	Executive 14th March 2012.	**Agenda Item No.** **4**

Title	Corporate & Community Services Review – Team Structure, Channel Strategy & ICT Strategy
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Wards of the District directly affected	All
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A
Background Papers	Employment Committee report on Corporate & Community Services Structure - March 27th 2012

Contrary to the policy framework:	~~Yes~~/No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	~~Yes~~/No
Key Decision?	Yes/~~No~~
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/~~No~~
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes/~~No~~
For the Channel Strategy	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	**Date**	**Name**
Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer	23/02/12	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	23/02/12	Susie Drummond
CMT	23/02/12	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones
Section 151 Officer	23/02/12	Mike Snow
Finance	23/02/12	Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)	23/02/12	Cllr Moira Ann Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Informal consultation with the individuals, teams and partners affected from December 2011 to February 2012. Unions notified of proposals. Proposals updated following feedback. The Channel Strategy is informed by customer data from Mosaic.		
Final Decision?	Yes/~~No~~	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 A Channel Strategy has been drafted which covers all of the channels used by the Council's customers. These channels include telephone, face to face, website, Twitter, and post. The strategy sets out the principles for how we improve the way we deliver to our customers, making the best use of available resources. The Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy provides a framework and direction of travel for technology at Warwick District Council. The strategy will be realised through a number of methods that support or directly deliver the Council's strategic and operational priorities.

1.2 A review of the Corporate & Community Services (C&CS) service area has resulted in a proposed new structure. The proposal considered how to contribute to the financial savings the Council requires, while maximising the ability to deliver Fit for the Future. Delivering the Channel Strategy will be a key part of this.

1.3 A number of ongoing savings will be realised by the changes. A request is made for funding from the Transformation Reserve to fund a number of important temporary posts.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Executive approves the Channel Strategy and associated Action Plan attached in Appendix A and notes that the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Community Services will be monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

2.2 That Executive approves the Information & Communications Technology Strategy in Appendix B.

2.3 That Executive approves the request for funding of up to a maximum of £125,000 per annum from the Council's Service Transformation Reserve, to fund three temporary (2 year) posts in the Corporate and Community Services staffing establishment subject to Employment Committee's consideration of the staffing structure proposals at its meeting of 27/03/12.

2.4 Executive notes that agreement to recommendation 2.3 will still deliver a net saving of £122,300 against current and anticipated budgets over the next two years.

2.5 That Executive notes the Equality Impact Assessment on the Channel Strategy in Appendix C.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Channel Strategy is based on customer insight - understanding customer behaviour, and their needs from our services. The channels our customers use vary from more traditional ones like face-to-face and telephone, to newer channels like social media and mobile web access. The accountability for all channels now sits within one service area. By setting out the overarching principles and supporting service areas to use customer data, we can improve the efficiency of and access to services. The Strategy has a detailed action plan to ensure the delivery of key actions that will improve access to services for customers, which will be monitored by the Portfolio Holder.

3.2   Warwick District Council's strategic commitments and aspirations are enabled and underpinned by maximising the strategic and operational value of ICT. Whilst it is recognised that technology has tremendous potential, it is vital that the utilisation of technology reflects the business needs of the Council. The benefit of technology investment must be demonstrated in terms of either a financial return or by delivering better Council services to the citizens of Warwick district. The ICT Strategy provides a framework and direction of travel for technology at Warwick District Council. The strategy will be realised through a number of implementation vehicles that support or directly deliver the Council's strategic and operational priorities.

3.3   The Corporate and Community Service Area purpose is to give our customers the right advice and support at the right time. The most immediate challenge for the service area is to support the organisation and its people in a time of change. The next 2 years are extremely important, as there are financial objectives to meet and the culture change to deliver. To increase capacity while releasing savings, the proposed changes will help to streamline the structure and focus the teams' work on WDC priorities. The teams affected and Service Area Managers have been involved in the development of the proposal, through informal consultation. The Proposed Structure is in Appendix D and current structure is at Appendix E.

3.3.1 Lessons learned from systems thinking interventions to date include:
       • involve HR resource from the beginning to support staff;
       • focus effort on quick wins and areas where greatest impact can be made;
       • more progress is made when structure and high-level planning (project management techniques) are used to focus teams on delivery of results.
       These are reflected in the proposed structure.

3.3.2 Changes to the external environment are reflected in the proposed structure. For example, there is much less focus on external auditing of performance and the use of targets (National Indicators). The roles in the proposed structure focus purely on the work that needs to be done. Supporting and coaching our staff and members will be the focus.

3.3.3 There are a number of Systems Thinking projects running. Systems thinking often results in bringing experts closer to the customer, and new customer service skills are needed from staff. Examples include the Benefits team dealing with customers at the Leamington One Stop Shop and parking services taking customer calls rather than passing them back to the CSC. We need to train and support staff in gaining these customer service skills. We also need to improve the customer access channels, to meet the changing demands from customers.

3.3.4 The proposed structure involves the removal of seven existing posts from the establishment and the creation of four new posts but with only one of those being permanent. The three temporary posts are for 2 years only as a significant amount of the Council's required savings and cultural change will need to be realised and embedded during that two year period. After the two years the temporary posts will be removed from the Council's staffing structure.

3.3.5 It is recommended that the temporary posts are funded from the Service Transformation Reserve so as to provide a clear message that within a relatively short period, the organisation needs to achieve the necessary savings and it needs to change the way it operates. For that reason the costs have not

been built into the Council's financial projections. The changes will provide the Council with a net saving of £122,300 over the next two years.

