

## WORCESTERSHIRE ENHANCED TWO TIER (WETT) PROGRAMME

(Report of the Joint Chief Executive)

### 1. Summary of Proposals

- 1.1 The Councils of Worcestershire have a shared vision and ambition for developing the way we work together to improve the quality of life for our Communities. Collectively we are on a journey, which is heading towards establishing and embedding an Enhanced Two Tier approach to delivering a number of key services.
- 1.2 The Council Partners' underlying principles in relation to this work are that the Customer will be at the heart of our service design and delivery and the provision and support of services must be as efficient as they are effective.

### 2. Recommendations

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that  
the report be noted.**

### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

#### Financial

- 3.1 During late 2008 the WETT programme successfully secured funding from the West Midland Improvement & Efficiency Partnership. There is currently £240,000 available to support the further development and implementation of WETT projects.
- 3.2 During early 2009, Capital funding was made available by the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) via the West Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (WM IEP), to support Local Authorities to deliver 'transformation' programmes, which it is considered could deliver significant service improvements and efficiencies.
- 3.3 The Worcestershire Councils submitted a combined bid, based around our WETT Regulatory Service Proposal and have since received confirmation that the WETT Regulatory Services Project

has been successful in securing £200,000 Capital funding to assist in the delivery of the ICT elements of the project.

- 3.4 The overall aim of the project as detailed above is to secure efficiency savings and service improvements – the specifics will be set out in the specific business cases.

### Legal

- 3.5 There are no specific legal implications contained within this report.

### Policy

- 3.6 None associated with this report.

### Risk

- 3.7 No specific risks associated with this report – a risk register will be developed as part of each business case.

### Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 There are no sustainability or environmental issues arising from this report.

### Report

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 During late 2008, the Worcestershire Council Partners were successful in a bid for external funding to support the development of an Enhanced Two Tier Working programme. This funding supported the recruitment of an interim Programme Manager to work with Council Officers and Members to develop this work.
- 4.2 Phase 1 of the developing Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) programme focussed on establishing a strategic consensus from Chief Executives and their Council Leaders for a preferred portfolio of Council services to be taken forward for development.
- 4.3 The Chief Executives and Council Leaders considered a number of services identified as priority for development which had been collated following consultations across the seven Council Partners.
- 4.4 Along with this, the Chief Executives and their Leaders considered the broader aspects for establishing a short list of services to be taken forward as those services which offer the best County wide partnership opportunities and potential benefits to our Communities e.g:-

- i) Services which can deliver significant, service improvement and increased efficiency across all Councils through collaborative working, e.g. increased value for money;
  - ii) Services which are most appropriate for delivery through centralised service delivery channels e.g. the Worcestershire Hub;
  - iii) Services which may offer the best return on investment if delivered through Two Tier / Shared Service partnerships.
- 4.5 Chief Executives & Council Leaders agreed 3 main service themes to prioritise for this further development i.e:-
- i) Environmental Services: including: Waste Collection, Street Scene & Regulatory Services;
  - ii) Corporate Support Services: Including: ICT, Human Resources, Finance, Property, Procurement and Legal & Democratic services;
  - iii) Youth & Community Services.
- 4.6 The initial phase of the programme also established resources from each Partner to support this work. These key Officers formed Project Teams around each of the agreed services work streams.
- 4.7 Throughout February and early March, a number of Project Team workshops took place, which involved the teams developing new and innovative ideas for delivering services through Partnership working. This has been the core activity of Phase 2 of the developing WETT programme.
- 4.8 Key Stakeholders were involved during the workshop stages e.g. representatives of the West Midland Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (WMRIEP) and Worcestershire Hub management team.
- 4.9 The outcomes and recommendations from each Project Team workshop formed the basis of a number of proposals and business models for further development.

## 5. **Key Issues**

### **Prioritising Two Tier Services**

- 5.1 The activities in Phase 2 led to a more focussed portfolio of services being proposed to be taken forward for detailed development. This

- has been necessary to ensure that existing Council resources were not over-committed.
- 5.2 The prioritised service work streams currently being developed are:
- i) Regulatory Services (Licensing, Trading Standards & Environmental Health)
  - ii) Property Services
  - iii) Human Resources
  - iv) Internal Audit
  - v) Street Scene
- 5.3 These were selected as the supporting proposals clearly illustrated that significant service improvements, increased efficiencies and more effective use of alternative service access channels e.g. the Worcestershire Hub could be achieved.
- 5.4 The remaining services from the initial three main service themes will form part of the next phase of the WETT programme development.
- 5.5 It is important to note that, during the development of these proposals, equal focus was placed by the team on developing of options which would provide 'local choice' to our Communities.

