

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: Improvement and Efficiency Sub Committee

Date: 1st June 2010

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: **LONDON EFFICIENCY CHALLENGE FEEDBACK AND ACTION PLAN**

Contact Officer: Harriet Martyn, Policy Analyst
Tel: 020 8313 4439 E-mail: harriet.martyn@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Doug Patterson, Chief Executive

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

This is an opportunity for a member of the London Efficiency Challenge team to feed back to Councillors on the findings of the second part of the London Efficiency Challenge which took place on 13th January 2010. The action plan which has been developed by Bromley as a result will also be presented to Members.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are asked to note the recommendations made by the London Efficiency Challenge (LEC) team, as detailed in the attached report written by the challenge team and the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Members are also asked to note the actions that have been proposed by the Organisational Improvement Team based on the LEC team's recommendations and which have received sign off by COE.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost The London Efficiency Challenge is a free programme being run across all London Local Authorities by Capital Ambition. However, a subscription is paid to London Councils, Capital Ambition's parent organisation, by each Local Authority to fund their work. Other costs include officers' time taken to participate in focus groups or interviews over one half day in December 2009 and one half day January 2010.
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: All
 4. Total current budget for this head: £N/A
 5. Source of funding: As set out in 1. above.
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1 member of Organisational Improvement Team to organise and coordinate London Efficiency Challenge in Bromley. A total of 30 officers participated in focus groups over the two days of the challenge. Additionally, three Chief Officers and one Councillor were interviewed as well as three members of the Organisational Improvement Team.
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Part of 1 member of Organisational Improvement Team's time. Focus groups ran for 3 hours on 9th December and for a maximum of 1.5 hours on 13th January. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes.
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Main beneficiaries will be the service users of the opportunity projects identified by the London Efficiency Challenge and through the action plan developed as a result.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 What does it involve?

The London Efficiency Challenge (LEC) is a free of charge pan-London programme run by Capital Ambition to enable London local authorities to share best practice. Its principal aim is: ***'To identify cashable efficiency savings in order to deliver the best possible affordable services to London and Londoners'***.

3.2 Bromley's challenge team consisted of:

Jan Willis – Director of Finance, LB Barnet

Steve Stott – Audit Manager, LB Bexley

David Armin – Challenge Manager, IDeA

Caroline Stanger, Capital Ambition representative

3.3 London Efficiency Challenge set-up day

On 9th December the London Efficiency Challenge team carried out an initial set-up day at Bromley. The team met with COE in the morning to agree Bromley's priority areas across the Council where it was felt that the greatest efficiencies could be made in order to deliver improved services. The challenge team then conducted two 3 hour focus groups, one with frontline staff and another with middle managers. The five priority areas that were identified by the challenge team were:

- Mobile & flexible working (including accommodation)
- E-payments / transactions
- Partnership working
- Customer access
- A more strategic approach towards efficiency in the organisation

3.4 Between the set-up day and the main challenge day, the London Efficiency Challenge team were given the details of partners who Bromley had worked with or are currently working with in order to gain an objective perspective on what we are like as a Council to work with. The details of the following people were given to the team:

- SEN transport manager, LB Bexley
- Director of Finance, PCT
- IT manager, Lewisham

3.5 London Efficiency Challenge main challenge day

On 13th January the challenge team returned to Bromley for the main challenge day. Three focus groups were set up based on the priority areas that were identified in December; one on e-payments / transactions, one on customer access and the third on mobile & flexible working each lasting 1.5 hours.

3.6 Interviews were conducted with the Chief Executive, the Director of Resources, the Director of Adult & Community Services, the Chairman of I&E Sub-Committee, and three members of the Organisational Improvement Team including the Assistant Director. Each interview lasted approximately 45mins.

3.7 London Efficiency Challenge feedback

The challenge team put together feedback and recommendations which were presented to COE in the afternoon of 13th January.

3.8 There was general agreement that the alignment of various cross-cutting change programmes under the Organisational Improvement Programme was a positive step in the right direction. Furthermore it was encouraging that the four main projects that were identified as areas to improve and increase efficiency were projects that the OIP is already focusing on, namely mobile & flexible working/accommodation rationalisation, customer access, e-payments / transactions and joint working and shared services.

3.9 However, there were specific recommendations for how to deliver more efficiently and effectively on these projects. Suggestions of actions that could be taken to ensure successful delivery were also outlined. These recommendations are set-out in more detail in the full report and PowerPoint slides in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.10 London Efficiency Challenge Action Plan and next steps

The action plan was drafted by the Organisational Improvement Team as a direct result of the recommendations made in the London Efficiency Challenge team's report (Appendix 1) and received sign-off by COE on 14th April. The actions are categorised under the same five areas identified by the LEC team:

- Strategic approach to efficiency
- Flexible & mobile working and property use
- Customer Access
- Back office productivity and purchase to pay
- Joint working and shared services

3.11 The action plan also highlights the links between the LEC recommendations and other areas of work that have taken place across the Council (e.g. staff survey) and at a national level, for example the 'Putting the Frontline First' report, put together by the Local Government Task Force chaired by the Mayor of Lewisham and the Leader of Manchester City Council.

3.12 Capital Ambition has made £15k available to help Bromley in delivering the recommendations that came out of the London Efficiency Challenge around mobile & flexible working. Basis consultants are currently running workshops with the Environmental Services Department and will produce a report on the options for new ways of working differently. Following this,

discussions will be held with Property Services on the future layout of the office accommodation in St Blaise.

3.13 Once all London boroughs have participated in the London Efficiency Challenge, a report will be produced allowing councils to share their areas of good practice across London.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the London Efficiency Challenge is to find areas across the council where cashable efficiency savings can be made. Ultimately, this goal supports one of the BBB objectives under Excellent Council: “To balance the expectation to maintain one of the lowest council taxes in Outer London against service delivery needs”.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Recommendations and actions from London Efficiency Challenge will be used to deliver high quality cross-cutting projects across the council in a more effective and efficient way.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal Implications, Personnel Implications,
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	London Efficiency Challenge report to I&E sub - 17/12/2009 London Efficiency Challenge report to I&E sub – 11/02/2010 London Efficiency Challenge full report – attached pdf document London Efficiency Challenge feedback – attached PowerPoint document London Efficiency Challenge action plan - attached