



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13TH MARCH 2018

AGENDA ITEM (11B)

UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE BUILDING CONTROL ROADMAP (MARCH 2018)

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| Accountable Member | Sue Coakley Cabinet Member for Environment |
| Accountable Officer | Stuart Rawlinson Service Business Manager 01993 861385 stuart.rawlinson@publicagroup.uk |
| Purpose of Report | To provide Members with an update in relation to progress made in implementing the Building Control Roadmap. |
| Recommendation | That the update report be noted. |
| Reason for Recommendation | Progress towards delivering the Roadmap is proceeding well and it is likely that the financial target amounts set out will be achieved a year early, i.e. 2018/19 financial year as opposed to the 2019/20 year as initially set out. |
| Financial Implications | The Council is likely to receive increased income as a result of the implementation of the roadmap in addition to other non-cashable benefits as set out in the document. |
| Legal and Human Rights Implications | Complies with core legislation set out by the Building Act 1984 (as amended). |
| Environmental and Sustainability Implications | None |
| Human Resource Implications | None |
| Key Risks | Risks associated with the implementation of the Roadmap are managed on a monthly basis by the Delivery Manager (Andrew Jones) and Product Owner (Stuart Rawlinson). |
| Equalities Analysis | This decision will not have an impact on a specific group. |

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| Related Decisions | None |
| Background Documents | None |
| Appendices | None |

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| Performance Management Follow Up | <p>A number of KPI and service level indicators are monitored throughout the year; the reported KPI's are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan checking performance (monthly - reported quarterly) • Income (monthly - reported quarterly) |
| Options for Joint Working | All work associated with implementing the Roadmap has arisen as part of the collaborative project to bring building control teams together across Publica partners. |

Background Information

1. Cotswold District Council began implementation of the Building Control Roadmap In September 2016 with recruitment and appointment of a shared Building Control Manager, who came into post in November 2016.

2. This post was also the delivery manager responsible for aligning three teams across the Publica to realise the following benefits:

- £93,000 increased income/savings by close of 2019/2020 financial year;
- improved resilience;
- improved processes and performance;
- improved customer service;
- improved efficiencies from smart-working;
- improved business development by creating dedicated technical support.

3. The alignment process has been undertaken throughout 2017, and has achieved the following key outcomes and anticipated outcomes:

Increased income/savings by close of 2019/2020 financial year

- The baseline income for the business case was £256,000 (2016 Financial Year), with fee earning staffing costs of £193,000; our projected end of year position is an income of £277,000 with fee earning staffing costs of £156,000.
- The number of applications received has risen from 650 in the 2016 financial year to a projected number in excess of 700 by the close of this financial year.
- A review of the fees and charges relating to building control products has been undertaken, including a benchmarking exercise. The new charges are likely to bring in the additional revenue noted in the roadmap of circa £28,000, subject to our work profile remain similar in the 2018/19 financial year.
- The LABC Partnership scheme enables companies to have a one-to-one relationship with a preferred authority for advice and plan appraisal throughout England. The number of partners has increased from 2 in 2016 to 13 in 2017. Partnerships provide an insight into both the quality of the councils building control services (as businesses are able to partner with any authority nationally), provide additional revenue and often facilitate access to larger schemes.

- With due regard to insight gained from our customers, additional products have been launched including energy efficiency ratings and warranty inspections, providing a single port of call for our customer and effectively allowing the service to upsell other valuable products, which they were formerly unaware of.

Improved Resilience

- More effective processes have been put in place (as discussed in process/customer service sections) to provide additional technical support for surveyors from the back office, allowing them to focus on their site inspections and relationships with clients.
- Surveyors from across Publica can now support this specific centre to ensure that urgent or pressing work is completed when there is an unexpected lack of capacity through a surveyor being absent.

Improved processes and performance

- Performance improvements have been achieved in relation to plan checking, which has risen significantly and remained above its indicator value for the entirety of the transformation project to date. This indicator is reported to councillors quarterly.
- Improved performance has been achieved in relation to increased uptake of the LABC Partnership Scheme. The number of partnerships held by the authority, rising from 2 at the commencement of the project to 13 and growing.
- The team has been recognised as one of the select few to be part of the first tranche of implementing the LABC ISO for Building Control Standards. This will build on the work the team have undertaken in relation to a service audit against the latest building control performance standards, which can into force in April 2017. The service has achieved a good level of assurance against these standards.
- Process improvements have been achieved, increasing the number of standard templates used by technical support officers and surveyors for routine tasks, which has reduced the amount of time taken by these process steps.
- Applications can now be submitted electronically and payment received 24 hours a day via the I-apply system, which automatically loads data into our back office database.
- Site inspections can now be booked via the LABC application from smart phones.

Improved customer service

- Applications and Payments can now be taken either electronically 24 hours a day or over the phone by the technical support team in business hours. This ensures that the customer can access the service quickly and their business is secured immediately.
- Once a client's project has commenced, they are allocated a surveyor and their contact details. This has enhanced their experience, giving them the ability to contact their appointed surveyor directly for advice in relation to their business and reduced wasted visits. If they are unavailable, the call will move directly to the technical support team, who either resolve the issue or book a specific time in for return contact.
- Customers are able to request inspections 24 hours a day via the LABC smartphone application.

Improved efficiencies from smart working

- The team have all been issued with laptops, which allows them to be flexible in their working locations and significantly less reliant on the office.
- The team are currently planning a trial of netbooks for remote site working in order to move to a fully electronic means of note capture and reduce double entry of data.
- Officers are making use of video conferencing facilities, reducing unnecessary travel.

Improved business development by creating dedicated technical support

- In June 2017, a dedicated technical support team for building control was created by migrating existing resources from the broader planning support team. This has provided the team with a significant level of support and increased focus on building control activities through co-location and implementing a different work prioritisation system.
- Work is currently in progress to realise a fully virtualised technical support team which will consist of resources at all three centres forming a virtual hub to support Publica. We expect to complete this work in 2018.

4. The Council's internal auditors, South West Audit Partnership, undertook an audit into project controls in March - May 2017, finding there to be a Good level of assurance. The report has previously been submitted to councillors as part of South West Audit Partnership's mandate.

5. In conclusion, the service has made significant progress and laid the foundations for a modern and effective public service, which meets its customers' needs. Evidence is already being collected from customers, such as our growing number of partnerships and rising number of applications, which suggests that the incisive changes made to the service will make it even more sustainable in the future. Finally we believe that the service transformation, wholly met from existing service budgets, has effectively managed the key internal and external risks associated with the change and continues to focus on our prime objective of providing high quality, safe homes within the Cotswolds.

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