### **Business Cases Development**

- 5.6 During April and May 2009, more detailed proposals were produced around the priority services and High Level Business Cases were developed for each priority service proposal.
- 5.7 At the time of writing this report, the Chief Executives Panel (CEP) are considering recommendations relating to the High Level Business Cases, and services identified to be taken forward for Detailed Business Case development.
- 5.8 The Detailed Business Cases (DBC) will be prepared to support the prioritised proposals and these will be presented to the Executive as they are finalised during Autumn 2009.
- 5.9 The County Treasurers Group are actively involved in the design and financial data population of the DBC. Their role will also be to offer final approval prior to the presentation of them to Members and Senior Officers.

### **Regulatory Services**

- 5.10 A consensus of support has already been received from Chief Executives for the further development of the proposed 'Regulatory Services' work stream.
- 5.11 Practitioners representing each Council and specialising in the three professional disciplines i.e. Licensing, Trading Standards and Environmental Health, are continuing to work together as a Project Team to develop the Regulatory Services business case.
- 5.12 The Regulatory Two Tier proposal would bring three specialist service areas together from across the seven Councils into a centralised and co-ordinated service provision.
- 5.13 This would provide the Communities of Worcestershire with an improved, more efficient and effective service, utilising the proposed innovative and collaborative approach to the management and delivery of them.
- 5.14 It is anticipated that efficiencies and cost savings can be achieved by implementing the proposed Regulatory Services two tier working model. All proposed improvements and benefits will be clearly identified as part of the DBC.

### **Governance & Member Engagement**

- 5.15 Since the beginning of 2009, the programme framework and governance has been developed to ensure that a 'fit for purpose' programme can be supported during the development and implementation stages i.e.
  - i) A Programme Manager leads the current development and delivery of the programme.
  - ii) A Programme Board, Chief Executives & Leaders Panel, lead on providing strategic direction on behalf of their individual Council's Officers and Members.
  - iii) A 'Programme Management Group' comprising of a Senior Manager from each Council ensures that the programme is being developed in line with agreed strategy, ensuring practical issues are addressed e.g. resourcing, Officer and Member communications and external funding allocation.
  - iv) The County 'Professional Groups' e.g. Treasurers, are consulted during key stages of the programmes development for detailed advice and support.

- v) The existing Project Teams continue to develop the service proposals from the current business case development stages through to the anticipated implementation stages later this financial year.
- 5.16 During the next stages of the WETT programme it is the programme team's highest priority to develop broader Member engagement as part of the further design and development of the two tier proposals e.g:
- i) A series of Member briefings have taken place over June and July 09.
  - ii) A number of County wide road shows are being planned for delivery during this summer. This will involve all Officers and Members having the opportunity to find out more and become involved in the WETT programme.
  - iii) Chief Executives and Councils Leaders will continue to consult Officers and Members of each Council following update reports and presentations to the Programme Board.
  - iv) This report is being presented to the Executive/Cabinets of each Council during July / August to ensure a consistent message is received by all Council's Executive Members.
  - v) A monthly newsletter for the WETT programme has been produced by the WETT programme team and the County Communications Group. This has been designed to offer a programme update to both Officers and Members and the first edition was circulated across Councils during June.
  - vi) A web based information portal has been built for the WETT programme. This will provide general access for Officers and Members of all Councils to up to date information relating to the programme and allowing users to interact with the Project Teams. This has been launched as a pilot with the Project Teams with a view to a broader launch during summer 2009.

### **Programme Timescales**

- 5.17 The Project Teams involved in the programme have proposed that an incremental approach to the development of the DBC would be the most sensible method for this next stage.
- 5.18 It is anticipated that, following the Worcestershire Chief Executives & Leaders Panel meeting in July 2009, the prioritised order of services for detailed business case development will be finalised and confirmed.

- 5.19 In the meantime, progress continues with the development of the WETT proposals. The teams are focussing specific priority on developing the Regulatory Services model.
- 5.20 The finalised schedule for the WETT programme detailed business case development will be confirmed during early July 2009 and will form part of a report to Executive at the next meeting in September 2009.

### **Summary**

- 5.21 The WETT programme has made positive progress and the Council teams involved in developing the two tier proposals have produced innovative and challenging service options for enhanced collaborative working.
- 5.22 The Detailed Business Cases for WETT will present Officers and Members with robust business data to support the feasibility of these innovative proposals.
- 5.23 Continued support from the Executive Members of all Councils for these developing Worcestershire Partnerships will ensure that the potential challenges facing the teams in developing these proposals will be significantly reduced.

### **6. Other Implications**

- Asset Management - There are none arising directly from this report.
- Community Safety - There are none arising directly from this report.
- Human Resources - None associated with this report – specific issues will be addressed as part of the detailed business cases.
- Social Exclusion - There are none arising directly from this report.

### **7. Lessons Learnt**

None particularly at this stage.

### **8. Background Papers**

Shared Services Programme Board Papers;  
Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Papers.

**9. Consultation**

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers. Specific consultation will take place with any staff directly affected by any proposals at the appropriate time.

**10. Author of Report**

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**11. Appendices**

None.