

## **Extract from minutes of Joint Advisory Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 May 2018**

### **Dorset Councils Partnership Digital Strategy**

The committee received a report which presented the Dorset Councils Partnership Digital Strategy and accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment. The committee had previously agreed to form a task and finish group to review the Digital Strategy prior to it being discussed formally by the committee and the notes of the meeting held were attached as an appendix to the report.

In presenting the report, the Project Manager noted that the Digital Strategy would define and communicate the current position and provided a direction of travel for the next 12 to 18 months whilst the new unitary authority was being established. The report detailed progress to date which included the use of a text messaging service, the development of digital dashboards in some services, increased use of mobile devices by staff and councillors, working in partnership with Dorset County Council to support Universal Credit customers and working with Google Digital Garage to provide opportunities for local businesses and charities to develop digital skills. The Digital Strategy reflected a joined up approach with councils across Dorset. The use of technology had assisted people to be able to access council services in a way and at a time convenient to them which resulted in more time being available to assist those who preferred to access services by telephone or face to face.

Members considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were made:

- Work on the new dorsetforyou website was reaching the final stages and the first phase would be going live in the next few weeks;
- In response to a question, the Project Manager would check information available and training to be made available for members;
- DCP Employees and elected members as well as volunteers were encouraged to take an active role to support residents to improve their digital skills and confidence. Information was available which could be shared with members;
- In respect of events like Google Digital Garage, promotion would be undertaken in conjunction with the partnership's Economic Development Team. In addition, information would be included in the Councillor Connect publication so that members could share the information with others;
- Close work was undertaken with the Digital Champions Network;
- A point was made that some customers still expected to be able to speak to a person on the telephone or face to face. The Chairman noted that there would always be cases where direct contact would take place but that digital services was the way forward;

- An example was given of a computer being provided for public use in a community building, which was well used for accessing information such as planning applications.

It was proposed by J Sewell seconded by A Weaving

### **Decision**

That the Joint Advisory Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the adoption of the Digital Strategy and accompanying documentation by North Dorset District Council Cabinet, West Dorset District Council Strategy Committee and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Management Committee.