



Council 14 December 2010

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr David Ray, Performance & Organisational Development Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Democratic Services;
- Health & Safety;
- Human Resources (including workforce development plan);
- Legal Services;
- Organisational Development;
- Work style programme;
- Staff learning and development;
- Member development and training;
- Performance management;
- Consultation;
- Council Improvement Plan;
- Risk management;
- Communications;
- Diversity;
- Customer services and access;
- Transformational Government/Electronic Government;
- Systems review and business change;
- Partnership working/service integration;
- Democratic renewal.

1. *Policy and Performance*

- 1.1 The Policy and Performance Teams at the Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) are exploring ways of working together to save money and to improve the services they deliver. The Teams are in phase one of the shared services project and are working on developing future options for service delivery and a business case.
- 1.2 Whilst the options and business case are being developed, the Teams are already working collaboratively. For example, a member of the Borough Council's Policy Team divides her time between both authorities. The Borough Council has also started to use the same performance management software as FHDC. This work will support the sharing of other services in the future.
- 1.3 The Government's recent announcement relating to the abolition of National Indicators means that we now have the opportunity to determine which performance indicators we want to measure and report. The Government has indicated that it will replace the National Indicators with a list of data it expects local government to report. Further details are awaited. In the meantime, officers are liaising with colleagues in FHDC and across the county, to identify appropriate performance measures. These will be discussed with Members in due course, with a new set of performance indicators in place by April 2011.

2. Communications

2.1 The Communications Team is currently involved in a number of projects and activities, including:-

- (a) supporting the Borough-wide master planning process, with particular emphasis on the public engagement;
- (b) leading the communications work stream for the shared services programme with FHDC. This supports communications across all the services involved;
- (c) as part of the first phase of the shared services process, working with colleagues in FHDC to create a West Suffolk Communications Team;
- (d) leading the communications work stream for the project to join our Revenues and Benefits service to the Anglia Revenues Partnership;
- (e) facilitating '*Communicate Suffolk*', the countywide group of cross-sector communications officers;
- (f) supporting development of the Go Rwanda! website; and
- (g) marketing plans for parks, including better web pages.

2.2 The winter edition of Community Spirit also had a new feature, shared pages with Forest Heath News. There are eight out of the 16 pages shared, including advertising. Topics covered, because they are relevant to residents across West Suffolk, include the 'Be a councillor campaign', Census information, weather-related advice, and Christmas/leisure activities. More shared pages are planned for the spring edition of both magazines.

3. Member Development

3.1 Member Development Charter

- (a) Members will be aware that the re-assessment took place on 27 October 2010, with a number of Members being interviewed by the Inspectors. Unfortunately, I have to report that the Inspectors felt unable to re-issue the Charter at this point.
- (b) Whilst they were impressed at the amount of development offered to Members across the Council in a number of ways, they felt that as only 14 Members completed the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) this year, with similar numbers being seen in previous years, and very few Members actually attend the training offered, there is not sufficient engagement of a high enough number of Members in development activities to qualify for the Charter.
- (c) The Inspectors have suggested that, following next May's elections, and following the induction period, we run the TNA again, perhaps sitting down with any Members who need more help to complete them and putting together individual development plans for those Members who would like this. If the Inspectors see a 60% to 70% return on this Analysis, they will be happy to award us the Charter.
- (d) The Inspectors will send a full detailed report on their findings within one month of the date of the assessment, and this will be analysed by the Democratic Renewal Working Party as soon as possible following receipt, and will put together an action plan to respond to the points raised. Some more detail on the strengths and weaknesses identified by the

Inspectors and made known to officers at the end of the inspection day are set out in Report B320 to the Democratic Renewal Working Party meeting of 25 November 2010.

3.2 **Member Development Programme 2010/2011**

- (a) The Member Development Programme for 2010/2011 has been circulated previously, but as a reminder, sessions for the remainder of the year are as follows:-

13 December 2010 : Influencing and negotiating skills.
(plus "working with officers" add-on)
25 January 2011 : IT Security Policy, Word Level 2 and Outlook Level 2.
15 February 2011 : Handling challenging situations and people.

- (b) Sessions set for March and April 2011 have been deferred as they were felt to be too close to the run-up to the Borough Council Elections, and will be run after May as part of the 2011/2012 development programme.
- (c) Once again I would like to take this opportunity to remind Members that should you attend any training outside of the programme outlined above, for example conferences or more specialised training, this needs to be recorded, so please let the Scrutiny Manager know if you attend such training.
- (d) The Charter Inspectors also noted that Members should be sharing the learning from external training, perhaps through short feedback reports in the Members' Bulletin and sharing of paperwork/slides, and this is one of the actions which the Democratic Renewal Working Party will be looking at in due course. Again, if you refer to Report B320 you will see the range of development activities attended by Members so far this year, and I am sure there are many more examples we could add to this list.
- (e) Sadly, the last two training opportunities have had to be cancelled due to the very low number of Members booked to attend. These were the sessions on Neighbourhood Development and Community Engagement on 28 October, and on Community Safety on 23 November. These were important new areas for the Member Development Programme and I find it extremely disappointing that more Members were not able to support them, for whatever reason, especially bearing in mind their relevance to the development of our community leadership roles.

