



# ASSET

## PUBLIC SERVICE VILLAGE

THE WEST SUFFOLK PARTNERSHIP

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## THE AUTHORS:

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As Head of Policy at Redcar and Cleveland Borough, Deborah was responsible for regeneration, partnerships and Best Value. She then transferred to central government on secondment, firstly at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, then the Audit Commission.

Deborah was appointed Chief Executive of St Edmundsbury Borough Council in 2002. She has been responsible for new political management structures, a major corporate management restructure and culture change throughout the organisation. During this time there has been a drop in staff turnover and sickness levels. Externally Deborah has focussed on building, and working with, partnerships.

During 2004 St Edmundsbury received its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The rating was "Good" and St Edmundsbury received the highest number of points (45 - just 3 points from the top "Excellent" rating) of any district or borough council in the county.

In 2006 Deborah received the OBE for services to local government.

CARLTON BRAND joined St Edmundsbury Borough Council in January 2004. In addition to his corporate responsibilities, he leads on BPR service improvement, cost reduction and efficiency, programme management, risk management and customer access.

Carlton's background is as an automotive engineer via the apprenticeship route with Ford Motor Company, where he obtained degrees in business and finance, and in advanced automotive engineering. He undertook doctoral research into systems engineering and projects before holding senior programme management positions on various new vehicle programmes in Germany, the USA and Japan.

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## CONTENTS:

Introduction.....	7
Public Service Delivery.....	7
Integrated Service Delivery in Suffolk . . . . .	7
The Partners . . . . .	7
Progress . . . . .	7
Stowmarket. . . . .	8
The PSV and the National Agenda.....	8
Quality and Customer Service . . . . .	8
Efficiency Agenda. . . . .	8
Asset Utilisation. . . . .	11
Programme Management and Procurement . . . . .	11
Responsible, Accessible Local Government . . . . .	11
A potential vehicle for Public Service Boards. . . . .	11
The PSV Programme - Overview.....	11
Financial . . . . .	11
Non-financial benefits. . . . .	12
Property and Accommodation strategy . . . . .	12
Critical Success Factors (CSFS) . . . . .	12
The PSV Programme - Major Challenges.....	12
Programme Management . . . . .	13
Customer Access Challenge . . . . .	14
Cultural Change Challenges Ahead . . . . .	14
Co-location or Integration with our Partners . . . . .	14

# PUBLIC SERVICE VILLAGE

## THE WEST SUFFOLK PARTNERSHIP

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### INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with four main topics:

1. Public Service Delivery in Suffolk
2. The PSV and the National Agenda
3. PSV Programme - Overview
4. PSV Programme - Major challenges

Deborah Cadman will deal with the first two topics and will hand over to Carlton Brand for the last two.

## PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

### INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY IN SUFFOLK

The Public Service Village (PSV) project focuses on:

- how we deliver public services to the people of St Edmundsbury and;
- how to integrate and join up some of the services that are at present delivered separately.

The Gershon Review and the Borough's Asset Management Plan were the original driving forces of the project. Many of the Council's buildings are not fit for purpose; they were built in another time for other reasons. Discussions with other local public service providers revealed similar problems. Accordingly, five other public agencies and the Borough Council decided that the most sensible option was to come together to build a building or a set of buildings that could deliver joined-up services that make sense for the people of St Edmundsbury.

Why do we need joined-up services? An example I often use is of somebody experiencing domestic violence. Such a person may have particular needs relating to housing, to support through Council Tax Benefits or to education for their children, and may also have particular health issues.

We found this individual would have to go to several different organisations to get answers. Now that is just one example of the difficulties some members of the public experience on a daily basis.

### THE PARTNERS

The partners in this project are:

- St Edmundsbury Borough Council;
- Suffolk Police;
- The Suffolk West Primary Care Trust (PCT);
- West Suffolk College;
- Home Office services; and
- Suffolk County Council.

All the partners want to demonstrate greater efficiencies and to deliver economies of scale and joined-up services that make sense to local people.

### PROGRESS

The project is now up and running and the stage we have reached is Phase 1, the outline business case. A Project Board is in place. The Phase 1 partners are St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. Other partners will come in Phase 2.

Two factors have allowed us to reach this point.

- The Suffolk County Council vision is to work jointly with district and borough councils to deliver e-enabled services with coordinated electronic systems plus face-to-face facilities in town centre locations.
- The St Edmundsbury Borough Council vision is to provide cost effective integrated services through redesigned processes via purpose-built locations.

