

Budget Panel

June 22nd 2011

Report of: Laxmi Curwen, Corporate Projects Section Head
Title: Update on Corporate Process Improvement Programme and Service Reviews
Nature of Report For information and appropriate comment

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out
- details of the Corporate Process Improvement Programme
 - provides an update on current service reviews
 - an update of quick wins that were identified in November 2010
- 1.2 In Feb 2011, Corporate Management Board agreed to set up a Corporate Process Improvement Programme, to transform the way the council works so it operates "lean" customer contact and other corporate processes that provide value for money and satisfy our customers. The projects in scope for this year and beyond are shown below.

Project	Service	Status	Sponsor	Proj. Mgr
Development Management Admin Review	Planning	Started	J. Custance	S. Jones
Data Cleansing	Planning	Started	J. Custance	S. Jones
Complete Academy Implementation	R&B	Started	D. Gardner	P. Adlard
Bartec	ES	Started	A. Gough	B. Beri
Change scanning solution in Dev Mgt	Planning	Started	J. Custance	S. Jones
Income Management & Cash-Receipting	ICT	Started	D. Gardner	E. Tiernan
Review of print, post and copy functions	Corporate	Started	T. Taylor	D. Negrello
Channel Shift	Corporate	Started	T. Taylor	L. Curwen
Harmonise payments processes in CSC	Corporate	Started	T. Taylor	Dimple Patel
Harmonise R&B processes in CSC	R&B	Not started	D. Gardner	tbc
Environmental Health process review	ES	Not started	A. Gough	J. Hoy
ES Admin Review	ES	Not started	A. Gough	tbc

Whilst some of these projects will relate to specific services, the methods and approaches could be leveraged across other areas and therefore considered to be beneficial to be part of a themed programme. Details of the role of the programme, who is involved and reporting arrangements, are covered in the main body and appendices of the report.

- 1.3 There are three service reviews taking place in Housing, Culture & Community and Licensing. All three projects are on track and work is progressing to ensure that outcomes of the reviews are known in time for budget planning for next year. Whilst these projects are being managed outside the Corporate Process Improvement Programme, any proposals resulting from these reviews that affect corporate or cross service working will need to be considered for implementation purposes by the programme.
- 1.4 The majority of the quick wins identified as part of the six week review project last year have been considered and many suggestions implemented. There are however a few outstanding actions (e.g. room booking process) which have been slightly delayed.

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Report approved by: Tricia Taylor, Executive Director (Resources)

2.0 Background

2.1 In November 2010, the findings of a six week review of customer contact, corporate and other support processes reported to Leadership team that there were a number of areas that needed to be addressed. Some “quick wins” were agreed to be progressed by services by March 2011 and this is currently in progress. However other findings would need to be addressed in the medium and long term as they are expected to require more effort.

In December 2010, Leadership team agreed that the council’s portfolio of projects and programmes, which now includes the proposals resulting from service prioritisation, would be managed through a Programme Delivery Board being managed by the Corporate Management Board and that certain projects would form part of themed programmes. The theme of “customer contact” was identified and certain projects nominally allocated to this programme. During January 2011, discussions with Heads of Service took place to consider the extent to which there is overlap between service prioritisation proposals and proposals from the customer contact review and the resourcing requirements for certain projects.

Based on these discussions and further input at the Programme Delivery Board’s first meeting on 1st Feb 2011, it was agreed that the

- Customer contact theme would be extended and the programme renamed “Corporate Process Improvement” programme and its scope extended to include projects related to other corporate efficiency rather than just customer related ones.
- Simon Jones the consultant supporting the Head of Strategic Finance with service prioritisation would be extended for a period of 3 months till Sep 2011 to support certain projects
- A business process re-engineering consultant with expertise in “LEAN” thinking would be procured to support EHL review projects.

The use of external assistance is kept to a minimum with time limited contract periods. In every case a pay back period of within a twelve month duration is required. The “Lean Thinking” consultancy support is programmed to commence in July to support the Licensing Review. This report sets out what progress has been made in each of the areas above and provides a summary of the plan going forward. It also provides an update on what progress has been made against the quick wins action plans identified in November 2010.

