

West Wiltshire District Council

Cabinet

3 November 2004

Wiltshire & Swindon Customer Services Programme

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress being made by the Partnership and to seek the views of Cabinet on the proposed work programme and associated costs.

2. Background

On 5 May 2004, Cabinet received a report on proposals for partnership working amongst the Wiltshire and Swindon authorities aimed at improving levels of customer service. The broad concept for improvement covered areas such as establishing joint contact centres, purchasing jointly a customer relationship management system and adopting common standards of customer care. Cabinet agreed to participate in the partnership and to allocate up to £20,000 of existing Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) funding for the co-ordination and support of the programme.

Since then, two meetings of the Partnership Steering Group have been held and proposals for the work of the Partnership have been developed. These build upon the work and investment carried out with the benefit of Pathfinder funding but concentrate on the general area of improving and integrating customer services across the county.

The Partnership has now requested that the constituent authorities each consider formally the proposed work programme and indicate the extent to which they wish to participate.

3. Scope of Proposed Programme

The scope of the proposed programme is shown in Appendix 1. The main features of it are as follows:

(i) Joint Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

A CRM system enables customer enquiries to be logged, allocated, responded to and monitored on a corporate basis. To be effective, its use needs to be accompanied by a review of business processes and the concentration of staff who deal with customers into a specialist customer services unit. Used across the Partnership, the system will be based on a shared and standardised index of services and joint customer service standards.

A joint tender for a CRM system has been undertaken and a preferred supplier has been selected. Individual authorities are now able to contract with the supplier and benefit from the discounted price that the partnership has been able to secure. It is understood that at least three of the Wiltshire authorities will be proceeding to implement the CRM immediately.

(ii) Hub Services

Local Government On-Line (LGOL) funding was used to establish a Wiltshire and Swindon hub which can be used to receive, transfer and respond to requests for services amongst the partner authorities. Pilot services of change of address and abandoned vehicles reporting have been developed. With the technology in place, it proposed to develop further 'notification' and 'request' services to make use of the hub.

(iii) Contact Points

It is proposed to set up joint face-to-face service counters in the main towns across the County to offer access to county and district services.

(iv) Call Centres

Each authority's telephone service would be organised as a centralised call centre with the facility to transfer calls directly to the services and staff of other authorities.

(v) Other Projects

Other elements of the programme include developing a joint content management system for partner websites, co-ordinating links between websites and jointly providing members' IT facilities.

4. Outline Costs

The estimated costs for the implementation of the whole of the proposed programme is shown in appendix 2. In addition to these, there would be an input required from existing staff resources.

5. Comment

The proposals for a partnership work programme have developed rapidly and are ambitious and challenging. At the same time, the partnership funding landscape is very different now, with no further LGOL funding and with only one more year of reduced IEG funding. There are also many other demands for ICT investment, both internally and as a result of central e-government targets which are required to be in place by the end of 2005.

Against this background the proposed work programme needs to be considered carefully, both to ensure that it is in line with the Council's own priorities and to ensure that good value for money is achieved.

Some concerns from the West Wiltshire perspective have been identified and are being discussed via the partnership channels. These include:

- The need for business cases for the various projects, quantifying costs and benefits.
- Ensuring that the cost estimates are realistic.
- Ensuring that the programme is rooted in changes of culture, customer care, practises and organisational improvements and is not just a series of IT projects.
- Establishing a fair basis for the apportionment of costs between partners.
- Accepting flexibility so that individual partners can opt in to selected components of the programme, according to local circumstances and priorities.

There are however significant benefits in terms of service quality and cost-effectiveness that can be gained through working in partnership. A number of the proposed work elements correspond with the Council's own ICT programmes and some budgets already exist. The CRM element, for example, is very much in line with the Council's Customers First priority.

It is suggested that at this stage the Council's response to the Partnership is as follows:

Work programme element	Response
Joint CRM Procurement (Including joint service index, configuration and authentication)	Will be pursued during 2005/06. Outline costs acceptable
Hub Services	Will be pursued during 2005/06, subject to clarification of potential duplication with CRM system. Outline staff resources acceptable. Concern about value of customer benefit relative to expenditure.
Joint Customer Service Standards	Willing to participate in development of joint standards. Outline staff resources acceptable.
Joint Contact Points	To be pursued over the medium term. Participation dependent upon detailed and quantified business case for each potential location. Concern about potential increase in staffing costs.
Call Centres - Development and Integration	To be pursued in the medium term. Preparations to start in 05/06 with implementation possibly in the following year

Members' Websites	To be pursued in 2005/06. Potential benefits of joint provision to be investigated. Outline costs acceptable.
Members' IT and Training	To be pursued in 2005/06. Potential benefits recognised. Should result in savings over current arrangements.

The next meeting of the Partnership Steering Group is on 23 November and the Council's response would be presented at that meeting.

6. Financial Implications

The Council has existing provision in its capital budget as follows:

- CRM Procurement: £20,000
- Members' IT £19,000

In addition to this, it is anticipated that IEG funding of between £100,000 and £150,000 will be received for 2005/06. Together, these would enable the Council to participate in the Partnership Work Programme as far as the capital costs are concerned.

