Questions to Executive Members

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 8 November 2022

Agenda item 5 - Data Protection Policy To: Cllr Cutting, Executive Member for Corporate Services	
Q:1 Does the council have any protocols in place to ensure/check that officers who work from home have a secure environment with respect to Data Protection, notwithstanding the requirements detailed in Section 27, giving responsibility to the employees? When an employee does not have the capacity to work in a secure environment, is there facility for them to work full-time in the office? From: Cllr Wilson	Q1. Following the introduction of agile working arrangements there have been no data breaches related to working from home and the risk remains low and so officers will have the responsibility for ensuring a secure environment at home in line with this policy. However, should future data breaches be related to home working, additional protocols may be considered.
Q2. What plans are there to train/refresh members about their obligations with respect to Data Protection? From: Cllr Wilson	Q2. A data protection training video has been prepared and this, along with other training videos, will be incorporated into Member Induction 2023.
Q3. How often are members of staff to be trained/given refresher training about the principles of Data Protection? From: Cllr Wilson	Q3. All staff must take annual data protection e-learning as part of the PDR process. Additionally, bespoke training is developed and run by the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager in relation to new policies, learning

	from data breaches, or changing legislation. <u>Additional Information</u> Over the last year, Four sessions were run to cover the Access to information, Data Retention and Data Breach Policies and 124 staff members attended. Five sessions were to run to cover more in-depth data breach training and 179 staff members attended.
Q4. How many internally reported data breaches have there been at the council over the last 12 months? From: Cllr Wilson	Q4. There have been 20 reported data breaches over the last 12 months. <u>Additional Information</u> Urgent actions are implemented as soon as possible with learning being shared more widely through regular data protection best practice updates on the staff intranet. This is supported by 6 monthly reporting of all breaches to Leadership Team and Audit and Governance Committee.
Q5. Councillors should be included in the Policy Introduction. Given the constraints on Members' other	Q5. Councillors will be added to the policy introduction and throughout wherever responsibilities are noted. Key

roles (i.e. some are working full time), Members should be informed of what the key aspects are. Could Officers explain how these key facts could be addressed and what level of training is appropriate for Councillors? From: Cllr Kemp	requirements of this policy have been included in the member data protection video.
Q6. There are other external trainers which can deliver quick succinct training, have Officers explored different training options? From: Cllr Drake	Q6. Not at this time as the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager develops and delivers training. This ensures a cost-efficient approach to the specific training requirements of the Council. Additional Information However, external trainers may be considered if training requirements go beyond the scope of data protection and information governance.

Agenda item 6 - Surveillance Technologies Policy –

No Questions

Agenda item 7 – Development Management Update

To: Cllr Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Q.1 The Planning Officers have done a tremendous job under great pressure for the last	

couple of years under the increased workload. It's good to see the plans to speed things up by streamlining non-controversial applications and assigning a task force to the backlog. However, could these measures have been identified and implemented earlier? Q2. Could we have an indication / breakdown of the number of planning officers normally engaged in (a) general planning applications (household and business), (b) Gilston, (c) other major sites in the District Plan, (d) enforcement, and (e) any other planning operations? Q3. For (b) and (c), what tasks are involved over the period when a planning application hasn't yet been submitted, and are there any opportunities for temporary redeployment to ease pressure elsewhere? From: Cllr Kemp	
Q. Can the Council lobby Central Government to seek support to manage large scale	

applications such as Gilston, including for appropriate grants to employ sufficient staff? From: Cllr Goldspink	
Agenda Item 8 Digital Communications Update To: Cllr Cutting, Executive Member for Corporate Services	
Q1. Does the council have any plans to do paid adverts on Facebook or on any other forum? From: Cllr Wilson	Q1. The council runs paid adverts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, most often on a campaign-specific basis rather than for day-to-day service-related information. Examples include the promotion of the East Herts Healthy Hub services, Covid-19 vaccination clinics and energy efficiency grant schemes. This month, coinciding with National Enterprise Week, we have plans to promote the Launchpad2 support for businesses using social media advertising.
Q2. Does the council send out informative posts, advising what our functions and responsibilities are compared to other tiers of local government? From: Cllr Wilson	Q2. Thank you for the suggestion. We are not currently posting this information, but I am aware that the council's communications manager created an informative 'who does what' graphic for this purpose at a previous authority. We will update this to ensure it is relevant for East Herts and

