rhadyr
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NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 9 July 2024

Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

Cabinet

**Wednesday, 17th July, 2024 at 5.00 pm,
Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk**

Attached are reports that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but were submitted to democratic services following publication of the agenda.

Item No	Item	Pages
8.	**Digital and Data Strategy** Division/Wards Affected: All Purpose: To present to Cabinet the Council's Digital and Data Strategy for approval. The strategy outlines how its use of digital and data will transform and modernise services, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and support the delivery of the wider Community and Corporate Plan. Author: James Vale - Head of Customer, ICT & Digital (Torfaen CBC) Contact Details: james.vale@torfaen.gov.uk	1 - 4

**Paul Matthews
Chief Executive**

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Extract of Minutes of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee on 11th July 2024 on Digital Strategy

Performance & Overview Scrutiny 11th July 2024

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting is at
Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee - 11th July 2024 (youtube.com)

Attendees:

Councillors: Rachel Buckler (Vice-Chair), Ben Callard (Cabinet Member), Alistair Neill (Chair), John Crook, Meirion Howells, Jane Lucas (observing), Paul Pavia, Peter Strong, Laura Wright.

Officers: Jonathon Davies, Peter Davies, Hazel Ilett, Richard Jones, Robert McGowan, Nia Roberts, James Vale, Pennie Walker.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Fookes and Councillor Bond, with no substitutes. The Chair commented that it would be helpful if any changes to membership of the committee could be formalised to ensure a full complement.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Digital and Data Strategy – Pre-decision Scrutiny ahead of Cabinet on 17th July 2024

Cabinet Member Ben Callard introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Peter Davies, James Vale and Richard Jones.

- A Member queried how the digital strategy aligns with the financial strategy and other enabling strategies. The explanation was given that the digital strategy supports the financial strategy by enabling more efficient and effective use of resources, data, and technology, and by creating new opportunities for income generation and service transformation. There was reference to it also aligning with other enabling strategies by providing the tools, skills, and culture to deliver better outcomes for the organization and the community.

- Questions were asked around how the digital strategy addresses the digital divide and ensures digital inclusion for all residents and staff. A further question asked was what difficulties were foreseen in encouraging the workforce to

embrace new technologies and data-driven processes. Training and developing user-friendly and accessible digital solutions were seen as key to achieving this.

- Discussion took place on how the digital strategy will measure and evaluate its impact and success, as well as use data to inform service planning and delivery.

- Members asked how the strategy supports collaboration and service integration with other local authorities and partners, particularly in terms of the extent to which we are working collaboratively with other Local Authorities, to ensure we have a common digital infrastructure should we consider integrated services in the future.

- Questions were also asked about how the digital strategy fosters a data culture and data literacy among staff, partners, and residents.

- Another question asked was in what ways the strategy will ensure a user-centred approach in mind, taking into account the needs and expectations of residents.

- A member suggested there was a need to be careful in making assumptions about whether older people can and do use digital platforms and social media.

- A member also raised the question of whether isolation due to increased use of technology had been captured in the Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Reference was made to the presentation of the Financial Strategy in the previous agenda item that had discussed the increased use of artificial intelligence and data analytics, a member asking whether the Council would be investing in those skillsets and whether it has the financial capacity to do so, and whether there would be scope for additional borrowing if required.

- Another member highlighted that residents are not finding the My Mon app user-friendly. Also, if the app retains resident's protected data, do we use this data to contact them about consultations on service change, as residents often ask how they are supposed to know about upcoming consultations, unless they proactively seek this information. It seems like a lost opportunity to consult with residents.

- A query was made around how to ensure that the data officers use is up to date.

All questions were responded to by the Cabinet Member and officers and the Committee moved the report and its recommendations, drawing the following conclusions.

Chair's Summary:

Thank you to officers and the Cabinet Member for bringing the Digital Strategy to the Committee who were supportive of its direction and would like to highlight the following points:

- It's clear from the report that this isn't simply about the Council collecting data, but also about making it easier for residents to access our services. We anticipate that if digital access methods become easier, demand for these may increase, so this needs to be modelled to ensure we have factored increased demand and that there is sufficient resource in the community hubs to deliver this.

- As councillors, we have a role to play in bridging the gap between the Council and residents and that may involve explanation and assistance, but customer engagement has been referred to in our discussions and that's encouraging.

- Members have also expressed that they would benefit from further training on digital platforms, having been in their roles for some time, so we will pass on the request for further member training on digital platforms to the Democratic Services Committee **(Action: Scrutiny Team).**

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