

Report title: Chief Executive's 100 Day Report	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report author: Gavin Jones, Chief Executive	
Date: 19 July 2016	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Richard Puleston – Director Strategy and Communications – Richard.puleston@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The 100 Days Report is appended to this paper. It sets out my thoughts on the issues I have identified in my first 100 Days that the organisation needs to address. It is based on my observations of the strengths and weaknesses of the Council as I have experienced them and as they have been relayed to me by employees and partners; it explains the work I have set in motion to address these; and it describes in high level terms – based on five key principles – the future direction of travel for the organisation in order to enable it to realise its ambition for Essex and its people – recognising that the challenges we face today are unlike any we have faced in the past. Essex County Council has many strengths, great officers and ambitious Members; despite the challenging circumstances that all public services face, Essex is well positioned not only to weather them but to thrive.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to publish the 100 Days Report appended to this paper and to its being shared with employees and partner organisations.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The Key themes and issues emerging from the 100 Days Report are set out below.

Context

- 3.2 Essex is a strong Council. It has weathered the storms of the last few years effectively – it has made significant savings, kept satisfaction levels reasonably buoyant; and improved outcomes for residents in key services. But the way the Council has operated in the past is unlikely to serve the needs of the future. For example, its strengths – including a broad organisational focus and a generous service offer to residents - may have less relevance going forwards when there will be much greater urgency to intensify our focus; be more explicit about our offer; exploit the opportunities of digital technologies

more systematically; and work across our organisational boundaries more efficiently.

- 3.3 Our challenge is to break-down silos inside and outside the organisation to take a more joined-up approach to the way we work and in so doing to support ambitious social outcomes, sustainable economic growth, and strong and resilient communities.

- 3.4 The 100 Day Report focuses on five key areas to enable us to achieve that:

Prioritisation

- 3.5 The ability to prioritise is a strategic capability. No organisation can do everything well. We must be rigorous in identifying and sticking to a core set of priorities that truly represent the things that will enable us to achieve the best outcomes for Essex's people and places.

- 3.6 The 100 Days work in this area has:

- Developed a 'core purpose' statement
- Put in place a process for developing a new business plan and business planning approach to make clearer the golden thread from high level Vision to individual performance plans
- Audited our existing priorities with a view to simplifying and clarifying to provide more focus
- Initiated work on the development of an Organisation Strategy which will set out how we will work and what we will be seeking to achieve over the next four years
- Started thinking about a Vision for Essex as a place over the next 10-15 years
- Started to simplify the project support we provide to transformation activity
- Streamlined our investment decisions process

Structure

- 3.7 Structure follows on from being clear about why we exist, what we are trying to achieve and how we will go about doing that. The process of reviewing how we are organised to support our strategic ambitions has begun and we are keen to undertake the structural changes to the organisation as quickly as possible.

- 3.8 The 100 Days work in this area has:

- Undertaken a review of what commissioning means to ECC
- Developed five operational principles that will drive our direction of travel for the future
- Started to develop our long-term strategy to ensure the structure of the organisation aligns with our future direction of travel and what we are trying to achieve

- Agreed nine organisation design principles to inform the options for a new structure
- 3.9 It is anticipated that the plans for the restructure of the top two layers of the organisation will be published for internal consultation in the Summer.

Organisational Culture

- 3.10 Culture is our greatest asset and is expressed through our mind-set, our way of working and our commitment. 64% of our employees say they are proud to work for the County Council – that is pretty good - but it should be higher. There is a huge amount of change confronting the organisation and the management of that change is an opportunity both to demonstrate and to shape our culture for the future.
- 3.11 I have placed significant emphasis on the importance of our culture in my first 100 days and see this as an important area to address going forwards. So far, I have:
- Developed thinking to enable employees to volunteer to drive our change activity through a new change network
 - Started work on simplifying our values and competency framework
 - Initiated work on the development of a workforce strategy which will clearly define how we will build the capability, skills and culture we need for the future and will also demonstrate the progress we are making across these dimensions
 - Started to clarify the 'employee deal' – what we expect from our employees, and what they can expect from the organisation

Financial Sustainability

- 3.12 The underpinning financial model for the organisation is shifting significantly. In part the culture change that we are seeking reflects the need to respond to these radical changes. There are significant opportunities in this shift towards a more autonomous, self-determining future. But there are also demands – to think more commercially, to take more risk, to innovate more systematically and to operate in market spaces we haven't previously occupied with a more entrepreneurial mind-set.
- 3.13 The 100 Days work in this area has focused on:
- Working with districts to maximise the Council Tax income we are due
 - The development of a residents' deal to ensure we are making the best use of fees and charges in support of all residents
 - The use of our capital to drive down revenue costs
 - The exploitation of the revenue potential of our existing assets
 - The extension of our traded strategy
 - New funding mechanisms to support core service delivery

- 3.14 A lot of thought has already gone in to these issues and Essex's approach to date means that we have a relatively strong financial base from which to build; that in itself creates some opportunities for us that other authorities might not have.

Mind-set and Ambition

- 3.15 Finally, apart from anything else we do, we must be ambitious for our county and the people of Essex. We must recognise that 'good enough' is never good enough. Essex people pride themselves on a can-do, entrepreneurial mind-set, their County Council should embrace that spirit. We should be energetic, outward-looking, prepared to take risks, outcome not process focused, adaptive to change, innovative, and enterprising. And we should marry that to a strong sense of public service mission. We should build on the advances we have made in developing this mind-set in certain parts of our business over the last couple of years and think hard now about how we can expand that approach across the organisation.

- 3.16 With that in mind, during the first 100 Days, I have:

- Accelerated progress on the delivery of the first Local Authority Challenge Prize in the country
- Developed the thinking on an innovative Leadership Collaborative – designed to school public service leaders across the county in systems leadership to solve real problems affecting our residents
- Begun to explore more creative approaches to the use of our capital resources
- Started exploratory work on what digital leadership might mean for Essex
- Agreed an approach to sourcing and investing in ideas from across the organisation.

4. Options

- 4.1 This Report sets out high level observations; identifies areas of work that have been prioritised; and articulates the business principles that will underpin our future approach. The intention is to formally adopt this paper through Cabinet and to share it with employees and partners. There is work flowing from each of the areas identified in the Report that is subject to further exploration through the usual channels and this work will come back to Cabinet with options regarding specific policy choices as appropriate.

5. Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 There are no specific financial decisions arising from the report. As a number of the principles are progressed to specific proposals, they will require decisions to be effected, which will have financial implications. However, the decision in this report does not require financial investment nor has direct implications for budgets.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 There will no doubt be a number of significant legal implications which result from the principles set out in this report but the decision in this report does not in itself have legal implications.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. The Report is high level. Elements of the activity it identifies will be subject to separate EqlAs.
- 6.4 The 100 Days Report is a high level summary document that combines an evaluation of the external environment in which the Council operates, with an assessment of its strategic capacity, and proposes a number of actions to guide the future direction of the authority. It signals a significant agenda that will be taken forward as part of our normal business processes setting out a clear pathway and a strong sense of purpose. Specific EqlAs will be undertaken as the activity in the report is developed and delivered.

7. List of appendices

Appendix 1 – 100 Days Report

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

8. List of Background papers

None.