So the time was right for both of us. The County wanted



Deborah Cadman

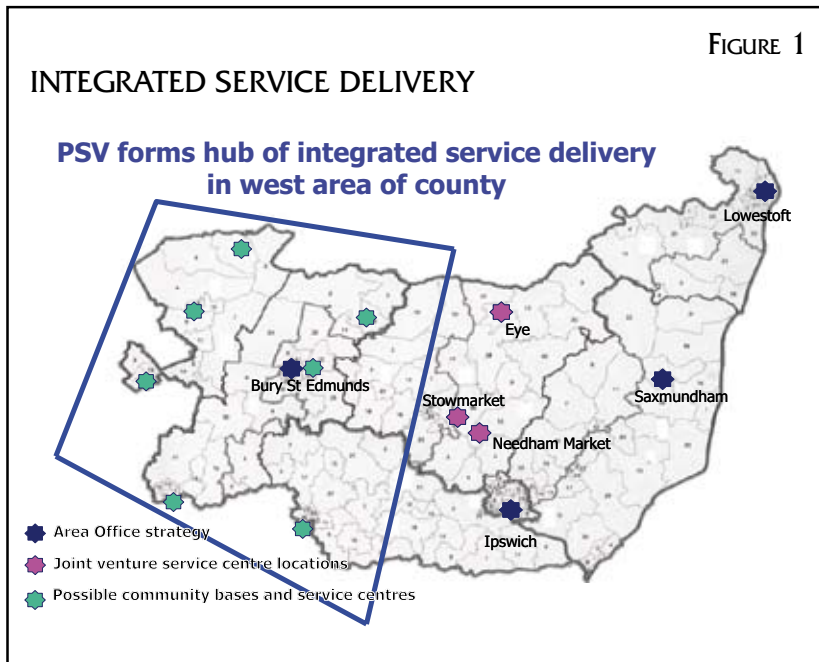


FIGURE 1

Victorian and some from the 1930s and 1960s even later. Separate old cellular offices are not fit for the purpose of modern integrated service delivery particularly when they are widely dispersed and in the wrong places.

We have spent a lot of time developing our public access strategy, i.e. how best to deliver services to meet the needs of the people that we serve. Also we have talked about the processes that we work to and considered whether they are fit for purpose and efficient. At the same time both partners have corporate property strategies and want to rationalise their estates.

Our goal is a modern infrastructure. Endeavour House, the SCC headquarters building is an example of how modern offices can look and feel. That is what we want to produce and replicate in the PSV; ideal for improved e-enabled services.

to devolve services to a more local level joined up with the services that districts and boroughs deliver and we realised that we had to be more cost effective, find more efficiencies and deliver better services.

The solutions we have evolved are:

- Improved access via customer service centres (CSC) and the Public Service Village in St Edmundsbury. The Council currently has two locations, one in the town – The Borough offices - and another at Western Way, a converted factory building, not fit for purpose. The time is right to change. This will eliminate the financial drain that building has become and provide a good quality environment for our staff.
- Flexible working solutions for staff related to strategically placed back offices.
- Government wants to integrate and join up large services and the PSV is a means of facilitating integrated services for Children and Young People and Adults, Health and Community Services at locations in the community supported by PSV back office.
- Savings made through rationalised property and FM services.

The PSV forms a hub of integrated service delivery in the west area of the county. The map in Figure 1 shows the west area of the county edged in blue, area offices by blue dots; joint service venture locations are pink and possible community bases and service centres in pink.

Our Public Access Model is designed to transform fragmented services and properties via a joint public access strategy, business process engineering and the SCC corporate property strategy into improved and e-enabled services.

Currently our estates comprise old cellular offices, some

## STOWMARKET

The photographs on the next two pages show a service centre in Stowmarket, a joint venture between Mid Suffolk District Council and SCC. It is a district office location that delivers joined up services. That is also the kind of feel that we want to see in the public service village.

## THE PSV AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

### QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### (DCLG e-government/CPA)

The Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM) wants to see e-enabled front offices linked to common back office processes and this is broadly our objective. There are huge efficiencies to be gained by joining up back office services and delivering these in different ways.

### EFFICIENCY AGENDA

#### (Gershon)

The Efficiency Agenda requires the public sector to deliver significant efficiencies year on year. The PSV outline business case shows the 25-year lifetime revenue savings will be £18m, significant for a small borough council.



