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Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Social Inclusion Working Group

Monday 28th September 2015 at 5.30pm
Lewes Room, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham

Councillors:

David Skipp (Chairman)
Alan Britten
Roger Clarke
David Coldwell

Matthew French
Tim Lloyd
Ben Staines
Tricia Youtan

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Agenda

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence	1
2. To approve as correct the record of the meeting held on 15th June 2015	
3. To receive any declarations of interest	
4. To receive any announcements from the Chairman or the Chief Executive	
5. To receive the responses from the Cabinet Members to the recommendations made by the Working Group in March 2015	3
6. To receive the report on Digital Inclusion by the Community Development and Engagement Manager	7

Links for information:

- Office of National Statistics: Internet Use in the UK: What are the Facts?
<http://visual.ons.gov.uk/internet-use/>
- Office for National Statistics: Internet Users 2015
http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_404497.pdf
- Ofcom: Half of UK homes turn to tablets – in just 5 years
<http://media.ofcom.org.uk/news/2015/five-years-of-tablets/>

Social Inclusion Working Group

Terms of Reference

To consider and to make recommendations to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on the following:

- i) Initiatives to develop the Council's approach to social inclusion, equality and diversity
- ii) Access to services and supporting vulnerable people
- iii) Anti-poverty initiatives
- iv) Reports received from Cabinet Members / service heads on specific issues relating to social inclusion, equality and diversity
- v) Health matters

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Social Inclusion Working Group
15th June 2015

Present: Councillors: David Skipp (Chairman) Roger Clarke, David Coldwell, Matthew French, Ben Staines, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillor: Alan Britten, Tim Lloyd

Also present: Councillor: Leonard Crosbie

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor David Skipp was elected as Chairman of the Working Group for the ensuing year.

2. TIME OF MEETINGS

The meetings of the Social Inclusion Working Group would be held at 5.30pm for the ensuing year.

3. TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH MARCH 2015

The minutes of 9th March 2015 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM CHAIRMAN OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

6. TO APPROVE THE WORKING GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference were approved by the Working Group.

The Chairman highlighted that included in the Working Group's remit was the provision to review health matters, however, he explained that a separate Health Provision Working Group had been established, emerging from the Social Inclusion Working Group, which primarily reviewed the

services available at Horsham Hospital, GP services and the overall health provision in the District.

7. UPDATE ON THE POSITION OF THE WORKING GROUP AND FUTURE REVIEWS

The new Working Group noted that the previous Group had recently completed its review of the effectiveness of the provision for local residents who are in financial hardship. A number of recommendations had been made to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at the end of the review, which had subsequently been made to the relevant Cabinet Members. The Working Group was therefore awaiting the responses to the recommendations before it was able to proceed. It was anticipated that the replies would be presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 6th July 2015, for consideration.

The Working Group discussed the recommendations and was looking forward to receiving the replies from the Cabinet Members and would then consider any outstanding issues.

In addition, a suggested new item for the Group's work programme was to help new Members understand more about the CenSus partnership.

The meeting finished at 6.28pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

Response to the recommendations from the Social Inclusion Working Group from the Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing

Recommendation:

(1) to review the impact of the decision to disband the Horsham District Community Partnership and consider its reinstatement, or otherwise request the Council to host a forum once or twice a year, to facilitate the meeting of Council Members and officers with local organisations / agencies, councils and churches to discuss community issues of common interest (which could build on the example of the Council's 'Our Future Together' Partnership Conference on 2nd March 2015)

Response:

Whilst there are no plans to reinstate the Horsham District Community Partnership, a report regarding the 'Our Future Together' Partnership Conference will be sent to all participants in July. The report asks for feedback to help determine if the conference should be held annually and if so, how to improve future events. Outcome of feedback to be available in September 2015

Recommendation:

(2) that the Health & Wellbeing web pages be updated to include more information about debt and money advice services, relevant local organisations and agencies; and also request the Communications team to publicise that information to staff on the intranet with a link to the relevant web pages; and request the Health & Wellbeing service to consider providing courses on financial management skills;

