

Committee: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 15 NOVEMBER 2007

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Title: UTTLESFORD IN 2011 TRANSFORMATION
PROGRAMME – PROGRESS REPORT

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Item for information

Summary

1. This report gives an update on the progress of each of the Uttlesford in 2011 Transformation Programme work streams.

Recommendations

2. That the Committee: -
 - a. Notes and comments on the progress of the work streams; and

Background Papers

3. 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.
 - The report to council on 12 December 2006;
 - The report to council on 15 February 2007;
 - Previous Finance and Administration Committee reports on the transformation programme.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	See relevant paragraphs.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Finance	See relevant paragraphs.
Human Rights	None.
Legal implications	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	See relevant paragraphs.

Situation

Work stream 1 – Change management

4. The council's programme and project management toolkit is currently being revised and updated and will incorporate the change management toolkit. The revised toolkit will be trialled during phase III of the OR programme in development services directorate.

Work stream 2 – Member support and development

5. The personal development plans that were agreed at the drop-in sessions in July 2007 are being put into action as follows:-
 - To date, 7 out of the 12 members that required IT training have received it. There are around 4/5 courses only outstanding;
 - The 3 members who expressed an interest in the Leadership Academy programme have been informed of dates. However, none have committed to a date as yet;
 - EERA seminars have been offered on a regular basis via the Members Bulletins.
6. At the recent group leaders meeting, the chief executive discussed the possibility of producing personal development plans for the remainder of Members. It was agreed that they would have another opportunity to produce a plan during the next round of needs analysis/review in July 2008.

Work stream 3 – Organisational Re-engineering

7. The vacancies for an OR and Change Manager and OR Officer have been filled by Paula Evans and Victoria Borges respectively. They both started in their new positions on 8 October 2007 and the team is now up to its full complement of 2.4 FTE.
8. Phase III of the programme in development services directorate started on 5 November 2007 with the initial meeting to discuss the project initiation document (PID) with senior development services staff. Work is currently being carried out on data gathering for benchmarking purposes. The PID will shortly be available on the intranet.
9. The OR review of democratic services, corporate administration, mail room and SMB personal assistants is progressing well. The report and recommendations for this element the programme will be finished by the end of November 2007.
10. The council is in the process of changing the company that collects and sorts the outgoing post. The Postal DeRegulation Act opened up this area of the market to competition and a number of suppliers now compete for additional work. To enable comparison and fast track procurement the OGC (Office of Government Commerce) Buying Solutions has produced a Catalyst Framework Agreement. When potential suppliers were contacted it became apparent that there were only

two who covered the entire Uttlesford area, TNT and UKMail (part of BusinessPost). Cost comparisons and feedback from other councils demonstrated that TNT offered best value for money. A trial of the TNT offering is due to start week commencing 19 November and will last for approximately 3 weeks. At the end of this period, if the trial has been successful, the new system will go live. Cost savings are expected to be in the region of £25,000 per annum.

11. The review of printing services has also commenced and this is planned to be completed by the end of December 2007. This review will incorporate a full business case covering future service delivery options as follows: -

- Outsourcing to another local authority;
- Outsourcing to a private sector supplier;
- Shared service with another local authority.

12. A review of public conveniences is ongoing. We have met with Saffron Walden Town Council and the provider of the council's 'superloos'. Replies from each are awaited. Meetings are also planned with Felsted and Thaxted Parish Councils and Dunmow Town Council.

13. Discussions are taking place with the Regional Centre of Excellence (East) to find out whether the OR programme would attract funding from Building Capacity (East). The RCE (East) are supportive of our OR programme and how it is contributing to other corporate wide initiatives like the optimisation of the customer service centre and preparation for shared services. The aim would be for the council to receive financial support to develop our programme and for it to be a pilot for others in the East of England to learn from. The outcome of the bid for funding from April 2008 will not be known until the end of December 2007 at the earliest.

