

Support Services Partnership

Project Sponsor Chris Williams, Buckinghamshire County Council
Project Manager Ian Trenholm, Buckinghamshire County Council

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Board agree:

- a) The production of a costed business case to be delivered by December 2007, looking at options for partnership working across support services for the five councils and other local partners,
- b) The services to be considered, as outlined in paragraph 3.1

2. Project objectives

2.1 The objectives which this project is aiming to deliver across the specified support services are:

- Better service delivery outcomes, as perceived by the users of those services
- Cost savings from partnership working.

2.2 **Note** – this document is seeking sign off to commence the work which will produce the business case, which in turn will deliver the outcomes out-lined above

3. Scope

3.1 Within scope

3.1.1 At its meeting on 18 April 2007, CADEX took an initial view on the scope of this project. It agreed that the following broad categories of service should be included within the ‘core’ of this project, and form part of this initial phase of the project:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Human Resources (HR) | ➤ Legal Services |
| ➤ Payroll | ➤ Internal Audit |
| ➤ Finance
(excluding revenues and benefits) | ➤ Information and Communications
Technology (ICT) |
| ➤ Property services
(Facilities Management functions only) | |

3.1.2 CADEX agreed a further set of services as being defined in an ‘outer ring’ of support or front-line services, and thus for consideration at a later stage:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ➤ Communications | ➤ Revenues and Benefits |
| ➤ Democratic services | ➤ Procurement |
| ➤ Voluntary and Community sector
management | ➤ Property – strategic management of assets |

3.1.3 Assumptions

- There are opportunities for other public sector providers to ‘opt in’ if they wish
- All existing third party providers/services are within scope where the above services are currently provided under contract
- The current service both in terms of people, quality and costs is the ‘baseline’.

- Mechanisms for performance managing the delivery of proposed benefits, i.e. an Intelligent Client function

3.2 Out of scope

People who are embedded in other services for whom the activities above represent only a small part of their role

4. Benefits

4.1 Financial

The pathfinder bid document estimated that around £4m savings could be generated from this work-stream. The purpose of this project is to carry out the work required to substantiate or update that estimate and identify a delivery timetable for any changes.

4.2 Non financial

The business case in phase 1 of the project will identify service delivery outcome benefits which could be delivered in later phases of the project.

5. Deliverables

- 5.1 The first phase of this project will produce a business case which will set out a range of costed options for how, through partnership working, the partners will be able to reduce the cost of support services, and/or improve service delivery outcomes at no extra cost.
- 5.2 The business case will include detailed scope of services and, where relevant, the proposed legal vehicle(s) to be used to share services.
- 5.3 Where appropriate, the business case will describe the governance and performance management relationship between the ‘commissioners’ and ‘deliverers’ of services.
- 5.4 Other deliverables beyond phase 1 of the project will become clearer upon production of the business case and subsequent decisions by the partners as to the preferred way forward.

6. Timescales and key milestones

6.1 Within Project

6.1.1 Phase 1 (see Appendix 1)

- July – August: Detailed definition of the scope of the business areas under review (aka ‘mapping’). This activity to be led by, and take account of previous work undertaken for, the existing Professional Groups (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT), supported by consultants and overseen by project board.
- July – October: Initial investigation and gathering information, to include workshops for staff plus desktop research on performance and current people and other costs
- November: work-up of final options
- December: Business Case Produced
- February 2008: JIB

6.1.2 Phase 2 and 3 (see Appendix 1)

- Phase 2 of this project will run during 2008, exact timetable will depend on the outcome of Phase 1 of this project
- Phase 3 will be a live running stage which is currently expected to run from March 2009 (but is again dependent on the conclusions reached at phase 1)

6.2 Outside Project

- Reorganisations by non-council partners, notably in the health sector may impact on the potential quantum of savings
- The shared services elements of Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire improvement partnership
- Government decisions (e.g. from implementation of other parts of the White Paper, or changes in direction)

7. Estimated costs

- 7.1 Initial work suggests that the resources within each council to undertake the first part of the detailed mapping exercise will be identified and provided by the existing professional groups (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT) who already collaborate across Councils and, in some instances, have already identified options and opportunities for greater partnership working. The costs for doing this will be borne by each council. There is a concern that the capacity in each council to carry out this work is limited and there will be a need to augment this with external support. There is also a need for a challenge role in writing up the business case. The project is seeking up to £200K to support the work, on the basis that the more resources that can be provided internally the less consultancy time will be needed

8. Project Board

- 8.1 One representative from each of the participant councils, collectively acting as the project executive. As well as directing the programme of activity for this project, these representatives will be responsible for ensuring that resources within their respective councils are made available to undertake project working wherever possible.
- 8.2 Chaired by the BCC Director of Resources, on behalf of the project sponsor, acting as project leader and senior supplier of consultancy services.
- 8.3 Other public sector partners who opt to join in, either supporting project assurance or joining the project executive on behalf of their organisation.
- 8.4 Assumption is that deputies will attend in the absence of the formal representative.

9. Member involvement

- 9.1 In addition to the wider governance arrangements applying to the Pathfinder programme (JIB, Leaders Group, etc), Member involvement will be addressed as part of the project's communications plan.

10. Related projects / Work streams

- 10.1 The support services involved in this project are also involved in all other facets of the Pathfinder and there may be resource conflicts such as:
- Some cross-over with the local access work stream which may place conflicting calls on resources in areas such as ICT and HR
 - Legal and Finance are providing support to all other projects
 - Property services will be providing advice on buildings matters as changes take place

11. Key Risks

- If one, or more, partner(s) choose to limit the degree of their involvement in the project then the quantum of the savings may be reduced.
- If one or more partner is unable to offer timely access to the information required to produce the business case then the process will be delayed.
- If one or more partner is unable to make available the local specialists required then the production of the business case will be delayed.
- If one of the proposed partners takes a strategic position which does not enable it to consider all options then the quantum of the saving may be reduced

Programme Timeline for Support Service Partnership

