

## SCRUTINY PANEL 18 MARCH 2014

- Present :-* Councillor Beverly Davies (Chairman)  
Councillors Marcus Harrington, Dave Harris, Jo Hayes,  
Peter Higgins and Mike Hogg
- Substitute Member :-* Councillor Pauline Hazell for Councillor Kevin Bentley
- Also in Attendance :-* Councillor Paul Smith  
Councillor Bill Frame  
Councillor Anne Turrell

### 56. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 11 February 2014 and the 24 February 2014 were confirmed as correct records.

### 57. Work Programme 2013-14

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive confirming the completed Work Programme for the Panel for 2013-14.

Councillor Harris commented that it would be useful for councillors on the Panel to view the items that are required for scheduling on the forward work programme in the next municipal year. Councillor Davies confirmed that work on the forward plan for the next municipal year will commence shortly.

*RESOLVED* that the completed Work Programme 2013-14 be noted.

### 58. Colchester Community Stadium Limited review

**Councillor Harrington (in respect of being a work colleague of Mr Gilham's spouse) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).**

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive, containing information provided by Colchester Community Stadium Limited (CCSL). David Murthwaite and Clive Gilham, Chairman and Chief Executive of Colchester Community Stadium Limited attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Panel.

David Murthwaite outlined that this was the third occasion that Colchester Community Stadium Limited had attended the Scrutiny Panel, with each appearance providing an opportunity to learn and continuously improve the stadium. Mr Murthwaite outlined the main issues arising from the Scrutiny meeting in March 2012, which included the community use of the stadium, marketing, growth and expansion of the stadium, the travel plan and the leases currently in place. 1

Since CCSL last attended the Scrutiny Panel, there have been a number of changes in the Stadium's arrangements;

- There has been a reduction of two posts on the Colchester Community Stadium Board. There are now three independent positions, two from Colchester Borough Council, and one from the football club.
- The Colchester United Community Sports Trust entered liquidation.
- The original five year contract with the Management Company came to an end. A new ten year contract with the Management Company has now commenced.

Clive Gilham, Chief Executive of Colchester Community Stadium Limited, updated the Panel as to the circumstances of the Trust's liquidation, which culminated in a loss of revenue of £3,000 for CCSL, and the Management Company taking over the space vacated at the Stadium. In addition, Mr Gilham stated that the leases for CCSL were now set up and permanently in place for the future. This included the contract with the Management Company, and the Football Club in their role as tenants of the Stadium.

With regards to the level of finance, the past financial year saw a profit of £15,000, with a similar amount predicted for the end of this financial year. The profit made to date has been reinvested, by enabling borrowing to upgrade the Stadium's car park at a cost of £150,000.

Colchester Community Stadium Limited by the end of this financial year will have paid back in full and on time, a loan of £35,000 which was provided by Colchester Borough Council as part of the original agreement. This means that the financial position of CCSL is looking positive, with a net level of borrowings at £50,000 due to the upgrade of the car park.

During the first five years of the Stadium, there was a target of 24 community events per year involving not for profit or charity organisations. At these events, the Stadium would provide free room hire, and provide catering services at cost. The target of 24 events was not achieved in the first few years of operation, but more recently the number of events has been higher. Attendance for both football and non-football events has increased year on year.

Clive Gilham then covered the contract arrangements with the Management Company. Performance of the contract is managed by twelve key performance indicators. The end of year report in 2010 featured 6 green indicators, 4 amber, and 1 categorised as red. As of the last report at the end of May 2013, all were categorised as green, apart from one amber indicator which referred to the timeliness of reporting. The rent for the Stadium is £52,000 per annum which is linked to inflation. CCSL receives a 6.5% share of the profits made by the Management Company.

The new ten year contract with the Management Company has introduced new elements including the addition of a sinking fund to allow for any breakages at the stadium to be addressed. The contract also includes £500,000 to be invested in the stadium over the next five years; £250,000 of this investment must be permanent. There is also a set of golden targets, which if achieved will provide an incentive to

extend the contract by a further five years, although this doesn't impose a legal requirement to do so.

Colchester Community Stadium Limited has sought to improve the number of community events taking place, and have set up the Community Yield. This looks to assess the events that are taking place and categorise them in terms of the benefit they have on the local community. Whilst football is included as part of the community function this does not have the effect on the local community that other not for profit or charity events may have. Clive Gilham highlighted a number of high quality community events that have taken place over the last five months, some examples of these were a Crucial Crew event and a Careers Convention.

