

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT FOR CABINET

Contact Details:	Allan Reid
Designation:	Chief Executive
Ext. No.:	2002
E-mail address:	allan.reid@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers:	None
Financial Implications:	Part of 2009/10 budget process
Equalities Implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A
Options:	N/A
Risks:	N/A

INTRODUCTION

I have set out below some of the organisational issues that I wish to bring to Members' attention. The key issues have been dealt with earlier in this agenda:

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Budget 2009/10
- Supporting the Community through Economic Difficulties

The above will impact upon all our services and how and what we deliver/commission in the future. Therefore, over the coming months we will be reviewing and planning for the implementation of the required changes.

Organisational Development

Members will recall that in September I reported on the issue of management capacity. This was to be covered by the appointment of an interim Director, whom we had secured but who then accepted alternative employment. As a short-term measure, I commissioned two projects – project management and performance management. The outcome of these projects was reported to the Performance and Efficiency Programme Board on 27th November 2008. Both project outcomes have assisted with some corporate arrangements for the future.

We have an ambitious agenda over the coming years, which will require additional and new skills sets for the organisation. I therefore intend to review, as part of the budget and action planning the process, the skills, capacity and delivery methodology of the organisation to ensure it is fit for purpose to meet all challenges efficiently and effectively. The report will go to February Cabinet.

Working Together

There are three issues to bring to the Cabinet's attending on working together with other organisations:

Colchester BC:

The joint Programme Board took stock of achievements to date and how the partnership will move on. It was agreed by both Councils that the current programme of reviews should be completed and the current interim support cease. However, it is proposed that the partnership should continue with both Cabinets meeting on a six-month basis. Management Board will probably meet on a three-month basis to discuss and identify common issues that may be worth pursuing jointly.

I believe this joint working has been a great success and built up a learning and sharing relationship that will create further opportunities in the future.

Essex County Council

A good working relationship continues with the County Council on the potential for sharing offices. We are now discussing with the County the benefits of a partnership on leisure and well-being provision as part of the Academies development. Our latest discussion has concerned economic development and whether we could build a strong relationship to ensure we input effectively into the County, sub-region and regional issues.

An option currently being considered is the bringing together of some of Essex County Council and District Council resources and those being sited within the District Council offices.

NHS Mid Essex

I have been discussing with NHS Mid Essex the options around greater partnership working and Members may recall that I highlighted the proposals for a jointly funded post to take forward the health improvement agenda within the District. This funding has been included in the 2009/10 budget process.

I have also been developing the partnership theme further with the Chief Executive of Mid Essex, regarding the possibility of a senior joint appointment between our two organisations, which could also create improved joint delivery across both organisations' services. This could be an exciting opportunity to develop more effective and efficient delivery and commissioning of services that impact upon the health of the residents of the District. I will bring forward proposals on any potential joint posts as part of a report on this organisation preparing to deliver the needs of the District.

Leisure Contract

We are currently undertaking preparatory work in connection with the expiry of the leisure contract and have been discussing with DCL, the possibility of an alternative leisure management structure that reflects current practice and can assist the Council in considering options for future service delivery.

The discussions have been around a new sub-contracting arrangement whereby DCL would enter into a sub-contract with a registered charity to provide services at our facilities. The contractual arrangements between the Council and DCL would remain the same. This new arrangement would afford the Council with an opportunity to test the charitable trust model and ascertain whether it is a viable model for the future provision of leisure services. Leisure trusts now operate 22% of all local authority

leisure facilities in the UK and can be effective not only in financial terms but also in achieving social objectives as their social purpose is central to the work that they do.

The arrangements will have no impact upon the delivery of our leisure services through local facilities, and DCL would still be contractually responsible for delivery.

If discussions are successful then it is envisaged that the new sub-contracting arrangement would operate with effect from 1st April 2009 for the remainder of the leisure contract.

Play Areas

We collected fourteen awards in a best kept playing fields competition run by the Essex Playing Fields Association. Included in the list of awards was the top accolade in Class 3 – best kept playground, for Bocking Church Street Primary School.

Providing well maintained play areas and open spaces can make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of children in the district. Challenging outdoor activity has been proved to be of great physical and mental benefit for children of all ages. The parks and open spaces team have a rolling programme of improvement; in spring next year six more play areas will be refurbished.