

Committee: COUNCIL

Agenda Item

Date: December 12, 2006

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Title: UTTLESFORD IN 2011

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510400

Item for
decision

Summary

The paper sets out an ambitious approach to service and performance improvement for Uttlesford District Council between now and 2011. This involves a programme of service transformation, an organisational restructure and commits the council to the goal of becoming the pre-eminent small district council in England by 2011.

Recommendations

1. That the council note and endorse the proposed approach and the organisational restructure that it entails.
2. That further report(s) be brought forward at the February 2007 council meeting setting out cost implications more fully (within the context of the 2007-8 council budget) and laying out a more detailed picture of the proposed programme of projects to achieve the transformation.

Background Papers

The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

- Previous council and committee reports on budgets, structure and project management
- The recently published white paper on local government
- The council's corporate plan and best value performance plan
- Various audit reports from our external auditors, notably the 2005-6 Annual Audit Letter.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	An early draft of this report was circulated to all staff and to all councillors for comments. A response to all comments received has been circulated to all staff and councillors – including those from Unison and from the council's middle management group, the Joint Management Team (JMT). Further consultation will be necessary on the
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	detailed proposals for organisational structure and for the elements of the transformation project as they are developed.
Community Safety	None specifically, but more effective partnership working will be an aim of the proposed programme of changes.
Equalities	The council's equality and diversity scheme is under review as part of the current corporate plan. The structural changes will be taken forward in accordance with the best practice in this field and the proposed changes to working practices will be subject to an equalities impact assessment.
Finance	The cost assumptions underpinning this report are set out in the report. Fully detailed costings will be brought forward as part of the 2007-8 budget setting.
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	The proposals in this report will impact on the work practices of the whole organisation and might result in a significant numbers of managerial and staffing changes. These will be assessed and consulted upon as appropriate.

Background

1. In 2004 the Council agreed the introduction of a new management structure based on a management team of eleven Executive Managers and a Chief Executive. It was also understood that this was a transitional structure and the Chief Executive was instructed to reduce the number of Executive Managers to eight over time.
2. The departure of the Executive Manager (Human Resources) at the end of October 2006 meant that this target figure had been reached. However, it is clear that the Council needs to review both its operations and its management if it is to continue to improve over the coming years, respond to the opportunities in the forthcoming Local Government Bill and if it is to be able to address the local challenges of the next council term of office.
3. This report sets out a new management structure for the Council and an ambitious programme of change to Council operations. Our ambition should be to position Uttlesford so that it is widely recognised to be the pre-eminent small District Council in England. There is still much detailed work to be done: this report concentrates on painting a picture of the future organisation – and it sets out a programme by which the transformation of the Council will be achieved.
4. Some early steps have already been taken:
 - There has been a series of meetings with staff and Members to share the vision that is developing;
 - Redundancy/retirement packages have been agreed with three Executive Managers to enable a rapid, but smooth transition to the new structure at a senior level;
 - A new approach to the development (and assessment) of middle managers (JMT) has been agreed;
 - An interim HR advisor has been appointed and she has been supporting Members and the Chief Executive in developing these proposals, including support to the Chief Officers' Pay Review Task Group.

Situation

5. The Council is well into the final year of its four-year term.
6. Much has been achieved: by the time we have completed this year's Corporate Plan, we will have:
 - Gone live with the introduction of integrated customer management;
 - Introduced a completely new recycling strategy across the whole district;
 - Established and begun to embed a new approach to performance management;

- Addressed several areas of identified weakness in response to the needs of the organisation and its regulatory framework;
 - Continued to deliver excellent services to our customers in many areas, as exemplified by 44% of the council's performance indicators being in the top 25% of English councils' performance.
7. However, there are several areas where development has not been as rapid as hoped, and several where new challenges have to be addressed:
- Uttlesford District Council is still not as effective as it should be in promoting the interests of the district in county, regional, or wider forums.
 - Staff and member development continues to be inconsistent
 - While there has been significant progress on achieving better communication and consultation there is still significant potential for development.
 - The recent local government white paper raised further questions about the balance of responsibilities between the tiers of councils and the use of shared services and partnership working. This means that the council must be able to engage effectively to achieve the best outcomes for the district.
8. There are also some issues which are specific to Uttlesford District Council which need to be addressed:
- While staff are highly committed to their role and to delivering good service, the systems we have in place for delivering services and for recognising performance are not effective in all areas.
 - Our information infrastructure remains fragile – despite recent improvements – and not always capable of providing robust and timely information to support management or Members in assessing performance and policy.
 - Not all team managers are capable – or willing – to perform the role that the organisation expects of them. Similarly, our HR systems are not always capable of properly recognising professional excellence.
 - The offices in London Road – while well located – are fast becoming unfit for purpose. Similarly, the Dunmow offices are extremely dated and are difficult and costly to maintain. Unless radical action is taken to avoid it, the 2007-11 Council will need to consider relocating out of the existing office facilities.
9. All of the above challenges need to be met in the context of a tightening financial position. This tightening is likely to accelerate following the next comprehensive spending review by central government.