3.0 Corporate Process Improvement Programme

3.1 The objectives of the programme

- To transform the way the council works so it operates “lean” customer contact and other corporate processes that provide value for money and satisfy our customers
- To identify and deliver cashable savings to contribute to the council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The projects in scope for this year and beyond are in 1.2 and further details are in **Appendix A**. Whilst some of these projects will relate to specific services, the methods and approaches could be leveraged across other areas and therefore considered to be beneficial to be part of a themed programme.

In addition to projects shown, there would need to be a piece of work that would assess the impact on the CSC of some of the above work. It is proposed that this is an ongoing work that forms part of the programme and reviewed at agreed intervals as part of the programme plan.

The role of the programme, details of who is involved and reporting arrangements are described in **Appendix B**.

3.2 Update on projects in progress or planned

Planning projects

There are 3 projects taking place in Planning to improve current processes. Due to capacity constraints within the service, these projects are currently being managed by Simon Jones. To date, the following progress has been made.

- Changing Scanning provider. This project will procure a new supplier to scan planning applications which will reduce contract costs and provide improved service levels. A business case, which has been completed and approved, anticipates an annual contract saving of £20,000. Service Prioritisation plans identified a target of £10,000 pa. The Invitation to Tender was issued in May with a closing date in Mid June. The aim is to commence the new contract from October 2011.
- Data Cleansing. This project was set up to correct 21,000 errors made in plotting properties in Uniform from 1976 to date which currently creates additional work when completing searches. The business case for this project identifies annual savings of £19,830 (equivalent of 0.5 FTE).
- Development Management Admin Review. This project will involve identifying process improvements in work of planning staff within the Technical Admin team. An external facilitator has run a 2 day workshop to help the team identify process improvements. An action plan is being developed to implement recommended actions. It is anticipated that there may be a need to review roles within the team and training may also be required. There have been 2 voluntary redundancies within this team and it is expected that this review along with the project above will result in efficiencies that will allow all of cost of the now vacant posts to be released as savings from Full Year 12/13.

Environmental Services

- Bartec. This project will implement the waste collection software and hardware into the depot back office and in vehicles. The software will allow real time prompts of waste collections for the crews, monitoring in real time of completed rounds and automatic updates to the Customer Service Centre on any bins not collected. This will allow the council to provide more accurate real time information on missed bin queries and create a basis on which further improvements to the process could be considered. The project plan is currently being finalised and phase one of the system is expected to go-live in September 2011.
- Environmental Health Process Review. This project will review EH processes to address feedback raised as part of the customer contact review work done last year. It is not intended to be a full service review but an improvement project designed to make current processes more effective particularly in relation to customer contact. The project has not started yet but expected to start in the winter and completed this financial year.
- Environmental Services Admin Review. This project will review the admin roles and processes across the whole of Environmental Services. The project will start in April 2012, six months after the team is co-located at the Depot and take approximately three months to complete.

Shared Services projects

The following projects are important to Watford Council as they will enable us to deliver our customer contact processes more efficiently and effectively and realise the full benefits of shared services.

- Income Management and Cash Receipting system. This project, to replace Watford's existing system with a new harmonised system with Three Rivers, is well underway

and will be completed by October 2011.

- Complete Academy Implementation: This project involves moving the R&B Academy system at Three Rivers from UNIX to Windows platform. This is a pre-requisite to the next project. A project plan has been drafted and agreed with Shared Services Management team and work is due to start week commencing 11 April 2011 and complete by Aug 2011.
- Harmonisation of Revenues & Benefits processes in CSC This project involves harmonising R&B processes and enabling CSC to handle more queries and to the same extent across both councils. It will require, amongst other things, implementation of ABC integration software and E-Benefits forms which have already been purchased. The project will enable the full benefits of Shared Services to be achieved including service improvement and potential cashable efficiencies. The project has not started yet. However, the CSC staff are currently being trained in using the Academy system so they can start taking some queries from June (e.g. account enquiry, copy bill request, etc).

