

138 Programme Nexus – One Year On

The Cabinet considered Report No 30/13 relating to progress on the Council's transformation programme entitled "Programme Nexus" including details of the achievements made during the first 12 months of the Programme and identifying the challenges the Council faced in seeking to modernise and improve its service provision.

The Report:

- Recapped on the rationale for change and the original aims of Programme Nexus in moving towards the Council's vision of "One District One Council";
- Considered the early achievements; and
- Outlined new challenges and opportunities over the next 12 months and proposals to meet them.

There were 3 main national drivers for change namely:

- A robust deficit reduction programme which included reductions in public spending, so as to reduce the national deficit and annual borrowing requirements over the medium term;
- A programme of decentralisation (known as "the localism agenda") that aimed to empower local people and communities to influence, shape and run local services themselves; and
- An aim to develop a balanced economy, based on a thriving and innovative private sector, which was supported by an enabling public sector.

Programme Nexus related to changing the way the Council did things; changing its mindset; becoming an outward looking and customer focused organisation which could adapt quickly to changing external pressures; and striving to be a learning organisation which had an empowering leadership style. Its vision was to create "One District One Council", and bring the Council closer to the residents it served.

The Council had promised its residents an unswerving commitment to customer service; that it would connect with its workforce and partners to inspire exceptional contribution; and that it would save money and, where possible, put it back into the pockets of its residents' and businesses where it could.

Paragraph 5 of the Report highlighted the key functions that Programme Nexus would provide. During the past year, in carrying out those functions, the Council had crystallised its ambitions and proposed way of working and had:

- Committed to a 0% Council tax increase and a savings target of £2.9 million over the period April 2011 to March 2015;
- Consolidated workspace and was being more responsive to customer needs through an Agile Working approach;
- Developed a new approach to citizen and community participation and engagement;
- Taken a pro-active approach to business and economic development; and
- Adopted a new approach to leadership, management and organisational development.

They were ambitious goals that required cultural change across the Council which took time and required effective political and corporate leadership and sustained commitment and skill from staff.

Significant progress had been made over the past 12 months, details of which were set out in the Report and in the summary document at Appendix 1 thereto. The Chair drew Cabinet's attention to the paragraph entitled "Energy efficiency" on page 6 of the summary document and explained that the energy efficient air-source heat pump heating systems had not yet been fitted in Barcombe and Rodmell but that such work would be undertaken in March or April 2013.

The December 2012 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had confirmed that local government continued to bear the brunt of public spending cuts and it was anticipated that a further £1.3 million worth of savings was needed from April 2015 through to March 2018.

Paragraph 8 of the Report outlined the opportunities which were being implemented by the Council and paragraph 9 set out details of the ways in which it would progress a change in its customer focus.

The next generation of public services would be more participative, more personalised and driven as much by community and individual needs as by bureaucratic structures and processes. People were increasingly looking for 24/7 access to online services from a smart phone or tablet, choice, high quality, and a say in how services were provided.

The Council wanted to prepare for that change by creating an innovative democratic network across the District for which it was to build a lasting framework for consultation, civic engagement and participative local services. The Council needed to review its working practices to ensure that it was "fit" for change and would maximise opportunities for co-location and move towards much more customer focused "one-stop" service delivery.

Resolved:

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| <p>138.1 That the achievements made during Year 1 of Programme Nexus which have built a springboard from which the Council can deliver improvements in service provision, (details of these achievements are set out in the Summary at Appendix 1 to Report No 30/13), be acknowledged;</p> | CE |
| <p>138.2 That that the Government's deficit reduction programme and, in particular, the recent (December 2012) Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, be noted and acknowledged, together with the 2012 Open Public Services White Paper's commitment in providing greater competition, choice and accountability in public services now demands radical change in the way that services are provided and that this cannot be achieved simply through maximising efficiencies and redesigning current services;</p> | CE |
| <p>138.3 That the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team be directed to make "customer access and service" the focus in developing a wholly new approach to the provision of council services with the objective of moving to "one-stop" service delivery; and</p> | CE |
| <p>138.4 That, in developing the approach described in 138.3 above, the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Maximise the opportunity afforded by the co-location of services and staff at Southover House, Lewes, to provide improved, holistic and seamless customer services; and(b) Continue the development of the Council's People Strategy (getting from "Good to Great" through people) which was outlined in the Report to Cabinet in November 2011. This strategy focuses on building the capacity, skills, culture and work environment the Council needs to become a great organisation and an exemplar employer. | CE |

Reasons for the Decisions:

To note that whilst significant progress has been made to date, the financial challenges ahead have become tougher and the Council needs to move to a new model of service delivery if it is to maintain pace with Government and customer expectation, make financial savings and, at the same time, improve its service provision and make a significant contribution to the Government's ambition that the public sector should champion decentralisation and the development of a balanced economy.