Target

10. By 2011, Uttlesford District Council should be aiming to be setting an entirely new standard for excellence in service delivery and community leadership that is beyond anything yet achieved by any small English district.
11. This will be achieved through:
 - a new, more responsive – but smaller – management structure;
 - a radical re-engineering of service methods to make full use of mobile working, information and communication technology, customer relationship management and performance monitoring
 - a revised approach to recruitment, pay, development and promotion to ensure that staff and managers are equipped to respond effectively and enthusiastically to the challenge.
 - a significant improvement in the facilities, training and support available to Members to enable them to carry out their role as community leaders and representatives more effectively.
12. This is a package: all parts are dependent on the successful achievement of the others if they are to succeed. Each element is described in more detail in the report that follows.

Structure

13. The aim of the new structure is four-fold:
 - to ensure that senior management are able to focus more on the strategic positioning of the Council and the delivery of its overall objectives and less on day-to-day operation;
 - to enable operational management to have a clear and recognised set of powers and responsibilities to deliver the service for which they are responsible;
 - to align more clearly our management structure with the council's key purposes in order to ensure better delivery of our objectives;
 - to reduce the overall costs of the management structure.
14. It is proposed, therefore, to replace the current structure of nine executive managers, with one consisting of five directors and a number – to be determined – of heads of division. The key requirements for these two types of role are:

Directors

- Strategic leadership
- Overview of the whole organisation
- Dealing with external relationships and challenges
- Thinking ahead and leading change

- Political awareness

Heads of Division

- Service management
 - Customer focussed
 - Problem-solvers
 - Responsible for people, money and performance
 - Agents of change and improvement
15. Each director will be responsible for the strategic management of a group of services, and for working with members and staff to enable the delivery of one of the following five organisational purposes:
- To ensure that Uttlesford District Council has the necessary resources, in the short, medium and long term to fulfil its ambitions for the future of the organisation and the district.
 - To ensure that there is a clear and deliverable vision for the future of the district of Uttlesford and its communities, and that the decisions of the council are consistent with that vision.
 - To ensure that the services Uttlesford District Council provides are delivered efficiently, effectively and to standards that exceed our customers' highest expectations.
 - To ensure that the relationship between customers, citizens, communities and the Council are open and trusting, based on mutual understanding and respect.
 - To ensure that the programme of transformation is delivered such that Uttlesford's aim of setting new standards of excellence for small district councils in England is met.
16. The new structure will be headed by a Strategic Management Board consisting of the Chief Executive and five directors. The key service responsibilities of each director are set out in the following table. Over the next month further details of the precise shape of each director's role will be worked out. The next stage is a meeting of the directors-designate with the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive on December 8 which will set out the new structure in more detail. There will also be an Assistant Chief Executive who will report directly to the Chief Executive and will be the council's Monitoring Officer. The Assistant Chief Executive will not be a member of the Strategic Management Board, but will attend as necessary to provide the advice appropriate to their role.
17. Each of the remaining Executive Managers has agreed to take on one of these six roles, and therefore the postholders are named in the table below.

Director of Resources	Finance HR Property & Asset Management Revenues Administration Contract Management & Procurement Corporate Administration & Facilities	Phil O'Dell
Director of Development	Housing Strategy Planning Policy Development Control Economic Development Building Surveying	John Mitchell
Director of Operations	Waste Management Environmental services Public Health Housing Management Museum Parking and Concessionary Fares Day Centres	Diane Burrige
Director of Customer and Communications	Partnerships Performance Customer Centre Communications Member Support Community development and Area Panels	Tracy Turner
Director of Business Transformation	ICT Organisational Re-engineering	Mike Brean

Assistant Chief Executive	Legal services Land Charges Benefit Fraud Emergency Planning Licensing Risk Management Internal Audit	Michael Perry
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18. The number and responsibilities of Heads of Division will be developed by each director within an agreed cost envelope which reflects the need to deliver financial savings in the year 2007-08 and beyond. Further details of costings will be presented to members in council or committee, as appropriate, for their approval.