Corporate projects

- Harmonisation payments processes in CSC: This project will define and implement processes to enable the CSC to take the full range of payments by “card” via the telephone and face to face. Currently, with a few exceptions, customers have to be put through to the Cash Office for these payments and the CSC can’t take card payments face to face. With the implementation of new Income Management and Cash Receipting system the CSC could take payments across all service areas. This project has not started and is under discussion with Shared Services as it will have an impact on the Cash office workload.
- Review of print, post and copy functions This project will review current in-house provision, service delivery and costs of corporate print, copy, post arrangements (including courier services). It will investigate the future print and post requirements of the council and how these can be delivered in the most effective and efficient way. The review will be completed by August 2011.
- Channel Shift This project is to investigate the feasibility and benefits of shifting to more cost effective customer contact channels in order to deliver cashable efficiencies for the council and improve customer satisfaction. Some work has already started to analyse current transactions in the CSC and an initial meeting held with a provider of voice recognition software in order to inform the project planning. Feedback will be sought from customers as part of any proposals emerging from this project. The project will be completed by Dec 2011.

4.0 Projects that are reviewing whole service areas

4.1 In addition to the process review projects covered by the Corporate Process Improvement programme, there are three projects where an entire service area is being reviewed with the aim of identifying efficiencies and service improvement.

Project SP indicates if part of Service Prioritisation	Savings target	Project Manager and any external support	Status
Housing Review (SP)	£50,000 FY11/12 £150,000 FY12/13	Rachel Dawson (PM) Simon Jones	The project is on track. The review is nearing completion. Report to Cabinet/ Budget Panel in June. The aim is to implement the majority of the changes by end of March 2012.
Culture & Community Value for Money Review	Not specified	Gary Oliver (PM) Simon Jones	The project started in April 2011. A PID is being drafted and it is expected that a review report will be ready to fit in with budget proposals in the autumn.
Licensing Review (SP)	£42,000 FY12/13	Justine Hoy (PM)	The project is currently being scoped with the aim being to start the project in June and complete by October 2011.

5.0 Quick Wins update

5.1 In November, it was agreed by Leadership Team that we should maintain the momentum of the review and address some of the suggestions which were quicker to implement by the end of March 2011. Services developed their "quick win action plans" and lots of the suggestions detailed on these have already been completed by individuals within those services.

Listed below are some of the cross cutting improvements that have already been implemented:

- Electronic payslips have been introduced
- Across most services, there are no longer separate minute takers for meetings, unless there is an exceptional reason to do so
- Voicemail protocol is available on the intranet to improve consistency of how voicemail is set up
- A variety of scripts used by the CSC have been updated to incorporate suggestions made by services to resolve enquiries more effectively. Some FAQs have also been updated.
- Frequency of CSC reports reduced from daily to weekly
- 2 additional Customer Liaison Officers in services now have access to Lagan to make the complaints handling process easier

There are also lots more within specific service areas and others that are still being worked on like the suggestion to enable on-line booking of meeting rooms.

There have been some suggestions that have not been able to be taken forward, mainly due to statutory reasons but also other constraints that mean making the suggested changes would have other negative impacts. For example, it was not possible to improve the electoral registration form as it is a legal form that can not be changed.

