

JOINT ICT COMMITTEE

(Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint ICT Committee held in Chamber 1, District Council Offices, Mill Lane, Wingerworth, Chesterfield on Monday 9 April 2018 at 2.30 pm

Present:

Bolsover District Council (BDC)

Councillor M Dooley
Councillor B Watson

Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC)

Councillor C Furness - Chair
Councillor M Ratcliffe

North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC)

Councillor W Armitage
Councillor P R Kerry

Officers:

N Blaney - BDC/DDDC/NEDDC
S Capes - DDDC
D Clarke - NEDDC
D Cairns - NEDDC
A Maher - NEDDC

13/17-18 Apologies for Absence

There was an apology from Councillor A Catt (substitute member – DDDC).

14/17-18 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

No declarations of interest were submitted at the meeting.

15/17-18 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Joint ICT Committee held on 14 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16/17-18 Quarterly Service Report on the Joint ICT Service – October 2017 to December 2017

The Committee received the quarterly report on the Joint ICT service (October 2017 – December 2017). This included information about the service performance, the budget and use of resources; as well as progress on key projects, security and the ongoing development of the service. With the agreement of the Chair, the ICT Manager Nick Blaney, updated this information for the period January 2018 – March 2018.

The Committee heard that the number of calls requesting the help of the serviced had increased slightly over the last three months. Members discussed the reasons for this with the ICT Manager. He explained that one of the main drivers for the increase was the pace of service development which had taken place, such as the roll out across Bolsover and North East Derbyshire of Microsoft Office 2013 as well as the deployment of new multifunctional devices (MFDs), laptops and personal computers at Bolsover. These developments tend to generate more service requests, until the changes have bedded in.

The Committee was reminded of some of the development projects that were also in the process of being implemented. These included the installation of a structured cabling system across the Derbyshire Dales Town Hall, which was currently taking place and the ongoing work which to ensure that all new laptops and pcs use the Windows 10 operating system.

Members were told that the number of “outstanding calls”, or requests for services yet to be resolved had risen. This was largely because the planned developments which had taken place had made it more difficult to deal with non-urgent work. Many non-critical requests had had to be put on hold. As much of this development work had been completed, the service could now devote more time to dealing with non-critical tasks. Consequently, the volume of outstanding calls was expected to fall. The Committee welcomed this.

During the discussion Members asked about the impact of the cold weather experienced earlier in the year, especially on Rykneld Homes. It was confirmed that this had not had a significant impact on the overall volume of service requests which had been received.

Members were informed that the Joint ICT budget had continued to underspend and was expected to be about £40,000 below budget for the year as a whole. It was explained that this was primarily due to lower than expected salary costs.

The Committee also heard that no significant new risks had been identified and that there had been no successful attempts made to hack the computer networks serving the three authorities. In this context, Members referred to the problem of spam e-mails, which many now received. The incidence of these e-mails, it was explained, had increased significantly over the last three months across all three authorities.

Spam e-mails, it was argued, were causing Members real problems and there was a fear that they might prevent Members from accessing legitimate e-mails by using up their data allocation.

The Committee made it clear it would like the reasons for the increase in spam e-mails to be investigated, so that hopefully ways could be found to block them from Members' inboxes in the future.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee thanked the ICT Manager for his report and the updated information about the performance of the service.

RESOLVED – That the Joint ICT Committee notes the report.

Action Point

The Information Communication Technology Manager investigates the reasons for the increase in spam e-mails received by Members.

17/17-18 Review of the Committee's Functions, Future Arrangements and Terms of Reference

The report to the Committee dealt with the future role of the Joint Committee. In particular it asked Members to consider specific changes of the Terms of Reference of the Committee to reflect the consultation and review role that it now had.

The Senior Governance Officer, Donna Cairns, explained that under these proposals, the Committee would cease to be a decision making body in its own right. The Joint Committee would continue to oversee and review the performance of the service, but any operational, policy, financial or other decisions about the service would be recommended to the three local authorities for them to decide on.

Members discussed the report and the specific proposals. There was general agreement that the Committee had a valuable role to play in overseeing the work of the Joint ICT service and this oversight role ought to continue.

The Committee recognised that the Executive Governance arrangements, that operate in Bolsover and North East Derbyshire would oblige the Committee to meet a range of legal obligations if it was to take significant decisions, such as the need to give advance notice and for these decisions to be scrutinized.

Members felt that as the Committee did not usually take significant decisions this was unlikely to be a major problem. In particular, the Committee concluded that it could avoid this from happening by voluntary agreeing to recommend any issues which required a decision to the three Councils, so that they could decide upon them. Members unanimously supported this approach.

Members recognised the need to keep the remit and Terms of Reference of the Joint ICT Committee under review. There was unanimity that in order to allow

this review to take place when possible changes to other joint arrangements were also being considered, it should take place from May 2019 onwards.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That no changes to the Joint ICT Committee's Terms of Reference be recommended to Bolsover, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire District Councils at this stage.
- (2) That Bolsover, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire District Councils consider reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee following the local government elections in May 2019.

18/17-18 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to be discussed at the meeting.

19/17-18 Date of Next Meeting

With the agreement of the Chair, it was:-

AGREED – That the next scheduled meeting of the Joint ICT Committee on 30 July 2018 be re-arranged. Members and officers will be informed of the new arrangements.