Some of the required revenue costs can be accommodated within existing budgets (eg IT training). The remaining revenue costs will be considered in more detail and, if necessary, bids under the service and resource planning procedure will be forwarded.

Participation in the medium term projects (ie beyond 2005/06) would be subject to future service and resource planning consideration.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council responds to the Wiltshire and Swindon Partnership as set out in Section 5 above.

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Wiltshire and Swindon Partnership - Outline Project Portfolio	
Workstreams & Projects	Outline
Access	
• CRM Procurement	Joint specification, selection and procurement of common CRM system for implementation by all partners
• Hub Services	Identification and development of common transactional services on the Partnership shared 'hub', for use with CRM system and for self-service access (Internet). Training for partnership staff to develop 'hub' services. Full roll-out of pilot services developed under e-Government Partnership (change of address and abandoned vehicles)
• CRM Set-up	Common activities across the Partnership, including:
○ A-Z of Services	Extension of A-Z of Services for access to all front-office services from CRM system
○ Authentication	Shared solution to verify individuals (on phone and online) <i>NB Potentially SW regional solution under discussion</i>
○ CRM Configuration	Common approaches to setting up customer records, council contacts, telephony, etc.
○ Integration of CRM & Hub	Standard interfaces for exchange of data: CRM access to hub services, reconciliation of customer details & transactions
Front Office	
• Customer Services Charter	Development of common service standards for access, response times, etc. in joint Charter across Partnership
• Contact Points	Set up joint face-to-face service counters across the county, offering access to County & District services
○ Contact Point Experience	Define coverage: range of services & standards for each level of Contact Point, locations & staffing agreed for each level
○ Design & Build	Physical design & build (space, fittings, ICT) for each location
• Call Centres	Set up each partner's phone customer service centre, offering access to County & District services
○ Design & Build	Physical design & build (space, fittings, ICT), business changes & staffing for each partner
○ Call Sharing & Integration	Joining up call handling across Partnership (virtual call centre), access to other partner's services, out of hours coverage
Coordination	
• Change Management	Common approach & timing for business changes to achieve joint standards, call sharing & integration across partners
○ Communications	Partnership information to support 'local' communications
• Front-Back Integration	Common standards & level of integration between front & back offices to enable cross-partner service access & delivery
• Shared Cross-Partner ICT	Ensure joint procurement, development & provision
○ Websites links	Coordination of deep-linking between partner websites
○ Members IT	Combined provision of IT, common information & access
○ Websites	Common (shared) solution for Community & Members sites
○ Smart Cards	Combined procurement for multiple services
• Data Protection & Freedom of Integration	Common approach across partners & for shared delivery of services

Partnership Programme - Costs & Resources

This document provides overall estimates for costs and resource commitments required to:

1. complete the joint projects under the Customer First Programme
2. on-going revenue costs (including maintaining existing shared Partnership systems)

Details of the Programme (plans and organisation) are also attached as appendices.

The Customer First Steering Group (28/09/04) agreed to seek commitment of budgets and resources to the Programme from each: ring-fenced budget to cover joint Partnership costs and delegate authority for allocating budget to their Steering Group representatives.

Shared costs

Where necessary, the split of costs between partners has been calculated using number of PCs as an approximation for the number of users or office based staff (see also Appendix A)

	WCC	SBC	DCs (average)	TOTALS
No. PCs	3000	2500	350	6900
Share of Costs (incl. SBC)	43.5%	36.2%	5.1%	100%
Share of Costs (excl. SBC)	68.2%	---	8.0%	100%

Financial years

Costs have not yet been calendarised: commitments from partners will differ over financial years depending on their plans (although timing of some costs is not related to partner plans).

Resourcing

Resources for shared and common work have been estimated on the basis of joint working supported by a Partnership 'pool' of temporary contract staff.

Summary

Programme Costs	TOTALS	Share across Partners		
<u>Capital Costs</u>		WCC	SBC	Each DC
CRM: procurement	£531.2k	£115.2k	£95.2k	£80.2k
Authentication: Gov't Gateway set-up	£70.0k	£30.4k	£25.4k	£3.6k
Shared Contact Points	£312.0k	£212.7k		£24.8k
Partnership resource pool (contract staff)	£148.0k	£64.3k	£53.6k	£7.5k
Programme management & support: year 1	£200.0k	£87.0k	£72.5k	£10.1k
Programme management & support: year 2	£125.0k	£54.3k	£45.3k	£6.3k
TOTALS Programme Capital Costs	£1,386.2k	£564.0k	£291.9k	£132.6k
+ Contingency @ 20%	£1,663k	£677k	£350k	£159k

	TOTALS	Share across Partners		
<u>Revenue Costs</u>		WCC	SBC	Each DC
Existing systems: hosting, support, maint'nce	£225.0k	£97.8k	£81.5k	£11.4k
CRM: ongoing support & maintenance	£62.6k	£18.8k	£14.2k	£7.4k
Authentication: Gov't Gateway charges/year	£10.0k	£4.3k	£3.6k	£0.5k
IT training & support (staff & members)	£50.0k	£34.1k		£4.0k
Members websites: support & hosting	£50.0k	£10.0k		£10.0k
TOTALS Programme Revenue Costs	£397.6k	£165.1k	£99.3k	£33.3k
+ Contingency @ 20%	£477k	£198k	£119k	£40k