

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 September 2019

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
None;

Organisational Development - Request to Commence Procurement Exercise

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

In line with the county council's procurement rules, this report sets out a recommendation to commence a procurement exercise to appoint a partner to work with the council on organisational development with a focus on redesigning services around best practice and building/maintaining support for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the commencement of a procurement exercise to appoint a partner to work in partnership with the council to achieve the necessary and effective change within the organisation in a way that will be sustainable moving forward.

Background and Advice

During the past few years the council has taken significant steps towards achieving financial stability and has made improvements in key service areas such as children's social care. These achievements have provided a platform for the ambitions set out in the corporate strategy.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by officers to deliver cost savings and efficiencies and we have reached a position whereby existing capacity to develop additional, more specialist initiatives and to affect change at pace is limited.

The work undertaken as part of the service challenge has demonstrated trends in Lancashire and across the northwest as a whole which are not replicated elsewhere in the country. Responses to demand-led services in particular appear to foster

dependency with a propensity for the public sector to step in and impose solutions rather than providing support to enable citizens and communities to be resilient in looking after themselves.

The council needs to develop different approaches to working with citizens, focussing its efforts on the most vulnerable and those with the most complex needs. Officers should be freed from unnecessary bureaucracy whilst at the same time making it easier for citizens to access our services. This would enable the council to better achieve our vision and corporate objectives as set out in the corporate strategy and ensure that we work effectively with and for our citizens to deliver the best possible services that are sustainable in the longer term. We need to identify and challenge organisational approaches, systems and processes that limit opportunities for improvement.

Embarking upon such an exercise would it is hoped, enable the council to move away from a cycle of focusing on cuts and savings to develop ways of effectively building on our strengths and in particular our staff, members, partners, technology, physical assets and finances. If successful it will future-proof the council and ensure that it delivers services in such a way that is appropriate for the 21st century and beyond. We also need support in considering how best to embrace the greater and more effective use of technology to facilitate enhanced customer responsiveness and free specialist expertise to deliver effective services. Our partner will be asked to help us develop processes which allow us to best understand our population's needs and to make full use of the available evidence to clearly define outcomes that we aspire to deliver and to support decision making. It has been evident for some time that the council could manage and utilise data more effectively to evidence outcomes, improvements, productivity and efficiency, and to highlight trends. This will be included as a key element of the brief to the successful organisation.

The council's staff is a crucial resource and in selecting a partner, it is vital to ensure that the approach adopted will equip, empower and support our staff to make decisions, take action and work collaboratively with partners. We will look to develop and embed real engagement in all improvement activities to ensure these are sustainable and that staff, members and our partners are invested in implementing solutions and can be held to account for on-going delivery.

Such a programme as envisaged is ambitious and will cut across the culture as well as our systems and procedures and will require innovative changes to professional practice and service delivery. It is important to develop an approach which allows for clear, efficient and simple processes supported by effective systems that make the customer experience a positive one. The council does not have the expertise necessary to embark upon such an exercise and in order to maximise the prospect of success we propose to secure the services of a partner with a proven track record in delivering similar programmes. We would look to harness expertise and specialist resources from an organisation which has experience of similar initiatives aligned with the skills, compassion and commitment of our staff. This is not to say that all similar ongoing change projects would be abandoned; we would consider how best to align existing change with organisational development and improvement work streams to maximise their potential impact. The successful organisation will bring objective feedback and challenge from an external source to allow us to focus on the

issues that will deliver the most returns in terms of change, performance, outcomes and savings.

The successful organisation would initially be tasked with designing a way forward and where the council lacks the necessary skills and resources, assist in the implementation in a way that introduces pace and sets a clear trajectory for the future through a structured programme supporting improvement and change.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Finance

It is anticipated that the initial design or scoping stage will take approximately three months and this will allow for a whole council approach for the programme. The predicted maximum spend to undertake such an exercise is up to £400,000, and can be funded from existing budget provision, although it is quite possible that the cost would fall some way below this. Further Cabinet approval will be sought after the initial stage when, having worked closely with an organisation on the design, we will have a firm estimate of the cost of the programme as a whole. At this stage no exact figure can be given as to the cost of scoping the work.

Legal

In procuring the services the council must comply with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. This can be demonstrated by either embarking upon a full procurement exercise or by using one of the many public sector frameworks which have been established in compliance with the regulations.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A