

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 JULY 2011

CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed approach to becoming a Co-operative Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Members approve the proposed approach and next steps set out in Sections 4 and 5 of this report and that delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Chief Executive following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Co-operative Council & Partnership to take all steps necessary to progress the Co-operative Council approach as outlined in the report and in particular to progress and deliver the Early Adopter Programme set out at Appendix 1;**
- 2.2 **That delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Chief Executive following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Co-operative Council and Partnership to approve any expenditure within the £15,000 fund allocated for Co-operative Council initiatives.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 We are one of a number of Councils, such as Lambeth, Rochdale and Oldham, who are committed to becoming **Co-operative Councils**. We are the first Council in the West Midlands to make this commitment.
- 3.2 Being a Co-operative Council is about us working together with our residents, partners and other local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can with the combined resources we have.
- 3.3 Whilst all the Councils involved share a belief that co-operative working should be at the heart of what we do, each Council will need to develop its own approach that will work for their own area, reflecting the different nature of their organisations and the communities they serve. However, as a member of the Co-operative Council Network, we will work closely with other Co-operative Councils to share best practice and ideas.

3.4 In Telford & Wrekin, our aims are to:

- Build a new partnership between local people and public services where power and responsibility is more balanced by agreeing what we will provide and what communities will control for themselves;
- Ensure that public services are of the best quality, offer value for money, are designed around people's lives and are 'joined up' so that residents get what they need at the right time and the right place;
- Involve the community and employees in planning services and support employees, local people and organisations to organise and run services differently;
- Enable people to do more to help their own communities and at the same time to help themselves by gaining new skills and experience.

3.5 Section 4 of this report sets out how we will translate these high-level aims into practical action. An important principle is that we will develop our plans in conjunction with our employees and the whole community. There will be a much greater emphasis on engagement and members and officers from across the Council will be encouraged to get involved in engagement activities.

4. **PROPOSED APPROACH**

4.1 Our first step to becoming a Co-operative Council has been to identify some practical **Early Adopter** projects that will put co-operative working into action as soon as possible. These are summarised in Appendix 1.

4.2 A key part of the Early Adopter Programme has been to prioritise some initial areas of work to support **Co-operative Service Delivery**. These are:

- **Pilot ward for co-operative service delivery (Brookside)** – Brookside has been identified as a potential pilot area for developing a co-operative approach to service delivery as there has been a programme of community engagement in the area that provides a good platform to build upon in terms of resident involvement. Also analysis of the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation relating to education, training, employment and skills identified Brookside as one of the priority areas within the Borough for 'narrowing the gap' in deprivation. It is proposed to build upon previous community engagement within the area to work with local residents, community groups, the Parish Council, and ward members to review Council-run facilities and services. The aim will be

to identify if these services could be redesigned or delivered differently to better meet the needs of local people.

- **Leisure, Culture & Libraries** – we will test out a range of ways of giving the Leisure, Culture & Libraries Service greater freedoms and flexibilities in how they do things, such as the ability to make faster decisions and to pursue new income generation opportunities. All employees will be encouraged to get involved by suggesting and helping to implement new ways of working. By stripping away some of the bureaucracy, the services will be able to respond better and quicker to what customers want, which is critical in a fast-moving and competitive environment. Whilst services will continue to be provided by the Council, they will effectively be run at ‘arms-length’ but firmly within the Council’s family of services.
 - **Dawley Town Hall** – in response to feedback from local residents about the future of Dawley Town Hall, we will work with a number of partners to assess the feasibility of bringing the facility back into community use.
 - **Schools Learning Partnership** - we will work with head-teachers to set up an educational trust for all community and trust schools in the secondary sector, which will work in close partnership with existing academies, grammar schools and the Thomas Telford CTC. The trust will establish an operational group consisting of head-teachers to lead on school to school developments with the local authority working in partnership to provide advice, organisation and support.
 - **Telford Employability Partnership** – we will establish a partnership (Council, Telford College of Arts and Technology, Job Centre+ and other training providers supporting unemployed and at risk of redundancy) to provide information, advice and support to help young people and adults into employment, education and training, including outreach in the most disadvantaged communities.
 - **Small Business Loans Fund** – we will work with local business people to establish a small business loans fund, based on co-operative principles.
- 4.3 At the same time as delivering the Early Adopter Programme, we will also work with local people and organisations and our employees to develop a longer-term **Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan**.
- 4.4 The **Co-operative Settlement** will be a shared agreement that will clearly set out what the Council will do and what others will do. The Settlement will have two parts:
- **Co-operative Community Settlement** – bringing together existing agreements, such as the Voluntary Sector Compact, Parish Charter and Customer Charter into a single updated agreement between

the Council and the community with a much greater emphasis on the role that citizens will play in the Borough;

- **Co-operative Workforce Settlement** – a new shared agreement between the Council and its employees.