Work stream 4 – Human Resources

14. Work has started on producing a human resource strategy. This will underpin the council's corporate aims by acknowledging that to be a modern, efficient, organisation requires a highly skilled, well motivated and flexible workforce.

15. The council's Equalities Standard Working Group continues to review the stipulated actions required to achieve level 2 by December 2008. Details are being transferred onto Covalent to monitor progress of the actions. Most equality impact assessments have been completed and these will form part of the framework for work at level 2 and level 3. Work with focus groups is being developed especially in the area of people with disabilities. Human resources are currently establishing a working liaison with the new Migrant Community Development Officer. The Gender Equality Scheme is in the final draft stage and the draft Religion/Faith Equality Scheme is being prepared.

16. Progress is being made with the production of a council wide training and development plan as follows: -

- Human resources met with 48 managers and supervisors between July and September 2007;
- Approximately two hundred personal development plans were produced for staff;
- The main focus for development was the on-line 'Learning Pool' facility and on the job coaching and counselling;
- Priority areas for training courses were identified as supervisory skills, presentation skills, train the trainer skills, time management skills, financial budgeting and processes, customer care;
- A consultant has been appointed to deliver the training. The dates and outline of requirements for the first four of the above courses have been agreed and arrangements for implementation are progressing;
- 32 Learning Pool modules were allocated to 162 members of staff who were identified as having this need;
- Details have been reported to SMB and the budget reviewed. A number of issues will be dealt with as part of the feedback to all staff following the small staff sessions with directors.

17. Current practices for use of temporary and agency staff are being reviewed in line with SMB guidelines. The current strategic Essex HR partnership arrangement on advertising and temporary agency working is due for renewal in 2008. Tenders are currently being reviewed, for an enhanced holistic recruitment arrangement covering professional and non-professional recruitment, talent pool, temps and advertising where necessary.

Work stream 5 – Climate change

18. The Council's climate change strategy was formally launched at an event held at the London Road offices on 29 October 2007 attended by community groups, parish councils, neighbouring councils and external partners. Several stories on this have appeared in the local media. The launch was sponsored by the Energy Saving Trust, who are also financially supporting other parts of the strategy including a community conference and sustainability training for planners.

19. The meetings of the climate change working group are well attended and productive. Work on delivering the actions in the climate change strategy is progressing well, including work on planning policies, new sustainable affordable housing and updating and implementing a 'green' travel plan for the council.

20. Several carbon management projects have been undertaken. The first major project is a powerPerfector unit which will modulate and reduce the voltage of electricity used in the main office.

21. Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) Programme milestones have been met and the next task is to develop a draft strategic implementation plan (SIP), which will detail a programme of energy and carbon saving projects for the next four years. Jake Roos is working on this now.

22. No cost energy saving measures such as turning down thermostats have also been implemented. Further work need to be done to establish to exact saving

from these efforts, but at the London Road Office alone it has resulted in a 38% reduction in gas use and a £3,112 saving so far this year compared to budget.

23. The issue of climate change emerged as a top priority from the stakeholder workshop for the new Uttlesford Futures Sustainable Community Strategy. This lays the groundwork for adoption of a target of an 80% greenhouse gas reduction by 2050 by Uttlesford Futures, a key goal in the council's climate change strategy.
24. The council is in talks with Braintree District Council as they have indicated they intend to replicate our innovative planning condition for energy efficiency and domestic extensions. This will be the first replication but many other councils have also expressed an interest in doing so. Jake Roos gave a presentation on the condition to the LGA 'Countdown to Zero Carbon' conference and has submitted it as evidence to a parliamentary select committee investigation into existing buildings and climate change.

Work stream 6 – Council properties

25. A range of information has been gathered on capital and running costs for the council's offices and other non-housing property. Market valuations have also been obtained. Potential options for future property use have also been generated and these take into account the council's strategy for shared services. These are to be discussed at the chairs and directors meeting scheduled to take place on 12 November 2007. Discussions are also planned with the Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Police and Essex County Council to explore sharing property in appropriate cases.
26. There was some useful discussion on the future use of all the council's offices and depots at the Member workshop on 3 Nov 2007. Comments will be built into the initial options document, which will be discussed at the next chairs and directors meeting on 15 November 2007. It is expected that following this meeting, it will be possible to pursue a number of the options as a matter of urgency.
27. It is intended to present a separate report to the meeting of this committee on 31 January 2008 setting out the recommendations for the future use of the Great Dunmow Offices.

