



## Council - 26 April 2010

### Aiming for Excellence (A4E)

#### Summary

To provide a final report and summarise the achievements of the A4E Programme

#### Attachment(s)

Appendix A - list of completed projects and outputs

#### 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 fifth of those reports and, as the programme finished towards the end of last year, it is the final report.

#### 2 Looking back – previous reports

- 2.1 In previous reports we:

- outlined the key aspects of the programme, detailed the programme governance arrangements and listed some early outputs from the programme;
- set out the communication plans for the programme, noted the additional resources that had been recruited to support it, and explained the project management arrangements;
- highlighted a significant number of outputs delivered by the programme, noted the increasing number of staff and Councillors becoming involved in projects, and looked at plans for continuous improvement; and
- reported some significant projects that had been completed benefitting our customers, staff and Councillors.

#### 3 What the Programme achieved

- 3.1 The Afternoon Tea with A4E closedown event on 2 November 2009 showed just how much we had achieved over the course of the programme, and reminded everyone how far we have come already – and that we did it (nearly) all ourselves. We also delivered the programme for £220k, £30k (12%) less than the Council had set aside for it and a fraction of what it would have cost had we engaged external consultants to deliver it for us.
- 3.2 At the end of the programme 40 projects had been completed (see Appendix A), 8 were ongoing, 3 were being revisited, and 14 will be considered for the future.
- 3.3 The building blocks have been 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 more effectively.
- 3.4 Apart from the actual outputs from the projects, the programme demonstrated what can be done by even a small authority like ours. It developed a sense of working together with almost 50% of staff getting involved in projects that were going to make a difference to staff and customers.
- 3.5 It was also praised by an external assessor. Positive staff engagement with the programme was recognised by the Investors in People (IiP) assessor who commented on it extensively in his report.

## 4 Beyond A4E

- 4.1 A4E has enabled us to change our ways of working in some areas and has provided opportunities for staff development. Crucially, it has provided us with the knowledge and skills to continually improve services and to become more efficient in these challenging financial times.
- 4.2 We have an ongoing programme of projects to help us build on the building blocks put in place to help us achieve our vision, and we will apply the lessons learned from A4E to ensure that all these projects go smoothly and achieve the desired outcomes.
- 4.3 The focus for the future will be:
- to use our customer insight to target services better and to use the most cost-effective means of delivering them;
  - to reduce 'avoidable contact', which waste the customers' time and ours; and
  - to improve our business processes.
- 4.4 Benefits from some of the projects are still being realised and we will continue to embed these into business as usual. We will also continue to link projects into our performance management framework.
- 4.5 The experience that has been gained by about half the workforce, who were directly involved in projects themselves, will be invaluable in continuing to provide better services in increasingly difficult financial circumstances.

## 5 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Council is recommended to note the achievements of the A4E Programme and the plans to build on that success by continuing to improve service delivery and efficiency.

<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>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
<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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equalities and</b>	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Human Rights</b>	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> A4E Programme files					
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> David Oliver, Chief Executive - 01832 742105 doliver@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
<b>Date: 9 March 2010</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)

## *Aiming for Excellence (A4E)*

### Appendix A – List of completed projects and outputs

#### 1 Completed Projects

1.1 The 40 projects completed in the A4E programme are listed below:

- 1APP - Planning
- A4E Programme Closedown
- Best Council to Work for
- Building Control Mobile
- Concessionary Travel Smart Cards
- Corporate Brand Design
- Corporate Brand Implementation
- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Project Management Tools
- Corporate Telephone Greeting
- Council Promotion
- Customer Service Standards
- Development Control Process Redesign
- Directory Structure
- Email Management
- Identifying Appropriate Channels for Services
- iIP Reassessment
- Knowledge Skills and Behaviours – Members
- Knowledge Skills and Behaviours – Staff
- Letter Review
- Local Housing Allowance Scheme
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Organisational Development Strategy
- Performance Plus
- Personnel Policies & Procedures Review
- Prioritisation of Services for Reshaping Service Delivery
- Public Access – Planning
- Public Consultation Strategy
- Reducing Avoidable Contact
- Reputation Campaign
- Risk Management
- Single Property Account
- Staff Appraisal Scheme Review
- Staff Induction Process Review
- Strategy and Policy Guidelines
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Understanding our Businesses and their Needs (Phase 1)
- Understanding our Customers and their Needs
- Vision and Corporate Outcomes
- Whistle Blowing Policy Review

## 2 Outputs

2.1 The outputs delivered by the A4E projects are listed below:

- 1APP Planning application form and process
- A4E Employee Journey
- A-Z leaflet of Council services
- A-Z Services for Businesses (internal use)
- Best Council to Work For survey results
- 'Buddy scheme' for new staff
- Clearer layout and Plain English content for letters to Benefits customers
- Corporate Brand
- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Style Guide
- Corporate Telephone Greeting
- Customer Relationship Management System (new)
- Customer Profiling Pilot
- Directory Structure (updated)
- Email Management system
- Identified Appropriate Channels for Services
- liP accreditation (retained)
- Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Framework (Staff)
- Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Framework (Members)
- Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) process
- Local Housing Allowance Scheme
- Medium Tern Financial Plan process
- National Concessionary Fares Scheme
- Organisational Development Strategy (updated)
- Partnership Protocol
- Performance and Development Review (PDR) system
- Personnel Policies (new or updated)
- Project Management Framework
- Public Access for Planning
- Public Consultation Strategy (updated)
- Reducing Avoidable Contact process
- Risk Management Action Plan
- Staff Induction Process (revised)
- Strategy & Policy Guidelines and Template
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Telephone system (new)
- The A4E Story
- Website Development Framework
- Welcome Pack for new staff
- Whistle Blowing Policy (updated)
- Writing for the Web guidelines
- Your Guide to our Business Services and Business Rates Information (external use)