Appointment of Heads of Division

19. The selection of new Heads of Division will – in the first instance – be from among the existing cohort of middle managers within the Council. In order to be eligible for consideration, managers will need to show that they either have met or are prepared to undergo development to meet the assessed competencies for the relevant post. Development centres have been arranged to enable the assessment of competencies to be undertaken in as objective a way as possible. This work must be underpinned by an extremely robust identification of the competencies which apply to managerial posts in general and to the specific roles which will be available.
20. Where there is only one eligible manager for a Head of Division role, they will be 'slotted' into the post. Where more than one manager is interested and eligible for the role then a selection process will take place. Timescales for this process are still to be determined but the aim is to have the new structure in place by 31 March 2007.
21. It is anticipated that managers who do not transfer to Heads of Division role will be absorbed into the appropriate part of the Council structure. Should any redundancies arise – whether proposed by staff themselves or by management – the costs of such an exercise will need to be borne within existing budgets or have an identifiable short payback period. We will also need to be confident that our approach is fair and unbiased and that issues of equalities and discrimination are fully accounted for.
22. Once the Heads of Division are in place, it is anticipated that they will meet regularly as a group to ensure that across the board operational issues are being addressed. This grouping will be convened by the Assistant Chief Executive.

Setting new standards

23. In order to meet our aim of setting a new standard of excellence, the intention is to establish a clear programme of work under the leadership of a designated director, with simultaneous work on a number of themes which impact on all parts of the organisation. The director in charge of the project will be the Director of Business Transformation.

Scope

24. The next stage of work is to engage members and staff in the design of the full scope of the project and to develop a clear project programme which brings all strands of work together. Some of the key elements of the project are set out below. The key areas in which we need to change and improve our current practices include:

- Human Resources
- Sustainability
- Customer and citizen understanding and engagement
- Member support and development
- Use of technology
- The building
- Shared services

25. There are, of course, other areas where improvement is necessary – our approach to governance, accountability and performance review is one example. These issues will not – and cannot – be ignored. The expectation will be that a more active process of addressing the kinds of issues set out above will create the capacity and creativity to ensure that other necessary improvements can also be delivered.

Human Resource Management

26. The council needs to adopt a more explicit and coherent approach to the management and development of its personnel. The specifics of the necessary programme of change will be designed by the council's Interim HR advisor but will include some or all of the following elements and more.
 - The adoption of career grades throughout the council to facilitate progression and succession planning
 - The placing of a clear expectation on managers at all levels of the organisation that they will support and ensure the development of their subordinates to advance further within their organisation.
 - An increased presumption that vacancies should – in the first instance – be filled from within the organisation, with selection based on clear and agreed criteria to ensure fairness and equity.

- The development of an internal development programme which supports professional excellence, organisational tools, management and leadership – including where appropriate access to externally validated qualifications – and tied to career progression and reward strategies.
 - Linking that internal development programme to a training needs analysis which arises from the corporate objectives of the council. Development of individuals to deliver their full potential needs to go hand in hand with effective skills improvement to ensure that those individuals are contributing to their maximum potential to the overall development of the council.
 - Support for staff with child or other caring responsibilities to enable staff retention and more flexible working
 - Review of rewards and benefits, particularly for delivering major projects and for recognition of outstanding personal achievement, as well as considering the full range of benefits available to make UDC an attractive prospect to prospective employees.
 - Development of a flexible pool of administrators that can carry out core functions and tasks in any service throughout the council
 - An expectation that for career progression, managers and administrators will develop experience in more than one discipline and/or in project management.
 - Deal with capacity issues around new corporate wide initiatives that the council continually faces (e.g. equality representation, business continuity and emergency planning) which are vital to the overall operation of the council but not central to the role of any single department or division.
 - The regular recruitment of generic trainees to ensure the constant infusion of new blood – at all entry levels – into the organisation. The programme to include provision for the trainees to be guaranteed council employment – if necessary in a supernumerary role – on completion of the training programme.
27. It should be emphasised that this approach does not assume that development and progression available to staff and to management exists only within the vertical dimension. It may be that the obvious and best next opportunity for any individual is to take on a greater role within their current specialised function, but that is not necessarily the case. If people wish to progress within their profession then structures will be in place to enable them to do so (even if their professional function is divided between departments), but should opportunities arise for sideways or diagonal moves into other aspects of the council's operations, then the structured approach to development must also encourage such opportunities to be taken.

