

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 24TH JUNE 2008

SUBJECT: DESIGNING BETTER SERVICES UPDATE

BY: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee regarding progress on the Designing Better Services (DBS) Project.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A(11) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to Managing the Finances of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee note the progress in respect of the DBS Project.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A progress report on this project was provided to the Policy Committee on 30th April 2008 (para 7 off the minute refers). The Project Board responsible for oversight of the project are committed to regular updates to this Committee.
- 3.2 The last 18 months have seen the emergence of a number of new national priorities relating to the reform of public services. Part of this agenda is real service improvements and efficiencies by Designing Better Services through simplifying, standardising or sharing, all of which complements the ongoing work of the Moray Council's Efficient Government Working Group. Moray Council, along with 29 other Councils, has been awarded a grant of £150,000 by the Scottish Government for a review of service delivery across the Council. The Council is being supported in this task by consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The project has four distinct stages as follows:

Stage 1 Analysis	Stage 2 Opportunity Selection	Stage 3 Models of Working	Stage 4 Business Case
Mid April	End June	Late July	End of Aug

4. PROGRESS

- 4.1 The DBS project continues to make good progress and remains on schedule. Following successful completion of the high-level data capture a detailed analysis of the collected data was undertaken. This identified 16 themes for our cross-cutting workshops – some of these are common to other Councils pursuing this agenda, others are unique to Moray. The workshops began in May and continue into early July.
- 4.2 The workshops are led by a specialist from our consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers, facilitated by DBS team members and attended by staff from across the Council. A main output of these workshops is a series of gap analyses that identify the Council's current position and where it needs to be in the context of leading practice principles for each workshop theme.
- 4.3 In the course of the workshops, we have been able to add detail to opportunities for service improvement or efficiency identified by staff during the data gathering phase and, importantly, add new ones. Common themes are emerging – many suggestions for improvements to departmental ways or working would appear to offer council-wide benefits. Individual opportunities that appear to offer limited benefits may also yield greater benefits if linked to other opportunities.
- 4.4 Feedback from workshop attendees has been largely encouraging. The input of attendees is a vital element of this stage and the DBS team has had great support from colleagues across the Council. Upon completion of the workshops, the collected opportunities will be distilled and ranked according to a standard scoring framework, prioritised by the Project Board and taken forward into Stage 3.

5. NEXT STAGE

- 5.1 "Stage 3 – Models of Working" involves adding further detail to the identified opportunities, exploring the costs and benefits and considering their feasibility and ease of implementation. Service staff will again be involved to assist in developing business models for the opportunities that have been identified for further investigation and development. Prioritisation of this list of potential opportunities will be undertaken by the Corporate Management Team.
- 5.2 The fourth and final stage is the development of a business case to support the changes in working practice. This will assess the potential capital costs of implementing the changes against the identified savings and service improvements. This final stage is expected to be completed by the end of August, and thereafter high-level recommendations will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

Undertaking the project should identify high level opportunities that assist the Council deliver service improvements and efficiencies.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy and legal implications rising from this report.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There is no further resource implications above that reported to the April 2008 Policy Committee meeting.

(d) Consultations

The Corporate Management Team have been involved in the background to this report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The DBS project is making good progress. It remains on target with regards to the project plan.

Author of Report: Mark Palmer, Chief Financial Officer

Background Papers:

Ref: MP/LMS/452304