Work stream 7 – Information and communications technology

28. The IT Working Group at its meeting on 29 October 2007 agreed that the Ocella system should not be replaced at this moment in time. This would enable the council to fully explore possibilities for shared services along with planned systems convergence, meaning that in the longer term the council may not need to procure a replacement system.
29. Mobile and home working is being implemented in a phased manner and a small project team has been set up to take this forward. The first areas to be looked at are building surveying and housing. As well as providing greater flexible working arrangements for staff and increased productivity, this will also release office

space so that we can consider commercially letting accommodation within this building.

30. A new ordering system linked directly to the financial system will enable commitment accounting to take place for the first time. This will enable significantly better financial control and reporting. The project is due to go live in late February 2008.
31. A move to blade servers has been put on hold due to the current financial challenges. It is now scheduled to happen at the start of 2008/09. Funds, amounting to £120,000 are in place.
32. The Members IT project is all but complete. A couple of councillors who have been extremely hard to contact remain outstanding but the rest are all now up and running.

Work stream 8 – Community leadership

33. A small group of the administration has been looking at our area panels. They have now handed this work formally to the constitution task group as part of a larger project to look at all committees.
34. Migrant worker workshops are taking place for anyone new to Britain in East Herts, Uttlesford and Braintree. The first workshop was giving general information and thereafter subject specific; benefits, road safety/policing and education. These are being run 6.00 – 8.00pm weekdays and repeated again on a Saturday 11.00 – 1.00pm. Individual sessions have also been arranged every Monday in the Town Hall in Saffron Walden and every Wednesday in the Town Hall in Braintree and East Herts District Council, Bishop's Stortford. These sessions run from 9.00 – 5.00pm and can be booked in advance via the Migrant Community Development Officers.

Work stream 9 – Communication

35. Estimates have now been received from the three companies tendering for the website redesign contract. A fourth company decided not to proceed with its tender as it did not feel it could deliver what the council requires for the budget available. A report went to the IT Working Group on October 29 updating members on the tenders and detailing the advantages and disadvantages each quote. The new website can be built on the chosen company's server and then transferred to ours in the future.
36. The branding and corporate design project has been put on hold until the next financial year. This piece of work is about how the council presents itself in a professional and consistent manner to the public, using standard fonts, colours and design templates. Some consideration may need to be given to simplifying the existing logo as there are practical issues surrounding the way it reproduces and the cost of doing so. But simplification does not mean introducing a new logo.

37. Similarly, producing a council A-Z for distribution to every home in the district will also be looked at in the next financial year as the current budgetary position does not allow for this to proceed.

Work stream 10 – Customers

38. The Customer Services Manager is now involved in East of England regional Assembly (EERA) benchmarking and mystery shopping projects. Through this reciprocal arrangement it will allow the council to build up contacts with other customer service centres and share good practice.

39. Regular meetings are ongoing between the Uconnect customer service centre, council tax and benefits. Uconnect staff have recently received extra training from the benefits team which has helped reduce the pressure on benefits back office staff to deal with customer inquiries. This internal focus group of users is now expanding to take in other officers involved in customer-facing services and its remit has grown to look at wider customer service issues, such as reviewing the council's customer care standards.

40. The remaining environmental services enquiries are being transferred to Uconnect. This will help the problem of customer phone calls bouncing between Uconnect and environmental services.

41. The regular meetings between directors and heads of division with responsibility for frontline services continue to make progress.

Work stream 11 – Shared and collaborative services

42. A detailed report on the progress of the shared services work stream was presented to the performance select committee on 6 November 2007. The following paragraphs summarise the progress but full details of the aforementioned report can be found on the committee management system.

