

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 1st October 2012
Title: Optimising skills within the Client Function

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Service: Human Resources

Directorate: Chief Executive

Wards affected: All wards

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the approach the Council will take to ensure the Client Team, who will fulfill the Client Function, has the right skills to deliver within the client role. This has been endorsed by Cabinet on 10th September.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the approach to ensuring the Client Team has the necessary skills required to fulfil the role of the Client Function following the implementation of the Business and Technical Packages.

3. Details

3.1 Background

A Cabinet report (dated 2nd August 2012) titled *Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme Business and Technical Package Procurement – Client Function* was presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th August. The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval for the retained Client Function pursuant to the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and the implementation of the Business and Technical Packages.

A key action from Overview and Scrutiny Committee was for Cabinet to provide assurance that the retained Client Team has the necessary skills in order to ensure the delivery of the Business and Technical services in a timely way, within budget and compliant with the Key Performance Indicators set out in the contractual documentation.

This report provides an outline of the proposed approach that has been endorsed by Cabinet to ensure that the client team have the necessary skills in order to deliver within their role and responsibilities.

3.2 Skills Audit and Development Plan

Through the procurement process for securing providers for the Business and Technical packages a need for client officer roles and specifications for these roles including responsibilities, skills and abilities, was recognised. The majority of these roles require existing professional and technical expertise and as a result key individuals were matched to the posts. It is, however, acknowledged that the officers identified to fulfil these roles may require further development in relation to contract management skills.

To clarify where such developments needs arise a Skills Audit of the key individuals within the Client Team is currently being undertaken to assess their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding linked to 12 key contract management areas. These are:

1. Risk management
2. Negotiation and influencing
3. Client / provider relationship management
4. Contract monitoring
5. Financial awareness
6. Legal appreciation
7. Technical appreciation
8. Commercial acumen
9. Political awareness
10. Contract administrative procedures
11. Project management
12. Leading people in times of change

These contract management skills have been scrutinised to ensure external verification through benchmark data from both public and private sector organisations.

The Skills Audit provides a base line measure and enables a bespoke development plan for individuals to be put in place to support any development needs arising from the audit for the Client Team.

This Skills Audit is completed online by the individual, in consultation with their Head of Service. Individuals are asked to rate their level of expertise (four point scale from expert, through to novice / development required). The data gathered from this exercise identifies individual's contract management skill gaps and informs their Development Plan.

The timescales for completing the online Skills Audit are between 17th September and 11th October. A bespoke development programme will be put in place for each individual to address any skill gap areas following the completion of the audit.

Any development support identified from the skills audit for the client team is expected to be delivered within existing budgets. If additional costs are going to be incurred resources will be prioritised within the corporate development budget.

This approach will enable the smooth transition, mobilisation and subsequent management of the contract and partnership for the Council. This will also support the

delivery of the overall Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and governance arrangement to be put in place in relation to the Business and Technical Packages.

4. Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

5. Background Information

The following document has been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author:

5.1 Cabinet report (dated 2nd August 2012) titled *Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme Business and Technical Package Procurement – Client Function* presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th August.