



# East Northamptonshire Council

Council - 20 July 2009

Aiming for Excellence (A4E)

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## Summary

To provide an update on progress to date

## Attachment(s)

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council decided on 23 July 2007 (Minute 107) that Cllr Hardcastle and I should make regular reports on progress with the Aiming for Excellence (A4E) Programme. This is the fourth of those reports.

### 2. Progress since my last report

- 2.1 Since my last report one extra project, A4E Programme Closedown, has been added to the programme bringing the total number of projects to 65. There are 9 projects identified which for various reasons will not be started during the programme. These projects will be considered at a later stage.
- 2.2 The programme now comprises 56 projects, of which 32 have been completed, 16 are ongoing and 8 are yet to start. So far 102 members of staff and a number of Councillors have been involved in projects.
- 2.3 Of the projects that have been completed since my last report, one will have a significant impact on staff. Following a review of the Staff Appraisal scheme a new Performance Development Review (PDR) system is being introduced. The PDR has been linked to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Framework for staff. Before the end of August all staff should have received a PDR and completed a Learning Needs Analysis (LNA). The LNA will identify staff development needs and these will be addressed by the Staff Development project.
- 2.4 The Letter Review project, completed since my last report, resulted in us simplifying our Benefit letters and the high volume Council Tax letters. Over the next few months we will be surveying our Benefit customers to measure the benefits of the new letters. Results of this will be available towards the end of the year.
- 2.5 The implementation of our corporate brand is helping us to reinforce our reputation with our customers. It has given us a brand to be proud of and provides a clear link for our customers between our services and the Council as the provider of these services. The recent Place Survey commissioned by the government shows that customers are generally happy with our services but have a low opinion of the Council. Strengthening the link between us and the services we provide which should help to address this problem.
- 2.6 The Councillors' Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours framework, which was presented to the Policy & Resources Committee last week, has been developed by Councillors for Councillors, to make clear the knowledge, skills and behaviours we think it's important for our Councillors to have. Using the framework as a self assessment tool

Councillors will be able to help Officers develop an effective Councillor Development Programme, which is a further A4E project.

- 2.7 We have introduced a lessons learned knowledge base and this will be used to benefit future projects.

### **3. Programme Governance**

- 3.1 The A4E Programme Board continues to meet monthly. The minutes of these meetings are available on EUNICE, see <http://eunicesrv/a4eprogrammeboard>.

- 3.2 The Programme Manager produces monthly project status reports for the A4E Programme Board and these too are available on EUNICE, see <http://eunicesrv/a4e>.

### **4. The next few months**

- 4.1 As I mentioned in my previous report, we have a few significant projects to progress that will directly impact on our customers, communities and businesses.

- 4.2 The Reducing Avoidable Contact project continues to highlight areas where we need to make improvements to eliminate the need for customers to contact us when they shouldn't have to.

- 4.3 We are developing our knowledge of our customers, communities, businesses and their needs. The Mosaic Customer Insight information is currently being used to help analyse responses to the Place Survey. This will help us to target action and communication to address issues and change perceptions.

- 4.4 The transition of our website to a new system will give us the potential to have a first class website. It will also be easier for the ICT Development Team to support two websites (ours and Wellingborough's) from the same supplier. Once the transition is complete we will overhaul EUNICE. This will make information much easier to find and will therefore be hugely beneficial to both staff and Councillors.

- 4.5 With less than four months to go before the end of the A4E Programme there is still a lot of work to do to ensure that most of the projects are completed, and SMT will ensure that this is done. We will also continue to realise the benefits from the projects.

### **5 A4E Celebration**

- 5.1 Hopefully you will agree that the A4E Programme is something to celebrate. On Monday 2 November, 2pm – 4pm, there will be an “Afternoon Tea with A4E” event which all staff and Councillors will be invited to. This will be an opportunity to see the before and after picture and the progress that has been made. For those of you unable to attend there will be an opportunity to view the displays before and after the Council meeting that evening. More details will follow in due course.

### **6. Beyond A4E**

- 6.1 As I said in my first report outlining progress to date on the A4E Programme, “the first two years of our journey towards excellence are mapped out in the A4E Programme”.

- 6.2 The building blocks are being put in place to help us achieve our vision of being an excellent council in the eyes of the community, particularly in terms of understanding our customers and their needs more thoroughly and giving staff and Councillors the knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet those needs effectively. There will be further projects to help us to achieve that vision.

- 6.3 We need to recognise that the financial climate has changed significantly since the programme started. Excellence in the future will be achieved by continuing to deliver

high quality services with significantly less resources, and A4E has made us very well placed to meet that challenge. Staff have developed skills such as process improvement, which will enable us to achieve our outcomes more efficiently and effectively, and our focus on driving out waste through identifying and eliminating avoidable contact will help to ensure that everything we do adds value for the customer.

**7. Resources**

7.1 To date £250,000 has been committed and the programme is within budget.

**8. Recommendation**

8.1 The Council is recommended to note progress on the A4E Programme to date.

<b>Implications:</b>					
<b>Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy</b>					
Good Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good Reputation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Good Value for Money	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High Quality Service Delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Community Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of our Customers and Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other:</b>					
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval					
<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial implications at this stage				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
	There is provision within existing budget				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may have potential for income generation				<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Risk Management</b>	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - residual risk score -				<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Staff</b>	There are no additional staffing implications				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equalities and Human Rights</b>	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications				<input type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Legal</b>	Power: Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000				
	Other considerations:				
<b>Background Papers:</b> None					
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> David Oliver, Chief Executive					
<b>Date:</b> 6 July 2009					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 19)