

MINUTES OF O&S COMMUNICATIONS TASK GROUP 21/09/16

Councillors in attendance: Cllr Davis (Chair of O&S); Cllr Capes (Chair of task group); Cllr Islam

Apologies: Cllrs Doran and Harman (Portfolio Holder)

Officers in attendance: Terry Collier (Deputy Chief Executive); Linda Norman (Group Head (Finance and Customer Relations)); Dawn Morrison (Communications and Licensing Manager)

Key objectives:

- Evaluate the type and content of **internal** communications available for councillors and officers
- Gain an understanding from councillors as to whether they have sufficient factual information to help their constituents
- Develop a process where councillors can quickly access information on key topics **and any other recommendations as appropriate**

The minutes of each meeting should be produced in a timely fashion and cleared by the Chairman of the Group before being circulated.

Preliminary issues/aims identified:

- There are some instances of great work being done by Services which do not appear to have been communicated to ward members
- Consideration needs to be given to the communications implications of the joint committee and how information will be fed back to borough councillors
- Protocols are in place for projects to be communicated to stakeholders, including ward members, but these are not always being followed
- In addition to projects, all matters of potential interest to residents should be communicated to ward councillors or all councillors as appropriate
- Cllrs don't always know to whom they should direct a question so would like a list of contacts, guides, URLs as appropriate
- Cllrs aren't always aware of the various sources of information available to them, so would like a better understanding of those and how to access them
- Actions to include conducting a survey of ward councillors about how they receive internal communications and to gauge perceived weaknesses in current channels, leading to awareness raising and identification of training needs
- Protocols are needed to establish what information staff should give to councillors and when, and what information staff cannot give councillors, and why (such as data protection)
- The aim of the Group would be to examine the status quo as a "critical friend"

Project risk

The project risk was identified as "low".

Timeline

The Task Group is to meet monthly, preferably on a Monday. It was estimated that two meetings would be required to assimilate information with a further meeting to agree the terms of the report, to complete by end of January 2017.

Gill Hobbs (Committee Services) to arrange dates and times for future meetings.

If the timelines are not met, or if there is an inappropriate delay, then the lead member of the Task Group shall escalate to the Chairman of O&S.

Budget

A small budget may be required for modest essentials.

External expertise

Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council

Internal expertise

Cllr Harman, Task Group members

Communications Strategy

Cllr Capes commented that the Communications Strategy was excellent and there are currently no plans to make any changes, although it might be appropriate to alter the Strategy or the Communications Service Plan to take account of any suggestions or recommendations that are made by the Task Group.

Next steps and date of next meeting: TBA