With regard to the future of the stadium, a lot has been learnt over the past few years both in the commercial and community aspect. Both of these elements benefit each other, as with increased usage and awareness there is more scope for additional revenue and profit for the Stadium.

The following issues were identified by Panel members.

- Councillor Harrington – How are community events categorised, when compiling comparative information for the community yield?
- Councillor Higgins – Asked for clarification on the statistics for Directors pay; what the £250,000 available for Stadium development will be used on; whether the stadium currently has any maintenance issues?
- Councillor Harrington – Noted that the PA system within the stadium doesn't always function correctly.
- Councillor Harris – Asked for statistics for each Community Yield events category, and noted that whilst not all events maybe aimed specifically at the community, they still provide engagement and a greater level of awareness of the stadium within the community.
- Councillor Hazell – Have there been any complaints about the display screens being made visible from the A12?
- Councillor Harrington – Request that the information titled 'points' displayed in Appendix 4, should be titled multiplier to reflect the categorisation of community event and its value on the Community Stadium.
- Councillor Davies – What responsibilities does the Stadium have with the local area in which is it located? Would the organisation consider working with other sporting organisations?
- Councillor Hogg – Does the Colchester Community Stadium consider holding events that represent community diversity in Colchester?
- Councillor Hayes – How many exhibitions have taken place at the Stadium, and is there scope for further music events or festivals to take place?

In response to the issues raised, the following information was provided by Clive Gilham and David Murthwaite:

- The Events Committee set up by the Colchester Community Stadium Board assess each community event to determine which category it should fall under. The Events Committee is made up of individuals from different outside bodies

and community organisations to ensure objectivity. An example of this is that the Crucial Crew event would be categorised an A, whereas football would be categorised an E.

- There has been no increase in the level of pay for Directors. The £250,000 must be spent on credible ideas that provide a boost to the Community Stadium. This may include items such as the development of the Stadium screen, other areas within the Stadium, and non-physical elements such as marketing and promotion that will improve the visibility of the Stadium. There is a five year period in which this money must be spent. There are currently no known issues with the Stadium at present; the money set aside for development cannot be spent on maintenance and must be used on making improvements that will provide greater revenue generation.
- CCSL is aware of some issues with the PA system, which will be fixed.
- Events in the past tended to score between B-C on the community yield scale. In terms of advertising for the Stadium the benefits have been significant from the screen display towards the A12. CCSL would like more opportunity to advertise local community events that are not taking place at the Stadium on the screen; requiring submission of an alteration to the original planning consent, which states that only those events at Colchester Community Stadium can be advertised.
- One or two complaints were received at the beginning of the A12 screen's use, but none have been received since.
- Noted that there were some presentational changes to be made, and commented that the Events Committee would be looking at the information prior to it being confirmed.
- The responsibility of the Stadium in the community goes across North Colchester; the more people that live in that area, the more can be achieved. The Stadium is eager to work with the local area and any new developments that take place. It is an excellent opportunity. CCSL is keen to work with all forms of sporting associations and organisations to further improve access to sport.
- In terms of diverse community events, the Stadium has in the past held a number of weddings and events from different religious backgrounds and is extremely keen to hold further events from across the community.
- The Stadium held a Business East conference at the beginning of March which was well attended. There will also be an Elton John concert taking place at the end of June, which will be the first event to trial the arrangements including the travel plan. The original aim of the CCSL is to hold three concerts each summer.

*RESOLVED* that:

- a) The Panel thanked Clive Gilham and David Murthwaite for attending the meeting and giving a presentation.
- b) The review of Colchester Community Stadium Limited be noted.
- c) Colchester Community Stadium Limited be invited back to the Scrutiny Panel in the spring of the next municipal year for further review.

## 59. Review of Council's overall IT provision

The Panel received a presentation from Matthew Sterling, Assistant Chief Executive and Lee French, ICT Manager about the overall provision of IT at Colchester Borough Council.

Matthew Sterling introduced the presentation, and outlined the main aims of Colchester Borough Council's IT provision. These were to ensure that business continues as usual, that the service complies with the law, and also enables change within the authority.

