

**FUTURE OPTIONS TECHNICAL NOTE:  
Assessment of Approaches**

<b>Title: Assessment of Approaches Input</b>
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<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>This paper provides a summary of the assessment of the possible approaches that was carried out within workshops attended by staff and councillors. It is also supported by a workgroup from UNISON who assessed the different approaches using the same assessment matrix as was presented to Members.</p> <p>The approaches for consideration were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In house Transformation Programme</li> <li>• Outsourcing</li> <li>• Shared Services</li> <li>• Shared CEO/Shared Management Board</li> </ul> <p>Each approach was debated in a workshop environment where group discussion was encouraged and facilitated by members of the Future Options Project Team, with the view of stimulating open and honest participation by all.</p>
<p><b>Sources of Information</b></p> <p>Output from workshops and workgroups</p>
<p><b>Consultees</b></p> <p>Management Board, UNISON, Staff</p>
<p><b>Officer Conclusion</b></p> <p>All those engaged in this assessment offered constructive and balanced feedback, reflecting similar themes and concerns.</p> <p>Most considered that strong leadership and the need for unified commitment is vital to ensure that whatever approach is chosen, it is supported and followed through to its natural successful conclusion.</p> <p>Whilst the groups recognised potential savings and opportunities for efficiencies, the overriding focus should be centred on the community. There were some doubts expressed whether this is best served through outsourced private sector delivery.</p>

A better understanding of community needs and expectations was referenced consistently throughout the assessment process. This is seen as a priority to unlocking the future success of the council.

Do Nothing was disregarded as not viable, but useful to benchmark the other approaches. The commentary captured shows that unanimously amongst management, officers and UNISON – doing nothing and staying as we are as a Council is not a valid option and not worth considering as a viable option. There is recognition that the Council has to change in some format and that there will be an impact on Members and staff alike, but that the community and the need to achieve sustainable savings is integral to the need to the change.

In house transformation approach is seen as the least risky approach. But it is considered by many that this could provide the greatest opportunity to become efficient; working alongside the community, developing the localism agenda and provide the Council a strong platform for moving forward.

The capacity and capability of existing staff to deliver the In house transformation is a concern. Whilst highlighting that capability exists within the organisation, this could be complimented by utilising some additional external skills.

A challenge of In House approach is the possible perception of investing in internal processes. This needs to be off set by the focus that this is an invest in the short term for much longer term sustainable savings

It appears that the least favourable of the approaches is outsourcing. Whilst the groups recognised potential savings and opportunities for efficiencies, the overriding factor centred on the community and whether this approach would be able to deliver. Opportunities could exist for community groups to undertake services but first of all there is a need to actual understand what the community wants from the council, what services do they require and who would be willing to deliver them if not the private sector. Contract Management and the extensive contracts and SLA's that would be needed, presented challenges in terms of skills to deliver them but also the technical knowledge in ensuring the robustness of them, whilst still maintaining flexibility. The element of risk was far greater than other Models, and doubt existed whether the interaction between the political and democratic process of the Council with an external provider would be managed successfully.

Shared Services approach was seen to provide opportunity to share knowledge and expertise, retain specialist skills and provide resilience. The approach creates large service partnership providing the ability to be more influential whether in policy formulation or in procurement.

The approach to ultimately share a CEO and Management team is still seen as a viable option with some exciting opportunities. It is considered by many that this needs to be developed with Councillors so that a clear understanding of its implication and the impact on the rest of the organisation is understood. It is considered that this is not currently fully understood.

Both officers and UNISON recognise that both an operational and cultural change is needed for the Council. Both want to see the Council emerge as a leading Council within the region using a business like approach for establishing efficient and effective services but above all be ultimately accountable as an organisation to succeed.