

Scrutiny Committee



Report of Head of Partnerships and Insight

Author: David Wilde

Telephone: 07540 349135

E-mail: David.wilde@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: Edward Blagrove

Tel: 07958 700461

E-mail: edward.blagrove@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

To: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Five Councils Contract Changes and Action Plan

Recommendations

- (a) Note the progress made on implementing changes to the Five Councils Capita Contract and make any recommendations arising to Cabinet.
- (b) Note the action plan attached at Annex A for the short term (1 year) to resolve other outstanding issues across our technology platforms and the Five Councils contract and to establish a medium-term technology strategy

Purpose of Report

1. This report updates Members on the progress to date and next steps with regards to completing and implementing planned changes to the Five Councils Capita contract and establishing an action plan for the Council that will support our business direction and priorities for the next 5 years.

Background

2. Over the last 6 months the Council's Chief Executive and Officers have been working with our service provider Capita to:
 - a. Rectify a number of shortcomings in service delivery which have not met the Council's expectations;

- b. Rebalance the overall service delivery models for some of our services to ensure roles and responsibilities are better defined and more clearly accountable between service provision and ownership of strategy and direction;
 - c. Reshape the contract to reflect these changes and ensure future delivery meets our expectations.
 - 3. In addition to this work the Council needs to establish a clear direction for technology investment and provision to support our business ambitions and objectives going forward, embracing the opportunities the digital revolution offers to do things quicker, better, cheaper and right first time. The Technology Strategy will deliver that.
 - 4. First taking the current service delivery issues, we have worked closely with Capita to develop and take forward five contract changes for:
 - a. Establishment of an IT end user computing environment for South and Vale Councils only, meeting our compliance needs for GDPR and enabling a range of new technology opportunities for secure mobile, flexible and multi-agency working;
 - b. Return of the Fraud Service in the Revenues and Benefits function as an in-house service so we can continue to grow our success in this field;
 - c. Bringing finance business partner roles and a number of other key responsibilities back in-house and better defining the roles and responsibilities between the supplier and customer across the finance function;
 - d. Bringing ownership of strategic Human Resources (HR) back in house and better defining the roles and responsibilities between the supplier and customer across the HR function;
 - e. Upgrading our finance system to a fully supported and up to date version of Unit 4 Business World (formerly called Agresso)
 - 5. The scope of the changes for b, c and d are virtually agreed, with the changes intended from the end of October 2018, subject to any time limitations set by TUPE and subject to completion of the revised inter-authority agreement between the five councils. The scope of the changes for a and e are also near completion. The proposed changes will be submitted to Cabinet in October.
 - 6. These changes are only part of a wider action plan to achieve stability, attached at Annex A. It is still in its early stages of delivery but collaboration with all suppliers has been positive and the changes being taken forward are being well received by staff.
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7. Finally, the Technology Strategy will provide the Council with the means to drive IT in the direction it needs for business purposes for the next 5 years and puts it back in control for service provision and investment decisions. The final version will be presented to Cabinet for approval in October 2018 with the supporting roadmaps for delivery completed as part of the 2018-19 business planning process.

Financial Implications

8. Changes b, c and d are cost neutral, achieved through contract adjustments.
9. The changes covering the core IT service and the Finance IT systems are expected to be funded within the established contract envelope in place for current services and anything in addition to that will be considered on its merits as part of the final business case for each change
10. For the technology strategy, any financial implications will be examined as part of the 2018-19 business planning round and the resulting delivery programmes will be resourced under those business plans agreed as part of the medium term financial strategy.

Legal Implications

11. The changes will be approved through the Five Councils Partnership change process and also through the Council's own governance arrangements. External legal advice will be sought on how to document the changes. The revised inter-authority agreement, which is close to being agreed, will need to be in place before these changes are made.

Risks

12. Until the core IT infrastructure has been brought up to a suitable standard for reliable delivery we remain at risk of service outages and performance failures which significantly impact the Council's ability to do business.

Conclusion

13. Good progress has been made with turning around the services delivered by Capita under the Five Councils contract and tangible improvements are now visible. The enactment of the first 5 changes over the next 2 months will address the immediate concerns and the wider tactical plan, if delivered in full, will put our Councils back on a stable footing with IT and other core services.
 14. The Technology Strategy, working as part of our wider business plan, will ensure the Councils are setting the direction they want for service transformation and the realisation of the potential that digital offers to meet the needs of our residents and business in the future.
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