	schedule as part of our content plan going forwards.
Q3. What is the overarching aim of our digital engagement strategy? Is it primarily to educate or to get more people to interact with us in a digital way or is there a further aim? From: Cllr Wilson	Q3. We don't have a specific digital engagement strategy as such, however the Corporate Plan does have a theme called "digital by default" which outlines our objectives in three areas: firstly an inward focusing objective to deliver the Transforming East Herts programme which is very much about getting our processes to be as efficient as possible. Secondly an outward looking objective to encourage more residents to self-serve on the website and lastly a collaborative objective around working with partners to ensure communities are digitally enabled. There are specific examples of projects and activities under each in the corporate plan document itself but to give you a feel under the first objective officers are currently reviewing our telephony requirements with a view to procuring a new system next year. I know that has been an issue close to Members hearts for some time so that is something I'm fully behind. On the second objective we launched a trial of a chat bot on our website last year to help

	customers get to the right content on our website. And for the third objective some of you may be aware of the Digital Inclusion Project which has been run by the CDA in some of our rural areas to build confidence amongst older or isolated individuals with the use of smartphones and tablets.
Q4. Can we redesign the reception area to give it a "user friendly" approach and make it more welcoming and so encourage digital interaction? From: Cllr Rutland-Barsby	Q4. I would certainly welcome any specific feedback or ideas about how to make the reception areas more user friendly and welcoming. We haven't invested a great deal of money in this area for a while however have made some changes to the reception in Hertford for example by moving the reception desk back which allows customers to go straight to a computer before speaking to a member of staff. Having observed the reception areas a few weeks ago for a few hours however I get the impression most people who come in do so because they want to speak to somebody. If Councillor Rutland-Barsby wants to join me one day however in the reception area I'm certainly happy to discuss how we could do this.

Q5. Can we re-open the reception area more than one day a week?	Q5. It is of course possible to do this however for now our priority is tackling the call answer rate. If we were to open for more days that would severely impact our response times which are struggling as many Members will know. I'm pleased to say we are seeing some improvement thanks to recruiting of new staff which the October call answer rate at just shy of 70% which is still not amazing but better than some previous months. I want to carry on this trajectory before looking again at opening hours.
Q6. In terms of the usage of our website, how do we compare with other Councils such as North Herts, Welwyn, Broxbourne and St Albans?	Q6. So far in 2022, our average page views per quarter is 686,598 – doubling what they were the year before. Other councils do not routinely publish their statistics, so I have asked the teams to gather what they can from neighbouring authorities. If agreeable, I will circulate this via email to the committee as soon as it's received.
Q7. What progress is being made to sign up the community to emails? From: Cllr Snowdon	Q7. We're making good progress in signing residents up to our weekly newsletter, Network, and you'll see that the report sets out our current growth rate of 13%. Sign-ups are promoted through the website and via email and the team is working on a refresh

	of the design to improve how the content is presented. Sign-up is also highlighted on social media as a way for residents to make sure they do not miss important local news that affects them, and a focused campaign is planned for 2023 to boost this even further.
Agenda item 9 – Draft Work Programme	
Q. Air Quality Management Plan – is it being followed, is it fit for purpose, is our website advertising the issue sufficiently for our residents? Are we fulfilling our statutory duty to deal appropriately with AQMA areas? From Cllr Wilson	Members supported the suggestion for the following approach: • 17 January 2023 – proposed items should remain as is. • Delivery of Strategic sites be deferred to the new civic year; • Air Quality Management plan (opposite) be added to the Work Programme for 21 March 2023. • Parking Standards – planning Officers to provide an update on when this will be reported

Copies to: Executive Members: Cllrs Cutting and Goodeve,

Richard Cassidy, James Ellis, Katie Mogan, Sara Saunders, and Ben Wood