

Decision Session – Executive Member for the Environment

3 December 2018

Report of the Director of Economy and Place

Evaluation of the pilot of the Better Decision Making Tool

Summary

1. One Planet Council (OPC) is the City of York Council's initiative which places sustainability and resilience at the heart of council decision-making processes. The programme was approved by the Executive on 16 March 2017.
2. The Better Decision Making Tool is a central part of the One Planet Council Programme. The tool was designed to help officers identify and balance the social, economic, environmental, and equalities implications of their decisions. This report presents a review the tool, following its six month pilot with Executive decisions.
3. Feedback and analysis of the pilot indicates that the tool is beneficial in helping officers to think more holistically about the impact of their proposal and identify additional improvements and mitigation strategies. In order to further embed the tool into corporate processes it is proposed that the tool is aligned with the All About Projects Framework and that a Project Officer post is created to support officers working on the capital programme and to lead on key delivery projects, including Go Ultra Low.

Recommendations

The Executive Member is asked to:

- Note the findings of the review
- Approve the creation of a Project Officer post to support officers delivering capital project and to lead key delivery projects.
- Delegate any further amendments of the tool to the Head of Corporate Strategy and City Partnerships and the Head of Programmes in Economy and Place.

Reason: in order to continue to improve the usability of the tool, to ensure that its impact is maximised and to ensure that there is capacity to deliver key projects around the One Planet agenda.

Background

4. The Better Decision Making Tool (BDMT) was designed to help officers identify and balance the social, economic, environmental, and equalities implications of their decisions. The tool is part of a wider corporate agenda to help realise the ambitions set out in the Council Plan (2015–19): to put sustainability at the heart of everything we do, to work towards ‘One Planet Living’ and to become a more resilient organisation.
5. In March 2017, the Executive approved a six month pilot of the tool, for strategies, policies, projects, and changes to services going before the Executive. The approved tool is attached as Annex 1. The pilot period ran from June to November 2017.

Review

6. Since the pilot, a review of the tool has been carried out, based on a combination of officer feedback and an analysis of the quality of responses provided within the tool.

7. The following benefits of the tool were identified:

- The tool helps officers systematically consider a wide range of potential implications of their project, enabling them to mitigate potential negative effects, and helping them identify additional positive benefits that could be delivered.
- The tool prompts officers to consider areas outside of their area of expertise, and where appropriate, seek advice from colleagues.
- The nature of the questions in the first part of the form (relating to health, access to services, employment, skills, etc.) helps officers to think more deeply about the equalities issues addressed in the latter part of the form.
- Where proposals relate to procurement, the tool provides an opportunity to raise officer awareness about the potential to deliver additional social, environmental and local economic benefits through the goods and services they buy.

8. Figure 1 shows a snapshot from a completed Better Decision Making Tool, highlighting key actions to maximise the positive, and minimise the negative, impacts of the proposal.

Figure 1: Snapshot from a completed Better Decision Making Tool

7.2 What are the outstanding actions needed to maximise benefits or minimise negative impacts in relation to this proposal? Please include the action, the person(s) responsible and the date it

Action	Person(s)	Due date
Appoint Dedicated Project Manager to support customers, carers, family members and providers.	Project Manager	May-17
Engagement / Q&A sessions with customers, carers and families	Project Manager / Adults LD / YILTS Team	May - Nov 17
Engagement / Q&A sessions with care providers.	Project Manager / Adults LD / YILTS Team	May - Nov 17
Produce cross directorate customer and community Transportation Policy	Health, Housing & Adult Social Care / Children, Education & Communities directorates	Nov-17
Practical / financial support with the management of Direct Payments	DP Support Framework Providers	Ongoing
Practical / financial support with the wider aspects of money management, income maximisation.	Financial Inclusion Network	Ongoing
Social and emotional support for families and carers	York Carers Centre	Ongoing
Explore alternative solutions for elderly customers with dementia and no family support.	Adults Long Term Team	Ongoing
Reduce the risk of discrimination against vulnerable customers.	YILTS / Safe Places Scheme	Ongoing
Encourage transport providers on the Approved CYC Framework to adopt sustainable principles.	Adults Commissioning Team	May-June 2017
Explore employment opportunities for Personal Assistants and Escorts created through the personalised approach.	Adults LD Team	Ongoing

9. The Better Decision Making tool includes an assessment of the equalities implications of a proposal and replaces the Community Impact Assessment. Officers typically report that the structure of the Better Decision Making tool makes is easier to complete and that the tool provides a more comprehensive and holistic assessment of a project. This view was echoed by the Staff Equalities Experts Group. During the pilot period the tool was used in twelve reports. This contrast with five uses of the Community Impact Assessment over the same six month period in the previous year. As we further refine our corporate processes in relation to the tool, we anticipate that the number of proposals using the tool will increase.

