

Leicester
City Council

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Cabinet**

15 July 2002

Interpretation, Translation and Communication Services

**Joint report of the Corporate Director of Social Care & Health
and the Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek support for the key findings of a consultant's report on 'Interpretation, Translation and Communication Services'; and for consultation to inform a formal Review process within the Council, for the future delivery of the services

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Customer Care Best Value Review (2001) determined the need for a review of arrangements for Interpretation and Translation within the Council, as a means to improving service arrangements for communication. The consultancy arose following joint agreement between the Council and the Health Community (through the Leicester Health Action Zone) to identify the options for developing a joint integrated communication service for the City, best able to meet the future demands for and the specific needs of the two bodies and users\customers.
- 2.2 The consultant conducted a series of comprehensive interviews with a wide section of officers from within the Council and Health Community, as well as other partners, together with an analysis of information available locally and via the agencies concerned.
- 2.3 The consultant's final report has now been formally submitted (full report on the Internet or available from the Committee Secretariat). The findings and recommendations for the Council are in the Supporting Information. They impact on the three current and distinct areas of existing Council provision:
- Auxiliary Interpreters Scheme (AIS) - Council wide scheme (excluding Education and Social Services Departments).
 - Community Languages Unit (CLU) - Town Clerk's & Corporate Resources Department

- Interpretation and Translation - Social Services Department.
Service (ITS)

- 2.4 If Members support the recommendations in principle, the next step is to assess the potential impact on service delivery, resources, personnel, policy, etc. It will be necessary, at an early stage for the Councils formal Review process to be initiated. This will provide a full and in-depth opportunity for the wider consideration of the consultant's report within the Council and allow the views of staff that currently manage and deliver these services to be considered in determining the future service delivery and policy arrangements.
- 2.5 It is vital that during the review process itself, there should be no adverse impact or disruption to the existing service arrangements and a positive and meaningful dialogue is maintained with all those concerned. Service needs will be identified and benchmarked through internal and external consultation.

3. Financial and Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are potentially significant human resources and financial implications arising from the report. The Review process will determine the future arrangements for communication services in the Council and manage the measures necessary to achieve this. The Council has legal obligations under the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), The Human Rights Act (2000) and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to take measures to ensure the accessibility of its services, prevent discrimination and inhuman treatment. Language and communication support is an essential means to meet these obligations.

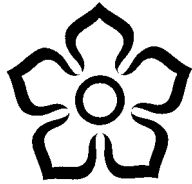
4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the overall direction and consultant's recommendations (paragraph 2.1 of the Supporting Information) be supported in principle.
- 4.2 That the Service Director (HR & Equalities) undertake consultation on the resulting organisational changes and bring back proposals for implementing them and for the new service delivery arrangements.
- 4.3 That the Council continues to work in partnership with the Health Community in determining and shaping a longer-term vision for communication services in the City.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact:

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Consultant's Findings

1.1 The report is structured into three parts:

- Stage 1 (Overview) - Identification of the current arrangements for Interpretation and Translation Services within the Council and Health Community.
- Stage 2 (Strategic Framework) - Identification of a common set of strategic principles for the development and delivery of Interpretation and Translation Services.
- Stage 3 (Implementation) - Identifies options and recommendation for the partner agencies to consider and explore in developing these services.

1.2 Highlighted here are the (extracted), consultants key views\findings which specifically concern the Council:

- The Council is considerably further advanced than the Health Community in developing and delivering communication services.
- There is a continuing high need for communication\language support within the City, which has a diverse community where English is not spoken or is not the preferred language for communication for a significant part of the population.
- £350,000 (approximately) per annum is being spent across the Council on a range of communication services\needs.

- A general feeling has been expressed that services were fragmented and lacked policy direction in the Council.
- There is a lack of common service values and policies around Interpretation and Translation within and between the Council and its Health partners.
- 202 sessional (language) Interpreters are registered with the Councils, Auxiliary Interpreters Scheme at the current time.
- There is considered to be a lack of/or limited awareness of the needs of disabled people in communication matters.
- There is a lack of a single focus for Interpretation and Translation in both policy and service delivery within the Council.
- A fully integrated service (with the Health Community), while a desired aim, is much further down the road and the priority at present, should be the better management and focus of existing service arrangements and the adoption of common strategic objectives.
- There is a need for the Council to continue to work with the Health Community in helping to shape the service and achieve a longer-term aim to develop an integrated service in the City.

2. Consultant's Recommendations

2.1 The consultant has made a number of recommendations, which impact, on the Council and Health Community. Those specific recommendations in relation to the Council can principally be summed up as:

- (1) The adoption of a Strategic Framework by the Council (and the Health Community), which incorporates common service and policy principles and a commitment to the development and delivery of communication services in the City.
- (2) The disbanding of the Council's Auxiliary Interpreters' Scheme, which is seen as ineffective and outdated.
- (3) The creation of a central policy development and management function for Interpretation, Translation and Communication, separate to the operational service delivery of these services.
- (4) The review and merger (of the functions of the Community Languages Unit and the Interpretation and Translation Service) into one single corporate integrated Council Interpretation, Translation and Communication Service, located within a service department.
- (5) The need to review the existing service delivery arrangements and cost effectiveness of these services in the Council, exploring options for possible alternative arrangements.

- (6) The development, greater awareness of and commitment to enabling improved communication for disabled people.
- (7) The reinvestment of resources (for communication) realised through the improvements identified\implemented.
- (8) The maintenance of the partnership with the Health Community through formal structures and senior officer involvement.

2.2 The consultant’s recommendations should be seen in the context of outcomes which improve the current service arrangements, providing greater clarity and focus for these services. The importance has been highlighted of this not being a budget driven exercise, but Members will want to consider the options for dealing with any resources freed up.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	Yes	This is a significant initiative towards equality of access to services.	
Policy	No		
Sustainable and Environmental	No		
Crime and Disorder	No		
Human Rights Act	No		
Elderly/People on Low Income	No		

3. Consultations

The consultancy has involved an ongoing process of consultation with each individual key Council service department being consulted at management and service level as to the current and potential future service options. The joint working arrangements with the Health Community have included representation from the Council’s, Chief Executives, Policy and Performance Team, the Resources, Access and Diversity Department and the Social Care and Health Directorate.

The internal, formal corporate review process will ensure full consultation with staff delivering interpretation, translation and communication services within the Council, their union representatives and with individual service departments to ensure options identified for possible implementation take full account of a wide range of views to better inform the process and needs of this service area.

3. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- 3.1 Report “*Interpretation, Translation and Communications Services*” (April 2002) by Public Management Associates.

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REVIEW OF INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

OUTLINE TIMETABLE

End of July: - Complete consultation on Review findings

- Departments (Managers)
- Trade Union
- I & S – staff

September: - Proposals/options on:-

- Future of Auxillary Interpreters Scheme
- Future Organisational Structure
- Financial Issues and Options

October : - Implementation of decisions on the above with timetable.

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