Use of technology

28. The potential of technology to achieve efficiencies, deliver improvements and reduce the administrative burden is immense, but we have not yet begun to fully realise those benefits. In order to begin to do so, we need to develop our approach in a number of ways, such as:
- Consider a key strategic supplier relationship for all IT systems
 - Review of all major systems as part of a comprehensive programme of replacement (e.g. Ocella and MSAM). Establish a clear business case for each proposed replacement system, including scalability to deliver shared services
 - Review IT staff support arrangements (24/7?) for remote and home workers to enable total flexible working (members and officers)
 - Consider corporate workflow to automate processes and to provide detailed analysis of transactional costs
 - Develop common, fully integrated infrastructures within the council and externally with government agencies and voluntary organisations to enable comprehensive sharing of information
 - Introduce new identity management solutions that enables the council to manage risk while providing trusted services (e.g. biometrics and national ID)
 - Overhaul of the financial management system and coding structures to drive devolved financial management throughout the whole council
 - Data warehouse (CRM) containing personal and socio economic information so that we truly know our customers, deliver more efficiently through customer segmentation and so that data (for example names and addresses of key partners) can be held once rather than in many places.
 - Effective off-site as well as on-site backup to ensure continued operation if systems fail.
 - Integration of proprietary systems with performance management system
 - Being willing to establish as an organisation 'one way' of doing certain common tasks to ensure the elimination of legacy systems at the earliest possible stage (e.g. diary management).
29. Taking all of the above as a whole, this amounts to a total review of the current operation of our information technology service. Some of the difficulties we have experienced in recent years have arisen due to the necessarily piecemeal approach to the development of our infrastructure. Integrated Customer Management has begun to put an end to that piecemeal approach and this will continue in the next phase of our transformation.

The building

30. The state of the current council estate is of concern. The office building in Great Dunmow is in need of significant investment if its future value to the council as a base in the town is to be secured. The presence in Thaxted is limited (and little used). There is no customer-accessible presence anywhere else in the district other than Saffron Walden.
31. The offices in Saffron Walden have served the council well in the decade and a half since we moved in, but if they are to be fit for purpose for another fifteen years, they will need significant reconfiguration. Indeed, it is possible that the true assessment of the position would be that the best interests of the council and the district as a whole would be served by seeking new accommodation and disposing of the London Road offices. The first stage of this work, therefore, would be to make an early assessment as to whether – taking account of modernised HR practice, the use of technology to support flexible working and the full potential of the use of the London Road offices – our current offices are capable of becoming fit for future purposes.
32. It is also the case that a number of the other buildings from which service is delivered (for example, Saffron Walden Museum) are in need of considerable updating if they are to meet our customers or visitors expectations – and indeed if they are to become attractive and productive environments in which to work.
33. In any case, the council should establish an early work programme to identify the risks and opportunities available in this arena. This work should include:
 - the establishment of an effective asset management strategy
 - a review of satellite office and customer accessible provision
 - development of robust disaster recovery and business continuity arrangements
 - greater collaboration with existing town and parish council facilities

Sustainability

34. Can Uttlesford District Council become the first carbon-neutral local authority in the UK? This would be a challenging target, and may not be achievable, but we should at least establish what it would take. Much good work has already taken place on this agenda, but we should accelerate our efforts in this respect to develop a strategy covering:
 - Awareness
 - Energy
 - Transport
 - Waste
 - Water conservation

- Procurement
 - Planning
35. Some of the more operational aspects of this strategy might include:
- As leaders of the community, proactively use energy saving techniques and incentives
 - Use the Local Authority Carbon Management programme for guidance and help on how to reduce carbon emissions
 - Increased use of renewable energy
 - Seek funding opportunities (e.g. Salix Finance, an independent company set up by the Carbon Trust)
 - Deliver effective green travel plans that significantly reduce our travel emissions
 - Introduce a local award scheme to recognise any developments that contribute to long-term sustainability
 - Aligning our overall objectives to promote sustainable working (for example more effective use of technology to reduce unnecessary travel and paper usage).

