

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Shared Service – Building Control

Meeting/Date: COMT – 3rd November 2014
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) –
11th November 2014
Cabinet – 20th November 2014

Executive Portfolio: Strategic Planning and Housing

Report by: Head of Development

Wards affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

This report includes recommendations to Cabinet from work on the business case for a Building Control Shared Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils. This work has been undertaken in context with other shared service partnership work by both Councils and Cambridge City reported to Cabinet in October 2014.

A report on the Building Control Shared Service was previously taken to Cabinet in July 2014, which requested approval to explore the business as one of four options. Progress made on this and the other options is detailed in Appendix A of this report.

This is a key decision because it results in the authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to this Council's budget for the service or function to which the decisions relates.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agree to the formation of a Shared Building Control Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils; and that South Cambridgeshire should be the Lead Authority for this phase of implementation.
- b) Give delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Delivery), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing Strategy, to implement a Building Control Shared Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Councils.
- c) Note the intended use of the Transformation Challenge Award to fund short term costs necessary to implement the shared Building Control service as determined by the Shared Service Board.
- d) Agree the approach set out under Option 1 in Appendix A to underpin the further development of a Building Control Shared

Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils.

- e) Agree to progress a business case with Cambridge City to move towards a shared Building Control Service involving all three Councils. This will be reported to the three Councils in Spring 2015.
- f) Agree that South Cambridgeshire District Council, as lead authority, attend the Shadow Regional Board for Building Control, on behalf of Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City, in order to explore potential for a regional partnership. Any future such organisational arrangements to be by mutual agreement of both South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Councils (and also Cambridge City if they are involved in the Shared Service).

1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the work undertaken following the resolution at the July 2014 meeting and to seek agreement to implement a shared service with South Cambridgeshire District Council and progress a business plan to also include Cambridge City Council in the shared service.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has significant budget challenges to meet and part of our strategy to deliver further efficiencies, whilst protecting the quality of frontline services, is through sharing services with the Council's strategic partners.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The options considered are set out in Appendix A.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

- 4.1 This matter was considered at the 11th November 2014 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). Members have received assurances that service standards will be maintained and that the evidence that supports the business plan to generate an additional £60,000 per annum in income is robust. It has further been clarified that the net benefit of the savings and additional income referred to in paragraph 4.1 of Appendix A will be shared between the partners.

- 4.2 Having welcomed the opportunities the shared service could provide for employees in terms of career progression, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to approve the recommendations contained in this report. In addition, it is recommended that, to promote good governance, scrutiny arrangements are developed for the shared service.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

- 5.1 There are potential benefits arising from the options in this report including savings, but also risks associated with large IT projects and partnership working.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The actions and timetable are set out in Appendix A.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 Ensuring we are a customer focused and service led council – The Corporate Plan states that we want to become more business-like and efficient in the way we deliver services, including investigating a programme of shared services.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Building Control teams at HDC and SCDC have been jointly briefed on the contents of this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any legal implications will be addressed as the shared service moves forward.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The delivery of shared services will require additional capacity upfront in order to ensure effective delivery. However, it is anticipated that this will be recovered via future efficiencies and via external funding, in particular the Transformation Challenge Award.

10.2 The work undertaken concludes that a Shared Service can deliver further savings. Savings in HDC's Building Control have already been made in recent years with staffing costs falling from £458,000 in 2011/12 to £366,000 in 2013/14 (a 20% saving).

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There will be staff implications arising from a shared service which will need to be considered in more detail as the project progresses.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 The Corporate Plan includes a commitment to investigate a programme of shared services. The Council has committed to the principle of sharing services as part of its response to the current budget challenges. Without sharing services the Council will reduce its choices and options around sustainable service delivery models.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – Building Control Shared Service: a joint report by SCDC and HDC
Appendix B – Building Control Shared Service: Shaping and Supporting Principles

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Shared Service Reports to:

10th July 2014 Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and 10th July 2014 Cabinet;

15th July 2014 Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) and 17th July 2014 Cabinet; and

9th October 2014 Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and 23rd October 2014 Cabinet.

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