





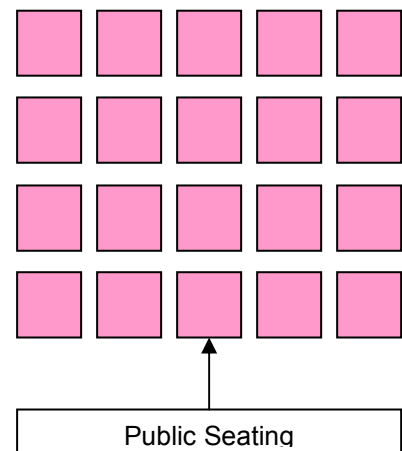
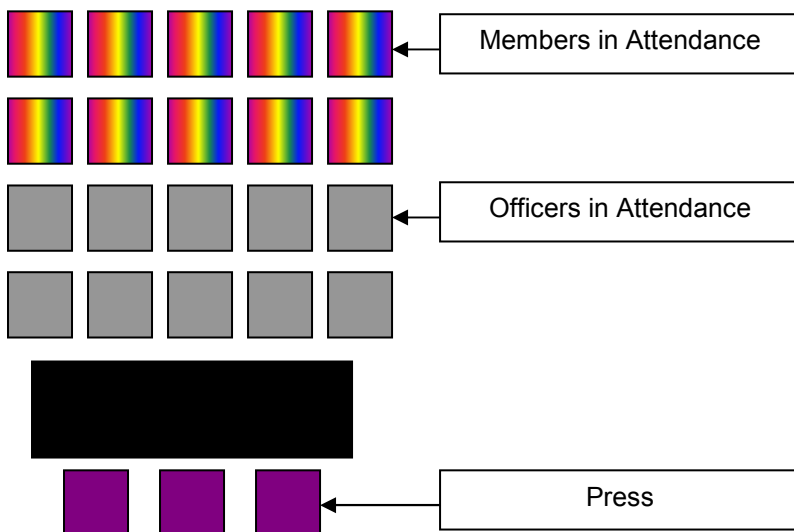
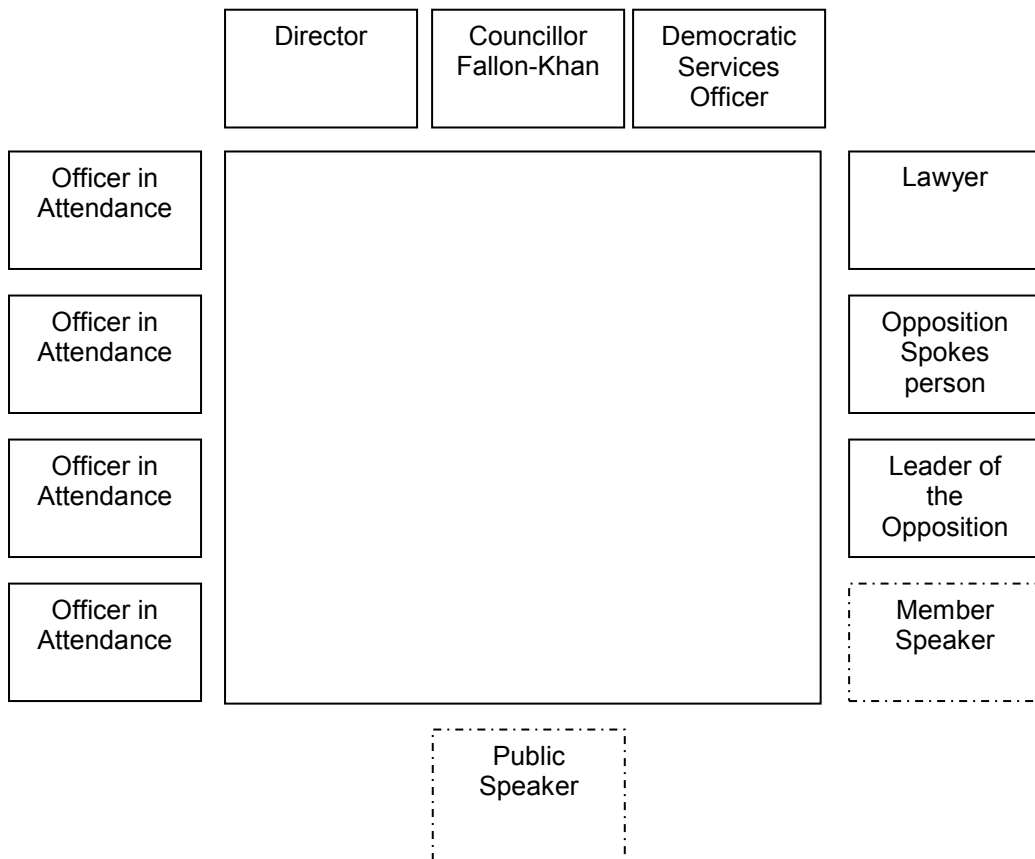
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Cabinet Member Meeting

