

Report Title:	Resident Scrutiny Suggestion – RBWM App
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Meeting and Date:	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Monday 29 th November 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	David Cook, Scrutiny Officer Daniel Brookman, Head of Transformation
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

The report outlines a suggested topic submitted by a resident for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Topics can be suggested by residents and then considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration (criteria outlined in paragraph 1.1.) Residents are able to access the criteria on the [council's website](#).

Details of the resident who has submitted this topic have been anonymised.

The suggested topic received as follows: “An app, to allow more effective communication between the borough and the residents. It would let the borough tell people (and keep telling them) about the things they need to be told. It would allow residents to have a ready place to turn when they want to report something or ask a question. There is a free app (see localgov.co.uk) which can be customised, but a better idea might be to create a spec for the app and open a competition for bright developers to create it. It would save money (reduce print) but more importantly it would improve communications.”

It is recommended that this topic is considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel and a ‘discovery’ session is undertaken within the next six months to enable a full specification to be costed.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- 1. Welcomes the suggestion made for such an app which could form part of the council’s suite of communication tools.**
- 2. Notes that a ‘discovery’ session within the next six months to capture user stories from both residents and other interested parties to enable a full specification to be costed, with the outcome of the session reported back to the Panel in June 2022.**

2. CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT FOR SUGGESTED TOPICS RECEIVED BY RESIDENTS

2.1 Residents should only submit topics that relate to a **service, event or issue** which affects the social, environmental or economic wellbeing of a group or community of people in the Borough.

2.2 What makes a good scrutiny topic?

- **Scope** – is it an issue of concern to our local communities and other associated organisations?
- **Significance** – could a review of this issue improve the Council's (or other organisations) processes or performance and make a positive difference to the lives of our residents?
- **Appropriate** – is this review timely and does it avoid duplicating other work?

2.3 Items that will not be considered include:

- Individual service complaints for which there is a corporate complaints procedure (please click [here](#) for more details).
- Topics outside of the remit of the council or where the council has no powers or influence to change an outcome.
- Issues which scrutiny has considered in the last 12 months.
- Areas relating to quasi-judicial functions e.g. planning, licensing and standards.

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED TOPIC

3.1 Ensuring a timely and quality flow of information and feedback between the council and residents in the borough is important. Although such an app has not previously been suggested, it is recommended that a 'discovery' phase is run, to include all interested parties, in order to capture the relevant requirements in order to develop a potential specification.

3.2 As such an app has the potential to make a significant difference to residents' understanding of what is happening in the borough, it is proposed to run the 'discovery' phase within the next six months. Production of a detailed, costed specification will enable decisions to be made about any future procurement.

3.3 The council is committed to digital as part of its transformation strategy and undertaking the 'discovery' phase will not duplicate other work currently underway. It is likely to determine areas that could be prioritised for delivery either through an app or through enhancements to the existing council website.

4. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Hilary Hall	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing	24/08/20	22/10/21
Simon Arthur	Strategic Lead – Information Technology Services	24/08/20	26/08/20
Daniel Brookman	Head of Transformation	19/04/21	22/10/21

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For consideration under the Panel's work programme	No	No

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