



Cabinet 23 May 2012

Recommendations from the Shared Services Steering Group: 20 April 2012 (Jun12/01)

Cabinet Member:
Cllr John Griffiths

Vice Chairman of the Steering Group:
Cllr David Ray

1. Customer Access Strategy (Report SSG12/014)

RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the draft Customer Access Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to Report No SSG12/014, be endorsed;**
- (2) in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Steering Group, the Strategic Director (Resources) (FHDC) and the Corporate Director (Community Services) (SEBC) be authorised to:-**
 - (a) amend the draft Strategy, as required, to reflect the outcomes of an equality impact assessment and any feedback received at the forthcoming Customer Access Workshop for Councillors from both Councils; and then**
 - (b) submit a final draft of the Strategy to their respective Cabinets and full Councils for approval at the earliest opportunity.**

A draft Customer Access Strategy was attached as Appendix 1 to Report SSG12/014, and this was considered in detail by the Steering Group. The Strategy sets out a basic and flexible model for customer service, which will inform the design of future shared services between St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC), as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of customer access for service users and tax payers.

On 28 March 2012, the Cabinet approved a new Customer Access Model, which was to be used to underpin the development of the draft Strategy (Cabinet minute 103 (c) refers). It was then developed with staff and stakeholders through understanding the current experience of both Councils' customers, and to identify transformational ways in which this can be improved as part of the implementation of shared services between the two Councils.

Further work is still required to develop and refine the Strategy before it can be submitted for formal approval in the next few months. Such amendments will incorporate the outcomes of an Equality Impact Assessment and any feedback received at the forthcoming Customer Access Workshop for Councillors of both authorities.

2. Planning Shared Service (Report SSG12/017X)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the outline Planning Shared Service Business Case, as detailed in Exempt Report SSG12/017X, be approved to enable informal consultation with staff and Planning and Development Control Members to be undertaken.

The Planning Service is the first of Forest Heath District Council's (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 had previously been agreed, that when staff are briefed on the proposals, an informal briefing is also given to both FHDC and SEBC Planning/Development Control Committee Members/Substitutes (Cabinet minute 103 (a) refers). These Members will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and these views will be taken into account when finalising the Business Case, which will be presented to the Shared Services Steering Group in June 2012.

The report and accompanying presentation was provided to the Steering Group to give an opportunity to comment on the proposals before the wider briefings detailed above take place. They both highlighted the key issues that will be covered in depth in the final Business Case.

3. Environmental Health Shared Service: Transitional Business Case (Report SSG12/015)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the transitional structure for the Environmental Health Shared Service, as detailed in the Business Case (Exempt Appendix 1 to Report SSG12/015), be supported.

On 28 March 2012, the Cabinet resolved that a first business case outlining transitional structures and early savings ahead of the full transformational change should be completed (minute 103 ((b) refers).

Attached as Exempt Appendix 1 to Report SSG12/015 is the transitional Business Case which outlines the transformational model that can be achieved through a corporate approach to customer access. The transitional Business Case shows that the existing Environmental Health teams at both authorities are structured similarly and can be brought together with a joint management structure. This initial integration of the staffing structures could

be introduced at the earliest opportunity and result in the required budget savings in 2012/2013.

Transforming the services will take longer but should result in further savings from 2013/2014 onwards. The Business Case identifies the opportunities for transforming the service, and the way the service should operate in the future. However, it will be difficult to make this level of change and improvement in isolation from other departments of the Councils because of interdependencies between services. In addition, there are likely to be more opportunities for savings through a corporate customer access approach.

The transitional proposal is expected to produce savings of approximately £120,000 per annum for both authorities. There will be a £65,000 one-off revenue cost required to realise the savings, and a £5,000 annual ongoing revenue cost for a joint online regulatory information system.

4. Housing Shared Service: Transitional Business Case (Report SSG12/016)

RECOMMENDED:-

That the transitional structure for the Housing Shared Service, as detailed in the Business Case (Exempt Appendix 1 to Report No SSG12/016), be supported.

On 28 March 2012, the Cabinet resolved that the Housing Service completes a first Business Case outlining transitional structures and early savings before moving towards a transformed structure (minute 103 (b) refers).

Attached as Exempt Appendix 1 to SSG12/016 is the transitional Business Case, which also outlined the transformational mode that can be achieved through a corporate approach to customer access. The transitional Business Case shows that the two Housing teams can be brought together as they are structured very similarly and operate the same IT systems. This initial change in staffing structures could be introduced at an early opportunity and result in the required budget savings in 2012/2013.

Transforming the service will take longer but should result in further savings from 2013/2014 onwards. The Business Case identifies the opportunities for transforming the service and the way the service should operate in the future. However, it will be difficult to make this level of change and improvement in isolation from other departments of the Councils because of interdependencies between services. In addition, there are likely to be more opportunities for savings through a corporate customer access approach.

The transitional proposal is expected to result in savings of approximately £56,000 per annum for both authorities. There will be no further costs required to realise this saving.