



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

C416

Cabinet 28 March 2012

Recommendations from the Shared Services Steering Group: 24 February 2012 (Apr12/04)

Cabinet Member:
Cllr John Griffiths

Chairman of the Steering Group:
Cllr David Ray

1. Planning Shared Service: Timeline and Process (Report SSG12/007)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the Planning Shared Service timeline and consultative process, as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 to Report SSG12/007, be approved.

The Planning Service is the first of Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) large frontline services to proceed through the shared service review.

Given that planning is such a politically sensitive subject with a high level of Member engagement, it is recommended, that when staff are briefed on the proposals, an informal briefing is also given to both FHDC and SEBC Planning/ Development Control Committee Members and Substitutes. These Members will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and these views would be taken into account when finalising the Business Case.

Consideration of the Business Case will proceed to the Shared Services Board and Steering Group before seeking final approval from the respective decision-making bodies.

A detailed breakdown of the process and timeline were shown in Appendices 1 and 2 to Report SSG12/007, which provides an indicative timeline from Business Case approval through to implementation.

2. Environmental Health and Housing Shared Service Business Cases (Report SSG12/008)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the production of first business cases for each Environmental Health and Housing Service, outlining the transitional structures and early savings ahead of full transformational change, as detailed in Report SSSG12/008, be supported.

Environmental Health and Housing Services have been working closely together on their progress towards shared services, whilst maintaining their identities as two separate services. Draft Business Cases have been produced that include a description of the current service and the themes for transformational change that have emerged from the Ignite workshops. Both services are now in a position to finalise a transitional service and structure which will deliver savings, but it is considered more appropriate for the transformational phase to be deferred and progressed alongside other services as part of the customer access work.

The Shared Services Steering Group recommends that each service completes a first Business Case outlining transitional structures and early savings before moving towards a transformed structure.

3. Customer Access Project Update (Report SSG12/009)

RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the proposed Customer Access Model, as detailed in Appendix 3 to Report SSG12/009, to be used to underpin the development of a new joint Customer Access Strategy, be adopted;***
- (2) the Customer Access Project Group undertake the following work to inform the development of the Strategy:-***
 - (a) to commission a half day Ignite-run Customer Journey Workshop for Members from both Councils;***
 - (b) to explore best practice approaches adopted by other councils;***
 - (c) the proposed ICT solutions for the delivery of customer access across both Councils be presented to the Shared Services Steering Group in June 2012; and***
 - (d) to develop a Customer Access Strategy for consideration by the Shared Services Steering Group in April 2012.***

Each of the phase two services being developed for sharing (Planning, and Environmental Health and Housing) have raised similar issues regarding the improvement of access to information; increasing self-service; and improving/clarifying links between the existing customer service teams and the services themselves.

The Customer Access Project Group was established to identify a co-ordinated and consistent approach to customer access. Without a consistent approach, it is possible that services will develop their own model of customer access in a piecemeal fashion and not benefit from opportunities which would emerge from a shared Customer Access Model.

Following feedback received from the two authority's Planning, and Environmental Health and Housing Services; and the recently held joint Management Team Customer Access Workshop, it was concluded that four common service delivery principles should be adopted to improve the way customers can access the Councils' services. These were illustrated in the Customer Access Model contained in Appendix 3 to Report SSG12/009, and this model will assist the future development of a Customer Access Strategy.

4. Internal Audit Shared Services: Full Business Case (Report SSG12/010)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the full Business Case for a shared Internal Audit Service for Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, as contained in the Exempt Appendix to Report SSG12/010, be approved.

The full Business Case, attached as an Exempt Appendix to Report SSG12/010, for a shared Internal Audit Service contains one preferred option which will create a single integrated Internal Audit Service covering both Councils. The expected on-going revenue savings arising from this shared service are £57,000 per annum.

One team will operate under a single Internal Audit Manager, which will undertake a range of internal audit work at each authority. Internal Audit staff would work at both main Council sites to provide continuous cover when possible, and all staff would build up experience of working at both sites.

If approved, a single team should be in place within the first quarter of 2012/2013.

5. Shared Property Service: Review of Business Case (Report SSG12/011)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the establishment of a shared Property Service Team between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, as detailed in the full Business Case (Exempt Appendix 1 to Report SSG12/011) and reviewed as detailed in the Summary of History and Changes (Exempt Appendix 2); Proposed 2011/2012 Costs and Savings (January 2012, Version 2) - Exempt Appendix 3) and a revised Staffing Structure (Exempt Appendix 4), be approved.

The Property Services teams at both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have recently reviewed the Business Case for a shared Property Service that was previously approved by the Cabinet on 27 April 2011 (minute 150(b)(3) refers). The Business Case was delayed due to the review of the Memorandum of Understanding that was undertaken during 2011.

The full Business Case was attached as Exempt Appendix 1 to Report SSG12/011, with the revisions to it as a result of the review set out in the Summary of History and Changes at Exempt Appendix 2.

The preferred option contained in the Business Case is to:-

- (1) create a single Property Services team serving both authorities;
- (2) create a new shared property data base to enable effective and efficient management of the property portfolios; and
- (3) develop an Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan.

The on-going revenue savings arising from a shared Property Service are expected to be approximately £290,000 over the four-year period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which will equate to an annual saving of around £75,000 for the partnership. The review has resulted in revised financial savings and these were detailed in the Proposed 2011/2012 Cost and Savings (January 2012 Version 2) report attached as Exempt Appendix 3.

Also as a consequence of the review, a revised Staffing Structure has been developed, as detailed in Exempt Appendix 4.