

## SCRUTINY REPORT

### PERSONALISATION OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Report by Marketing and Development Panel

Cabinet Lead: Cllr Fairhurst

Scrutiny Lead: Cllr D Smith

Key Decision: NA

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#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To have an input to Personalisation by scrutinising implementation methods.
- 1.2 To make recommendations on Policy Development regarding additional service offers for residents.
- 1.3 Since I took over as Scrutiny Lead for Marketing and Development it has become very clear that this is a massive undertaking for the Officers concerned.
- 1.4 My findings on 1.1 above are that the Personalisation project is going well although under resourced. The work of the team on this project cannot be praised highly enough. They have delivered against all targets such as customer insight and engagement, an IT platform and market research. Their endeavours are recognised and applauded by this Scrutiny panel and should equally be so by the Cabinet.

#### 2.0 Recommendation

The Scrutiny Board recommends to Cabinet that:-

- 2.1 The Council does not provide a roadside glass collection service; and
- 2.2 A commercial MOT service be provided at the depot and, if successful, added to the Personalisation project.

#### 3.0 Subject of Report

- 3.1 Personalisation is now part of a programme known as "Delivering Differently" and within this programme are key projects such as:-
  1. Personalisation
  2. Operational Services
  3. Parking and traffic management

#### 4. Legal Back Office Services

It is acknowledged that projects 3 and 4 above are progressing well and, as previously stated, Personalisation is on target.

- 3.2 However progress on Operational Services has faltered and several projects have not been delivered. This panel considers the implementation of these Services would be better served by the use of Agile working. Evidence would suggest that this method has not been used.
- 3.3 This Council is moving quickly towards Agile working, and must embrace this new way of thinking. My opinion is that Officers are being frustrated by the unwillingness of some Councillors to "Deliver Differently" and move in an Agile manner to implement certain additional services - even if undertaken on a trial basis.
- 3.4 Being Agile takes the right mind-set, the right processes and, above all a high level of desire to get things done. If we, as a Council, are happy to coast, the only future for us is failure. Agile working has the potential to transform how we do things.
- 3.5 We must get away from the traditional approach in which an entire project is long term planned from the outset and action does not materialise until a professed "final solution" is achieved.
- 3.6 We must not be afraid to "dip our toe in the water" with the implementation of some of these proposed services. If successful, and proven money-makers, we should push ahead in an Agile manner and get them established. If they are not successful we must acknowledge that our plans are inappropriate and discard them from our agenda, moving quickly to a new course of action.
- 3.7 An important element of being an Agile Council is the realisation that we may sometimes fail, and we must not be afraid of this as when we "fail-fast" we can learn quickly from false assumptions and collect evidence on how we can better proceed.

#### 4.0 Key Issues

- 4.1 In the spirit of the agile method I have therefore produced this succinct review of what incremental steps should be taken next, to measure and learn from. The list of possible "additional services" is too long and I felt it would be more productive to concentrate on an initial sub-set.
- 4.2 The two services below were chosen for exactly opposite reasons. One because I initially thought it was not viable and the other because I thought exactly the opposite.

#### 4.3 Roadside glass collection.

4.4 It is clear to me, following more than one meeting with Service Manager Peter Vince, that this idea is not viable. The enormous set up costs (as experienced by EHDC) and the legislation involved is highly unlikely to produce a satisfactory return to HBC. It is therefore this panel's recommendation that it should be discarded from the agenda and resource directed in areas that *would* bring income to the Council.

4.5 **MoT Servicing.**

4.6 The idea of offering an MoT Service to local residents was suggested several years ago. Reports on market analysis and the impact on existing MoT businesses were requested but never materialised. Several Councils nationwide already operate this service — for example in financial year 2012-13 Luton Council generated an income of £285,000. The recommendation of this panel is that we progress the implementation of this service as soon as the Cabinet Lead considers it possible. The introduction of a MoT service would need market testing as this the very essence of Agile and would need to be progressed quickly. It is extremely hard to judge the effect on other MoT garages until we run with it.

4.7 The set up cost of a MoT station within the Southmoor Depot workshop is estimated, by two sources, to be between £47,500 and £60,000 to include improvements to infrastructure, new equipment etc.

Additional costs would be:

- a. Improved IT systems & payment processing = c £1,500
  - b. Marketing and promotional activities = £2,500-£10,000
  - c. Training for workshop staff = c £1,000
- Plus annual costs of:
- a. Increased management overheads = £1,500
  - b. Increased support costs ie audit, legal, financial = £1,500

4.8 HBC would need to seek Planning permission and authorisation from VOSA, but once the Cabinet Lead has given the "green light", I am confident it would take only 6 months or so to set up.

4.9 A commercial marketing campaign would have to be proactive. It is acknowledged by this panel that this venture would take business from local garages and we would need to be prepared for adverse publicity in the short term, but I feel that HBC would be trusted by residents to offer a fair and reliable MOT service.

4.10 Bookings for this service could be made and managed by the Support Service team and the workshop team who would undertake this work with no detrimental impact on current service delivery to Council vehicles.

4.11 It is acknowledged by this panel that the Council does not currently have any customers and there is no guarantee that sufficient residents or businesses would make use of our MoT testing station. Other local

authorities who provide this service have been contacted and they all say that it took several years to build up a customer base.

- 4.12 To further generate custom the Council could offer other vehicle maintenance services to both members of the public and businesses in the form of pre-purchase inspections, Summer & Winter checks, full servicing and repairs. In the unlikely event that this service fails then the set up cost would not be wasted inasmuch as the MoT station and its qualified team would be used to MoT and service HBC vehicles and thus avoid the expense of using external garages.
- 4.13 External garages as far away as Portsmouth are currently used and the cost to the Council, per annum is approaching £8,000 not including HBC man hours used to deliver and collect these vehicles.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Lead take action as soon as he deems possible and in an Agile manner. Peter Vince has worked hard on this service and expressed an interest and desire to progress it further.
- 5.2 Once this methodology has been proven to work, it will encourage the same practice in the future on other additional services.

## 5.0 Implications

- 5.1 **Strategy:** The provision of a commercial MOT service station at the depot will provide an affordable service to our customers and contribute towards the Council's objective of providing excellent public services
- 5.2 **Risks:** Competing with private enterprises could potentially attract adverse publicity in the short term.
- 5.3 **Communications:** Any change to the functions of the depot will require a communications plan as part of the process.
- 5.4 **For the Community:** The community would benefit with the Council providing choice for the customer
- 5.5 **The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following: N/A**

## 6.0 Consultation: N/A

**Background Papers: none**

**Agreed and signed off by:**

Legal Services: 7 November 2014

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