

REPORT TO: Cabinet
LEAD MEMBER: Chief Executive

26 July 2018

South Cambridgeshire District Council – an organisation for a sustainable future

Purpose

1. The Council faces an exciting but testing future – it is operating in an environment with reducing resources and rising customer expectations. We've already begun to consider how to best meet these challenges and this report sets out the next steps in the journey to ensure the organisation is fit for the future. Part of this work is to procure an independent assessment to determine how we can best focus on delivering priorities. A budget of £50,000 is required, this is not within approved Council budgets and requires Cabinet agreement.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended:
 - a) that Cabinet approve a budget of £50,000 to enable the Head of the Paid Service to commence a procurement process and,
 - b) that the money is taken from business efficiency reserves.

Background

4. The challenge and opportunities we face:
 - our district is one of the most successful and fast growing in the UK but we need to nurture and shape this growth not just manage it
 - customer expectations are rising. They expect a level of service and responsiveness on a par with “best in class” organisations
 - at the same time, we face financial pressures as central Government support evaporates. Future financial sustainability requires a different mindset and a more commercial approach to fill the gap due to cuts to funding
 - the Greater Cambridge area, with high employment levels and high housing costs results in a challenging recruitment market. The Council will need to stand out as an employer of choice
5. We do not have an option to stand still. We want to be ambitious in meeting the needs of our residents and businesses. This will require a different approach to setting strategy, service delivery and new ways of operating.
6. Our priorities are to:
 - shape and foster economic growth, through servicing the needs of existing and prospective local businesses
 - establish the Council as a regional exemplar and driver for natural capital

- deliver attractive, sustainable and affordable living opportunities for our residents
 - identify and optimise commercial opportunities to generate income to fill the gap left due to cuts to national funding so it can be invested to provide services for local people
 - ensure that interaction and engagement with our customers is “best in class”
7. We need to create an environment where staff can focus on customer delivery and are empowered by streamlined processes and clear accountability. We also need to continue to invest in our workforce through professional skills development and personal growth opportunities to become an organisation that people want to work for.
8. Our organisation must respond to these challenges and position itself as agile, flexible, solution orientated, business and customer friendly. We will need the right resources in the right areas, including the introduction of new capabilities to supplement current skills and expertise. This approach will maximise potential by supporting teams to work collaboratively across the organisation and not solely within their services. Subject to approval, the organisation will procure independent input to work alongside the Chief Executive to inform the next steps of our improvement journey.
9. The initial programme of activity will take a few months and is expected to be complete in February 2019. We will then be able to set out the next steps.

Considerations

10. Whilst we have met our priorities and objectives over recent years through our skilled and innovative workforce, we have been working for some time on the next phases of our journey to ensure the Council is well placed to deliver. This is against a backdrop of reducing resources and the need to save a further £4.4 million over the next 5 years due to reductions in central Government grants and funding.
11. The Council must also continue to ensure it invests in developing its staff to help deliver the best outcomes for communities and is recognised as a sought-after employer.

Options

12. Cabinet can approve the additional budget, which will be taken from business efficiency reserves, and by doing so the tendering process for the external support can proceed.
13. Cabinet does not approve the additional budget in which case there will be insufficient funds to progress this piece of work.

Implications

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

15. This report requests approval for a budget of £50,000. This is not currently within approved Council budgets.

Legal

16. The value of the work requires an open tendering process.

Staffing

17. There are no staffing implications at this stage

Risk Management

18. There is a risk that there will be insufficient interest in the tender and a suitable partner is not procured.

Equality and Diversity

19. None at this stage

Climate Change

20. None identified

Consultation responses

21. Consultation has not taken place at this stage however, the recognised trade unions and staff will be engaged and consulted in accordance with the Council's organisational change policies at the appropriate time. This included the unions being advised of this work recently and staff being made aware in advance of this report being published.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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