

# Information Briefing

Report from: Kate Charlton, City Solicitor  
Report to: Co-ordinating O&S Committee

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## LEGAL SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

### 1. SUMMARY

The note below outlines the proposed changes to the Legal Services Department delivery model, and explain how it intends to operate in a Core/Core Plus model for the remainder of 2018/19 and into future years.

### 2. OUTLINE OF APPROACH

Financial challenges in Legal Services have led to a review of Service Delivery priorities. For the last six years, Legal Services have meticulously reviewed and planned resources based on existing and forecasted demand; the result is that the total current workload required by Directorates cannot be delivered within the amount funded by the Corporate Centre. Whilst the amount provided has never been enough to meet demand in its entirety, there is a need to formally address this via a mechanism that provides the City Council with a sustainable legal function and gives clarity and visibility to all about the functions that are provided.

Legal Services have therefore split their processes into a *Core* category, which will be funded by the Corporate Centre, and a *Core Plus* category which will be funded by alternative sources.

Core delivery areas and processes are primarily concerned with ensuring no citizen/service is left without necessary support, and keeping the City Council safe and legal. Legal Services will include as many additional areas of legal support as possible into Core funded work. The Core is fluid – work can be swapped, added to or subtracted from in accordance with priorities, available funding and agreement with frontline directorates.

Core Plus work funding sources are numerous, examples include but are not limited to;

- recovered fees being retained in the event of success in contentious matters;
- recovering fees from external grants to service areas; capital schemes; external developer funding or internal charging.

The alternative is that Core Plus work could cease and staff reduced in order to meet the funding gap, although this would likely result in the work being replicated elsewhere.

Where internal charging is necessary, a commercial approach to the work will be undertaken, enabling efficiencies, comparisons with private sector providers, and ensuring

value for money is demonstrated. In addition to a commercial approach being taken to delivering legal work, the department will also closely collaborate with directorates to achieve desired outcomes jointly, whilst also undertaking focussed activity to reduce Core Plus work, and associated additional legal expenditure, via a revised approach to Joint Action Planning that will incorporate delivering strategies to reduce or eliminate failure demand. This approach to collaboration can also be extended to the Combined Authority with anticipated - although uncalculated - resource/efficiency gains for all.

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