Title:	Central Services Cabinet Member Meeting
Date:	13 October 2008
Time:	4.30pm
Venue	Committee Room 1, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillor: Fallon-Khan (Cabinet Member)
Contact:	Nara Miranda Democratic Services Officer 01273 291004 (voicemail only) nara.miranda@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Democratic Services: Meeting Layout



AGENDA

29. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (b) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 6

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2008 (copy attached).

31. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

32. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- (a) Items reserved by the Cabinet Member
- (b) Items reserved by the Opposition Spokesperson
- (c) Items reserved by Members, with the agreement of the Cabinet Member.

NOTE: Public Questions, Written Questions from Councillors, Petitions, Deputations, Letters from Councillors and Notices of Motion will be reserved automatically.

33. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 6 October 2008)

No public questions received by date of publication.

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

34. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No written questions have been received.

35. PETITIONS

No petitions received by date of publication.

36. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 6 October 2008)

No deputations received by date of publication.

37. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

No letters have been received.

38. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

No Notices of Motion have been referred.

39. MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION

No matters have been referred.

40. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No reports have been received.

41. POTENTIAL 'TELL US ONCE' PILOT

7 - 12

Report of the Director of Finance & Resources (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Paul Holloway

Tel: 292005

Ward Affected: All Wards

42. POTENTIAL IN AND OUT OF WORK PILOT

13 - 20

Report of the Director of Finance & Central Services (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Valerie Pearce

Tel: 291850

Ward Affected: All Wards

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fifth working day before the meeting.

Agendas and minutes are published on the council's website www.brighton-hove.gov.uk. Agendas are available to view five working days prior to the meeting date.

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Nara Miranda, (01273 291004 (voicemail only), email nara.miranda@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Friday, 3 October 2008

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 31
Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.45PM, 21 JULY 2008

ROOM 1 – HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Fallon-Khan , Cabinet Member for Central Services.

Also in attendance:

Cabinet Member/s: Councillor Young, Cabinet Member for Finance.

Other Members:

Councillor Hamilton, Opposition Spokesperson.

PART ONE

13 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13a Declarations of Interests

13.1 There were none.

13b Exclusion of Press and Public

13.2 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

13.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of item 27a, in Part Two of the agenda.

14 MINUTES

14.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 3.1 should refer to the Cabinet Meeting for Central Services, and the first sentence of paragraph 3.6 should be deleted (for copy see minute book).

15 CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 15.1 The Cabinet Member welcomed all those in attendance and stressed that he wanted the Cabinet Member Meetings to be as open and transparent as possible.
- 15.2 The Cabinet Member thanked officers, Directors and Assistant Directors for their hard work and dedication over the last few months. These officers had always been available for requests for information.

16 ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 16.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

17 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 17.1 There were none.

18 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 18.1 There were none.

19 PETITIONS

- 19.1 There were none.

20 DEPUTATIONS

- 20.1 There were none.

21 LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 21.1 There were none.

22 NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

- 22.1 There were none.

23 MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION

- 23.1 There were none.

24 REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 24.1 There were none.

25 COMMUNITY FACILITIES – REVISED LONG LEASE

- 25.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Assistant Director, Property & Design which explained that the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 February 2005 resolved that the council acquire a long leasehold interest of 160 years for the Community Facilities to be built as part of the development of blocks E and F at the New England Quarter, as set out in the original Section 106 agreement for the development dated September 2003. In addition, it was resolved that an underlease be granted to the Ethical Property Company PLC for 125 years. The

developer of blocks E & F had now offered the council a lease for 999 years, as set out in a subsequent Section 106 agreement dated September 2007.

