

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Corporate Services)

8 October 2009

SHARED SERVICE FOR DELIVERY OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

Purpose

1. To consider the introduction of a shared service for the delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits services with Uttlesford District Council.
2. This is a key decision because it is:
 - (a) likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or *the making of savings* which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; and
 - (b) of such significance to a locality, the Council or *the services which it provides* that the decision-taker is of the opinion that it should be treated as a key decisionand it was first published in the October 2009 forward plan.

Background

3. The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder instructed the Executive Director (Corporate Services) to investigate the potential for developing a shared service model for the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits services with local authority partners.
4. The Executive Director has entered into dialogue with Uttlesford District Council and with the existing Anglian Revenues Partnership (ARP) between East Cambridgeshire, Forest Heath and Breckland District Councils to develop a detailed business case to this end.

Considerations / Options

5. The Executive Summary to the outline business case produced by ARP is attached at **Appendix 2** and sets out the options and considerations. The detailed business case at **Appendix 3** contains both staffing and other commercially sensitive information and therefore has not been made generally available. Members may find it helpful to contact the report author for further clarification to assist in their consideration of this matter.

Implications

6.

Financial	The Medium Term Financial Strategy has assumed a £350,000 reduction in cost from 2011/12 onwards. Implicit within this assumption is that any set up costs will be met from savings arising in 2010/11.
Legal	There are significant corporate governance implications arising from adopting such a service delivery model principal among which are, the creation of a new Joint Committee and a robust Partnership Agreement.

Staffing	There are significant staffing implications arising. Informal consultations and briefings have already taken place; the detailed staffing implications will be considered as firmer proposals are put together.
Risk Management	Combining services in this way elevates the potential for service failure. The adoption of appropriate project management methodology to manage the change and robust performance management to manage the ongoing service delivery will significantly mitigate these risks
Equal Opportunities	None identified

Consultations

7. Staff employed by both Councils have been briefed on the proposals to date. More formal consultations will take place as the project progresses.

Effect on Strategic Aims

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| Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all. |
| The shared service model is seen as a key tool to deliver improved services with wider access points. |
| Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all. |
| None identified |
| Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live. |
| None identified |
| Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all. |
| The shared service will be hosted within the district and will potentially act as a catalyst for expansion in the future |
| Commitment to providing a voice for rural life. |
| None identified |

Conclusions / Summary

9. The outline business case highlights that there are clear financial and operational advantages to the Council in progressing with a shared service model for the delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Services. A successful implementation will not only secure significant financial savings but also deliver key service improvements and strengthen service resilience.

Recommendation

10. That a shared service model be pursued for the delivery of revenues and benefits services from October 2010 in partnership with Uttlesford District Council.

Background Papers: The following background papers were used in preparation of this report: None

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