Shared services

36. The council should actively seek opportunities to promote the development of shared service provision: in the interests of efficiency, economy and effective service delivery. At this stage, it is unlikely that any fixed framework of partners will deliver benefits in all aspects and therefore it is proposed that a pragmatic, case by case approach should be taken rather than – for example – any automatic assumption that an Essex-wide approach will deliver benefits.
37. With that caveat however, there needs to be a presumption in favour of shared services if it can be demonstrated that:
- Quality will improve and/or costs will reduce
 - The opportunity exists for the appropriate customisation of service to suit the needs of Uttlesford communities.
38. With those basic principles in mind, the key elements of this workstream include:
- Development of a strategic approach to service delivery based on sound knowledge of our customers, their expectations, our performance and costs and the opportunities for improvement;
 - Greater service collaboration between the council and other public bodies;

- Ensure a business case is built around any proposed arrangement, including added service resilience;
- Develop shared service arrangements with those authorities best suited to each other's needs, not restricting our vision to any particular locality or sector
- Consider shared procurement for significant financial opportunities

Customer and citizen engagement

39. Much of what we deliver for our customers is excellent. But too often it is based on little knowledge of the needs or expectations of the recipients of the service, an inadequate understanding of the costs and performance of the service and a lack of awareness of the potential for changes to the way we work. Similarly, if the council's aspiration to be recognised as speaking powerfully for the interests of the community is to be realised, we need to enter into a much clearer and more productive dialogue with ordinary citizens and other stakeholders. A re-energised approach to customer and citizen engagement might encompass:

- Greater resident participation through effective consultation and engagement - ensure services are user not provider led
- Use of customer intelligence to inform future strategies and plans
- Use of customer segmentation to target hard to reach groups and ensure that the delivery mechanisms for services are effective and meet the needs of the community
- Use of management information to ensure we fully understand the costs and benefits of different ways of delivering services (face-to-face, telephone, online etc).
- Develop modern channels for all customers to access services

Member support and development

40. The council needs to ensure it is making full use of all the talent available to it: including the elected members. There is a clear need to improve – and increase – the support available to members to carry out and to develop their role. This support needs to include:

- A strong policy and research capability (not necessarily in-house) to support the council in developing its policies and strategies in terms of its existing functions and changing circumstances
- Increased support and resources to enable those in leading positions to operate effectively
- Full support for the scrutiny function to ensure its effective contribution to the council's development;

- Increased support and resources to enable individual councillors to work effectively in their own wards.
- Full recognition and support for the range of roles that councillors play : as chairs of task groups, or within their own political groups, for example.
- A more co-ordinated and effective programme of member development and training, whether for newly elected councillors, those in leadership roles or simple skills development in – for example – the chairing of meetings or the mysterious workings of local government finance. Members will be asked to consider the creation of individual development plans – similar to those we will be putting in place for staff – to ensure their increased effectiveness.

Finances

41. The council needs to have a sound financial strategy for the medium term. This must include a fully developed understanding of the range of possible financial futures, but also more concerted attempts to create opportunities to develop income streams – whether from capital investment, new service delivery or improved treasury management – in order to support the investment and improvement necessary to meet our aims.

Approach

42. Similarly, it is as crucial to identify how we intend to carry out this project as it is to be clear on what we intend to do. The approach will be one in which all those with a stake in the organisation - whether elected members, management, staff, customers or third parties - will be enabled to and will be expected to contribute their ideas and energy. Key elements of the approach are discussed below.

Communication

43. While some individuals will be fully involved in the development and delivery of particular strands of work, it will be vital that all are able to keep up to speed with what is happening, but also to have the opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions and to challenge or question what is being suggested. Therefore, we will look to:
 - Establish short life combined officer and member ‘think tanks’ to proactively seek ideas and suggestions on specific issues (perhaps addressing issues at a high level of intensity but over a short period of time – all day for two days, rather than two hours a month for eight months).
 - Consider a new approach based on intensive but extremely limited duration workshops to tackle a specific problem from start to finish within a period of hours rather than weeks.

- Proactively share and seek out best practice both within and outside the organisation: we must spend more time investigating the experiences and solutions already adopted in other places, and less reinventing the wheel or defending the status quo.
- Use the capabilities of modern technology to support an ongoing dialogue between those working on a project stream and those who are outside the core workgroup (whether members, officers or others).