10. During the course of the pilot period officer feedback was collected regarding the ease of completing the tool. The tool was also presented in

an interactive session to the members of Leading Together: a group which comprises senior managers from across the council. Some subtle changes to the language used and the form layout were made, in order to make it easier to complete. These changes were signed off by the Executive Member for the Environment and the Director of Economy and Place during the pilot period, as per the March 2017 Executive approval. The original tool is provided in Annex 1 and the amended version in Annex 2.

11. The Better Decision Making Tool was piloted with Executive decisions. This decision was taken on the basis that it would help raise awareness of the tool and ensure we prioritise the most significant decisions. While this is an important step, and officers have been able to apply the tool to positive effect, officers also report that the tool would have delivered greater benefit were they to use it earlier in a proposals lifecycle. This is due to the greater flexibility to make modifications.
12. In order to ensure that the tool is used at the earliest opportunity, it is proposed that the tool is aligned with the council's All About Projects Framework. The tool should be used in the Discovery stage of a proposal, when gathering evidence about its potential impact, shaping the form a project takes, and identifying key outcomes aligned to the One Planet principles. The tool should be consulted again during full business case development and act as a living document throughout the lifecycle of the Project.
13. During the pilot, officers were offered support to complete the tool, including from colleagues in health and equalities. The quality of the responses provided in the tool is strongly linked to the amount of assistance provided by officers with specialist knowledge. While the quality of some completed Better Decision Making Tools is high, others are insufficiently detailed. In light of this it is proposed that a Project Officer post is created to support and challenge officers working on major capital projects.
14. Examples of the Capital Projects are as follows:
 - York Central
 - Castle Gateway

- Housing Development Company
- Guildhall
- Older Persons' Accommodation
- STEP
- Specialist Disabled Children's Short Break Facility
- Community Stadium
- Outer ring road
- AWRP

15. Built into the Project Officer role will be the delivery of key projects that align to the One Planet agenda. An example of this would be the Go Ultra Low project: a project which the Council has been successful in securing funding for the infrastructure and strongly supports the green aspects of One Planet.

16. The officer would sit within the Directorate of Economy and Place reporting into the Programmes function and have the following responsibilities:

- a. Work with project managers during the Discovery stage of All About Projects, helping them to shape the proposal, identify additional social, economic and environmental opportunities and risks and establish key outcomes aligned to the One Planet Principles
- b. Provide ongoing support and challenge throughout the development of major capital projects, particularly during full business case development
- c. Identify and apply for funding that enables project managers to deliver wider benefits that will support our corporate objectives around sustainability and resilience
- d. Support officers when procuring goods and services, helping them understand how tenders can be structured to deliver additional social, economic and environmental benefits
- e. Facilitate cross-directorate support and knowledge transfer. Through regular engagement with Directorate Management Teams the Project Officer would gain an appreciation of their current projects and priorities. This would enable them to identify

how a capital project in one area could support an initiative in another.

- f. Make further refinements to the Better Decision Making Tool in order to reflect changing directorate priorities and to further improve its utility
- g. Take the lead on key delivery projects that support the One Planet agenda and ensure that maximum benefits are achieved.

17. By creating a position with oversight of all major capital projects, awareness of broader corporate priorities and with scope to lead delivery projects, the council will be able to achieve a more coordinated approach to sustainability and resilience, capitalising on opportunities as and when they arise.

18. The post will be funded over 3 years using the £50k assigned to support the delivery of battery storage projects (this falls within the scope of the Go Ultra Low project) and a further £150k will be sought from Executive as Monitor 3 from the One Planet budget.

Consultation

Extensive internal consultation was carried out in relation to the development of the Better Decision Making tool. Officers with a broad range of experience and expertise relevant to the One Planet principles were consulted.

Consultation began in August 2016 and included officers from: health, economic development, corporate services, arboriculture, public protection, waste services, transport, property, HR, business travel, fleet transport, energy and sustainability, equalities, communities, and All About Projects.

Council Plan

The Better Decision Making Tool will help realise the ambitions set out in the Council Plan (2015–19): to put sustainability at the heart of everything we do, to work towards 'One Planet Living' and to become a more resilient organisation.

Implications

- **Financial** - The post will be funded over 3 years using the £50k assigned to support the delivery of battery storage projects (this falls within the scope of the Go Ultra Low project) and a further £150k will be sought from Executive as Monitor 3 from the One Planet budget.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications
- **Equalities** –The tool was designed to ensure that the equalities implications of a proposal are thoroughly considered. There are no additional equalities implications.
- **Legal** – There are no other implications
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no information technology implications
- **Property** - There are no property implications

Other - There are no other implications

Risk Management

No risks identified

Contact Details

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Report **Date** 23/11/2018
Approved

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Delivering One Planet Council (16 March 2017)

Annexes

Annex 1: Better Decision Making Tool (original)
Annex 2: Better Decision Making Tool (amended)