

**FUTURE DIRECTION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES: NEXT STAGES**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 To report on the recent work on developing proposals for an integrated local service.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The report summarises some of the key issues and recent work relating to the development of integrated local service delivery and the intention to produce a detailed project plan over the coming months.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

(a) comment on the report; and

(b) delegate the detailed development work to the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services and agree that a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

#### 4. **Background**

- 4.1 At the last Committee meeting, the outline proposals for the development of integrated local service centres and related changes in the structure of Neighbourhood Services were approved.
- 4.2 The report covered the context and reasons for change. It also listed a number of objectives for the restructuring.
- 4.3 The proposed outline model sought to separate out back office functions and specialist services from those which would most effectively be delivered together in local service centres.
- 4.4 There has been limited time to develop the work since the last Committee meeting.
- 4.5 However, the recruitment process for the Neighbourhood Managers has commenced. This was considered a priority as the Directorate's middle management needs to be strengthened irrespective of the final shape of the structure. The posts of business planning officer and service development managers also require filling ahead of final decisions in order to prepare for changes such as resource accounting and the Joint Review.
- 4.6 Consultation has taken place with staff and Trade Unions and at the first stage, current third tier Managers are being considered for these posts.

#### 5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 In line with the proposals in the previous report, the core services in the integrated local service centres would be:-
- Housing management functions including allocations/lettings and rent collection and social work services for older people and people with a physical impairment. Money Advice and developing community safety services would also be valuable additions.
- 5.2 The basic structure would be a Neighbourhood Manager for each centre with separate Housing and Social Care teams working closely together. Some matrix arrangements will be required to provide appropriate professional supervision and supplement the line management accountability.
- 5.3 A key post will be the customer services officers. They will provide some advice and information on a range of services and some preliminary "filtering" and "sign post" people to the next stage, e.g. full assessment, provision of "simple service" referrals to the Voluntary Sector etc.
- 5.4 Services such as homelessness, sheltered housing and home care are currently the subject of reviews or major changes. It is envisaged they will, therefore, not be decentralised until a later stage in the developments.
- 5.5 A considerable amount of detailed work is required. This must include an assessment of the practicalities, logistics and budgetary implications. It is anticipated some useful lessons can be learnt from the West Bletchley Pilot Project.

- 5.6 Discussions about the inclusion of other Council and external agencies' services (such as primary health care) are only at the very early stages.
- 5.7 It is, therefore, premature to reach conclusions about the number of local centres and their boundaries.
- 5.8 There will need to be a debate on the balance between continuity and more radical change and whether there are advantages of beginning with one integrated local service centre.
- 5.9 The timing will need to take into account the SSI Inspection of Older People's Services scheduled for 2-16 May 2000 and the Joint Review planned for April – July 2001.
- 5.10 It is recognised that the next step must be to develop a detailed project plan.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

Proposals will need to achieve more sustainable service delivery. An assessment should be made of the impact on resources, use of buildings and travel.

### 6.2 Equalities

It is essential that the Council's equalities policies are adhered to during the implementation of the proposals.

### 6.3 Financial

The specific changes which are proposed must be contained within the current budget. Further work must include a detailed financial appraisal.

### 6.4 Legal

There are no direct implications.

### 6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Staff and Trade Unions will continue to be consulted on the implementation of all proposals.

## 7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 The proposals provide the basis for improving service delivery through the promotion of further integration and anticipate changes such as new legislation. The next stage of the work will include the development of a project plan.

Background Papers: Report to Neighbourhood Services Committee - 9 November 1999