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Report

Subject : Building Control Shared Services Business Case
Report to : The Cabinet
Date : Wednesday 05 September 2007
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Cabinet Member for Planning : Councillor Clegg

Building Control Shared Services Business Case

1. Report Summary:

To inform Cabinet of progress made on this project and to seek approval to continue to develop the business case as requested by the Wiltshire Customer First Partnership Board, and in light of the recent LGR announcement.

2. Background:

2.1 - Building Control was identified by the Wiltshire Customer First Partnership as a service that might be improved by partnership working.

2.2 - Building Control Managers from Kennet DC, North Wiltshire DC, Salisbury DC and West Wiltshire DC have carried out extensive work since April 2006 to identify and investigate various options for the delivery of the service. KPMG were engaged as consultants to assess the financial aspect of the case.

3. Key issues:

3.1 - The building control service is subject to increasing pressures from both internal and external drivers of change within the building control sector, and wider local government environments. This has created a challenge to the viability of the current strategies used, and systems adopted.

3.2 - The building control managers hold the collective view that the pressure for change and its impact on key service resources and capabilities is overwhelming. It is considered that if strategic actions are not taken in the short-medium term, the authorities may find themselves in a position of service failure, additional expenditure, and reduced revenues.



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3.3 - The business case outlines a pro-active response to these drivers, setting out why a new structural form is required, and how this may safeguard strategic capability whilst allowing the development of service, which is more resilient to future strategic challenges.

4. Options for consideration:

In light of the recent LGR announcement, and the work being undertaken to align district/county structures & services, it is felt that this report could be an effective catalyst for change in that context. Many of the key issues and options around integrating services have already been explored via the report.

The LGR decision has effectively closed the 'status quo' option. The Building Control project group consider that there is now an excellent opportunity to work closely with county in the effective design of this front line service. The group feel that the report is both comprehensive and pro-active in its approach to the challenge now faced by both organizations, and that this option should be further explored.

5. Consultation Undertaken:

Both the unions and staff have been consulted as part of the process. Two 'all staff' meetings were held at Kennet DC offices in April and another two will be scheduled following the LGR decision. Unison have been consulted and we are awaiting their response.

6. Recommendation(s):

- 6.1** Cabinet approves in principle the establishment of joint working in Building Control.
- 6.2** Endorsement be given to the Joint Working in Building Control business case
- 6.3** A further report be prepared when the detailed information is completed and approved by the Wiltshire Customer Partnership Board.

7. Background Papers:

The full business case is available electronically. Please contact kkeegan@salisbury.gov.uk for a copy.

8. Implications:

Financial:

The financial case has been prepared by KPMG and is set out in section 5 of the business case. The case concludes that:

Using realistic projections, the joint unit will cost around £19k less to deliver building control services across Wiltshire in Year 1 than the current position with four authorities;

The saving compared with the current position is likely to increase in Years 2 and 3. A realistic estimate is that there will be a net benefit of £175k over three years;

The sensitivity analysis suggests that over three years the benefits could be as high as £876k (optimistic scenario), but there could be a cost of £271k (pessimistic scenario);

Potential implementation costs could be up to £112k, which shows a maximum payback period of three years.

Legal:

The authorities are able under the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000 to create joint working structures. Any employment law issues will be considered as part of the implementation plan.

Human Rights:

There are no human rights implications.

Personnel:

Consultation is currently underway with HR and within the context of the recent announcement on

LGR and wider staffing issues. The union representative has also been consulted and we are awaiting a response.

Community Safety:

There are no community safety implications.

Environmental:

There are no environmental impact implications.

Council's Core Values:

The business case aligns closely with all of the Council's core values.

Equalities:

There are no equalities implications.

ICT:

There will be a requirement to invest in ICT to allow the development of the operating systems and processes.

Wards Affected:

No wards will be affected.