

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Social Inclusion Working Group
30th November 2015

Present: Councillors: David Skipp (Chairman) Alan Britten, David Coldwell, Ben Staines

Apologies: Councillor: Roger Clarke, Matthew French, Tim Lloyd, Tricia Youtan

Also present: Councillor: Godfrey Newman

1. TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2015

The minutes of 28th September 2015 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

The Working Group noted that West Sussex County Council had employed a financial inclusion officer. The Community Development and Engagement Manager would invite him to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM CHAIRMAN OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

4. TO RECEIVE THE DIGITAL INCLUSION REPORT BY THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

The Community Development and Engagement Manager presented the report on Digital Inclusion.

The Community Development Officer demonstrated how Horsham District Council was performing in terms of digital inclusion, in comparison to other local authorities, by showing the Group a number of council websites.

As the website was the main point of contact for most people, it was essential that older people and those who have a disability or were impaired have access to the Council's services on the website. The Community Development Officer explained that this could easily be achieved by having a link from the Home page to accessibility information to make accessing digital services simple.

A good example of how this was achieved was on the Crawley Borough Council website.

Members were also shown the Mid Sussex District Council and Arun District Council websites and how they compared to Horsham's website.

Members agreed that the Horsham District Council website must be accessible for everyone to use. The Group agreed that improvements could easily be made by adding link to the Home page. This would be raised with the Communications team.

The Group also agreed that although most the access to the Council's services was through the website, it was important to maintain the reception desk and face to face service, along with contact telephone numbers if people were unable to use the online facilities. By doing this it would show that the Council understood the needs of all those who access the Council's services.

Members questioned whether a digital inclusion strategy had been included in the new Corporate Plan which was being prepared for 2016.

The Working Group would invite the Business Transformation Manager about plans in terms of incorporating a strategy into the Corporate Plan and making the website more accessible to all.

The Working Group also discussed access to the internet in Horsham overall, for example better infrastructure for better internet connection in new housing developments, achieving better Wi-Fi in Horsham town centre. The Working Group would also invite the Leader to a future meeting to discuss this inclusion of a digital strategy in the Corporate Plan.

Housing associations, Henfield Hub and the Job Centre were also other organisations who could be invited to a future meeting of the Working Group to discuss their plans for the future regarding digital inclusion.

5. **CENSUS REVENUES AND BENEFITS PERFORMANCE DATA**

The Working Group noted the performance data on CenSus Revenues and Benefits. The Group agreed that it needed more information to support this and the Chairman would follow this up.

The meeting finished at 7.01pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

CHAIRMAN