

Decision Maker: Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee

Date: 19th January 2011

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

Title: ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

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Chief Officer: Doug Patterson, Chief Executive

Ward: Borough-wide

1. Reason for report

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Organisational Improvement Programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Note the progress made to date on projects led by the Organisational Improvement Programme

Corporate Policy

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

1. Cost of proposal: N/A No additional costs at this stage
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A. Opportunity cost of Organisational Improvement Team. No additional ongoing costs at this stage. Any business cases for future projects will include ongoing costs.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Organisational Improvement Team
 4. Total current budget for this head: £
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budgets
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 5 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-statutory - Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Beneficiaries will be identified as part of business cases developed through the programme. Potentially all customers and staff are beneficiaries of this improvement programme.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Since last reporting to I&E Sub-Committee, several of the projects within the programme have progressed significantly.
- 3.2 More detail on the precise progress, risks, issues and planned work is shown in the Programme Highlight report in Appendix 1. A very brief summary of the major workstreams' progress is given below for convenience.

Agency staff

- 3.3 Spend on agency staff during the first half of 2010-11 was £6.2m. If the annual spend reaches a projected £12m, this will equate to an increase of 100% compared to 2008-9 agency spend.
- 3.4 In September 2010, HR issued vacancy management procedures with, in particular, clear guidelines on how to recruit to short-term vacancies and in what circumstances it was considered acceptable to recruit agency staff to fill a post.
- 3.5 It is anticipated that in the new financial year spend on agency staff will decrease significantly. The Organisational Improvement Team will be working with colleagues from HR to devise a mechanism by which staff looking for deployment can be engaged rather than buying in agency staff for short term work.
- 3.6 Procurement are also currently working with recruitment agencies to control staff costs and a reduction in the margin paid is anticipated.

Civic centre accommodation

- 3.7 The report on civic centre accommodation went to the meeting of the Executive on 8th December 2010. Approval in principle was granted by Members to release £2m for the refurbishment programme to upgrade civic centre offices and release Ann Springman, Joseph Lancaster and the Old Town Hall by 2012-13.
- 3.8 Orders for the works are ready to be placed once final consultations have been held and agreement obtained from the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Resources.
- 3.9 Meetings are scheduled throughout January between each Director, the Head of Property and the Head of Improvement and Efficiency from the Organisational Improvement Team to consult on draft plans.
- 3.10 Proposals are also underway to amalgamate reception points across the council. The Director of Legal, Democratic and Customer Services will consult Directors on draft designs for the single point of contact.
- 3.11 This item is the subject of a full report to this committee.

Web upgrade

- 3.12 Since the Executive signed off on the capital to upgrade the website, a small project team has been put together to deliver the upgrade on time and to budget. As set out in the report to Executive at the time, this is a six month project and we are now reaching the half way point.

In the past three months the team have:

- Reviewed all the website content (over 4,000 pages) deleting around 10% of outdated content. All content managers have been interviewed and had a session working with the web team directly

- Completed a design survey and consulted over 100 people (including Members from the New Technology Working Group, Service Heads and their representatives, Designers, Customer Service Centre representatives, Communication Officers, ICT Officers, a freelance photographer plus groups of students who were set the challenge to come up with recommendations for the new site.)
 - Final designs have been completed working very closely with our private sector provider (the Company Jadu who presented at the last I&E Sub meeting)
 - New hosting/servers have been procured
 - Training on new software also completed for the IT development and Bromley Knowledge Teams
- 3.13 But there is still plenty to do and the project is moving into its most hectic period as the templates are completed and loaded up onto our new servers ready for the web team to start the process of migrating all the existing content onto the new site. All the content (documents, text, images etc) will need to be categorised correctly so that it is easy for customers to find what they are looking and they receive a positive customer experience. Work planned over the next few months ready for our go-live date on April 1st includes:
- Migrate 4,000 pages of content – plus 3 sub sites
 - Test and set up new servers and hosting arrangements
 - Work with new X-forms product to pilot new e-forms
 - Tender new e-bookings solution
 - Categorise all content using Local Government metadata
 - Refine search engine
 - Create new image library
 - Investigate integration with social media to encourage channel shift

Customer Contact Centre service migration

- 3.14 The landscape helpdesk is the next service to be migrated into the Customer Contact Centre in April.
- 3.15 Although the migration of the landscape helpdesk was agreed some time ago, it has been on hold due to technical development work required by the I.S. team who are currently occupied with the VR project and the web upgrade and in order to allow the Composting for All roll out to take place.
- 3.16 The back-office function of the registrars service will also be migrated into the Customer Contact Centre over the summer, once their new e-booking system is implemented in April. The e-booking system will allow back-office registrars staff as well as members of the public to book appointments to register a birth or death and notifications of marriage or civil partnership.

