



Council 1 March 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

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

Portfolio includes:

- Democratic Services;
- Health and 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
- Shared Services

1. Policy and Performance

- 1.1 The Policy and Performance Teams at St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) continue to explore opportunities for sharing services. An options report is being prepared and will be considered by the Shared Services Steering Group in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, the two teams continue to work closely, for example, a member of the Borough Council's team divides her time between the two authorities and focuses on integrating a shared performance management system.
- 1.2 The Policy Team is also supporting other services to deliver shared services through its involvement in the Policy, Performance and Customer Access Workstream.

2. Communications

- 2.1 The Communications Team is currently involved in a number of projects and activities, including:-
- (a) working with FHDC on sharing costs of both Councils' corporate publications;
 - (b) supporting the Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and rural masterplanning communications, including through the website and events;
 - (c) looking at cost-effective ways of improving the website;

- (d) drafting a marketing toolkit to help services save costs;
- (e) continuing communications support for Revenues and Benefits staff as they move to the Anglia Revenue Partnership;
- (f) working in partnership to provide internal and external communications about the shared services process; and
- (g) looking at how a shared West Suffolk Communications team could operate.

3. Member Development

3.1 Member Development Charter

3.1.1 Following my report to you at the last Council meeting of the loss of the Council's Member Development Charter, we have now received the full report from South East Employers, and this was discussed by the Democratic Renewal Working Party on 17 February 2011.

3.1.2 Three priority areas for improvement were set out:-

- (a) a requirement for at least 60% of Members to complete a Training Needs Analysis by 30 September 2011;
- (b) the adoption of a training programme based on the results of that analysis as well as the Council's and national priorities; and
- (c) co-ordination of all training through the Democratic Renewal Working Party.

3.1.3 A number of other suggested areas for improvement were also recommended by the inspectors, and the Democratic Renewal Working Party are recommending an Action Plan, to be approved by Council at this meeting, to initially address the three priority areas, following which we are confident we shall be re-awarded Charter status later this year.

3.2 Member Induction Programme and Development Programme 2011/2012

3.2.1 Also discussed by the Democratic Renewal Working Party was a programme of development sessions for new and re-elected Members for the three month period following the Borough Council elections, May to July 2011. Details of the induction programme are being put together in a brochure to be sent out to prospective Councillors with nomination papers, and this will soon be available.

3.2.2 As stated above, the remainder of the Member Development Programme for 2011/2012 will then be set following a Training Needs Analysis to be completed by all Members following the Borough Council elections.

4. Transformational Government/Electronic Government

4.1 We have recently gone live with a new online e-petitions facility. This enables people who live, work or study in St Edmundsbury to petition the Council electronically via a new Petitions Scheme page on the Council's website. Supporters of a petition are able to sign the petition electronically and the whole process is carefully governed and controlled according to the rules set out in the Borough Council's Petition Scheme, which is contained in Part 4, Rules of Procedure, in the Council's Constitution.

4.2 This facility meets the statutory requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

5. *Human Resources and Health and Safety*

5.1 The Human Resource (HR) Teams at SEBC 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.

5.2 HR procedures agreed through the work of the HR Policy and Protocols Workstream (Shared Services) are the Supplementary Guidance on Organisation Change and Redundancy, and the Drugs and Alcohol Testing Procedure. These procedures are produced to support the existing policies.

5.3 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 with a view to making recommendations for adoption from April 2012.

5.4 Payroll is in phase one of the shared service programme and both Councils are working on both future options for service delivery, and a business case.

5.5 Sickness Absence continues to fall, with the total days lost over the 12 months to the end December 2010 being 7.29 per employee at SEBC. In addition, management supported by the HR Team has been working hard on reducing the days lost in Waste Operations at FHDC, which has now fallen from 22 days per employee in that service to 16. This is a significant success and reflects the value that the shared HR Service is providing.

5.6 Health and Safety Officers across the partnership have also been working together to harmonise policies: this work is on going. The Health and Safety Manager at FHDC has recently resigned and so we will be looking at the opportunity this provides to share the service.

6. *Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP)*

6.1 All posts in the new staff structure at ARP are now filled. Following a robust selection process based on assessment of skills, performance, attendance and employment records, all the Borough Council's employees were successful in obtaining posts in the structure. This is an outstanding result for the Borough Council and reflects the effective management and employment practices that have taken place. Work continues to support team development and the redeployment of staff to Breckland House, Thetford.

6.2 This large restructuring exercise (involving over 150 people, four Councils and three employers) has been challenging but has provided key learning for future restructuring and development of shared services. Feedback from Unison, staff, managers and the ARP Project Board has been extremely positive.

7. *Learning and Development Service*

7.1 The interim arrangements for sharing the Learning and Development service across the two authorities remains.

7.2 The full business case for a Shared Learning and Development service is due to go to the Project Board and then the Steering Group in March 2011.

- 7.3 Learning and Development interventions in support of the Shared Services programme are continuing. Training events have been held since December 2010. These include Handling Change and CV Writing. A familiarisation event which was a half day visit from one authority to another included presentations from senior managers, update on the shared service project and a tour of the buildings. This was to encourage employees to gain a better understanding of the other authority and proved useful to the 32 employees who visited across the two. Feedback will be gathered on the events in order to inform any changes or other support required before offering them again as the Shared Service programme moves into the next phase.
- 7.4 Further work with the HR workstream will establish interventions and support for those who are at risk, and embed new policies and processes as they are adopted across both authorities.
- 7.5 Basic skills continue to be offered to all employees. A new programme has recently started for numeracy. The Borough Council and UNISON Lifelong Learning Initiative has been put forward for an Adult Learners' Week Award.

8. Shared services

8.1 Work on sharing services across FHDC and SEBC continues with regular monitoring of progress by the joint office Project Board and Shared Service Steering Group (SSSG).

8.2 The last meeting of the SSSG considered the following items:-

(a) **ICT business case**

The full business case for a shared ICT service across both Councils was recommended for approval to both Councils. The Cabinet has given approval, and an implementation plan will be now put in place to establish a single shared service staffing structure by August 2011.

(b) **Protocol for sharing costs and benefits**

A protocol for determining the most appropriate model for sharing costs and benefits for each shared service was also approved by Cabinet on 16 February 2011. An audit of the existing sharing of resources in the transitional phase before full service integration was received and deemed to be broadly balanced across the two Councils. This will continue to be monitored.

(c) **Project update**

An update on project activity for the period ending December 2010 was received. This indicated that the project was progressing well and that the business cases for all phase one services would be presented to the SSSG for decision by mid April 2011. There is now a need to move forward and decide what the priorities will be for the next phase of the project. Proposals are currently being developed for consideration by the SSSG at its meeting on 4 March 2011.

(d) **Communications update**

A monthly newsletter is now issued to help keep staff and Councillors informed about the shared services programme. Arrangements are also in hand to hold joint briefings for Councillors at SEBC and FHDC to update them on current progress and future plans for the shared services programme.