Appendix A Summary of projects in Corporate Process Improvement Programme

Service	Project Name	Key Benefits	Financial Benefits £	Project Sponsor	Project Manager	Complete by**	Status
Planning	Development Management Admin Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency • Reduction in days taken to view online applications 	50,000 pa	Jane Custance	Simon Jones	June 2011	In progress
Revs and Bens	Complete Academy Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRDC staff can print to WBC print room • Enabler of other R&B project shown below 	None	David Gardner	Phil Adlard	Aug 2011	In progress
Corporate	Review of print, post and copy functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service aligned to requirements and future proofed • Efficiency 	tbc	Tricia Taylor	Danielle Negrello	Aug 2011	In progress
Planning	Data Cleansing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in data quality • Efficiency – less time to do searches and correct data 	19,000 pa	Jane Custance	Simon Jones	Sep 2011	In progress
ES	Bartec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real time updates on bin collection and reduction in call backs from customers • Improved monitoring • Targeted communications on recycling • Efficiency 	tbc	Alan Gough	Bev Beri	Sep 2011	In progress
SS - ICT	Income Management and Cash-Receipting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved management control • Increased credibility of transactions and processes • Streamlined processes with more convenience for both Customer and Council • Compliance with the latest legislative requirements 	None	David Gardner	Emma Tiernan	Oct 2011	In progress
Corporate	Harmonise payments processes in CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service improvements • Efficiency 	tbc	Tricia Taylor	tbc	Oct 11	In progress
Planning	Change scanning solution in Dev Mgt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract savings • Improvement in turnaround times • Reduction in time taken to view applications on line 	20,000 pa	Jane Custance	Simon Jones	Oct 2011	In progress
Corporate	Channel Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency • Increased service availability for customers • Improvement in customer satisfaction 	tbc	Tricia Taylor	Laxmi Curwen	Dec 2011	In progress
Revs and Bens	Harmonise R&B processes in CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency • Service performance improvements 	tbc	David Gardner	tbc	tbc	Not started
ES	Environmental Health process review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective and efficient processes 	tbc	Alan Gough	Justine Hoy	tbc	Not started
ES	Admin Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency 	tbc	Alan Gough	tbc	tbc	Not started

** For review projects, the end dates refers to the date by which the review will be completed not necessarily the implementation of the review findings

Appendix B Corporate Process Improvement Programme Role

Programme Role

- Define and agree with leadership team and members the vision and guidelines for key corporate processes
- Ensure the effective set up and delivery of all projects that relate to the improvement of corporate processes including those related to improvement in customer contact and back office processes such as document management and administration
- Ensuring alignment of projects to corporate vision
- Monitor progress of projects and provide regular updates to the Programme Delivery Board
- Resolve issues and escalate as required
- Ensure effective integration of service projects with corporate functions such as CSC, Print, etc
- Co-ordination with other projects/programmes where there is dependency
- Ensure sharing of best practice, skills and where practical resources so projects are delivered effectively and efficiently
- To monitor benefits realisation

Programme Members

The programme will be a temporary arrangement; initially from April 11 to March 12 but subject to extension, with the following roles

- Programme Sponsor (Tricia Taylor): Director sponsoring the programme
- Programme Manager (Laxmi Curwen, Corporate Projects Section Head): Day to day manager overseeing the programme. This will involve compiling an overview of projects, liaising with project managers to ensure scope, plans etc in place and ensuring projects work effectively together, setting up and maintaining programme role.
- Project Managers & Sponsors: Each project will have individual project sponsors, project managers and steering group/project boards who will be responsible for setting and up and delivering projects.
- Programme Steering Group: Group including Programme Sponsor, Manager, and other nominated individuals who together will ensure the programme maintains its role as set out above. The group includes
 - Customer Services Section Head (Danielle Negrello) to ensure effective integration on customer contact processes
 - Head of Revenues & Benefits (Phil Adlard) as the service which has the biggest customer interaction, scope for channel shift and also involvement with document mgt
 - Business Manager from ICT (Emma Tiernan) to ensure ICT integration
 - Representative from Environmental Services (Alan Gough) as another service with potential for channel shift.
 - Representative from Planning (David Noble) given there are 3 projects from Planning within the scope of the programme

Reporting

- The programme steering group will meet on a monthly basis.
- All projects within the scope of the programme will be asked to send a copy of their progress report on a monthly basis to the Programme Manager. Projects will continue to report progress to their sponsors and Steering Groups/Project Boards as they do currently.
- The Programme Manager will, on behalf of the Steering Group, and in-scope projects provide an overall written progress update to Programme Delivery Board on a quarterly basis, who will in update the Leadership team following the meeting as they do currently. The programme update will also include status on benefits realisation of these projects.
- Regular updates to all staff via intranet and Wats up on the programme and its progress will also take place, in addition to project specific communications which project managers will be responsible for.