

Cabinet Decision Call-in

Date of call-in:	26 th July 2022
Call-in item:	Customer Services Improvement Plan and Website development
Reason/details of call-in:	<p>We are requesting a call in of decision on item C2 from the meeting of the cabinet on July 19th 2022. The reason's for this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst it is noted that the improvements to the website were part of the Digital Strategy the report highlights a large percentage of residents who responded to the recent survey were happy with the Council website. - The report fails to set out how smaller improvements could be made and the costs associated with these. - Whilst £80,000 was set aside in the capital allocation this should not be viewed as a target. The projected spend of £77,800 doesn't account for the officer time involved in the website work. - The report highlights no 'rolling news' however fails to highlight the additional council website www.Rossendalenews.org.uk or set out how this domain will function moving forwards. - We feel that the justification for sticking to the original plan is weak and this will cause more disruption for residents who have been supported to understand the existing site infrastructure to carry out functions and that this will be changed and lead to more time supporting residents to adapt to the new site. <p>As such we are requesting that this decision is called in for further review.</p> <p>Additional clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relevant policy is the digital strategy. The strategies vision states 'Rossendale Borough Council will put the customer at the heart of its services and utilise technology to improve the lives of residents and the efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services.'. This item seeks to procure a new website in line with the strategy which will have a different look and feel to the existing. The recent residents survey being used to support the justification actually showed more people accessing digital first and the majority of customers were happy with the existing site. Therefore if the item was following the digital strategy vision of putting the customer at the heart we would have expected alternatives to have been explored which would have seen less wholesale change of the infrastructure as customers are clearly increasing engagement digitally and are satisfied with the current provision. Items and rationale such as 'rolling news service' already feature on other council run sites and ideas for their integration are not referenced - something which would resolve some of the concerns. - Whilst it is accepted that the development of a website is agreed within the budget for this year at £80,000 there is no reference to other costs for smaller options or other providers. Equally the report seeks to establish rolling news articles etc onto the council site whilst failing to acknowledge how this is already provided and any costs linked to the maintenance or upgrade of this website to support integration. As such given the amount £77,800 is so close to the total budget of £80,000 we're concerned that there is not enough head room to resolve issues like this - similarly there is no contingency referenced should there be challenges along the way. As such it is felt that the cost is simply too close to the overall budget.

Called-in by	Councillor
1.	David Foxcroft
2.	Alan Woods
3.	Peter Steen
Validated by the Monitoring Officer:	29 th July 2022
Monitoring Officer comments:	The Monitoring Officer does not agree that this is contrary to budget as it clearly falls within the approved budget agreed by Full Council in February, however the Monitoring Officer is prepared to validate the call-in on the basis that this could be viewed by some to be potentially at conflict with the policy referred to.

The committee needs to determine if the decision of Cabinet is in accordance with policy and the budget and explain the reasons for their decision.

If the committee determines it is, the committee needs to give their reasons and no further action is required and the decision will come into immediate effect and there can be no further call-in regarding this item.

If the committee determines it isn't in accordance with policy and/or the budget, the committee needs to give their reasons and refer the matter with their comments to either of the following:

- Back to the Cabinet to consider the committee's comments and to re-consider the decision (within 10 working days).
- To a Full Council meeting for all members to consider the item and make a decision.

The following matters are exempt from call-in.

- i. Where decisions involve expenditure or reductions in service only those over a value of £25,000 per annum may be called-in.
- ii. The procedure will not apply to decisions on individual planning or licensing applications.
- iii. Call-ins should only apply to decisions which are considered to be contrary to policy or not in accordance with the budget.
- iv. Decisions which are deemed to be urgent by a Cabinet and a resolution passed to that effect.
- v. Decisions determined by the various Appeals Panels which deal with personnel matters (e.g. grievances, disciplinary matters, re-gradings and other matters relating to employment terms and conditions).
- vi. Any deferred decisions.