- 4.5 Each part of the Settlement will include a **Delivery Plan**, which will set out in detail a programme to deliver co-operative working in the community and within the Council. A specific time plan will be developed, however it is expected that it will take 10 years to become a fully Co-operative Council and importantly a Co-operative Borough.
- 4.6 To help develop the Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan, we will set up a **Co-operative Commission**. The Commission will bring together a wide range of community and business leaders with the Cabinet and other members. Membership of the Commission will be announced at Cabinet on 26 July. Commissioners will be volunteers and will not receive any payments.
- 4.7 The reasons for setting up the Commission are to draw on the wide range of expertise and skills that exist within the Borough and to bring a fresh, external and challenging perspective to how we do things.
- 4.8 The first step will be for the full Assembly of Commissioners to meet to identify and prioritise a number of work-streams that the Commission will lead to inform the development of the Settlement and Delivery Plan, based on areas where Commissioners feel they will be able to add the most value. Work-streams may focus on a particular service area or be more cross-cutting.
- 4.9 An important principle is that the Commission will have the freedom and flexibility to set its own agenda. Once the Commission has agreed its priority work-streams, the Cabinet will be able to determine whether there are any other additional work-streams that the Council should progress alongside the work of the Commission.
- 4.10 We will also work with the Scrutiny Management Board to identify any common areas of interest between Scrutiny and the Commission. Wherever possible, we will seek to bring together the work of the relevant Scrutiny Committee and the Commission to avoid duplication.
- 4.11 Each of the Commission's priority work-streams will be delivered by a sub-group; members of the Commission will have the opportunity to join the sub-group(s) that they feel best fits their expertise and interests. The sub-groups will work collaboratively with the appropriate lead Cabinet member, Corporate Management Team lead and other Council officers.
- 4.12 Sub-groups will be able to carry out or commission the Council to carry out engagement with local residents, service users, local

organisations and Council employees etc, as needed, in order to inform their thinking. They will also be able to invite other people with relevant expertise to join their sub-group.

- 4.13 Each sub-group will be asked to submit a short report to the Commission with recommended actions that the Council should take in the short-term (6 months), medium-term (18 months) and long-term (3 years and more). Recommendations should identify any associated savings and up-front costs. The Assembly of Commissioners will then meet to consider and approve the sub-groups' recommendations, which will be brought together into a single report to be presented to Cabinet.
- 4.14 We are also proposing to establish a **Citizens' Group**, which we will run collaboratively with Rights and Fairness Telford (RAFT). This group will be made up of a mixture of representatives from existing groups and forums and local residents recruited directly.
- 4.15 This group will have three roles:
- Act as a sounding board for the Commission sub-groups as they develop their recommendations;
 - Assess the equalities impacts of the Commission's recommendations;
 - Promote and act as champions for co-operative working within their groups and communities.
- 4.16 To move forward our approach to co-operative working within the Council, we will also set up an **Employee Commission**. The Employee Commission will involve representatives from existing employee groups, trade unions and **Employee Champions** (employees who will promote and act as champions for co-operative working, at least one from each service area).
- 4.17 In parallel with the work of the Co-operative Commission, the Employee Commission will determine priority work-streams to inform the development of the Workforce Settlement and Delivery Plan and will work in sub-groups to deliver these.
- 4.18 Both the Co-operative and Employee Commissions will be asked to report to Cabinet by the end of January 2012 (see Section 5 'Next Steps and Timescales'). Cabinet will then consider the Commission reports, alongside any additional work that has been carried out by the Council. It will then publish its draft Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan.

5. NEXT STEPS & TIMESCALES

- 5.1 The timescales for the delivery of the Early Adopter Programme is shown in Appendix 1.

5.2 We have already held a number of engagement sessions with managers and employees. There will be ongoing communication and engagement to involve our workforce in developing our approach.

