

Report

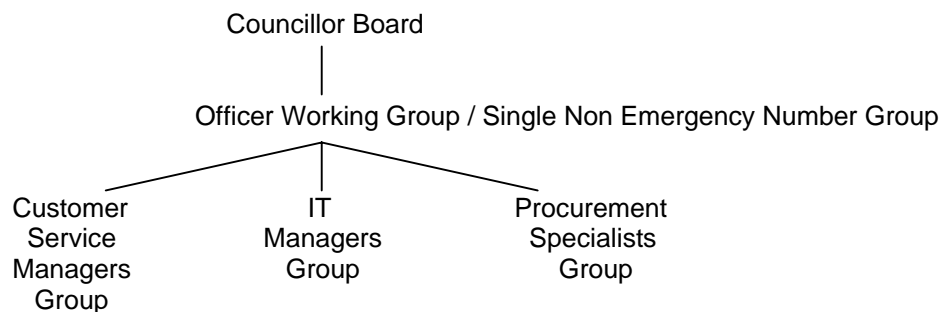
Subject: : Customer First Partnership – Current Position
Report to : The Cabinet
Date : 15 November 2006
Author : Debbie Dixon
Deputy Leader : Cllr Westmoreland

1. Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the current work programme of the Customer First Partnership.

2. Background:

- 2.1. Cabinet will recall that in May 2004 a decision was taken to support the Wiltshire Customer First Partnership and in November of that year approved a programme of work for the partnership.
- 2.2. In March the following year the constitution of the partnership was formally approved by the council.
- 2.3. Since the outset, Salisbury District Council has actively participated in the partnership, both at councillor and officer levels.
- 2.4. The partnership's structure is:



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



The structure is supported by a Partnership Manager and Support Officer (funded by partners). Salisbury District Council is well represented with the Deputy Leader acting as Vice Chair of the Board, the relevant Policy Director participating in the Officer Working Group, the Head of Customer Services has just taken on chairing the Customer Service Managers Group, whilst the Head of ICT and Procurement Manager play active parts in their specialist groups.

- 2.6. Additional task and finish groups are set up for particular tasks e.g. CRM, shared services etc.
- 2.7. A comprehensive programme of work is currently underway and the aim of this report is to familiarise Cabinet with current issues in preparation for longer term thinking about council delivery of services.

3. Strategic Work Programme:

- 3.1. There are 2 major strategic projects currently underway:

- Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN)

A bid has been made to the Home Office for funding a SNEN project for Wiltshire. SNEN 101 is a number the public can call when it is less urgent than 999. The Home Office describe SNEN as:

“101 will make communities safer places to live and work. The easily accessible service will provide action, advice and information to the public on community safety issues. Greater co-ordination between local councils and police and better information about what problems are happening where, will improve the management of resources and services to the public”.

A bid has been made for approximately £2m of funding. If successful, the police would lead the project on behalf of the partnership. There will however, be implications for all councils.

- Shared Services

This project has focused on evaluating the potential for delivering services on a shared basis with the aim of improving quality and/or reducing cost. Solid progress has been made in 3 service areas. Firstly, a multi council external solicitors call off contract has been agreed. This is likely to lead to cost savings for each of the 19 participating councils.

Secondly, the building control teams at the four district councils have identified the potential for merging. A review is to be commissioned to enable recommendations to be made in the New Year.

Thirdly, the district councils have agreed to ask Wiltshire County Council to provide a payroll service for all staff. Again this will result in efficiencies.

- 3.2. In addition to the two major projects a range of other smaller projects designed to improve services to customers, increase the efficiency of ICT and procure in the most cost effective way are underway.

4. Way Forward:

- 4.1. Cabinet will recall that the partnership has been considered at previous Cabinet Policy Development Days. Given the significance of the 2 strategic projects to the district council, it is proposed that another session is held in early 2007.

The Improving Customer Services Board has invited the Director of Finance at the Police who

leads the 101 project to the next meeting of 19 December. All Cabinet Members are most welcome to attend.

5. Recommendations:

Cabinet is invited to:

- i) note progress;
- ii) agree to consider the Customer First Partnership further in 2007;
- iii) recognise the contribution of the Head of Legal and Property Services in concluding the call off contract and invite a report 6 months into the contract to review its effectiveness and likely savings.

6. Implications:

- **Financial:**
 - **Legal:**
 - **Personnel:**
 - **ICT:**
 - **Community Safety:** None
 - **Environmental:** None
- } None at this stage although there will be implications if SNEN achieves Home Office funding and if the decision is taken to implement the shared service for building control.