

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 26 July 2011

Towards a commissioning framework for the built environment – update report

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| Accountable member | Cabinet Member Built Environment, Councillor John Rawson |
| Accountable officer | Director of commissioning, Jane Griffiths |
| Accountable scrutiny committee | Environment |
| Ward(s) affected | All |
| Key Decision | No |
| Executive summary | <p>The council has commenced a review of the services under scope of the outcomes for the built environment and this report updates the Cabinet on the work to date and what is planned for the future. The review has reached a stage when it now needs to engage more widely with the community, partners and key stakeholders.</p> <p>The review is still in the analysis stage which has comprised developing a needs analysis, identifying outcomes, benchmarking of current provision and identifying other providers. English Heritage has also been able to support the project with a small amount of money to enable a facilitator to engage with some of the key stakeholders.</p> <p>The attached update report (appendix 2) was considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 13 July and a verbal update will be provided to Cabinet.</p> |
| Recommendations | <p>I recommend that Cabinet agree to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with local partners and stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector, parish councils, Local Strategic Partnership, Business partnership, Civic Society, Architects Panel, developers and users of the services within scope to bring them up to date with the review so far on the direction of travel, priorities for further work and emerging outcomes.• Engage with other providers to understand more fully the opportunities for different delivery models and where the market may need to be developed in the longer term.• To bring a report back to Cabinet on 26 September setting out the findings from the above and a draft action plan. |

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| Financial implications | <p>English Heritage funding of £2,000 is to be spent on consultancy fees in supporting the commissioning review with emphasis on developing the outcomes model and reviewing alternative service delivery models.</p> <p>Contact officer: Andrew Powers andrew.powers@cheltenham.gov.uk , 01242 264121</p> |
| Legal implications | <p>None directly arising from this report</p> <p>Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon, Onelegal shirin.wotherspoon@teWKesbury.gov.uk, 01242</p> |
| HR implications (including learning and organisational development) | <p>There are no immediate HR implications arising from this phase of the Built Environment Commissioning review. However, on going informal consultation with the recognised trade unions and employees working within Built Environment service area is recommended to ensure employee engagement is maintained and that any proposed changes that are needed in the future are properly understood.</p> <p>Contact officer: Julie McCarthy HR Operations Manager, julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264355</p> |
| Key risks | <p>See attached risk register</p> |
| Corporate and community plan Implications | <p>The commissioning process is aligned to the councils corporate objectives and these have been used as a basis for discussions on the outcomes for the built environment</p> |
| Environmental and climate change implications | <p>The commissioning process includes a climate change/sustainability assessment and this will need to be completed as part of the analysis stage.</p> |

1. Background

- 1.1 The council is undertaking a number of commissioning reviews all of which are at different stages of the process. The built environment review is in an initial analysis stage, gathering evidence and looking at needs and outcomes.
- 1.2 **Appendix 2** "Towards a Commissioning Strategy for the built environment" summarises the work to date.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Although there has been some discussion with others outside of the council, the whole basis of commissioning is to ascertain what the needs are and how outcomes can be developed and services delivered to meet these needs. In order to undertake this work we need to engage with a range of stakeholders and users of the service and the recommendation is to carry out this work ahead of a report back to Cabinet in the autumn.

3. Consultation and feedback

- 3.1 The council has set up a member working group, which has proved extremely productive. The focus of these initial meetings has been a consideration of a range of outcomes and outputs they would want to see delivered. There is more work to be done in translating these discussions into measurable outcomes and outputs which can be tested. The attached update report is not a report of the member working group but they have been sent a copy of the draft report in advance and comments where received have been incorporated. The environment overview and scrutiny committee were consulted on the attached report and their views will be updated verbally at the meeting.

4. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 4.1 The project is being run using Prince2 methodology and there is a project plan for the key work strands. In developing the commissioning strategy for the built environment the review will need to identify realisable benefits which will need to be monitored and a set of performance measures for the outcomes.

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| Report author | Contact officer: Jane Griffiths Director Commissioning Jane.Griffiths@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264126 |
| Appendices | 1. Risk Assessment 2. Towards a commissioning strategy – update report July 2011 |
| Background information | 1. |