Lee French highlighted the scope of IT provided at Colchester Borough Council, with requirements for storing data, ensuring that the data is secured, and that the IT service is kept up to date. Providing IT services is consistently challenging due to the complex technical environment and the interdependence across the organisation.

The current set up at Colchester Borough Council uses the client-contract model, which has been in place since 1995. This model relies on an internal team to define what is required and identify solutions, with the external contractor providing the support and maintenance for the systems' used. The IT at Colchester Borough Council uses a number of external contractors, the main providers are Capita Secure Information Systems that provide the computer support and Virgin Media who provide the telephone system.

In terms of the financial position of IT provision at Colchester Borough Council, the cost for licenses and contracts is £1,408,200 for the main applications. The Capita contract, costing £828,000 in this financial year with subsequent reductions year on year, is a relatively recent development and is in conjunction with three other local authorities in the local area. Overall the contract reduced the cost of support for Colchester Borough Council by £500,000 in its first year. The annual cost of the telephone contract from Virgin Media is £136,000.

The total budget for staff in the IT team is £455,500, but this has reduced further to £425,000 this year. Each year for the last three years there has been a reduction in staff costs in the team.

The provision of customer facing IT is changing at the Council, as part of the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service review (UCC FSR). A total of £2.7m was set aside to help channel shift and a refresh of customer self-service.

Over last few years, a number of significant changes have taken place in IT provision at the Council.

- 2005 – Customer Service Centre Implementation; improved services available to the customer.
- 2009 – Virtualisation; reduced the number of PC's required for staff, and enabled flexible working arrangements so that approximately 200 members of staff work remotely every day, and 800 are enabled to do so.
- 2011 – iConnect; self-service provision at the Council helped to provide channel

shift and better access for customers.

- 2013 – Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review

IT provision at Colchester Borough Council is a significant part of the UCC FSR, aiming to improve the current customer facing culture of the organisation, but also the facilities in general. Part one of the review is replacing the iConnect system, which is currently used in the Customer Service Centre, with a Northgate system based on Microsoft's Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). In addition the current provider of the Colchester Borough Council website will provide a knowledge base. Old and obsolete hardware is being replaced, and new back-up system has also been put in place, addressing issues from the previous system, and the Council will be removing all remaining equipment from Angel Court.

Further plans are in place to update the entire Borough Council from Windows XP to Windows 7 and Office 2010.

Lee French also stated that the current Virgin Media telephone contract is coming to an end in June, as the system is now obsolete. The IT team have identified a new solution through project management and are on the verge of going into a contract with another organisation.

With regards to information security, the Borough Council is currently compliant with the new Government standard Public Services Network. Maintaining this requires further remedial work, especially with the additional issues around smartphones, tablets and file access.

In terms of the provision of ICT for Councillors Lee French and Matthew Sterling outlined that it would be based on the work undertaken by the ICT and Community Engagement Task and Finish group. The aim for the future is to ensure that Councillors have the correct means to access the important information that is required, as well as e-mails and contact details of officers. It was noted that the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), which is in place and successful for staff, does not necessarily fulfil the requirements of Councillors.

In terms of devices, most Councillors are using their own equipment and will continue to be able to. However, where they cannot supply their own kit requests can be put through to the IT team

To conclude the presentation, Lee French stated that the IT service as provided is going through a significant change as part of the Fundamental Service Review. Through the new contracts, and other elements, the costs of IT in the organisation are reducing, whilst being shaped ready for the future.

The following issues were identified by Panel members

- Councillor Davies – Questioned whether there are any current issues regarding the IT used in refuse vehicles?
- Councillor Harris – Is there scope for updating the current system to enable printing from a tablet? Also cited examples where the Colchester Borough Council

website had not been updated to reflect the details of new Councillors that had been elected.