Organisational Re-engineering

44. The organisational re-engineering team are well advanced on the second of four departmentally based reviews of our current practice. As this programme proceeds, it is clear that there are potential gains to be made in looking at common activities across service boundaries as well as within service structures. As the current programme reaches conclusion, or as our OR capacity increases, we will widen the scope of the programme to deal with cross-cutting issues such as document management, debt recovery, home/remote working practices.
45. It is also vital that the conclusions and proposals of OR projects, once agreed, are fully implemented so that both savings and improvements are effectively delivered. We will explore the potential benefits of a central implementation team as compared to individual services being responsible for their delivery.

Project management

46. The council has adopted an agreed project management methodology for both major and day to day projects. This methodology will continue to be used to ensure clear targets and accountability as well as effective monitoring of progress. All projects will need to be justified in their own terms but also will be tested on their capacity to advance the overall aim of the 2011 project, risk assessment and return on investment.
47. The whole approach needs to be summarised as 'getting on with it'. Too often in local government generally, and in Uttlesford in particular, initiatives and improvements are allowed to become stale as our search for perfection, or for ensuring every 'i' is dotted and every 't' crossed results in a failure to make any progress at all.

Costs

48. The changes to the managerial structure proposed in this report are not primarily designed to save money, yet they do have the additional advantage of doing so. The preliminary estimate of the annual saving to the General Fund based on latest assumptions is £130,000. The actual saving cannot be calculated until the senior officer pay review, the head of division structure and other possible staffing effects further down the managerial chain have been finalised. However, it is known that the change already made to the number of Executive Managers has taken annual costs totalling

approximately £209,000 out of the Council's budget. Part of this saving will benefit the Housing Revenue Account, although there will be changes to the time allocations of other managers which will offset this sum.

49. The one-off costs of the changes made so far were included in the report to the Operations Committee on 16 November 2006. There are as yet no plans to take steps during the restructuring which will increase this figure. It could be however as directors finalise their structures they will identify or be offered opportunities for increased efficiency and/or improved service delivery from the potential departure of staff. If these opportunities do arise each one will be dealt with on its merits with regard to the one-off and ongoing financial implications and within council policy and budgetary limits. Any such proposals will be dealt with in accordance with the council's policy and will apply the new pension regulations and the council's redundancy policy as recently agreed by Operations Committee.
50. All known costs associated with the proposed changes will be included in the figures which finalise the Council's budget during January and February 2007. Officers are aware of the difficult financial scenario for the Council and will be striving to at least achieve the estimated savings figure of £130,000 for the General Fund.
51. The only likely changes to pay costs during the current financial year 2006/07 are those associated with Directors assuming their roles on 1 January 2007 so that they can plan and implement the details of the restructure, as well as assume direct control of services from that date. The costs of this are likely to be less than £30,000 and affordable within overall pay budgets for the year.

Conclusions

52. This is a challenging agenda for change. It will require the full commitment of the whole organisation to be successfully delivered, but the confidence, competence and capability does exist to seize the chance to take the council into an entirely new phase of development. At this stage, other than the organisational restructuring and the commitment to the aim of pre-eminence, no specific proposals are being put forward for agreement. The timescales for the key stages are as follows:

December 8	Management awayday to finalise proposed departmental and divisional structure
December 12	Note new structure and agree process for allocation of new posts
December to February	Further discussions and development of project plan with a view to ...
February 15	... Council meeting to agree budget, medium term financial strategy and framework for the '2011 Project'
March 31	Final elements of new officer structure in place

May onwards

Delivery programme implemented and monitored

Risk Analysis

53. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the council is unable to address the challenges facing it between now and 2011	Medium	The likelihood is that service quality, while initially remaining high will suffer as staff become increasingly unable to 'patch' quality simply by increased effort	The approach set out in this report will encourage a wide range of staff and members to fully engage with the programme of change – thereby enabling the knowledge and approach necessary to be fully embedded within the culture and practice of UDC
That the attempt to address the challenges proves unsustainable or unsuccessful	Low	Initial enthusiasm gives way to disillusion, and drastic action becomes necessary as a result of unsustainable financial or operational circumstances	The proposals in this report are designed to anticipate the challenges that might arise and give an opportunity to the organisation to move to a more sustainable (in every sense) footing in advance of them reaching crisis point.
That the legislative or statutory framework in which the council operates changes in ways which frustrates the	Medium	Government might choose to change the legal framework in which we operate or even the structure of local government in England: depending on the extent of the	The approach set out continues the organisation's focus on service quality, but will boost our communications capability and enable us to ensure that – whatever the legal framework –

purposes of this report		change, it is possible that UDC's ambition could be frustrated as a result	the interests of Uttlesford communities are protected.
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