



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

A652

Cabinet 28 April 2010

Recommendations from Shared Services Steering Group: 29 March 2010 (May10/10)

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Griffiths Vice Chairman of Group: Cllr David Ray

**1. Partnership Organisation Development Programme
(Exempt Report A611)**

RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the Partnership Organisational Development Programme, outlined in Appendix 1 to Report A611 be approved;***
- (2) an estimated budget of £20,000 to roll-out the Programme be approved; and***
- (3) following the holding of the 'Visioning to Blueprint Workshop', as outlined in the first item of Appendix 1 to Report A611, a robust project management structure be developed to support the roll-out of the Programme and that this be presented to a future meeting of the Steering Group.***

For the Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) shared service agenda to be successful, a clarity of purpose and a clear sense of direction is required from senior managers and Councillors to ensure enthusiasm and commitment from staff at all levels within both Councils. A Partnership Organisational Development Programme, will support the Councils' partnership agenda to effectively deliver the shared services programme. A budget of £20,000 is required to roll-out the Development Programme.

In order to achieve tangible outcomes and deliver the ambitious shared service agenda in the timescales identified, it is essential that as part of the Development Programme:-

- (a) a joint vision and destination for the programme is agreed;**
- (b) the values which are required from staff and Councillors to successfully deliver the programme need to be identified;**
- (c) robust project management arrangements are required to be implemented; and**
- (d) clear and consistent communication across both organisations with a single voice is required.**

The Steering Group supported the Development Programme and acknowledged that it is imperative that the vision and strategy be initially developed to ensure the shared services agenda is progressing in the right direction. The use of external facilitators to bring best practice to the programme should also be encouraged.

2. Partnership People Management Protocol (Exempt Report A612)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the Partnership People Management Protocol, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report A612, be approved.

Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) are operating under a preferred Partner Status Agreement which means that the development and subsequent management of the practical arrangements for the joint workforce are required. A Partnership People Management Protocol, has been designed to provide a framework for the sensible interpretation and management of Human Resource (HR) issues that will inevitably arise throughout the transition to new partnering arrangements whilst retaining separate 'home' employers.

The Protocol has been developed by the Heads of HR from both authorities. Key features of the Protocol include:-

- (a) shared HR system and exchange of information;
- (b) sharing resources and integrated structures;
- (c) joint communications to staff;
- (d) joint forum for consultation with Unison;
- (e) Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE) will not be applied, as employees will remain with their 'home' authority;
- (f) harmony for terms and conditions wherever practicable and affordable;
- (g) joint Workforce Planning, including vacancy management and learning and development; and
- (h) joint procurement of HR service providers.

3. Communications

RECOMMENDED:-

That the internal communication proposals detailed in Section 4 of Report A613 be approved.

Both authorities' Communication Units are developing a shared branding to be used for all shared service internal communications. This branding will help provide an overall cohesion to the project and will be used for internal newsletters and briefings, including the provision of a shared intranet. Sally Rodé, FHDC's Communications Manager, tabled details of the proposed shared intranet which had been entitled GOLD. GOLD is an acronym of:-

- (a) Goals : outcomes, such as maintaining or improving services;
- (b) Openness : transparency in decision making, staff and Councillor honesty;
- (c) Learning : learning from colleagues and Members of both councils; and
- (d) Dividend : more for less, reduced pressure on Council Tax levels.

Members noted that the GOLD intranet, will be a useful tool for all staff and Members to keep track of the programme's progress. It will include reports and minutes of the Shared Services Steering Group and from other Committees or decision making bodies, together with joint protocols, templates, shared events and common information which many services may regularly require.

The Steering Group also noted a number of other communication methods to communicate the Shared Services agenda and these were contained in Section 4.5 of the report.

4. Information and Communication Technology Service

RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the approach and vision detailed in Section 3.4 of Report A614 be supported;***
- (2) the use of funds in the region of £30,000 divided between the two authorities, to employ an expert to support the officers in producing a full business case leading to the implementation of a shared Information and Communication Technology (ICT) service be approved; and***
- (3) the single team to facilitate the convergence of user ICT systems within service areas as individual cases are constructed be moved forward.***

The vision for a shared Information and Communication Technology (ICT) service requires defined parameters and it is recognised that over time, the mechanics of service delivery may change but the vision must be sufficiently robust to continue to underpin the shared service arrangements as they evolve. Broad statements of intent need to be refined into the shared vision and these are likely to include:-

- (a) in the medium term timescale, the operation of the ICT services for both Councils should be provided through a single team headed up by a single manager reporting to both Councils through the Heads of Finance (until such a time that there will be only one Head of Finance);
- (b) the single team will serve the two sites and include a presence at both sites covering all working hours. Specialist analysts will be available across the locations to accommodate service user needs; and
- (c) moving forward the single team will facilitate convergence of user ICT systems within service areas as individual business cases are constructed.

Emanating from this vision requires the identification of aspirations to build a robust business case constructed on the needs of the business and its service to customer delivery, including developing an Action Plan with deliverable outcomes. In order to progress these shared services for ICT, a raft of data collection and analysis is required to be undertaken by both Councils jointly sharing details of their costs, systems, staffing, and other data.

The Steering Group noted from the report that the cost to employ an expert to support officers in producing a full business case would cost approximately £30,000 to be divided between the two authorities. During the discussion at the meeting, Members considered the allocation of £30,000 appeared inflated for the production of a business case. In response, the Steering Group was informed that the allocation will enable the progression of the joint service following the initial compilation of the business case and that it is important to procure the relevant expertise to ensure the work proceeded in the right direction. Members, therefore, considered the recommendation contained in the report should be amended to reflect that the allocation was not only for the production of the business case but would lead to the implementation of the shared service.