

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **Report to the Director of Corporate Services – Maxine O’Mahony**

#### **Implementation and Formalisation of New Projects Requiring Approval from BISC**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Business Improvement Sub Committee’s approval of the recommendations to adopt a standardised application process and form for all requests for new projects and funding enabling the committee to make informed decisions in line with business needs and benefits.

##### **2. Recommendation(s)**

- It is recommended that with effect from the next sub committee (2<sup>nd</sup> November) that:
- 2.1 The Business Improvement Sub Committee approves the BISC application form for new projects and funding through the Business Improvement Sub Committee (option3)
- 2.2 The Business Improvement Sub Committee approves the new process for issuance, circulation and evaluation of applications by the Business Improvement Team in preparation for forthcoming Business Improvement Sub Committees (option 3).
- 2.3 The Business Improvement Sub-Committee embed and embrace the new process for the acceptance and approval for all new and future projects and funding (option 3).

**Note:** In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

##### **3. Information, Issues and Options**

###### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 The Business Improvement Sub Committee has the ability to approve and release funding for Breckland Council projects and programmes to maintain or improve services using IT as a key enabler.
- 3.1.2 Currently the committee receives reports in varying manners either verbally, committee template report or a BI ICT application. The reports rarely address key questions relating to the business.
- 3.1.3 To ensure the committee makes an informed decision about future projects and programmes, this report seeks to formalise and adopt the BISC Application process as standard for all new projects and programmes requesting funding, prioritisation and resource planning. The process will be centrally administered through the Business Improvement Team.
- 3.1.4 The process aims to challenge the applicant with a series of key questions focusing on the business needs, risk, ease to achieve, value and the corporate business plan. Once completed it is circulated with key stakeholders including ICT, Business Improvement, Finance, Performance, Procurement and Customer for their views and guidance on the application before being presented to Business Improvement Sub Committee to make a formal decision:
- Rejection: reject the application
  - Request for further information at the next Business Improvement Sub Committee
  - Approve the application subject to returning to the sub committee with a business case\*, Project Initiation Document\* , summary report and Proforma-B (*\*When required*)

- Approve the application and release funding subject to the relevant documents complete and presented

Monitor and evaluate the progress of the project until such a time it is successfully delivered and the benefits realised.

New applications must be received and circulated as part of the agenda pack in order to give members and attendees the time to review the application and prepare comments within the deadlines set out.

### 3.2 Issues

3.2.2 There are a number of issues with the current process and format that the sub committee receives requests seeking approval for funding.

- **Inconsistency:** Reports are received in differing formats and do not always address key questions. In some instances some requests for funding or projects have been approved without the application which was introduced in 2009. This process will standardise all requests for funding and new projects through the committee.
- **Non realisation of benefits:** There are few projects that the committee monitor until delivered or the benefits realised. This process will monitor projects until such a time as delivered and benefits realised.
- **Alignment to business needs:** Projects and investments should be evaluated against Council priorities and business needs in order to prioritise and demonstrate value for money. This process will evaluate all processes against Council priorities, business benefits, risk, legislation and ease to achieve to demonstrate value for money and alignment of projects and funding against Council priorities.
- **Stakeholder input:** Rarely stakeholders are available to input unless present at the committee. This allows full representation prior to the forthcoming board and comments to be distributed as part of the agenda pack.
- **Standardised questions:** There are no standardised questions or points unless raised Adhoc at the meeting. All applicants will be asked to address the same points ensuring that a fair evaluation can take place and the committee can make an informed decision.

3.2.3 The change and streamlining of this process, plus an evaluation will ensure all projects and funding requests through the Business Improvement Sub Committee are treated fairly and exposed to the same evaluation. This will enable managers and members to make informed decisions but also ensure there is accountability for applicants to deliver the solution and realise any associated benefits through the monitoring of delivery.

### 3.3 Options

#### **Option 1 : Do nothing**

- Retain the current mix of reports and pro-forma B's for new projects and programmes with the lack of consistency and, in some cases, information and justification.

#### **Option 2: Revert to the former process of committee report templates**

- Use the standard committee services template which does not challenge the applicant on key business needs and impact which could result in an uninformed decision being made and non invitation to comment from key stakeholders.

#### **Option 3: Formalise the BISC application process and forms and embed within the Business Improvement Sub Committee**

- Only accept the BISC application form for new projects and funding through the Business Improvement Sub Committee.
- Adopt a new process for issuance, circulation and evaluation of applications by the Business Improvement Team in preparation for forthcoming Business Improvement

Sub Committees.

- Embed and embrace a new process for the acceptance and approval for all new and future projects and funding.

### 3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 3.4.1 The Business Improvement Sub Committee needs to focus on Business Improvement initiatives utilising ICT as an enabler rather than a driver to demonstrate value for money and to be able to make an informed decision based on the format and content of the information presented.
- 3.4.2 Projects and funding released should be held accountable by the service requesting the project/funding approval. The committee should monitor projects and funding until delivered and the benefits realised to demonstrate value for money.
- 3.4.3 It will create a strong governance framework around the application, evaluation, approval, prioritisation and monitoring for all new projects and funding for ICT or Business Improvement initiatives.
- 3.4.4 It will ensure all projects and funding is prioritised inline with Council priorities, business needs and associated benefits and consider the impact on the workforce and current projects.

## 4. Risk and Financial Implications

### 4.1 Risk

- 4.1.1 Adopting and embedding these processes for new projects and funding will ensure that the applicant assesses the risks as a result of undertaking/not undertaking the project.
- 4.1.2 Through creation of the correct project documents, the risks associated to the project delivery should be captured and the mechanism in place to mitigate these.

### 4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 There are no financial risks however it does allow the council to demonstrate value for money in the selection of its projects and allocation of funding. It also allows for projects to be monitored and benefits tracked.

## 5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

## 6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: Equalities has no effect on this report.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998:
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006:
- d) Human Rights:
- e) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004]

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