4. **Human Resources and Health and Safety**

- 4.1 The Human Resource Teams at the Borough Council and FHDC continue to work collaboratively across the two authorities sharing Human Resources (HR) Management and integrating the Team's work through the HR partners and administration as appropriate.
- 4.2 Two key HR policies have been agreed for harmonisation by the two authorities, these are Sickness Absence and Ill Health, and Disciplinary and Incapability.
- 4.3 Further work is underway to develop policy harmonisation around the management of the wider workforce to support the development of shared services, this includes comparison work on employment roles and the pay lines.
- 4.4 Payroll is in phase one of the shared service programme and both Councils are working on future options for service delivery and a business case.
- 4.5 A key focus continues to be the proactive and effective management of absence. This has resulted in a drop across both Councils in sickness absence. The number of days lost at

the Borough Council over the 12 months to end October 2010 is 7.21 days per employee, the lowest it has been since recording started in 2000/2001.

- 4.6 The two Health and Safety Officers across the partnership have also been working together to harmonise policies, this work is ongoing.

5. Shared services

- 5.1 Work on sharing services across the boundaries of FHDC and the Borough Council continues with regular monitoring of progress by the joint Project Board and Shared Services Steering Group (SSSG).

- 5.2 At the last SSSG meeting, Members considered a Project Update, Memorandum of Understanding, Shared Branding, the results of a Staff and Councillor Survey, plus an update on the Joint Waste and Street Scene Service.

5.3 Project update

The overall project is progressing well and is on target to present business cases for each of the phase one services between January and March 2011. The emphasis at this stage has been on the diagnostic phase, with phase one services consulting with stakeholders and building collaboration across each Council's service teams. A top level project report was presented to SSSG members, which confirmed the project is on track to achieve its overall objectives.

5.4 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

This sets out the background to the shared services project, and what is expected from the process. A formal, but not legally binding, document, a MoU helps to create clarity by setting out the reasons why each partner is involved and their expectations. The MoU provides a backbone to the shared services process and will help to create a shared understanding between Councillors and staff at both Councils.

5.5 Shared branding

Where services are joining up they will begin to use a common style of presentation (branding) which helps to make clear to the public who is delivering their services. There is no additional cost to this process as the branding will be introduced when new equipment or materials are bought through the usual procedures. The branding recognises the individual identities of each Council but also acknowledges we are working across West Suffolk.

5.6 Staff and councillor survey

Staff and Councillors at both Councils were surveyed to establish how well informed they were about shared services, how they would like to receive information in the future, and how they felt about the process. The survey, which will be repeated at the end of next year, showed the majority of respondents felt well-informed and wanted communications in electronic and face-to-face formats. A monthly programme of updates will start in January 2011.

5.7 Waste and Street Scene Service

FHDC and the Borough Council provide a domestic kerbside recycling and refuse collection service (six million bins a year) to a combined population of over 166,000 people in more than 78,000 households. The Joint Waste Committee oversees this partnership work and SSSG members received a report on progress which was originally presented to the Joint Committee. This included savings achieved so far and the success of the bin round reorganisation.

5.8 **Anglia Revenues Partnership**

The staff consultation process has been progressing very well and in accordance with the timetable, with over 80 individual meetings having been completed across the Borough Council and FHDC. It is the ambition to populate to the new Anglia Revenues Partnership structure during early December 2010 and for all staff to have a confirmed outcome before Christmas.

6. **Human Resources and Learning and Development Service**

- 6.1 An interim arrangement for Learning and Development has been in place since July 2010. The service is provided across FHDC and the Borough Council by a team of three officers. A Learning and Development Manager, Learning and Development Advisor (secondment position) and Learning and Development Apprentice (one year placement). There is also a Unison Learning Representative who is responsible for Life Long Learning and basic skills and presently works in the team two days a week until March 2011.
- 6.2 The service is also in phase one of the Shared Service Programme. Options and a business case are being developed and the views of stakeholders are being sought at present through focus groups and questionnaires. Further work with the interim team to explore and format options will take place in December 2010. The options report is due to go to the Project Board in January 2011, with a full business case completed by March 2011.
- 6.3 The Learning and Development Service is also a work stream for Shared Services and the team is identifying processes, documentation and policies which will be reviewed, updated and shared across both authorities to help support other services in the programme.
- 6.4 The work stream has identified training and development initiatives/interventions which are specific to support employees during the Shared Service programme. The programme of support is varied and is for all employees whether in a Shared Service phase or just working more collaboratively across authorities. It includes skills, knowledge and support to assist employees through change. There are specific topics to support employees who may be required to apply for new positions within or external to the authority. It supports the Human Resources work stream with short information training on revised policies and practices which are being introduced across both authorities to support service. There will be a programme of coaching offered to managers who become responsible for managing new mixed teams once a service business case is approved, new structures are in place and the service is in the transition stage.