Response:

The Community Development and Engagement Manager is researching the subject area of financial inclusion and how other Councils operate. She is developing the policy / framework with a view to taking this through the process for formal adoption. A mapping exercise of existing provision is underway and the external website will be updated by the Community Development Team. Timeframe: mapping exercise of existing provision Information will be on the website by September 2015. Policy and framework adoption – early 2016

Recommendation:

(3) to request that the autumn edition of the Horsham District News magazine include a feature article detailing those organisations which provide advice and assistance to local residents who are in financial hardship, and later collate that information to include within a leaflet to be distributed widely across the District.

Response:

As far as I am aware this was not actioned before Raymond Tinney left HDC. However as part of the process identified in (2), the Community development team will produce a leaflet and article. This will be winter edition 2015

Recommendation:

(4) request that a room be made available in the Council offices in Parkside, Horsham for a regular 'surgery' which could be publicised to allow local residents who are in financial hardship/crisis and in need of advice to meet relevant volunteers and/or Council staff; and ensure easy access and for people to be able to ask for face to face advice in anonymity if they wished.

Response:

This recommendation can be researched after policy has been adopted and formal ways of working have been approved. This recommendation involves working in partnership with other agencies to assess whether this would be useful or whether existing provision is indeed adequate but poorly promoted. Timeframe: Early 2016

Recommendation:

(5) request West Sussex County Council to promote financial management by inviting relevant agencies to visit District schools to speak on the topic as part of PSHE lessons (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education).

Response:

This recommendation will be passed to WSCC

Response to the recommendation from the Social Inclusion Working Group from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets

Recommendation:

To request the Finance and Performance Working Group to continue to monitor the performance data for the CenSus Revenues and Benefits service, in particular the speed of processing benefit claims and the speed of processing information on the changed circumstances of individual benefit applicants, to check that the target times were not exceeded and that performance was improving from the current position; and for a follow-up report to be provided later in 2015; and

Response:

These key statistics are part of the quarterly report provided to the Finance and Performance Working Group (FPWG). The FPWG will continue to monitor the processing times for the processing new benefit claims and change of circumstances to benefit claim to ensure that performance targets are met. These statistics are also monitored by the CenSus Joint Committee. Current statistics can be provided to a future Social Inclusion Working Group as part of a follow up report when requested.

Recommendation:

To enquire about the performance of the CenSus telephone contact service and to propose that key organisations / agencies be provided with direct telephone contact numbers to circumvent the reported difficulties in contacting CenSus via the general public telephone number; and for a follow-up report to be provided later in 2015.

Response:

The CenSus telephony service has improved over the year and customers no longer have issues with their telephone calls being unanswered. Key partners did utilise a direct dial number for the service when problems were experienced and if problems arise this system will be reutilised. The CenSus Joint Committee is updated quarterly on the status of the telephony service and are monitoring its continual improvement.

Response to the recommendation from the Social Inclusion Working Group from the Leader of the Council

Recommendation:

” To consider how the Business Transformation Programme’s provision of more Council communications and services to the public via online transactions might adversely impact on local residents who do not have internet access or might not have the ability or available support to communicate by that method; and to consider the preparation of a digital inclusion policy and to map the public access to internet use and support which was available across the District.”

Response from the Leader in the absence of a Cabinet Member for Communication, Special Projects and Horsham Town:

Throughout the development and delivery of our Business Transformation Programme (a key part of which is aimed at encouraging more use of digital access to our services) we have stressed the importance of recognising that we must always offer a “human face” to those residents and customers who are unable to engage with us via the internet. It is also true to say that many of our services could never be delivered solely on line and our customer access strategy has been built around these facts. As we roll forward the next stages of our programme – which will see a greater accent on digital access - we will be looking in more detail at what we can do to help those without internet access. Regular updates will be given to the Business Transformation Advisory Group (on which David Skipp sits) and you may want to continue the previous arrangement which saw the Business Improvement Working Group receiving periodic progress reports.

