

Committee(s)	Dated:
Finance Committee	13 April 2021
Subject: Report of the Work of the Sub-Committee(s)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y/N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information
Report author: John Cater, Committee Clerk, Finance Committee	

Summary

On 19 July 2016, the Finance Committee agreed that, in addition to draft minutes of Sub-Committee meetings, short reports be provided to advise the Committee of the main issues considered by the Sub-Committees at recent meetings. This report sets out some of the main public issues considered by the following Sub Committees since 16th February 2021:

Digital Services Sub-Committee – 26th March 2021

Modern.gov App - Digital Access to Committee Documentation

The Sub Committee considered a joint report of the Town Clerk and the Chamberlain considering proposals to enhance user participation at committee meetings and support paperless working and electronic access to committee documents.

Members were supportive of a pilot to test the enhanced functionality of the Modern.gov app but had reservations in respect of:

- The availability of non-public/confidential papers
- The user interface for non-CoL Members
- Access on non-CoL devices
- The likelihood that Local Authority business could no longer be conducted at virtual meetings beyond 6th May 2021.
- There would be occasions when hard copies of agenda packs would be required

It was also felt that the pilot should not be restricted to Digital Services Sub Committee Members only.

The Sub Committee has agreed that

- All CoL Members (including Co-optees), be invited to participate in a three month pilot;
- A status updates be provided to future meetings;

- If necessary, the pilot is extended and findings reported to the Sub Committee before any final recommendations are made to your Committee and the Court of Common Council.

Efficiency & Performance Sub-Committee – 30th March 2021

The Sub-Committee held an extensive discussion concerning our future ways of working.

In summary, several points/actions were raised:

Coordination between Officer Groups and Members

It was critical that all Members played a central role in helping to shape the Corporation's post-pandemic plans for different ways of working; as a starting point, the Sub-Committee asked the Committee Clerk to produce, and distribute to all Court Members, a briefing note outlining the Sub-Committee's views and concerns around the medium-to-long term outlook for our future ways-of-working.

In the meantime, the Chamberlain would liaise with the (officer composed) 'Return to the Office Working Group' and other relevant Chief Officers, to highlight the Sub-Committee concerns and ensure that Member views were being embedded in the Corporation's planning.

Property, IT and people

It was clear that any proposals that emerge had to be predicated on the need to be cognizant of:

- the scope of what we are physically able to do in the current operational buildings (e.g. social distancing);
- how we can build upon the really positive contribution that our IT infrastructure has made during the response to the pandemic, as well as recognising the limits of IT enabled remote working; and
- the vital need to bring our workforce with us by recognising that there will be different requirements (that may require us to examine incentives and/or changes to the actual physical space in Guildhall), and contrasting experiences of the past 12 months which will shape attitudes to future ways of working.

What benefits can we capture

Whilst Members were keen that a meaningful shift back to Guildhall (and other operational buildings) took place as the Govt began to lift restrictions, it was vital that we learn the lessons of the past 12 months and capture efficiencies and better ways of working for the longer term. It was also apparent that, post-covid, our space requirements would be permanently reduced which could deliver significant savings and commercial opportunities further down the line.

Timeline for Strategy – pace plan of the actions that we need to take

Members cautioned that the strategy would take time to develop and implement. Whilst we needed to avoid rushing into introducing multiple new measures all at the same time, they would be very interested to see a broad 12-18 month timeline developed which

could serve as a roadmap. Officers would consult with relevant colleagues and come back to the Sub-Committee in due course.

Procurement Sub Committee – 12th April 2021

PSC Meeting will be held after the publication of the FC agenda pack – a summary note will be circulated to FC Members in advance of our meeting on 13/04.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

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