25.2 The Cabinet Member thanked Jessica Hamilton for her report and the fact that the council had managed to negotiate a 999 year lease. The Opposition Spokesperson concurred.

25.3 **RESOLVED** – That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

(1) That the council acquires a long leasehold interest of 999 years for the Community Facilities to be built as part of the development of blocks E and F at the New England Quarter.

2) That the council grants an underlease to the Ethical Property Company plc on terms to be agreed by officers under general delegations.

26 RESPONSE TO A REPORT REQUEST ON BADGER MANAGEMENT

26.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Assistant Director, Property & Design, which had been produced in response to a letter request by Councillor Duncan, regarding a proposal for the council to introduce a ban on badger culling on farmland owned by Brighton & Hove City Council. The report considered the current legal framework, the problems badgers can cause and the implications of a ban and the current political debate (for copy see minute book).

26.2 The Cabinet Member expressed disappointment that Councillor Duncan was not in attendance at the meeting to hear the response to his letter.

26.3 The Cabinet Member stressed that the council was currently following government guidance in relation to badgers and he could see no reason to alter this policy.

26.4 The Opposition Spokesperson expressed the view that he would be sorry to see badgers culled but accepted the findings of the report. He queried whether badgers were much of a problem in Brighton & Hove. There were several badger setts in the area where he lived and the farmer said they were not a problem.

26.5 The representative from Smiths Gore explained that no-body knew the extent of TB in badgers or which areas were more affected than others. The disease was more likely to affect diary cattle as they lived longer than beef cattle, and TB took a long time to gestate.

26.6 Councillor Young asked if there were any cases of TB within the cities boundaries. The representative from Smiths Gore replied that there was not any data as to how many animals had TB. There were no diary cows among the cities commercial herds. However, the situation could change in the next few years, should farmers revert to dairy production.

26.7 **RESOLVED** – That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

(1) That a ban on badger culling be resisted, and that the authority relies on the

existing statutory controls in place.

(2) That it be agreed that, should national legislation be revised, or the Government issue further guidance in relation to disease control to reduce the spread of TB, the authority should review its policy in light of any further advice or guidance.

27 PROVISION OF A CASH IN TRANSIT AND ANCILLARY SERVICE EFFECTIVE FROM 10 DECEMBER 2008

27.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources concerning the outcome of the evaluation process regarding the Cash in Transit and Ancillary Service Contract. The report also recommended the appointment of the Council's preferred contractor. Further details of the financial evaluation was contained in the exempt item 27b (for copy see minute book).

27.2 The Cabinet Member thanked officers for the information contained in the report and stated that the tendering process had been carried out in the spirit of quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness.

27.3 **RESOLVED** - That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

1) That it be noted that Coin Co International Plc met the evaluation criteria as set out in the evaluation process.

2) That the ward of contract to Coin Co International Plc for a period of three years, commencing 10 December 2008, be approved, with an option (at the sole discretion of the council), to extend the contract for a further two years.

PART TWO SUMMARY

28. PROVISION OF A CASH IN TRANSIT AND ANCILLARY SERVICE EFFECTIVE FROM 10 DECEMBER 2008 – EXEMPT CATEGORY 3

28.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources concerning further information on the financial evaluation process and the outcome of the evaluation process regarding the cash in transit and Ancillary Service Contract. The report further recommended the appointment of the Council's preferred contractor.

28.2 **RESOLVED** – As set out in 27 above.

29. PART 2 ITEMS

29.1 The Cabinet Member considered whether or not any of the above items should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

29.2 **RESOLVED** – That item No 28 should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 5.04pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 41

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Potential 'Tell Us Once' Pilot
Date of Meeting: 13 October 2008
Report of: Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer: Name: Paul Holloway **Tel:** 29-2005
E-mail: Paul.holloway@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No Information only
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 'Tell Us Once' is a potential pilot project that would benefit the citizens of Brighton & Hove. The pilot, if approved, sits within the Council's Access Vision (agreed by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2007) and Council priorities, including better use of public money.
- 1.2 It is anticipated that with continued members commitment to providing cost effective value for money services, this pilot if offered, will improve services to customers, by minimising the amount of contact a customer has to have with the Council.
- 1.3 Citizens would find it easier to access services and will only have to communicate once with the council about a change of circumstances.
- 1.4 There are 2 potential pilots within this – one for bereavement communication and one for change of address communication.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Central Services is requested to:

