Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

11 February 2025

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	Committee Members Present: Councillors Kaushik Banerjee, Farhad Choubedar, Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead), Elizabeth Garelick, Narinder Garg, Ekta Gohil (in place of Ekta Gohil) and Peter Smallwood (in place of Adam Bennett) **LBH Officers Present**: Matthew Wallbridge - Chief Operating Officer , Darren Everden - Head of Technology and Anisha Teji - Democratic Services
	NOMINATION OF CHAIR In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Senior Democratic Services Officer invited nominations for a Chair. Councillor Kaushik Banerjee was proposed and seconded and duly appointed as Chair for the meeting.
48.	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** *(Agenda Item 1)* Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Riley with Councillor Ekta Gohil substituting and Councillor Adam Bennett with Councillor Peter Smallwood substituting.
49.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING** *(Agenda Item 2)* There were no declarations of interest.
50.	**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** *(Agenda Item 3)* **RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting from 9 January 2025 be approved.**
51.	**TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE** *(Agenda Item 4)* It was confirmed that agenda items 5-8 would be heard in Part I and agenda item 9 would be heard in Part II.
52.	**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION UPDATE** *(Agenda Item 5)* The Chief Operating Officer and Head of Digital provided an update on Digital Transformation highlighting progress and updates on various digital transformation initiatives within the Council. Members heard that the Hillingdon Digital Strategy was approved in October 2024 and this outlined the Council's vision for the next three years. It was reported that the Digital Strategy included a three-year investment program aimed at enhancing efficiency, modernising processes and leveraging data to

improve decision-making.

The presentation detailed five cross-council programs under the Digital Strategy, including the development of seamless systems and automated processes, the delivery of a single view of the customer/household to drive evidence-based decision-making, the provision of an end-to-end customer journey and enhanced digital inclusion, the replacement and consolidation of outdated systems and the delivery of new devices along with the implementation of a learning and development program for officers and Members.

The presentation provided key updates on various programs across departments. The Corporate Services department had launched the Resident Hub on 1 January 2025, merging Customer Experience and Business Administration, automating over 10 processes and delivering a £1m saving. The Digital Inclusion program had provided laptops to 69 residents, with plans for more devices. In Finance, key processes in Financial Assessments for Adult Services had been automated and a new AI-enabled telephony platform had been introduced. Revenue and Benefits were developing key automations, with a new resident portal in progress.

Members also heard that in the Place directorate, Waste Services were undergoing a systems review and Parking Services and Repairs Service had moved to an AI telephony platform. In Adult Social Care & Health, an Electronic Medication Administration Record system was being introduced and the Families Information Service had moved to an AI telephony platform. In Children Services, the Fostering and SEND websites were being updated, and the Stronger Families Service had also moved to an AI telephony platform.

The Committee commended the initiative offering laptops to vulnerable residents and noted that alternative advertisement methods, such as through libraries, to reach digitally excluded individuals would be explored. The initiative initially involved staff nominations of users, as the Council was cautious about advertising widely to avoid overwhelming demand.

In terms of identifying all of the Council's data sources and system, it was explained that officers had identified all data sources and systems through an information governance board, emphasising the importance of data security and informed decision-making, especially with the rise of AI. Continuous efforts were being made to improve data governance and usage. It was noted that the Council aimed to consolidate over 100 telephony platforms into a single AI platform to improve resident experience and prioritise calls from vulnerable residents. There was also a transition from Cisco telephony to integrating telephony within Microsoft Teams.

Officers acknowledged the need to support residents who preferred non-digital methods and there was investment being undertaken in improving both digital and non-digital services. There were also checks in place to prevent duplicate records and efforts to manually cleanse data, with AI tools being used to improve data accuracy.

The importance of feedback mechanisms for improving services, particularly in housing, and the need for a balance between digital and paper-based processes were emphasised. The importance of feedback was acknowledged with plans to include more feedback into new ways of working. The ongoing efforts to revamp the website and improve digital processes were highlighted, with a focus on testing and regularly updating processes to ensure they met all user needs.

	In terms of AI, the Council's efforts to integrate AI and other digital tools to enhance services and improve efficiency were noted. The use of AI bots and chatbots to handle customer interactions, translate messages into different languages and support Members in their work was highlighted. The importance of user feedback and testing, particularly from less digitally savvy individuals, to ensure the effectiveness of digital transformation initiatives was noted. Members also heard that the Council's investment in Microsoft Copilot to assist staff in managing tasks and improving productivity was providing to be helpful for staff productivity. The Committee thanked officers for the comprehensive presentation. **RESVOLED: That the update on Digital Transformation be noted.** **RESVOLED: That the update on Digital Transformation be noted.**
53.	**SCOPING REPORT ON MAJOR REVIEW: MAXIMISING COUNCIL SPACES: A REVIEW OF BUSINESS AND PRIVATE HIRE OPPORTUNITIES** *(Agenda Item 6)* The Committee considered the scoping report and discussed creating an asset register that would include information on rooms, halls and offices available for letting, differentiating between commercial and individual users. Members emphasised the importance of exploring third party opportunities and involving local businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations in the review process. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to identify best practice from other local authorities to improve systems. The importance of leveraging existing booking systems and gathering user feedback to improve the asset register was highlighted. It was hoped that the review would map out current assets and make them more accessible to different resident groups. The Committee approved the scoping report so that the investigation stage could be initiated. **RESOLVED: That the scoping report be agreed and the review be initiated.**
54.	**CABINET FORWARD PLAN** *(Agenda Item 7)* **RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**
55.	**WORK PROGRAMME** *(Agenda Item 8)* The Committee agreed to add an information item on the right to buy backs to the work programme and noted that there was a plan to bring a performance update to all select committees later this year. **RESOLVED: That the updates to the work programme be noted and agreed.**
56.	**CYBER SECURITY UPDATE - PART II** *(Agenda Item 9)* *This item was discussed as a Part II item without the press or public present as the information under discussion contained confidential or exempt information as defined*

by law in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. This was because it discussed 'information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime, e.g. proposed police action or planned trading standards investigation.' (paragraph 7 of the schedule to the Act).

The Head of Technology and Chief Operating Officer provided the Committee with insights into the current threat landscape and recent cyber incidents. The presentation highlighted various trends, including supply chain attacks, triple extortion, ransomware as a service, attacking unpatched systems, and phishing. Case studies were explored and how different organisations had been impacted by the attacks. Members heard about the need for improvement in specific areas and the importance of addressing cyber threats and enhancing cyber security culture in organisations.

RESOLVED: That the presentation on Cyber Security be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.13 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk or 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.