43. Preliminary discussions have taken place with a number of other councils including Braintree District Council, Chelmsford Borough Council and East Herts District Council to drive this agenda forward. The following factors need to be taken into account when deciding any future shared service delivery partner/s: -

- Which organisations have similar approaches to shared service delivery;
- Which organisations have similar strategic expectations from joint service delivery;
- Which organisations have similar service priorities;
- Which organisations have similar views on decision-making structures.

44. In addition, we are currently in discussion with other local authorities on a number of partnership working opportunities as follows: -

- Shared heavy goods vehicle workshop with Braintree District Council;

- Litter picking verges along the A120 with Braintree District Council. Braintree has invested in appropriate safety vehicle and signage but we have yet to do so. They could include our part of the A120 with theirs;
- Shared waste collection with Braintree District Council. Possibility of re-location of the depot in Great Dunmow to Essex County Council's civic amenity site on the outskirts of the town;
- Early stages of discussions with Braintree District Council regarding legal services partnership;
- Early stages of discussions with other organisations regarding a shared printing service.

45. Although the council has experience of providing services jointly, or in collaboration with other local authorities, such arrangements have been fragmented and have not been the standard way of developing services. It is recognised that a step-change in the approach to shared services is required that will provide reassurance to the council and the community that the medium to long-term financial standing of the authority is sustainable.

46. An outline business case (OBC) has been produced for corporate support and transactional services. The OBC explains the difference between corporate and transactional service, sets out the strategic need for shared services along with the external and internal drivers for change. It should be noted that the document was produced at the end of July 2007 and the information relating to budgets and the medium term financial strategy is currently being updated.

47. The OBC indicates that the preferred delivery model is to share services with another local authority. This model can then be developed to incorporate more local authorities, other public/private sector organisations and the third sector. The aim would be to provide services to the partner organisations through a separate entity at a reduced cost. The OBC also explores the possibility for shared service units to eventually trade and generate income. This approach to shared services has been discussed at the strategic management board and with the chairs of committees.

48. The shared services project team has been established and met for the first time on 11 October 2007. The membership of the team, which will meet every month, is as follows: -

- Mike Brean SMB sponsor
- Alaine Clarke Shared services lead officer
- Adrian Webb Responsibility for ICT, finance and organisational re-engineering
- Simon Martin Responsibility for council buildings and home/mobile working
- Richard Auty Responsibility for Uconnect and communications

- Jo Ware Human resources

49. The membership reflects the key areas of responsibility to drive the shared services initiative forward.

50. A project initiation document (PID) has been produced detailing the scope of the shared services project. It summarises the shared services implementation plan, includes a detailed communications plan and highlights the risks involved in a comprehensive risk register.

51. A detailed project plan will be produced once a decision is made on potential partner organisations for shared services. This will enable timescales for all the aspects of the implementation to be integrated into the project. The following are considered key areas of the implementation: -

- The development and approval of the full business case;
- Human resource and workforce issues resulting from any shared service proposals;
- Planned systems convergence of any major ICT systems used by the partner organisations;
- Potential rationalisation of assets, including offices and depots.

52. A summary shared services implementation plan has been produced, which is attached at appendix 1 to this report. It sets out the three key stages of the project and elements within each stage. They are: -

- Stage one – platform development;
- Stage two – transformation;
- Stage three – optimisation.

53. Work is progressing well with the platform development stage of the implementation and some aspects of stage two. A brief update on the progress, and where appropriate an explanation, of each stage is provided in the performance select committee report referred to in paragraph 42 above.

Work stream 12 – Financial management

54. The Finance system enhancements continue to progress. A number of initial meetings have been held to design the new ordering process. Hardware is currently on order and system set-up, configuration and training should commence within the next fortnight.

Risk Analysis

55. The Uttlesford in 2011 transformation programme risk management team has produced a detailed risk register for shared services implementation. This forms part of the PID.

56. The risk management team will be meeting monthly to discuss progress.

SHARED SERVICES