Digital Inclusion

To make sure the web is truly for everyone, we need to provide more than just access. We need to equip people with the skills, infrastructure, motivation and trust to go online, be digitally capable and to make the most of the internet.

People

Digital services are becoming the default option for [accessing public services, information, entertainment and each other](#). In 2013, [36 million adults \(73%\) in Britain accessed the internet every day](#). Those who are offline and not capable of using the internet risk missing out on the benefits that the internet can offer.

For individuals, this can mean reduced costs of living. Households offline are missing out on savings of [£560 per year](#) from shopping and paying bills online, or being able to keep in touch with family members and friends.

The internet also provides improved educational attainment and job prospects as [being digitally capable is critical in finding and securing a job](#). Similarly, reducing digital exclusion can help address many wider equality, social, health and wellbeing issues such as isolation. [81% of people over 55 say being online makes them feel part of modern society](#) and less lonely.

Government

The government is making services [digital by default](#) as [The digital efficiency report](#) showed that the cost of digital transactions is almost 20 times lower than telephone and 50 times lower than face to face. The government state that going digital by default will save the taxpayer [£1.2 billion by Spring 2015](#). Similarly Horsham District Council could benefit financially with more people accessing services online. As this [Local Government Association paper](#) table states below:

Source Channel	Socitm Insight May 2012
Face-to-face	£8.62 per transaction
Phone	£2.83 per transaction
Web	£0.15 per transaction

The Office for National Statistics has consulted on options for future population. [The 2021 Census](#) consultation proposes two options one of which is to collect information primarily online. If Horsham District Residents do not have the skills, infrastructure, trust in inputting personal information online or the motivation to go online – then this census data which drives the delivery and future planning of resources and which is used to lever in funding into the district will be critically flawed.

Digital by default whilst cost effective, poses difficulties. This situation is particularly worrying in the light of the impending shift to Universal Credit, in which the DWP's stated aim is to make applications 'digital by default': The new system combines six types of benefits into one and will, according to its creators, simplify claims and ensure that working is always more attractive and worthwhile than claiming.

In February 2015, the national roll-out begins for single people who would have otherwise claimed Jobseeker's Allowance. Universal Credit aims to be an almost entirely online service. Whether you need to make a new claim, have a change in circumstances or just want to know what date your payment's coming in, it'll be easiest on the internet.

Universal Credit will be applied just once a month and may therefore be problematic for some people who find budgeting difficult or who are already in debt

Those already receiving benefits will start to be moved to UC mostly when they have a significant change of circumstances, such as starting a new job or when a child is born. Claimants will be required to communicate and claim their benefits via an online system. For some this will be fine. For many others, this is going to be a huge problem.

In the document *Preparing for Universal Credit Implementation (Key Questions and Answers for Local Authorities)* It states

“Local authority and partner organisation’s digital inclusion strategies are Key in identifying innovative ways to up-skill and influence customers.” (p91)

The Challenge

There are 4 main kinds of challenge people face:

- access - the ability to actually go online and connect to the internet
- skills - to be able to use the internet
- motivation - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing
- trust - the risk of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online

The challenges that people face

Access	Skills	Motivation	Trust
Accessibility	Literacy skills	Risks	Identity
Location	Digital skills	Necessity	Security
Cost	Security skills	Financial benefits	Standards
Technology	Confidence	Social benefits	Reputation
Infrastructure		Health and wellbeing benefits	
Language			

Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

For all of these groups, adult digital and literacy skills are a sizeable challenge. Being able to improve adult digital and literacy skills is at the heart of reducing digital exclusion and helping people go online.