3.4 The Channel Strategy has undergone an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure any impact on groups with protected characteristics has been recognised and, where possible, mitigated. The result of the EIA is that there is no action plan, as there is minimal impact on protected groups.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 **Policy Framework** – No changes to the following policies:
- Development Plan Documents
- Fit for the Future
- Food Law Enforcement Service Plan
- The plan and strategy which comprise the Housing Investment Programme

4.2 **Fit for the Future** – our vision of making Warwick District a great place to live work and visit is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The proposed structure will focus the available corporate resources on the delivery of Fit for the Future. The Channel Strategy will directly contribute to the vision by ensuring residents, businesses and visitors are able to access services effectively and efficiently.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

5.1 The Council is currently reviewing all of its services to make savings where possible. The proposed structure balances the need to have skilled resources delivering Fit for the Future with the need to contribute to the ongoing savings required.

5.1.1 The temporary costs are up to a maximum of £125,000 per annum for financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14, to cover the posts of Customer Contact Manager and two Organisational Development officers. It is requested that this cost is met from the Service Transformation Reserve for each of the financial years.

5.1.2 There will be a net anticipated saving of £122,300 over the next two years. From 2014/15 there will be ongoing revenue savings of £171,500. The 2012/13 Budget and medium term financial projections will be duly updated, with the savings reducing the amount due to be found from Fit For the Future in 2012/13.

5.1.3 No possible redundancy costs have been calculated at this point. If it is not possible to redeploy all staff through the agreed matching process, a further report will be presented to the Executive and Employment Committee to agree any redundancy and associated funding.

5.2 The staffing structure is due to be further reviewed in eighteen months time, as referred to in paragraph 3.3.4. There is obviously a risk that at that stage that one or all of the temporary posts are not removed. It will be for senior managers to ensure this is not the case.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

6.1 The option to not have a Channel Strategy or an ICT Strategy was considered. In considering implementing a channel strategy, there is often considerable

resistance to change. A channel strategy needs to become an integral part of the structure of the organisation and the way the objectives of the organisation are realised. Ensuring that the organisation is clear on the strategy for customer access is key. In a time of diminishing resources, we will focus our time on channels which are favoured by our customers. Priorities for action will be based on demand. We also need to recognise that people will use different channels not just for different types of interactions, but also to suit their own convenience. An integrated channel strategy is required that takes into account the varied ways in which local people may want to interact with the council, and that explains how we will deliver this.

6.2   The ICT Strategy is focused on the business requirements that technology will support and provides a strategic framework for the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) over the next four years. This strategic framework applies to ICT throughout the Council and will be used by Service Areas in shaping their ICT requirements aligned to their business priorities. Whilst it is recognised that technology has tremendous potential, it is vital that the utilisation of technology reflects the business needs of the Council. The benefit of technology investment must be demonstrated in terms of either a financial return or by delivering better Council services to the citizens of Warwick district.

6.3   The option to have a structure that removed posts without creating new posts was considered. This would have brought the largest immediate financial benefit, in that ongoing revenue savings would be greater. However, the capacity for the teams to drive delivery of Fit for the Future benefits would be much reduced. Hence the risk of not being able to achieve customer benefits, culture change as well as the significant financial savings would be greater.

6.4   The option to create a structure with only permanent posts was considered. This would have the advantage of not having to request funds from the Service Transformation Reserve. However, the ongoing budget savings would be significantly lower and therefore the contribution to revenue savings much less. The other advantage is that permanent posts bring stability to the service and staff. The peak of transformation work to drive savings and improvement will be in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years, so this is when the posts are required. The Service Transformation Reserve was created to enable services to continue to be provided pending delivery of required savings. The prudent option therefore is to set some of the posts up as temporary posts with a commitment to review.

7.   **BACKGROUND**

7.1   A previous re-structure in March 2011 and related Employment Committee reports proposed a number of experiments and temporary arrangements. The Improvement & Performance, Human Resources and the Media Room teams are now part of the Corporate & Community Services service area. The proposed Structure will go to Employment Committee on 27th March 2012 for approval. Informal consultation on the proposals has taken place with the teams affected, Service Area Managers and key partners. A number of changes have been made, based on the feedback received.

7.2   Corporate and Community Services consists of: Customer Services (including the Customer Service Centre, One Stop Shops, Document Management Centre, Website, Media Room), Community Partnership Team, ICT, Human Resources

and Improvement & Performance. Our overarching purpose is to give our customers the right advice and support at the right time. The most immediate challenge for the service area is to support the organisation and its people in a time of change. Fit for the Future has 2 channels of work – activities and projects delivering societal outcomes which are managed by the Warwick Partnership, and activities and projects designed to improve the organisation and WDC's services which will be managed through a Change Programme. A large part of C&CS is focussed on supporting the Change Programme in addition to its day to day work. The next 2 years are key, as we have financial objectives to meet and the culture change to deliver.

7.3   Many councils are focussed on moving customers to cheaper channels, most often the internet. At Warwick District Council we have a different view - we want customers to be able to use the most effective channel for them, where we can do so with the resources we have available. Rather than putting every service on to every channel, service areas should consider the customer demand and the value of the service on any channel. The Channel Strategy explains how WDC will meet the demands of our customers using the resources we have available.

7.4   Unlike previous years when the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) programme dominated the ICT Strategy, there is no single ICT project or programme that will achieve the Council's objectives. Rather ICT will act as an enabler for Fit for the Future. In addition, the on-going Systems Thinking initiatives will assist Council services to exploit current ICT investments enabling waste to be driven from existing business processes.