

Scrutiny Committee – 16th July 2009

8. Pioneer Somerset – Programme Management Arrangements

Purpose of the Report

This report was considered by the District Executive at its meeting on 7th May 2009. The report sets out proposals for programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the associated resource requirements. The proposals are those of the Pioneer Somerset Board (comprising the Leaders of the 6 Councils and the Chief Executives in attendance). An additional recommendation was proposed and agreed, the relevant minutes from the District Executive meeting are attached at the end of this report.

Action Required

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

The following report was considered by the District Executive at its meeting on 7th May 2009.

Pioneer Somerset – Programme Management Arrangements

Executive Portfolio Holder: Tim Carroll, Leader of the Council (Strategy and Policy)
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1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out proposals for programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the associated resource requirements. The proposals are those of the Pioneer Somerset Board (comprising the Leaders of the 6 Councils and the Chief Executives in attendance).

2. Recommendations

2.1 District Executive are recommended to:-

- endorse the programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset programme as proposed by the Pioneer Somerset Board and set out in para 3.7 of this report;
- approve a contribution towards the cost of these arrangements from District Executive contingency funds in 2009/10. A schedule of recommended apportioned costs for each authority will be tabled at the meeting.
- note that further proposals will be brought to the Board in due course in relation to funding the programme management arrangements on an on-going basis;
- approve urgency in relation to these recommendations to give certainty to our partners and avoid any unnecessary delay in recruiting to key posts etc.

3. Background

3.1 This report follows the phase 1 report taken through all Councils at the end of last year /beginning of 2009. That report set out the way forward for the Pioneer Somerset programme including establishing 3 priority workstreams and clear governance arrangements. That report set out the intention to bring in SOLACE Ent Ltd to review progress with the programme; identify barriers to future delivery and assist the Pioneer Somerset Board to develop solutions move the programme forward. This assessment of the programme is now complete and culminated in a workshop on the 17th April involving the Pioneer Somerset Board, Deputy Leaders', Chief Executives' and key officers from the Directors' Group.

3.2 The workshop represented a 'water-shed' event for the Pioneer Somerset programme and significant progress was made in a number of areas. The workshop:-

- Re-affirmed the vision and outcomes of the Programme.
- Re-affirmed the previously agreed priority workstreams agreed as part of the Phase 1 report, ie customer access, shared services and community leadership but a very significant fourth priority workstream was added – see para 3.3 below.
- Identified a number of 'first priority' shared service proposals which officers have been instructed to work up proposals for consideration at the next Pioneer Somerset Board meeting in May – see paras 3.4 to 3.6 below.
- Agreed programme management arrangements considered essential to build and maintain momentum with the programme – see para 3.7. Each Leader will now ensure that any necessary approvals are obtained in their Council to put the resources in place to establish the programme management arrangements, hence this report to the Executive Board

3.3 In considering the issue of priority workstreams, discussion widened into the likely on-going budget difficulties that the public sector and in particular local authorities are likely to face in forthcoming years as the government of the day looks to rebalance the nation's books beyond the current recession. National indications suggest that the original 'efficiency' savings target applied to Pioneer Somerset will be insignificant alongside the likelihood of more substantial public sector budget reductions in the future. Radical action is required by the 6 councils at this stage to prepare the sector for the impact of this level of budget reduction and there was a determination at the workshop to tackle this issue head on, together and at speed as a fourth priority workstream. The identification by the Pioneer Somerset Board of priority shared service proposals to be moved forward quickly and the intention beyond that to have a rolling programme of shared service schemes signals the future intent of the Board as does the intention to have a 6 council workshop in July to discuss forward budget planning and how we can support each other in achieving the level of savings predicted to be required across the sector.

3.4 Much preparatory work has been going on in relation to the potential to bring forward shared service options under the priority workstream. In order to provide a greater level of clarity and impetus to this work, the Pioneer Somerset Board has agreed clear priorities for review. Officers have been instructed to bring forward proposals as a matter of urgency in 4 key areas which offer potential for shared services, namely:

- (a) the virtual 'majors' team proposal

- (b) operational housing / strategic housing functions
- (c) equalities and diversity functions
- (d) legal services

3.5 The Pioneer Somerset Board has also asked the Somerset Waste Partnership to actively market the partnership to neighbouring authorities beyond the County boundary. It is clear from research into two-tier 'pathfinders' that in the area of 'waste' Somerset is well ahead 'of the game' and the Board considers that there is potential to benefit from this.

3.6 This is the first stage in a rolling programme of shared service developments that the Pioneer Somerset Board will be looking to take to the 6 councils for approval. The 6 Leaders were unanimous in their support for moving this work forward.

