



Council 28 June 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. Equality and Diversity

- 1.1 The Diversity Group has recently revised the Equality Scheme, which will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny on 6 July 2011, and the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance. The revisions take into account the changes to the Equality Act, which were announced by the Government in March 2011. Attention to these issues gives a clear message to staff and Councillors that we are serious about customer service for all our customers and will adapt services to their needs.

2. Performance Management

- 2.1 The introduction and embedding of the Covalent Performance Management system is now complete with all service areas using the system for inputting data for their Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). These are reported to the Management Team and to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The first report was run for Quarter Four 2010/2011 and the Policy Team is currently uploading new targets and thresholds for 2011/2012 and producing the Quarter One report for the beginning of July 2011.

- 2.2 Covalent is a shared resource in partnership with Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and the benefits of working together on the system are already becoming apparent as the services work together to agree performance measures across both authorities.
- 2.3 Covalent has many applications and some service areas are currently considering the use of the following:-
- (a) Complaints and Compliments (Feedback) module as part of shared services with FHDC; and
 - (b) Risk Management module.

3. Communications

- 3.1 During the past few weeks the Communications Unit has:-
- (a) supported the election process by putting information on to the website promptly and helping with the Members' events;
 - (b) continued support for Vision 2031 consultation, including publicising weekly themes through Twitter to supplement traditional communications routes;
 - (c) improved sections of the website, including major changes to the Parks section;
 - (d) made website changes to reflect new arrangements, such as highways webpages following transfer to the County Council, and the Anglia Revenues Partnership;
 - (e) worked with Borough Council and FHDC colleagues to develop the business case for a shared West Suffolk Communications Team, ready for consideration by Councillors in July 2011;
 - (f) updated the shared GOLD intranet, including new questions and answers, and joint policies;
 - (g) worked with those involved in developing the Haverhill 'mini public service village' in Lower Downs Slade to ensure all stakeholders are informed of progress; and
 - (h) carried out the day-to-day communications functions.

4. Member Development

4.1 Member Development Charter

- 4.1.1 The Democratic Renewal Working Party met on 9 June 2011 and received an update on the 8-item Action Plan to address both the three priority areas recommended by the Charter Assessors, plus five other areas which the Working Party feels will add value to the Council's Member Development offer.
- 4.1.2 The Working Party also recommended a revised Member Development Policy for approval, and started monitoring the budget for Member Development, two of the actions in the Action Plan.
- 4.1.3 Towards the end of June 2011 all Members will be sent a Training Needs Analysis form which will enable them to assess their own skill level under a range of topics. We need a 60 to 70% return of these forms to re-achieve Charter status, and Members will be given 1-1 assistance to complete the forms if they so require. Members' responses will then be used to set a Member Development Programme for the remainder of 2011/2012.

4.2 Member Induction Programme

4.2.1 The programme of development sessions for new and re-elected Members for the three month period following the Borough Council elections is well underway, with sessions having been held on Development Control, Standards and Ethics, Scrutiny, the Constitution, Shared Services and Diversity. The initial welcome sessions on 10 May 2011 were a great success, with 37 Members attending either of the two sessions, including all 12 new Members.

4.2.2 The remainder of the induction programme is as follows, and I would ask you to advise officers of the sessions you wish to attend, if you have not already done so, as this helps greatly in planning the sessions.

4.2.3

Session	Date
Local Government Finance	Wednesday 29 June
Introduction to Licensing	Monday 4 July
Audit and Treasury Management (P&AS Committee Members only)	Tuesday 12 July
Choice Based Lettings/Strategic Housing	Monday 18 July
Planning – the basics –what a Ward Member needs to know	Tuesday 26 July

4.2.4 As stated above, the remainder of the Member Development Programme for 2011/2012 will be set following completion of the Training Needs Analysis form by Members during July 2011.

5. Shared Services Update

5.1 Since my last report in April 2011 work has continued to complete all of the phase one business cases. The business cases for ICT, Property Services, Learning and Development and a shared Payroll/Human Resources System have all been approved by the Borough Council. These will be considered by Forest Heath District Council at its June 2011 meeting, after which it is hoped that we can move forward to implement single shared services in all of these areas during 2011/2012.

5.2 Business cases for Policy and Performance and Communications are currently being finalised for consideration at future Shared Services Steering Group meetings.

5.3 We have begun work on phase two services and are now preparing business cases for Planning and Building Control, Environmental Health, Housing, Licensing Services and Homelessness, with a target date for completion by the end of September 2011.

5.4 This programme continues to form an important part of our savings agenda and will also help us to build resilience in the services provided to our communities.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 As part of the continuing development of the Council's health, safety and wellbeing strategy Eyecare International will deliver a free service outlined below (between 14 to 27 June 2011) to all Borough Council, FHDC, Anglia Revenues Partnership and Abbeycroft Leisure employees, and Suffolk County Council employees who work at West Suffolk House.

6.2 The free service provides an eye test, which takes on average 20 minutes. Employees who need glasses will need a little longer to select from a range of lenses and frames from an extensive in-clinic range.

- 6.3 95% of all glasses will be delivered within six working days.
- 6.4 There is no obligation to purchase glasses from Eyecare International. Employees are free to go to any 'high street' optician with the Eyecare prescription.
- 6.5 Whilst individual patient confidentiality is maintained at all times, the Council will receive a full Eyecare report of the process including for example, the overall percentages of take-up, need and conditions found on site.
- 6.6 There will be no monetary cost to the Council: normally Eyecare International would charge £20.00 for an appointment that is missed, but this charge has now been waived.

7. Learning and Development

- 7.1 The Council has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement from the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, (NIACE) in recognition of the Council's commitment to learning. This is following other recognition received by the Council for the ongoing support offered to adult and life-long learning.
- 7.2 The Shared Service programme of events to support services and employees ran from October 2010 to April 2011. Evaluation is taking place now and it is intended to repeat the programme of events from September 2011 to support phase two services. A specific part of the ongoing programme is to support employees who are at risk or who have been given notice of redundancy as a result of shared services restructuring. The programme will support these staff to improve their skills and knowledge to apply for and secure employment outside of the Council. The programme will be run across the Borough Council and FHDC and is supported by external funding.

8. Human Resources

- 8.1 Human Resources (HR) is supporting the development of the shared service business cases whilst in a transitional shared structure themselves.
- 8.2 Sickness absence is still very low in comparison to national data, at 6.6 days per employee. Focus remains on reducing absence at FHDC, and completing its local savings agenda.
- 8.3 HR has been supporting the transition and relocation of staff into the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

9. Transformational Government/Electronic Government

- 9.1 We are continuing to add to the online transactions available from our website, and since April 2011 customers have been able to apply and pay for pay-and-display car park season tickets online.
- 9.2 We have also brought the online job application process back in-house after using an external agency for this service for some years. This measure has reduced costs and provided us greater control and efficiency to the process. We expect to also provide this facility for FHDC over the coming few weeks as a further cost saving and service sharing initiative.