

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 28 JANUARY 2013

REPORT ON: CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE BOARD UPDATE

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 69-2013

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report explains the role and operation of the Changing for the Future Board and highlights the outcomes it has achieved so far.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the content of this report is noted.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly associated to this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Prior to 2010, the City Council had no structured improvement function and the identification and delivery of improvements was done on a very ad hoc basis. In 2010, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to establish the Corporate Improvement team to develop and implement a corporate improvement programme, known as the Changing For The Future (CFTF) Programme.

- 4.2 Further before 2010, the Revenue Budget exercise within the Council generally had been within the remit of the Administration Group with budget savings being exchanged between the respective Party groupings seven days before the Budget Setting meeting in mid February. This left little opportunity for other political groups, independent members and the public to consider or challenge the savings proposals being made.

Although substantial savings were made in almost every year since the Council's formation in 1996, the level of savings required from 2010 onwards and the projected financial environment were unprecedented and required a new approach to the budgetary decision making that could involve more consensus and cooperation between all elected members and the senior officers of the Council.

- 4.3 In order to achieve these new approaches, Report 441-2010 proposed that a Changing for the Future Board be established to oversee and guide the Changing for the Future programme and the annual Revenue Budget process. This was seen as critical if the Council was going to deliver balanced budgets in financial years 2011/12 onwards.

THE CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE BOARD

4.4 The Board meets on a private and confidential basis in order to allow discussion and analysis of information and formulate strategic proposals, with meetings being held as and when business requires. In common with all the Project Boards and Groups set up by the Council, the Changing for the Future Board meets on a private and confidential basis in order to allow discussion and analysis of information and the formulation of strategic proposals, with meetings being held as and when business requires. It must be stressed that the establishment of the Board does not take any substantive decisions or take away the powers and decision making role of the Council and its Committees. In fact, policy reports or reports with staffing implications emanating from the CFTF programme and the Revenue Budget savings still require to be taken to the appropriate Committee for their consideration and determination.

4.5 To ensure there was challenge, consensus and cooperation between all elected members the membership of the Board was agreed as follows:

Chief Executive (Chair)
Director of Finance
Leader of Administration
Depute Leader of Administration
Administration Finance Spokesperson
Leader of Labour Group
Leader of Conservative Group
Leader of Liberal Democrat Group
Independent member
Lord Provost

Following the Council Election in May 2012 the current membership of the Board is as follows:-

Chief Executive (Chair)
Director of Corporate Services
Councillor Guild
Lord Provost Duncan
Bailie Sawers
Councillor Murray
Councillor Keenan
Councillor Macpherson
Bailie Scott
Bailie Borthwick

4.6 There have been 10 Board meetings so far and to date despite invitations being issued to all members of the Board for each meeting, only the Administration Group members and the previous Lord Provost attended the meetings.

4.7 It is important to stress that shortly after each Board meeting, hopefully the same day, copies of all reports considered by the Board members are issued to all 29 elected members and Trade Unions (where there may be implications for their members). The reports are also communicated to staff via chief officers as well as all the reports being available via the CFTF section of the Council's intranet site.

CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE - FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

- 4.8 This new approach in terms of the Revenue Budget means that elected members, staff and the public are being made aware of the Revenue Budget savings proposals in January each year, some 3 to 4 weeks earlier than was the case prior to 2010.
- 4.9 The Board has overseen the CFTF programme and the delivery of savings that have helped in the achievement of balanced budgets each year. Report 439-2012 to the Policy & Resources Committee on 26 November 2012 reported that £10.478M of CFTF savings had been approved so far
- 4.10 In addition, the recently released report for the 2013/14 Revenue Budget and Savings proposals outlines projects that are expected to achieve £2.5M in 2013/14 and £3.6M for 2014/15. As the CFTF programme is constantly evolving and delivering change the figure for 2014/15 will change in a positive direction. The total CFTF savings up to and including 2013/14 equate to almost £13M and have contributed significantly to the City Council achieving a Council Tax freeze every year since 2009.

CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

- 4.11 The CFTF programme has been a catalyst for change and new ways of working within the Council. There have been 48 projects (one of which has 13 sub projects) initiated since October 2010 and these are at one of three stages – Review (14 projects), Implementation (16 projects) and Complete (18 projects). A key aim of the programme was to reshape services and deliver change that had as little detrimental impact on front line services as possible.
- 4.12 The following highlights some of the key changes happening now -
- Rationalisation of Council assets ensuring they are utilised in a more corporate and productive way e.g. fleet and property
 - Reshaping services that have delivered efficiencies and/or a more joined up approach, but improved service delivery from our citizens perspective e.g. Re-structure of council departments (reduced from 14 to 7), Community Safety Hub and maintenance of public open spaces
 - Rationalising and streamlining back office & support functions e.g. Admin/clerical, IT, HR, etc
 - Improving services by exploitation of technology e.g. new technology implemented Corporate Electronic Records & Document management system, new IP telephony, enhancement of web services, etc
 - New ways of working to support changes outlined above and a continuous improvement culture within the Council e.g. mobile & flexible working, STEP programme

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- 4.13 The Council's external auditor and Audit Scotland have both supported the Council's new approach to corporate improvement via the CFTF programme and neither have reported negatively about the Board's role.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no issues in this regard to report on.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

David K Dorward
Chief Executive

25 January 2013