- 2.1 To note the aims of the potential pilot project.
- 2.2 To support and agree any involvement the Council is able to secure in the Tell Us Once programme, subject to there being no additional unfunded financial or resource implications.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 'Service Transformation' is a government initiative that has come out of the Varney Review of December 2006. Sir David Varney, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was asked to look at the channels through which services are delivered, with a view to suggesting ways of making them more efficient, and specifically more personalised to the needs of the customer and businesses.
- 3.2 The Tell Us Once programme has been developed in response to the Varney Review and recommendations.
- 3.3 The initiative's principles are to provide a better service for citizens and businesses and a better deal for the tax payer.
- 3.4 The pilot will involve the DWP programme team calling upon data sharing / information from across Government with a view to removing, or working around those barriers that presently impede the efficient processes that are being sought.
- 3.5 The Council, through working with the DWP in any agreed pilot would ensure any agreed changes to processes regarding sharing of information, to provide a better service, are covered by the Data Protection Act.
- 3.6 Sir David Varney's report has highlighted that often the most vulnerable citizens currently have to "join up public service islands" for themselves.
- 3.7 The primary objective of the Tell Us Once pilot is to look at testing more efficient and effective processes around the customer journey for birth and bereavement. Also and separately piloting the creation of a change of change of address service, by 2010. The ultimate aim is for citizens not to have to notify multiple public services of changes.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There has been an initial meeting with the DWP Tell Us Once project manager and further discussions are due to take place to establish the most appropriate way in which the council can become involved in a pilot project scheme that will potentially benefit citizens, and whether we have a suitable location and demographic for the DWP in their choice of spread of different authorities.
- 4.2 Discussions have also taken place with the Sussex Improvement Partnership (SIP). SIP have already received funding for some customer service based projects and have indicated they would be in a position to help support a pilot project of this nature.

FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

At this stage the Government is exploring whether the proposals are viable and if it can add real value to the citizens' interaction with government. If selected as a pilot authority, we would anticipate all associated costs being met by the Department for Work and Pensions. The aims of the project certainly suggest benefits to our citizens but also show potential to generate overall cost savings for the council. The financial, as well as all other implications, of any resulting projects would need to be considered in full and reported back to Members in a future report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Stuart Taylor

Date: 10/09/08

Legal Implications:

5.2 If and when the council takes part in any pilot project, any processing of personal data must comply with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 15/09/08

Equalities Implications:

5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out to date as this is a potential pilot. Consideration to an EIA will be given if the pilot is offered

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There are no negative / adverse risk and opportunity management implications.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The potential pilot project will benefit citizens, and fits with the Council's Access Vision and its priorities.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 Alternative options are not relevant as this is a potential pilot project.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Officers believe the pilot project will make processes and contact with the Council easier for citizens, and they will benefit from improved services as a result.
- 7.2 The pilot project aims fit in with the Council's Access Vision for citizens and this also supports the Council's priorities for providing a cost effective, value for money service for its citizens.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix A

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Tell Us Once report to Central Services Cabinet Member meeting – Cabinet Member meeting, 13 October 2008.

APPENDIX A

Information taken from Cabinet Office website.

Putting the citizen at the centre of transformed services

Government has to be able to listen and learn from citizens and businesses as customers of public services. This is central to the Service Transformation Agreement.

Transformational Government set out the challenge for radical public service reform across government to design services which are more personalised to the needs of citizens and businesses.

The Service Transformation Agreement takes this one step further by placing this challenge at the centre of the Government's plans for public service reform. It recognises the need for the Government to construct and deliver services in order that the citizen is well equipped to conduct their business with government:

- in ways which make most sense for the citizen or business, irrespective of agency boundaries;
- in the manner of the citizen's own choosing; and
- with the backing of considerable communication and readily available support.

The result will be public services that make life easier for people and which are there to serve the public.

In his report, Sir David Varney report suggested that citizens who need to access multiple services from Government (often the most vulnerable) may find it very difficult to do so and are forced to 'join-up public service islands' for themselves. In his report he presented a number of recommendations including:

- Developing a change of circumstances service starting with bereavement, birth and change of address by 2010, so that citizens don't have to notify multiple public services.
- The **Tell Us Once Programme**, a cross government initiative, has been set up to explore whether this proposal is viable and if it can add real value to the citizens' interaction with government.

CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 42

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Potential In and Out of Work Pilot
Date of Meeting: 13 October 2008
Report of: Director of Finance & Resources
Contact Officer: Name: **Valerie Pearce** Tel: **29-1850**
E-mail: Valerie.Pearce@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No Information Only
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 'In and Out of Work' is a joint pilot project between the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and some Local Authorities (LA), which aims to improve the access to in and out of work benefits and services to customers who move frequently in and out of work, pending national rollout.
- 1.2 Following an initial trial within North Tyneside in 2006 and pilots across six Local Authority areas, the DWP are seeking Local Authorities to volunteer to take part in the next wave of pilot schemes. This report informs the cabinet member of the scheme and seeks approval to take part, if accepted, in the pilot. The findings of which are likely to shape the national rollout of the scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Central Services is requested to:

- 2.1 Note the In and Out of Work Project; and
- 2.2 Agree in principle to Brighton & Hove becoming a pilot, if selected by DWP to take part, subject to satisfactory financial and resource arrangements.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The In and Out of Work Pilots have been running since September 2007 in six Local Authority areas; Lambeth; Liverpool; Merthyr Tydfil; Sedgemoor; West Lothian and West Somerset.

- 3.2 The pilot areas have been testing new processes which involve Job Centre Plus acting as a single point of contact for customers who are claiming Housing (HB) & Council Tax (CTB) Benefit and/or tax credits along with their Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Income Support (IS). The pilots have demonstrated that closer working between JobCentre Plus, LAs and the Tax Office delivers a range of benefits including
- Significant improvements to the customer experience
 - Paying customers more quickly – end to end 15% faster
 - Leading to increased customer confidence to take up short-term work
- 3.3 Feedback from Liverpool City Council indicates that relationships between Job Centre Plus and the local authorities have greatly improved; customers liked the 'joined up' Government approach and 84% of HB/CTB customers were clearer on what evidence was required to support their claim. The quality of data collected by Job Centre Plus staff improved by at least 50% which reduced the need for Local authority staff to contact customers for further information improving processing times and reducing debt.
- 3.4 In addition, liaison with HMRC who process tax credits, and electronic transfer to data on Tax Credits has enabled in work claims to be processed more speedily. Transferring claims electronically from Job Centre Plus to Local Authorities has also reduced the loss of forms and as claims are received within a day of verification at Job Centre Plus processing times are further improved.
- 3.5 For Brighton & Hove, this pilot would potentially help reduce the time taken to process changes of circumstances and could therefore potentially minimise this type of HB overpayments. There are 24413 HB and 25200 CTB claimants within Brighton & Hove. Of these 70% of HB claimants and 58% of CTB claimants are of working age (although these figures do not take account of those who are of working age but are unable to work due to disability).
- 3.6 The In and Out of Work Project is now looking to establish pathfinder areas in the regions which do not yet have a pilot. It is anticipated that the pilot would last between 6-12 months and full roll out will take place by December 2009. Further details of the pilot can be found in appendix 1.
- 3.7 Brighton & Hove would ensure that in any agreed pilot, any changes to processes regarding the sharing of information in order to deliver service improvements, are compliant with the Data Protection Act.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Benefits service has held discussions with the ICT division within Brighton & Hove as the pilot is reliant upon Brighton & Hove having a Government Connect secure connection. The work towards this is on target and due to be completed by 31st October. The Government Connect connection is a requirement for all local authorities and Brighton & Hove would be required to implement this work regardless of whether the authority is selected as a pilot for the In/Out of Work project.

- 4.2 The Benefits service has also discussed the benefits of the scheme with Liverpool City Council who are currently acting as a pilot.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 It is difficult at this stage to assess the full financial implications of the project. Having Job Centre Plus acting as the chief point of contact, should reduce the workload for the council in processing the benefit payments for those claimants affected and should increase the accuracy and speed of payments. This should also lead to a reduction in the number overpayments. If the council is chosen to take part in the pilot, the affect on workloads and the amount of subsidy receivable will be closely monitored.

