

would work together and who would take on the key roles and responsibilities including project manager, project team and project board.

The Board discussed the importance of keeping other Councillors and staff in the organisation up to date and informed as the project proceeds. Members discussed whether this should appear as a regular item on the Cabinet agenda and whether this could be featured in a proposed Cabinet newsletter.

Action Point: *That the Chief Executive and the Leader consider and implement appropriate channels of communication.*

5. BUSINESS EFFICIENCY REVIEWS

(1) Funding.

Trevor Wilson, Deputy Finance Director, advised that a recommendation had been put forward to the Council meeting to seek an increase in the budget for the business efficiency programme of £367,050, taking the balance to £817,050. This increased budget being required to provide funding for potential redundancy and access to pension payments. On the basis that those members of staff under notice of redundancy and are not found alternative employment through the staff stability scheme.

(2) Update with the Reviews.

Jan Lycett of Alexander Consulting referred to the papers supplied with the agenda which were up to date as of Thursday 18th October 2007. The report presented improved figures but there was still a significant deficit. Members noted the latest position regarding staffing and those posts that would be transferring to GCH. It was noted that although the position for SLAs was better than previously reported this might just defer any financial implications for the Council should the SLAs not be continued beyond March 2009.

One of the largest SLAs was in place for Street Scene and this also had an earlier end date of December 2008. The Council was proposing to agree deferred TUPE rights which would cover some of the staffing costs should the service be taken on by a third party provider.

The Chief Executive advised the Board that discussions would be undertaken from early 2008 to determine the Council's priorities, reviewing finances and looking ahead to the period post March 2009.

Jan Lycett advised the Board of the approach being taken to the review of front line services. In conjunction with the senior managers the process would be looking at:

- Identification and elimination of waste
- Service improvements and increasing customer satisfaction
- Evaluating different options and delivery vehicles for some services
- Skilling of staff to continue the business review process

In the ensuing discussion it was recognised that there a number of initiatives and corporate projects which interrelate which need to be managed effectively. These include:

- Links with Colchester Borough /other partners
- The role of the Council as a community provider
- Preparing for the Comprehensive Area Assessment, in conjunction with our partners to include quality of life issues
- The implications of external factors such as impact of the new local government Bill
- Ensuring any decisions are transparent and setting out clear channels of communication both internally and externally
- Taking on board any issues as part of future staff training and as part of future Member Development Programmes
- Ensuring managers have the necessary skills to continue the business efficiency programme;
- Agreeing the timeframe to include early successes but to factor in that many changes are likely to take more than 12 months to implement

In recognition of the fact that this was a large and complex agenda the Chief Executive would arrange to meet with Jan Lycett to discuss the above issues.

DECISION: That the progress report be received and noted.

Action Point: *That the Chief Executive undertakes discussions with Jan Lycett and the Leader to plan as to how and in what time frame the above issues should be addressed.*

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

DECISION: It was agreed that the next meeting of the Performance and Efficiency Programme Board should be held on Thursday 13th December 2007 starting at 5.00pm.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 6.30pm

M C M Lager

(Chairman)