

REPORT

Councillor John Collier : Deputy Leader of the Council

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON PARTNERSHIP: CUSTOMER FIRST PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

To seek in principle Cabinet approval for the Customer First Programme and the associated Salisbury District Council share of the project costs and ongoing maintenance.

2. Background and Introduction

- 2.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 5th May 2004 a decision was taken to support the Wiltshire and Swindon Customer Services Programme.
- 2.2 Since that time Salisbury District Council has actively participated in the partnership and has most recently led the procurement of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- 2.3 The Partnership has now produced an overarching high level programme which is the subject of this report.

3. Partnership Programme, Costs and Resources

- 3.1 The Customer First Steering Group recently considered an earlier version of the attached report (Appendix I). The Group agreed to seek the commitment of individual authorities to the programme, to ring fence budgets to cover joint partnership costs (both projects and ongoing costs to maintain systems) and to delegate to the relevant director responsibility for allocating budgets.
- 3.2 The key projects of the programme are summarised in the Outline Project Portfolio on page 7 of Appendix I. The three major workstreams are:
 - access to and delivery of services;
 - front office;
 - co-ordination across councils.
- 3.3 At this early stage it would appear that the overarching programme will be supportive of Salisbury District Council's political priority of 'Improving Customer Service'.
- 3.4 However, individual project plans have yet to be discussed and developed for:
 - shared contact points;
 - partnership resource pool;
 - staff and member training and support;
 - member websites.

- 3.5 Whilst the last three are unlikely to be controversial, shared contact points will need careful evaluation by Salisbury District Council. For example, the partnership project may not be compatible with our aspirations for customer contact in the district if the proposal only signposts customers to services rather than resolve 80% of customer queries at point of contact (SDC's agreed standard).
- 3.6 to date the Cabinet has already agreed provision for up to £80,000 in the current capital programme to cover the CRM procurement element of the project and £20,000 towards programme management costs. Recurring revenue costs are currently assumed to be made from compensating savings, this position will need to be reviewed as part of the December report.

4. Recommendations

The Cabinet are asked to:

- i) Approve in principle the Customer First Programme, subject to specific consideration of detailed project plans for projects outlined in 3.4.
- ii) Give consideration in the portfolio plan for any additional resources required for future stages of the project.
- iii) Delegate to the Policy Director (e-Government Officer Champion) responsibility to allocate budget for all projects within the programme that already have agreed individual project plan.
- iv) Authorise the Council's Policy Director (e-Government Officer Champion) to enter into any legal agreements that may be necessary in the future for the successful completion of the projects that already have agreed individual project plans contained within the Customer First Programme.
- v) Request the partnership to identify the potential savings that the Customer First Programme is likely to achieve for each authority.

5. Implications

Financial: currently there is £80,000 contained in the approved capital programme and no provision for ongoing revenue costs.

Legal: the Local Government Act 1972 and the well-being power provided by the Local Government Act 2000 together enable the Council [in accordance with Part 2 Article 11 of the Council's constitution] to enter into joint arrangements or agreements with other local authorities to discharge its functions [subject to certain exceptions] and to delegate those functions to other local authorities and to incur expenditure and provide resources in doing so provided that the Council does not thereby fetter the future exercise of its statutory powers.

Personnel : Contained within the report

Community Safety : None

Environmental : None

Core Values : All

Wards Affected : All