- 3.17 A list of services with a high volume of calls and/or a high proportion of abandoned calls was presented to the Customer Focus Group and to the Organisational Improvement Board for consideration.
- 3.18 The services which came out at the top of the list were housing, planning, building control and school admissions.
- 3.19 The Head of Customer Services is recommending to the Organisational Improvement Board that whilst some further analysis of volumes may be carried out, a final decision as to whether these services should be migrated into the Customer Contact Centre will be postponed to coincide with the work going on around amalgamating reception points across the council into a single point of contact.
- 3.20 In addition, the merging of the Resources Department with Legal, Democratic and Customer Services is likely to involve a piece of work identifying customer service teams across the council with a view to bringing them together under one new department. This potential restructure may affect any decisions made regarding customer service migrations.

Voice recognition

- 3.21 Phase 1 of the Voice Recognition (VR) project for internal use across the Council has now been live for just over 6 months and is used with great success by Members and Officers alike with an average of 600 calls being made to the system every day and a success rate of 80%.
- 3.22 Phase 2 – expanding the VR switchboard function for external use by members of the public is due to go live mid-January subject to User Acceptance Testing.
- 3.23 Extensive data quality checks have been carried out with teams across the council to ensure that service requests are captured as accurately as possible. The data has now been uploaded to the Telephonetics system ready for testing.
- 3.24 Call volumes for other simple requests with high volumes such as reporting missed bins and requesting a new recycling box have been evaluated and considered suitable for use with VR technology; this will form phase 3 of the project.
- 3.25 The benefits of the ‘report it’ function are that it will free up customer advisors’ time from more simple repetitive tasks so that they can focus on more complex calls. An option will remain for the customer to opt-out of the VR system at any point and talk to a customer advisor if they would prefer.
- 3.26 Officers from Waste Services, the Customer Contact Centre and the Organisational Improvement Team visited Croydon Council who already have the VR report it function in place and received approximately 75 calls through the system every day.
- 3.27 Further development work is required by the I.S. team to enable Telephonetics to access a resident’s information, held on the Council’s CRM web database, whilst maintaining the Council’s internet security features.

Shared services

- 3.28 The Shared Services Board between Bexley and Bromley continues to meet on a quarterly basis with the Chief Executive of Croydon and another Chief Officer from Croydon due to join the group on a permanent basis from January.
- 3.29 The Chief Executives from Bexley and Bromley met with the Chief Executive of Croydon to discuss potential areas for joint working.

- 3.30 Whilst Bexley and Bromley are primarily looking at opportunities in back-office services, Croydon presented many front-line areas that they would be interested in delivering in conjunction with Bexley and/or Bromley.
- 3.31 Bexley and Bromley have agreed to ensure that newly let contracts will have piggy-back clauses written into them.
- 3.32 Bromley's new IT and telephony contract, let to Sunguard in conjunction with Lewisham, as well as the new Exchequer services contract both have a piggy-back clause allowing members of South-East London E-governance Services Group (SELEG) and the London Contracts and Supplies Group (LCSG) to join the contract and take on part of the contract cost.
- 3.33 The Organisational Improvement Team will continue to track and monitor the shared service projects between meetings to ensure that projects are progressing and that as many opportunities as possible are being identified.

Organisational Design

- 3.34 As an inevitable consequence of the financial challenges the organisation faces, the structure of the organisation needs consideration and scrutiny.
- 3.35 The Chief Executive has recently announced the merger of the Legal, Democratic and Customer Service Department with the Resources Department. Further exploratory work, supported by the Organisational Improvement Team, is now underway to ensure our structure is as efficient and effective as possible and aligned to Members' objectives.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Although it is not possible to provide specifics the nature and scope of the programme will be likely to have an impact on existing policies such as HR.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As the business cases for these projects will/have been largely making the case for investment on an 'invest to save' basis and to be funded through 'capital', efficiency savings achieved through capital investments will mean changes and longer term savings to current revenue spend.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No obvious legal implications at this stage

7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All the projects mentioned above will have personnel implications as we continue to move towards a well skilled but smaller workforce.

Non-Applicable Sections:	
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	