3.7 There was recognition at the workshop that the unexpected loss of the appointed programme manager last June had stalled delivery of the programme and that if the momentum now being achieved is to be maintained then additional dedicated officer capacity for the programme at this stage is absolutely essential. This re-affirmed the view of Joint Scrutiny Panel. Various options were considered but the Pioneer Somerset Board agreed to the appointment as soon as possible of:

- a dedicated independent Chief Executive for the Programme
- a dedicated Programme Manager
- additional dedicated professional and administrative support necessary to support the above appointments.

This represents a variation from the potential models for programme management set out in the phase 1 report but in the opinion of the Board best fits the current context within which the programme finds itself.

3.8 Further drawdown of RIEP funding is not possible at this stage to support these appointments and therefore the Leaders agreed to seek the necessary resources from their respective councils up to a total budget of £350k (full year estimated costs) and proportioned across the 6 Councils. Further details of the proposed apportionment between the Councils will be given at the meeting. Any agreement to provide SCC funding is conditional on the district councils' contributions being forthcoming.

3.9 Please note that this will result in an estimated total spend of £200k approx in 2009/10 following recruitment to the posts.

3.10 Further proposals will be brought to the Board in due course in relation to funding the programme management arrangements on an on-going basis beyond 2009/10.

4. Consultations undertaken

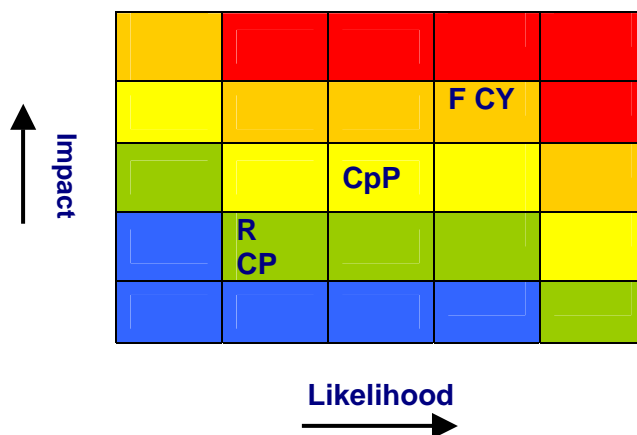
4.1 As set out in this report.

5. Implications

5.1 **Financial:** An update on the financial costs will be made at the Committee meeting once a share agreement has been made between all of the Somerset Authorities. The amount agreed by District Executive will be funded from the District Executive contingency fund for 2009/10.

5.2 **Risk:** The programme management appointments are considered essential if the potential benefits of Pioneer Somerset are to be achieved. Insufficient capacity at officer level has stalled progress and even with programme management arrangements in place there will still be a significant impact on existing staff of the 6 councils.

Risk Matrix



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Pioneer Somerset PID report – 23rd April Executive Board and the subsequent record of the meeting
- 6.2 Progress report to 25th November Executive Board and subsequent record of the meeting
- 6.3 Progress Report to Executive Board – 17th December 2008 and subsequent record of the meeting

Minute from District Executive 7th May 2009 - Pioneer Somerset – Programme Management Arrangements

The Chairman introduced the report, which asked Members to agree the proposals for programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the associated resource requirements. An amended Schedule of Costs for each partner authority was circulated, detailing the South Somerset contribution as £21,600 (£12,400 in 2009/10). He advised that at the last meeting of the Pioneer Somerset Board, all partners had acknowledged the lack of progress on the various projects and officers had

conceded that they did not have sufficient time resource to commit, therefore, the partners had agreed to allocate a dedicated staff resource of 3 posts to progress the potential to bring forward the shared service options under the 4 identified key areas.

During discussion, Members were fully supportive of the recommendations and the Chairman proposed that South Somerset offer to provide hosting and accommodation for some or all of the posts.

Members were unanimous in their support for the proposals, noting that significant savings must be achieved for South Somerset's contribution of £21,600.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

endorsed the programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset programme as proposed by the Pioneer Somerset Board and set out in paragraph 3.7 of the Agenda report;

approved a contribution of £21,600 (£12,400 in 2009/10 and £9,200 in 2010/11) towards the cost of these arrangements from 2009/10 District Executive contingency funds.

noted that further proposals would be brought to the Board in due course in relation to funding the programme management arrangements on an on-going basis beyond the first year;

approved the urgency in relation to the recommendations to give certainty to our partners and avoid any unnecessary delay in recruitment to key posts etc.

offer hosting and accommodation arrangements, in discussion with Pioneer Somerset partners.

Reason: To agree the proposals for programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the associated resource requirements.

(Philip Dolan, Chief Executive - (01935) 462101)
