

### **Service Based Review Steering Group: Lessons and Reflections**

Report of the Chamberlain



### **Background**

The Service Based Review (SBR) Steering Group met for the final time on 07 March. At this meeting Steering Group attendees reflected upon the SBR process and explored lessons for the organisation. These items are detailed below.

### **Reflections of the Group**

It was noted that there may have been too much focus on savings rather than opportunities for transformation. Transformation is much more difficult to communicate and this may have meant that there was more of a focus on the cost saving elements.

We need to be clear about the messages we are giving from the beginning, ensuring the messages are appropriate for different audiences: Members, Staff, Public and Communities we serve. We need to ensure these messages are then effectively promoted.

The balance between a 'strategic review' and a 'salami slice' was considered. Whilst the former was the intention of the process, it requires the organisation to be advanced in its thinking, especially with regards to identifying priorities. An understanding of this importance has developed through the process, and it ultimately resulted in Policy and Resources Committee starting to consider prioritising competing demands. This is a significant change in thinking.

Securing buy-in from Members was particularly important, when savings directly impacted on them. A shared understanding of 'what we are here for' is instrumental. Changing our ways of working, particularly with increased collaboration, will assist in this process.

The financial challenge has been met and this is a good result. The longer term result of transforming the organisation is still in progress. However, it is essential that the momentum gained through the SBR process is maintained and we need to embed SBR/Challenge as a continuous process.

We do not yet have an optimal way of challenging ourselves and are still too departmentally focussed.

We could do much more with our assets, and this could drive income generation. Income Generation and Marketing will need further work.

It was noted that there are many ways of communicating and identifying efficiency, particularly through the involvement of staff. Whilst this may delay improvements, it ensured greater traction and better results.

It was reflected that the addition of dedicated resources was able to move a number of projects forward. Whilst the organisation cannot rely entirely upon outside assistance, projects need to be appropriately resourced with the right skills to deliver change in the timeframes desired. We need to be much clearer about how long real change takes and realistic about achieving outcomes. Strategic Resources Group will oversee the work on improving project and programme management across the organisation.