

REPORT TO: POLICY COMMITTEE ON 5th AUGUST 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. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The DBS project began in March 2008 and is Moray's response to a national initiative that is being driven by the COSLA Improvement Service. Following pathfinder projects in Edinburgh and Glasgow, this programme is being undertaken by the remaining 30 Scottish councils, each supported by Scottish Government funding of £150K. The prime objective of the programme is to identify areas where simplification, standardisation or sharing can lead to service quality improvements and/or material efficiencies. The project comprises four stages. Stage one, requiring data collection and analysis, was completed in April. Stage two involved a series of cross-cutting workshops based on themes suggested by the first stage - concluding July. These workshops considered 'opportunities' (*definition: a different way of doing things that might offer a business improvement*) gathered during the collection phase, identified new opportunities and undertook gap analyses by comparing Moray's current approach to leading practice for that theme. Stage 3 sees the refinement of opportunities into proposals that can be taken into Stage 4 as business cases. The final output from the project will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in September.

4. PROGRESS

- 4.1 The last Policy and Resources Committee Report acknowledged the assistance provided by staff during the analysis phase and this support has continued. The workshops were attended by about 120 staff who made a major contribution to the project's progress. Our consultancy partners, PricewaterhouseCoopers, were impressed by the quality of staff input to the workshops and feedback from the staff who attended was also very positive. At the end of Stage 2, some 650 opportunities had been gathered. These were consolidated by the project team into 120 and further distillation took these down to 25. This figure was reduced to 17 by the DBS Project Board on 3rd July and further work is now taking place to develop these.

5. STAGE 3

- 5.1 The DBS team is part-way through "Stage 3 – Models of Working". This involves adding more detail to the identified opportunities, exploring the costs and benefits and considering their feasibility and ease of implementation. Service staff have been involved as business models for implementing opportunities are developed. Prioritisation will be undertaken by the Corporate Management Team late August. It should be stressed that opportunities that have not survived to this point are not being discarded. Service-specific opportunities are being fed back to departments for consideration while others will be retained for future review. Output from the project, including weekly Project Board reports, appears on the DBS button on the Council's intranet site.

6. NEXT STAGE

- 6.1 The fourth and final stage is the development of a business case to support the changes in working practice. This will pitch the potential capital costs of implementing the changes against the identified savings and service improvements. This final stage is expected to be completed by late September, and thereafter high-level recommendations will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

7. 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 & Legal

There are no policy and legal implications rising from this report

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

There are no further resource implications above those reported to the June 2008 Policy Committee Meeting.

(d) Consultation

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

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The DBS project is making good progress. It remains on target with regards to the project plan and within budget.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: DM/LJC/473620