

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 27 July 2010

Service access and delivery

Report of the Cabinet Member Corporate Services

1. Executive summary and recommendation

1.1 The issue

At this time of economic downturn the council can anticipate the demand for our services will increase. The unprecedented financial pressures facing the council requires an approach to service delivery that responds to the need to maintain or even improve services within the context of shrinking budgets.

1.2 I therefore recommend that:

1.2.1 Cabinet approves the approach to service access and delivery detailed in the appendix to this report, and

1.2.2 Cabinet considers a further report in the autumn detailing a costed business case for its implementation.

1.3 Summary of implications

1.3.1 Financial

A budget of £254k was agreed by Council in December 2009 to cover the cost of investment in customer services as part of the sourcing strategy. A further report on the 'invest to save' use of this budget will be brought back to this Cabinet in September 2010.

The revised profile of anticipated savings will be fed into the 'Bridging the Gap' programme in order to determine the potential impact on the Medium Term Financial strategy.

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1.3.2 Legal

Enhanced use of web-based systems will need to recognise the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 with regard to protecting personal data.

Any impact on existing staff arising from the proposal set out in the report will need to be assessed in accordance with employment legislation.

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1.3.3 Human Resources

There are implications for the establishment re the deletion of posts, potentially up to four which aim to be achieved through normal turnover. Whilst the likelihood of not achieving reduction through this means is low, if it cannot be achieved, compulsory redundancies cannot be ruled out. In such circumstance the council will follow the agreed policy and procedures for redundancy as required, however every measure will be sought to avoid this if at all possible. The Trade Unions will need to be consulted fully on the implications of the approach.

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1.4 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities

1.4.1 The council's corporate strategy has the cross-cutting objective of ensuring we provide value for money services that meet the needs of our customers.

1.5 Statement on risk

1.5.1 See the statement of risk attached as Appendix two. The identified risks are:

- if service managers assign adequate resources to systems thinking activity then it may affect day-to-day service delivery
- if service managers do not allocate adequate staff resources to the 'system thinking' of their service then the work may not complete or may not complete in time for the rapid delivery of cashable savings
- if service teams do not have the necessary inhouse expertise in the systems thinking then the expected outcomes will not be achieved, and
- if opportunities for normal turnover or redeployment of staff are not immediately identifiable then this will impact on the savings achieved.

2. Background

2.1 The attached document details a proposal for interdependent tactical approaches that will meet the objective of maintaining or improving service access and delivery whilst at the same time delivering cashable efficiency savings.

2.2 The proposed approach is summarised as follows:

2.2.1 **Service redesign and process optimatisation.** This will principally use the Vanguard system thinking approach. This technique eliminates as far as is possible all processes that are not directly related to what the customer requests. In streamlining systems in this way, service delivery times are reduced, waste and failure eliminated, customer satisfaction increased, costs decreased and savings achieved.

2.2.2 **Improved web-based services.** The most cost effective means of delivering the streamlined services is through electronic web-based channels. This requires a level of investment and it is proposed to afford this through partial use of the savings from system thinking interventions. Without this investment the ability to maximise savings through systems thinking will be compromised.

2.2.3 A web-based marketing campaign will encourage our customers to shift to the cheaper and more convenient web service.

3. Consultation

3.1 The approach to service access and delivery is based on a process that begins with listening to our customers and building streamlined services to meet their needs. Thus, in effect, consultation is at the core of the work. Trade Unions, and employees will be consulted and engaged as part of the process.

Appendix	Service access and delivery
Background papers	None
Contact officer	John Steed, Head of Service Development, 01242 264208, john.steed@cheltenham.gov.uk
Accountability	Cllr Colin Hay, Cabinet Member Corporate Services
Scrutiny function	Economy and Business Improvement