Finance Officer Consulted: Patrick Rice

Date: 17/09/2008

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 If agencies are sharing customer data it will be important to ensure that this is done with the consent of the individual and that appropriate checks are in place to obtain this consent in every case.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 10/09/2008

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment would be carried out if Brighton & Hove is selected as one of the pilot areas.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no implications on crime and disorder.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 None.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Brighton & Hove could opt to wait until the full roll out in December 2009.
- 6.2 However, if selected to take part in the scheme, there would be the opportunity to help develop an implementation model and influence the wider roll out. Brighton

& Hove would also be able to take advantage of the benefits of the new processes including improved customer service and clearance times.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommended proposals will enable the City Council to provide a better service to citizens, providing better use of public money and reducing inequality by increasing opportunity. (Council Priorities 2008-11)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Briefing – In and Out of Work Project

Background Documents

1. Housing & Council Tax Benefit – General Information Bulletin G10/2008

Appendix 1. Briefing - In and Out of Work Project

Background

Building on an initial trial within North Tyneside in 2006, the In and Out of Work Pilots were implemented across six Local Authority areas from September 2007. The six pilots covered a total of 38 sites – including 6 Local Authorities, 2 Contact Centres, 24 Jobcentres, 5 Benefit Delivery Centres, and the HMRC Tax Credit Office.

The In and Out of Work Project is at the forefront of the Transformational Government agenda breaking new ground by focusing on improving service to the customer through streamlining cross-government services. The pilots key aim is to offer more effective access to in and out of work benefits and services to customers who move frequently in and out of work. In short, removing the barriers to work, driving out potential significant social and labour market improvements with the focus on the customer.

In 2006 Customer Insight told us that customers moving into and out of work have to make multiple contacts to three organisations (Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities and Tax Credit Office) for their respective claims – adding delays to processing times. The process was onerous for the customer with often the same information and evidence required by the different agencies for in and out of work benefits.

The IOW pilots adopt a ‘tell us once’ philosophy by gathering customer information and evidence through Jobcentre Plus and sharing it with Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs Tax Credit Office and Local Authorities.

The strategic benefit from this initiative is achieved through a combination of two main factors - transformed customer service through a one contact approach and improved speed of processing. Turning benefits on and off more quickly and effectively is a key enabler to encouraging the customers to take the first step into the labour market, particularly to take up short term work. The Project demonstrates joined-up Government whilst providing an improved service to the customer.

There is now a substantial weight of validated performance data and customer research to support a range of process and service improvements, speeding up the end to end processing times, reducing potential overpayments, and significantly improving the completeness and processability of customer claims.

Key Points

- Overall, this is achievable without increasing the cost to the taxpayer.
- The pilot processes were developed with the full support of operational staff across the three departments.

- The new processes were supported by development of simple IT using electronic forms, secure e mail and Government Connect Secure Xtranet (GCSX).
- The scope of the pilots covers all JSA and IS Lone Parent cases with an immediate Work Focussed Interview.
- To thoroughly evaluate the pilots the project worked closely with a range of key stakeholders across the analytical community.
- The formal evaluation, completed in March 2008, confirmed very encouraging results with improved performance compared to the baseline. This is evident across a range of performance measures:
 - Improved end to end processing times for JCP to Housing Benefit by 15%
 - Improved clearance of Tax Credit new claims
 - Improved Average Actual Clearance Times
 - Reduction in the number of customers failing to attend Jobcentres for interviews
 - Increased completeness of information collected and exchanged between the three departments.
- Key findings from customer and staff research was positive:
 - Two independent surveys support the view that customers prefer the pilot processes
 - Increased customer confidence to take up short-term work
 - Customers have experienced speedier resolution of their entitlements
 - Staff were positive and encouraged by the new process.
- Some key performance measures will take longer to evidence (eg Labour Market impact). The full range of pilot processes continue to operate, so that further monitoring can be conducted.
- The benefits have been clearly identified and continue to be subject to further testing.
- Key driver is customer service improvements. The processes save time for customers and present a joined up government approach to customers moving in and out of work across the three departments.

Next Steps

- Secure full ministerial approval, building on existing briefing and meetings
- Establish fully resourced project team

- Develop detailed proposal for first stage of implementation involving a phased approach across JCP; HMRC and LAs, starting in the existing Pilot Districts/Regions.
- At the same time, identify districts in the remaining 6 JCP regions which could easily adopt the new working practices quickly.
- Begin rollout of the pilots by summer 2008 and to complete roll out by Dec 2009.
- Pursue development and implementation of IT Solution working closely with EDS and ASPIRE.