Digital exclusion affects some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society:

- those in social housing - [37% of those who are digitally excluded are social housing tenants](#)
- those on lower wages, or unemployed - [17% of people earning less than £20,000 never use the internet, as opposed to 2% of people earning more than £40,000. 44% of people without basic digital skills are on lower wages or are unemployed](#)
- those with disabilities - [33% of people with registered disabilities have never used the internet. This is 54% of the total number of people who have never used the internet](#)
- older people - [over 53% of people who lack basic digital skills are aged over 65, and 69% are over 55](#)
- young people - [6% of people who lack digital skills are between 15 and 24 years](#). Only 27% of young people who are offline are in full-time employment
- In 2014, 38 million adults (76%) in Great Britain accessed the Internet every day, 21 million more than in 2006, when directly comparable records began.
- Access to the Internet using a mobile phone more than doubled between 2010 and 2014, from 24% to 58%.
- In 2014, 74% of all adults bought goods or services online, up from 53% in 2008. Clothes (49%) were the most popular online purchase in 2014.
- Of all adults in Great Britain, 67% are aware of Internet storage space services, but the take up of these services to store data is much lower at 35%.
- In Great Britain, 22 million households (84%) had Internet access in 2014, up from 57% in 2006.
- Fixed broadband Internet connections were used by 91% of households.

(ONS: Aug 2014)

Older people

98% of those aged over 65 [that are online](#) have said that they would rather give up their TVs, radios, or newspapers and magazines than lose access to the internet, deeming it to be their most important source of news and information.

Over half of those polled found that being online reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation, helping them to feel closer to their families and allowing them to join online clubs or social groups to meet new people online. In spite of these findings, only half of those polled felt confident in their online skills.

[Go ON UK](#) state throughout the UK there are 4.7million people aged 65+ who have never been online and there are many more that lack the basic digital skills to fully benefit from what the internet and digital technology can offer.

Health

There are LOTS of ways you can use the internet to support your health, from making appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions online, to finding advice on specific symptoms and conditions.

[NHS Choices](#) website is a great way to find health information, provide feedback and hear about people's experiences. With advice about medicine and symptoms. The website can also help you make other important decisions about your health.

Most GPs will have a website and offer some online services

Trial studies have shown that when people manage their health with the help of the internet there are huge benefits:

45% drop in mortality rates.

20% drop in emergency admissions.

14% drop in elective admissions

The common causes of digital exclusion are:

- **Skills** - ability, levels of competence and confidence using devices
- **Access** - infrastructure, speed and availability of local amenities that provide internet access
- **Cost** - device cost, a broadband subscription or monthly fees for mobile data
- **Trust** – even with a good ability and with finances not a problem, trusting the integrity of a website with your personal information, bank account details etc. is a problem.
- **Motivation** - ties everything together and can often be the factor that reduces or removes barriers.

It can be challenging and often isolating living without the benefits of the internet, but this is the reality for one in five UK adults.

•[Getting online gives someone the potential to increase their lifetime earnings by £8,300.](#)

Conclusion

The Internet has an immediate effect on the lives of those who use it. It connects them to news, media, friends, and family; saves them money on services; and opens a world of choice in consumer goods. In the longer term, the Internet has significant tangible benefits for education, employment, and retirement. Research suggests that digitisation helps people at every stage of their lives, from youth into working age and well into later life. Digital learning tools can play an important role in improving education outcomes. Online job listings encourage job searching by the unemployed, and Internet-enabled flexible work situations allow people to retain jobs they would otherwise have to leave. Later life: Digitisation allows older people to stay connected to friends and family, and helps counter depression.

Recommendations

- A Digital Inclusion Strategy outlining our commitment to ensuring Horsham District Residents can access online services with action plan is written and adopted
- That the action plan progress is reported to the Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) annually.
- For the SIWG to investigate existing mechanisms in Horsham Council for residents to access services digitally and proposed infrastructure / development in the future. (Existence/ development of user-friendly forms and websites. Access via smart phone/app format, reporting issues via social media etc.)
- To further discuss the importance of the wider digital Inclusion agenda beyond the SIWG and how this affects our communities and to encourage and support specific budgeting for this agenda in line with the government [UK Digital Inclusion Charter - GOV.UK](#) and [Government Digital Inclusion Strategy - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

Lisa Boydell
Community Development and Engagement Manager
28th September 2015