| The risk | | | | Original risk score (impact x likelihood) | | | Managing risk | | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|-------------|--|---|-------|---------------|---|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Risk ref. | Risk description | Risk Owner | Date raised | I | L | Score | Control | Action | Deadline | Responsible officer | Transferred to risk register |
| 1 | If the needs analysis is inaccurate, the wrong outcomes may be defined. | Richard Gibson | 05/04/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | The needs analysis will be consulted on and shared with key stakeholders to test whether it fully reflects the key issues | August 2011 | Richard Gibson | Details held on the project risk log |
| 2 | If the wrong outcomes are selected, the service will not be focussed on addressing the true needs of the community. | Grahame Lewis | 05/04/2011 | 3 | 2 | 6 | A | The outcomes will be tested with the community and key stakeholders to ensure that they fully reflect needs | August 2011 | Jane Griffiths | Details held on the project risk log |
| 3 | If we do not successfully engage other partner organisations, the opportunity to pool resources and deliver greater outcomes may be missed. | Jane Griffiths | 05/04/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Conversations have already been held with key partners but these will continue over the next few months | August 2011 | Jane Griffiths | Details held on the project risk log |
| 4 | If we do not thoroughly research alternative delivery models and review the possibilities with open minds, we could miss the opportunity to implement more efficient outcome focussed delivery models. | Grahame Lewis | 05/04/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Further discussions are planned to explore alternative models. | August 2011 | Jon Hyde | Details held on the project risk log |
| 5 | If project team members (including officers and members) are overloaded with work, then there is a risk that the reports will not be ready in time for the scheduled Cabinet meetings, or that the report quality will suffer. The likelihood of this occurring has increased as a Housing Review and a Joint Waste commissioning project have been initiated which call upon many of the same resources as the built environment commissioning review. | Jane Griffiths | 03/05/2011 | 3 | 3 | 9 | A | Continue to monitor resourcing issues through the corporate resource management process. Be wary of scope creep which would exacerbate resource issues. | August 2011 | Jon Hyde | Details held on the project risk log |
| 6 | If service managers and officers are not involved in the commissioning process, the project will fail to benefit from their expertise, threatening the accurate assessment of needs and outcomes. This could also have a negative impact on the assessment of alternative delivery models and make it difficult to implement changes to the | Mike Redman | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Continue to involve service managers in all aspects of the project. | August 2011 | Mike Redman | Details held on the project risk log |

| The risk | | | | Original risk score (impact x likelihood) | | | Managing risk | | | | |
|-----------|--|--------------------|-------------|--|---|-------|---------------|--|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
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| | services. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | If contracts for new service models are too rigid, it becomes difficult to respond to change. For example local authorities who outsourced before the government spending review was conducted subsequently found that they were unable to cut costs in this area, which meant that additional savings had to be found elsewhere. The localism bill is still being considered by the House of Lords. The bill is likely to have a big impact on the way that development management and strategic land use is performed. We need to ensure that any new delivery model arrangements that are entered into are flexible enough to enable the service to respond to external change – as there is a risk that external contractors will not be willing to give us the desired level of flexibility, or that this condition could make the contract cost prohibitive. | Shirin Wotherspoon | 23/06/2011 | 5 | 2 | 10 | A | Ensure that future arrangements are flexible. | December 2011 | Shirin Wotherspoon | Details held on the project risk log |
| 8 | The cost centres for built environment department do not map perfectly onto the individual services making it difficult to establish the true costs of service delivery. There is a risk that costs will not be accurately established, which could lead to an incorrect comparison of current and alternative delivery models. | Andrew Powers | 23/06/2011 | 3 | 2 | 6 | A | Need to be aware of this as service costs are calculated. | August 2011 | Andrew Powers | Details held on the project risk log |
| 9 | If current shared service partners (e.g. Tewkesbury BC for building control) are not properly consulted throughout the process, then there is a risk that they will not agree to any future proposed service changes. | Mike Redman | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Ensure that TBC officers and members are well briefed and engaged throughout the project. | August 2011 | Mike Redman | Details held on the project risk log |
| 10 | When local fee setting comes into effect, there is a risk that Cheltenham is seen as being out of line in comparison to other similar authorities. If this happens we will need to find additional savings to bring our costs and fees into line with others, or communicate the fact that Cheltenham is investing more in this area to maintain a high level of quality. | Mike Redman | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | The Council needs to be sensitive to the market rate when adjusting fees should the legislation be passed. | December 2011 | Mike Redman and Shirin Wotherspoon | Details held on the project risk log |

| The risk | | | | Original risk score (impact x likelihood) | | | Managing risk | | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------|-------------|--|---|-------|---------------|---|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Risk ref. | Risk description | Risk Owner | Date raised | I | L | Score | Control | Action | Deadline | Responsible officer | Transferred to risk register |
| | | | | | | | | Any arrangements must be worded to ensure that the Council receives a fair share of any increased revenue opportunities arising from legislative change. | | | |
| 11 | With elections due next year there is a risk that the political makeup of the Council could change leading to a change of opinion around the desirability of certain delivery models. Effort could be wasted if time is put into developing an option which following the elections is no longer seen as desirable. Effort may also be wasted if members are not kept properly briefed on project progress, leading to a lack of buy when recommendations are put forward. | Grahame Lewis | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Continue to work with the cross-party member working group so that the project can continue to be steered in a direction that is agreeable to members. | August 2011 | Jane Griffiths | Details held on the project risk log |
| 12 | If project objectives and timescales are not clearly communicated to staff then there will be increased uncertainty and a negative impact on staff morale. | Mike Redman | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Continue to brief all staff on project progress | August 2011 | Mike Redman | Details held on the project risk log |
| 13 | If a clear end date is not set for the review, then staff resource will continue to be diverted from delivering the service, leading to a reduction in service efficiency. | Jane Griffiths | 23/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | A | Ensure that the September report has clear recommendations on proposed changes to service delivery, and agree how long services that wont be affected will have before a new review is initiated. | August 2011 | Grahame Lewis | Details held on the project risk log |