- Councillor Hazell – A number of issues have occurred recently in forwarding e-mails from a .gov account to a personal account, can the position of the Council be clarified?
- Councillor Hogg – Noted the time it takes to remotely log in to the VDI system and the requirement of special equipment to do this.
- Councillor Harris – Does the Council have the ability to remotely wipe content from mobile devices?
- Councillor Harrington – Expressed the view that the IT system may be seen as not good value for money with the time it takes to load, and the age of some of the equipment used. It was also reported that the Planning application call-in form was proving difficult to access.
- Councillor Higgins – How many staff are currently employed in the IT team? What moves are there for the IT provision to include cloud computing, and what plans does Colchester Borough Council have in place if a catastrophic IT failure occurs?
- Councillor Higgins – Is there an issue with bargaining power when tendering for new IT contracts, as Capita are involved with a number of Local Authorities?
- Councillors Higgins – With the planned refresh of the website, will the Council use a mystery shopper system to assess its quality?
- Councillor Hayes – Commented on possible postcode and location inaccuracies when searching through planning application maps. As well as reiterating the difficulty of accessing the Call-in form. Councillor Hayes also enquired whether the website had been reviewed for visually impaired users.
- Councillor Hayes – What provision will replace the VDI arrangement?
- Councillor Davies – Reiterated the requirements for Councillors, particularly to have access to the Hub, People Finder, and Call-in forms for Councillors.
- Councillor Harris – Are there enough access terminals provided for members of the public? Has the service been tested for being fit for purpose?

In response to the issues raised, the following information was provided by Lee French and Matthew Sterling:

- The technology in refuse collection vehicles is managed by that particular service rather than falling under the responsibility of IT. Information will be provided to the Panel regarding this question following the meeting.
- The technology to enable printing from a tablet device does exist; however this will require further work to ensure compatibility with the government's regulations. In addition it was stated that government advice for the use of personal devices for work purposes state a preference for partitioning the device.
- Councillor Smith, stated that guidance from the government recommended that a separate device for each authority a councillor may serve, which is very restrictive.
- Updating the website falls under another team, rather than the ICT team. Colchester Borough Council is currently in the process of redesigning the website, and reducing the number of pages that exist which will improve the speed of updates.
- With regard to the forwarding of e-mails by Councillors, it was necessary to ensure

- that no personal details or data was involved.
- The log on time for the Virtual Desktop Interface (VDI) has been improving recently, with developments in the servers used. It is noted that the VDI system does not provide the best form of access to content for Councillors, and the intention is to remove that element. However, the VDI system does provide the access level that officers in the authority require.
  - All non-VDI devices that are provided by the Council have the appropriate level of encryption which means that to access the hard disk a code is required. The IT team are currently reviewing the best method for remotely wiping tablets and other mobile devices that may be used by members of staff.
  - The old infrastructure is getting towards the end of its working life, and investment is being made. There are scheduled upgrades from Windows XP to Windows 7. A strategic and balanced approach is required to ensure that Colchester Borough Council has the systems in place to fulfil the requirements but that it is affordable.
  - The IT team currently has twelve employees, with one current vacancy. The use of cloud computing is built into the new Capita contract. There is currently some investigatory work being undertaken in sharing servers with Braintree District Council, which would create a form of private cloud based system. With regard to the recovery systems in case of failure. This is being looked at as part of the co-location of servers.
  - The Council received 40 expressions of interest from companies looking to supply IT support services, so the level of bargaining power in creating an IT contract still remains.
  - The Council participates in the annual Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM), Better Connected survey. The aim of this survey is to ensure Local Authority websites follow best practice and are accessible. Colchester Borough Council website recently retained its 3Star accreditation. As part of the review of the website the number of pages is being reduced to make it more manageable, as it currently holds over 400 individual pages.
  - The software used for planning mapping is called CMaps, with the responsibility falling under the IT team, which will be looked at. The call-in form will be handled by Professional services and under the new website will be easier to access.
  - The website will be put under thorough review, with the aim of making it more task orientated. The accessibility of the site will be tested with advice sought.
  - Staff will remain using VDI, with a recent move to new servers already speeding up the service. Unfortunately the virtualisation process hasn't been a success for most Councillors, and so this will be changed to give greater accessibility to the areas that are most important. Currently Councillors are able to access their e-mails and calendars on their own devices. In the near future a web based application, that will also be available on smartphones and tablets, will provide direct access to meeting papers and agendas.
  - In response to Councillor Harris, it was confirmed that significant testing and assessment of the new system will be undertaken. A steering group meets regularly to discuss issues, and holds frequent conversations with the supplier. This online provision to customers and the amount of equipment provided at the Community Hub in the Library will remain under constant review to improve customers' experience. Further research is being undertaken with the help of Parish Councils, and the County Council on how to best use existing facilities



across the public sector to improve accessibility.

*RESOLVED* that the review of the overall provision of IT at Colchester Borough Council be noted.