

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CENTRAL AND CORPORATE)**

**MONDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2011**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, B Chastney,  
M Hamilton, J Hardy, K Groves, R Wood,  
A Gabriel, V Kendall, T Hanley and  
R Grahame

### **62 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **63 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Blackburn, A Lowe, N Taggart and L Carter.

Councillors R Grahame (A Lowe), T Hanley (N Taggart) and V Kendall (L Carter) were in attendance as substitute Members.

### **64 Call-In of Decision - Briefing Paper**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development informed Members of the Call In arrangements in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the options of action available to the Board. It was reported that only the two following options were applicable to the Board:

- Release the decision for implementation
- Recommend that the decision be reconsidered

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

### **65 Call-In - Design and Cost Report - The Web and Intranet Replacement Project**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the background papers to the following Executive Board decision that had been called-in in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

- Executive Board, Minute No 158: Design and Cost Report: The Web and Internet Replacement Project – 5 January 2011.

The following information was appended to the report:

- A copy of the completed Call-In request form

- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
- Relevant extract of Executive Board Minutes of 5 January 2011

Members of the Board were also issued with a copy of the Web and Intranet Replacement Project Board Business Case which was listed as a background paper under the Executive Board report.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Councillor J Monaghan – Call-in Signatory
- Councillor M Lobley – Call-in Signatory
- James Rogers – Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
- Dylan Roberts – Chief Officer (ICT)
- John Thompson, Senior Project Manager, ICT Services
- Elizabeth Sanderson, Web Content Manager, Corporate Communications

The Call-in request stated that the Executive Board report did not provide satisfactory assurance that the significant investment required for this project would result in the desired outcomes.

Councillor Lobley and Monaghan were invited to address the Board with their reasons for the Call-in of the decision. The following issues were raised:

- The need to highlight business transformation in several areas affected by the project.
- Would the new system reduce the need for the number of staff across different departments of the Council to upload information to the intranet/internet?
- Could it be more beneficial to have the system produced by an external partner?
- The timescale for the project was felt to be too ambitious and would not allow for proper testing.
- Concern regarding other ICT systems produced internally including the Elected Members' Casework system.
- The case did not outline the benefits for the public.
- Concern that the Council should be making use of the new technology and multimedia industry that currently operated in Leeds.
- How to integrate the Council websites that operated externally from the Council's main website and whether this was appropriate in all cases.
- Was it now the right time to develop a new website, particularly in relation to the investment involved?
- Would it meet the future needs of the Council?
- Would it support mobile browsing?
- Search facilities – were new search facilities necessary when popular search engines such as Google could provide the necessary service?

In response to the issues raised and other questions and comments by Members, the following issues were discussed:

- The new website would provide improved content management which in turn would make more information and knowledge available and improve communication with the public.
- Although it was recognised that the website had been revamped only 4 years ago, the infrastructure was over 10 years old and advancements in technology had moved on. The site had to be taken down for 20 minutes each day to be updated which was not sustainable for a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week service.
- Some Council websites were unable to be provided alongside the current site due to the inflexibility of the current system and it not being compatible with newer technology.
- Ways in which an improved website can contribute to savings – as an example, it was reported that the average cost of responding to each call made to the Council's call centre was £3.20 as opposed to on-line response which were only 39p. An improved website with more clearly available and accessible information would increase the number of enquiries satisfied online.
- The search facility to be incorporated in the system would be comparable to Google and would be compatible with the intranet and be a valuable investigative tool for staff.
- Testing for the system would involve staff from across all Council departments and would also include external users.
- The current Council websites that were not accessed via the central website were supported by various external partners and had differing lengths of time left on their existing contracts, many of these now being on a month to month basis. The migration of these websites could be done at the end of their contracts.
- Work and information sharing with external organisations including the universities. External expertise would be utilised where required and there was provision for assistance from First Direct who had offered their services free of charge.
- Potential sources of raising income through the website such as advertising.

Councillors Lobley and Monaghan were invited to summarise the call-in request and reiterated their earlier comments. Concern was also expressed that the Executive Board hadn't considered all the relevant information and had not received a copy of the business case with their report. It was reported that many of the issues discussed today had also been discussed at the Executive Board meeting and the business case had been considered by the relevant Executive Member and was included under the background papers to the Executive Board report and was therefore available to its Members.

**RESOLVED** – That the report and discussion be noted.

**66 Outcome of Call-In**

Further to the Board's discussion on the Call In of Executive Board Minute No 158, Design and Cost Report: The Web and Intranet Replacement Project, Members were asked to make a formal decision in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the options of action available to the Board as reported earlier.

Following a vote by Members, it was

**RESOLVED** – to release the decision for implementation.

**67 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday, 7 February 2011 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting at 9.30 a.m. for all Board Members)

**The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.**