5.3 The key next steps and timescales for the development of the Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan are:

Next Steps	Timescale
Proposed approach agreed by Cabinet and launch/promotion internally and externally	26 July 2011
First meeting of Co-operative Commission– priority work-streams identified and agreed	After Cabinet, date to be confirmed – late July/early September
Recruit and brief members of Employee Commission	End August 2011
Recruit and brief Citizens' Group members	End August 2011
First meeting of Employee Commission	September 2011
First meeting of Citizens' Group	September 2011
Sub-group meetings – scoping/planning	September 2011
Sub-groups – engagement/information gathering	October/November 2011
Sub-group meetings – review engagement/information gathering results, develop initial ideas and recommendations	End November 2011
Co-operative Commission sub-groups 'test' initial ideas with Citizens' Group where appropriate	December 2011
Sub-group meetings – agree and submit recommendations to Commission	End December 2011
Second meeting of Co-operative/Employee Commission – consider and agree recommendations of sub-groups	January 2012
Commission submit final reports to Cabinet	End January 2012
Cabinet publishes draft Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan	End February 2012 (coincide with publication of final budget/new vision and priorities)
Draft Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan considered by full Council	March 2012

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Community and Equalities Impact	The development of the draft Co-operative Settlement and Delivery Plan will be subject to an equalities impact assessment. The Citizens' Group will play a key role in helping to assess the impact of the Commission's recommendations on different groups within the community. We will assess the impact of other initiatives as they are developed.
Financial Impact	A sum of £15,000 has been allocated from within existing resources to establish a fund for Co-operative Council initiatives.
Legal Issues	The Council has the power to undertake the work outlined in this report under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (wellbeing powers). These are powers to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area. Before exercising this power the Council must have regard to the Secretary of State's Guidance on use of the powers.
Impact on specific wards	Borough-wide impact.

7. PREVIOUS MINUTES

7.1 Nil.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

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APPENDIX 1 – EARLY ADOPTER PROGRAMME

a) Joining up Services

Early Adopter	Target Delivery Date
In partnership with the Primary Care Trust, launch a 'Health Hub' in the Civic Offices First Point to enable First Point customers to access a range of health services and council services in one location	Phase 1 – End July 2011
Set up a direct email account and single direct line to Wrekin Housing Trust for Telford & Wrekin Councillors so that they can report issues on behalf of residents in their wards	End July 2011
Establish Telford Employability Partnership – see Section 4.2 of report	Launch 31 October 2011

b) Involving the community in planning services

Early Adopter	Target Delivery Date
Launch a new approach to the Community Fund with a greater role for ward councillors and Parish Councils	New approach agreed 21 June 2011
Set up a facility on the Council's Website for people to submit their savings suggestions (Suggestion Box)	Went live on 1 July 2011 – 118 suggestions received 1-14 July
Involve people in budget development through a new online 'budget calculator' – developed and currently being tested by members of the public	Launch 27 July 2011
Re-launch the Community Panel and run a campaign to recruit new members	Recruitment started – impact to be reviewed September 2011
Carry out a programme of engagement with the whole community to develop a new vision and set of priorities for the Borough	Engagement started – draft vision by mid-November 2011
Develop a single access point for all engagement activities so that people can go to one place to find out how they can get involved	Portal populated and promoted by November 2011

c) Supporting employees, local people and organisations to organise and run services differently

Early Adopter	Target Delivery Date
Pilot ward for co-operative service delivery (Brookside) – See Section 4.2 of report	Agree action plan – early October 2011
Leisure, Culture & Libraries – See Section 4.2 of report	Agree governance arrangements and service objectives/targets – end September 2011
Dawley Town Hall – See Section 4.2 of report	Feasibility study – end July 2011
Schools Learning Partnership – See Section 4.2 of report	To be confirmed
Small Business Loans Fund – See Section 4.2 of report	End October 2011

d) **Enabling local people and organisations to play a more active role in their communities**

Early Adopter	Target Delivery Date
Run a campaign to promote the benefits of volunteering as part of National Volunteers week	Delivered 1-7 June 2011 (262 letters of thanks, 10 community events held and wide media coverage)
Encourage employees, local people and organisations to become Fair-trade champions	Internal campaign to promote Fair-trade vending machines – end of August 2011, Fair-trade event in a school with link to global Fair-trade school programme – October 2011
Develop a package of support for voluntary-run youth clubs, review charging policy for use of Council buildings by youth clubs and develop a package of support for other voluntary groups who include young people and are not supported by national governing bodies	October 2011

e) **Developing a new partnership with employees**

Early Adopter	Target Delivery Date
Put in place a package of new flexible employment options that will benefit both the Council and employees. Prepared and currently in consultation with Trade Unions	Sept 2011
Pilot new ways to involve employees in identifying non-staff savings and helping to reduce costs	Pilot 'Cost Challenge' 15 July 2011