

Subject: Delegation to the EKSC for the development of a Business Case to enable consideration of potential changes to EKS service delivery including a potential option for contracting out of some functions.

Director/Head of Service: Director of EK Services

Decision Issues: These matters are within the authority of the East Kent Services Committee.

Decision type: Not applicable

Classification: This report is open to the public.

Summary: The participating Councils in East Kent Services and EK Human Resources, Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council, have agreed to delegate the commissioning of a business case examining the merits of potentially contracting out the Councils' functions in relation to Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Functions.

This report requests the onward delegation to the Director of EK Services of the arrangements for the commissioning of such a business case.

That the Committee resolves:

(1) To note that the attached report has been considered and approved by each of the Cabinets of Thanet District Council and Dover District Council, and the Policy and Resources Committee of Canterbury City Council.

(2) To accept the requests of the above Cabinets and Committee that the East Kent Services Committee should discharge the powers and functions of the Council to develop a business case for the potential contracting out of the Council's functions in relation to the following:-

- Council Tax Administration and Enforcement
- National Non-Domestic Rates Administration and Enforcement
- Housing Benefit and associated services
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme and associated services
- Debt Recovery
- Customer Services

(together called 'the Revenues, Benefits, Debt Recovery and Customer Services Functions') and to determine the actions to be taken in connection therewith.

- (3) To delegate to each of the Director of Collaborative Services and the Director of EK Services responsibility for the commissioning and production of a business case examining the merits of the potential contracting out of the Councils' functions in relation to Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Functions and request that such a business case be presented to each of the three councils prior to further consideration by the East Kent Services Committee.

Next stage in process

Should the delegation be approved, a detailed business case will be produced and submitted to each of Dover District Council, Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council prior to further consideration by the East Kent Services Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Background

As part of EK Services' ongoing operation, the Director of Shared Services and his Management Team have been examining options to reduce the cost of service delivery to the three councils whilst maintaining the high quality of services that have been delivered since its inception.

Following consideration of the attached report, the Cabinets of Dover District Council and Thanet District Council, and the Policy and Resources Committee of Canterbury City Council have authorised and requested that:

The East Kent Services Committee should discharge the powers and functions of the Council to develop a business case for the potential contracting out of the Councils' functions in relation to the following:-

- Council Tax Administration and Enforcement
- National Non-Domestic Rates Administration and Enforcement
- Housing Benefit and associated services
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme and associated services
- Debt Recovery
- Customer Services

(together called 'the Revenues, Benefits, Debt Recovery and Customer Services Functions') and to determine the actions to be taken in connection therewith.

This Business Case is required in order to ensure that each of the three councils are given all relevant information to enable them to consider the options for future EKS service delivery and to consider the merits of a potential contracting out of the Revenues, Benefits, Debt Recovery and Customer Services functions.

The East Kent Services Committee is asked to consider delegating the responsibility of the development of such a business case to the Director of Shared Services.

Should this be granted the intention is for the business case to be considered by each council according to the following timetable, prior to further consideration by the East Kent Services Committee:

Canterbury City Council	4 October Policy & Resources Committee	19 October Council	
Dover District Council	2 October Cabinet	10 October Scrutiny (Policy & Performance) Committee	6 November Cabinet
Thanet District Council	19 September Cabinet	24 October Overview & Scrutiny Panel	16 November Cabinet

3. Relevant Council Documents

Attached as Annex A.

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

None relating specifically to this change of delegation. If these delegations are approved, and the Committee agrees the production of a detailed business case, consultation with all relevant stakeholders will be undertaken.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

- (i) To approve the proposed delegation
- (ii) Not to approve the proposed delegation.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option (i) is recommended, as it allows the East Kent Services Committee to commission a business case considering the potential contracting out of elements of EK Services' operations for consideration by the three Councils.

7. **Implications**

(a) Financial Implications

None at this stage, although agreeing the recommendation would allow for significant potential savings to be delivered in the future.

(b) Legal Implications

The proposed amendments to the delegations are in accordance with legislation and are considered to be lawful,

8. **Conclusions**

This delegation will facilitate the commissioning and production of a detailed business case examining the viability of a potential contracting out of functions. It could allow the realisation of significant savings for the three councils whilst safeguarding both the quality of services to the public and the jobs of existing EK Services staff.

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