

Agenda item No. 11

Title: **Joint Working for Building Control**

Portfolio holder: **Cllr Tony Phillips OBE**

Reporting officer: **Glyn Jackson**

Key decision: **Yes**

Purpose

- 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.

Background

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

Key issues

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 resilient to future strategic challenges.

Effect on strategies and codes

- This project aligns with the Councils priority of putting customers first.
- It also is an action listed in the building control service plan.

The project fits with the supporting principles of

- sound financial management;
- valued and supported staff;
- a well planned and focussed approach;

- efficient and effective service delivery.

Risk management Implications

- A detailed risk register is provided in section 7 of the business case.

Finance and performance implications

- 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.
- The Wiltshire Customer First Partnership Board has asked for further work to be carried out to establish the cost of providing support services to the new building control unit.

Legal and human rights implications

- Partners to establish a Joint Committee under s101 of the Local Government Act 1972

Next Steps

- Carry out further work as required by Wiltshire Customer First Partnership Board.
- Prepare a detailed implementation plan.
- Seek approval from each partner authority to move to implementation stage.

Recommendations

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

Key decision box (if applicable ie if key decision for Cabinet).

Statement of reason for key decision	Decision will be of significance to the services that the Council provides.
Options considered and rejected	To not establish joint working.
Date of implementation	Estimated April 2008

Background papers

'Joint Working for Building Control' v6 (members room).