Stowmarket service centre





Stowmarket service centre



But there are additional soft savings, i.e. more contented staff and more satisfied customers. We are looking at remote and home working as one way of releasing office space. Working in different ways such as this will get council office staff out into the community and working from home will mean less travelling into work, less pollution and help counteract global warming. The Council has a programme of reviews under way looking at service delivery to make them more streamlined, more efficient and more understandable to the general public. Customer expectations have increased phenomenally from when I first joined the public sector over 23 years ago. There is an expectation that things will be delivered quickly. That public sector bureaucracy we all revelled in 20/30 years ago now has no place to hide.



## ASSET UTILISATION

**(Sir Michael Lyons)**

The partners have five town centre properties. They are unfit for current use so naturally we aspire to consolidate to one new site. This in turn could bring some real regeneration opportunities for the community around the new site and the surplus town centre sites.

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND PROCUREMENT

**(OGC)**

We are keen to adhere to OGC Gateway Compliance and so the project has been robustly challenged. We have been through the Gateway Process, the 4 Ps project management process, and that robust challenge and review has produced benefits, one of those being that staff are now trained and lead reviews in other parts of the country, learn from those and bring best practice back here.

## RESPONSIBLE, ACCESSIBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The government requires us to be responsive and accessible: this means putting the customer at the centre of everything we do. In the public sector it is easy to forget why we are here. It is about delivering good quality services to people.

## A POTENTIAL VEHICLE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE BOARDS

St Edmundsbury Borough Council wants to be the catalyst for the generation of a public service board. The PSV will bring all public services together under one roof to deliver joined up services. The Board may take longer than the two-year development plan of Phase 1. But I believe that with commitment and people prepared to take risks that we could see that happen.

I would now like to hand over to Carlton Brand who will take you through the rest of this paper.

## THE PSV PROGRAMME - OVERVIEW

The PSV programme will present the partners with some major challenges over the next two years.

## FINANCIAL

The estimated gross capital investment is £21 million, excluding any asset disposals. Projected annual savings for the borough and county councils are in the region of £700,000. St Edmundsbury is capital rich and revenue poor so the ability to convert capital into a hard, reliable revenue stream is important. These savings exclude some of the softer savings to be mentioned later.



Carlton Brand

## NON-FINANCIAL BENEFITS

### Integration across the two authorities

Apart from the domestic violence scenario mentioned earlier, there are hundreds of customer situations in which customers bounce off various partners in the public sector such as the police, the college, the NHS, the PCT and various levels of local government. We think joining up services is important for customers; as are improved levels of service delivery. Many services are complex to deliver. For example paying housing benefit involves a multiple step process offered from multiple sites. In the public sector delivering such services is time-consuming. It currently takes 40 days to assess a new housing benefit claim. At the moment we are re-engineering that process, aiming at a target of 10 to 15 days but are constantly coming up against the same property problems, old cellular buildings with communication problems and people having to work in small groups. Future flexibility is important. Local government and national government are changing. A White Paper is being published later this month that will put a lot of pressure on us to offer more flexible services. Some older buildings do not give us the opportunities to do this. The final non-financial benefit is an improved work environment for staff. Over half of our staff work in an out-of-town 1960s factory on an industrial estate. It is dreadful environment. In July 2006 it was 32 degrees in that factory; in the winter, when the boilers packed up it was freezing cold. Apart from the breach of H&S legislation this makes it difficult to increase organisational productivity levels.

## PROPERTY AND ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

For St Edmundsbury Borough Council this will be our new headquarters; most staff will work from here. All customer services and support services will be delivered from the site. The new building will also include members' space and the council chamber. The PSV will also become the County Council's western area office. All its adult and children social care and education offices for the west of Suffolk will be based there. There will be about 600 – 650 people in total, a substantial facility. The location will also become the "hub" for the west of the county, a focus for collaborative work with the surrounding districts of Forest Heath, Babergh and Mid-Suffolk.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (CSFS)

As part of the outline business case a number of CSFs were developed in consultation with councillors, senior managers and members of staff. Some of these are as follows.

- PSV completed within budget and delivered on time
  - This is a big credibility issue for me, the team, the Council and its CPA rating; and also credibility with the taxpayers and the people we deliver services for.
- PSV demonstrates net revenue savings
  - A fundamental budget fact of life. It is imperative to deliver the budget savings needed to make this organisation sustainable in the medium to long term.
- Post occupancy, customer and user survey shows improved ratings
- Improved space utilisation and better office layout
  - Currently everybody has a desk but at any one time during the day about 40% are not used and computers are switched off. We are moving to hot-desking and a utilisation rate of nearly 100%.
- Positive effect on CPA ratings, including Use of Resources
- More joined-up services at a lower cost
- Improvements to the environment through specific targets and attainments

## THE PSV PROGRAMME - MAJOR CHALLENGES

There are four major challenges. These are:

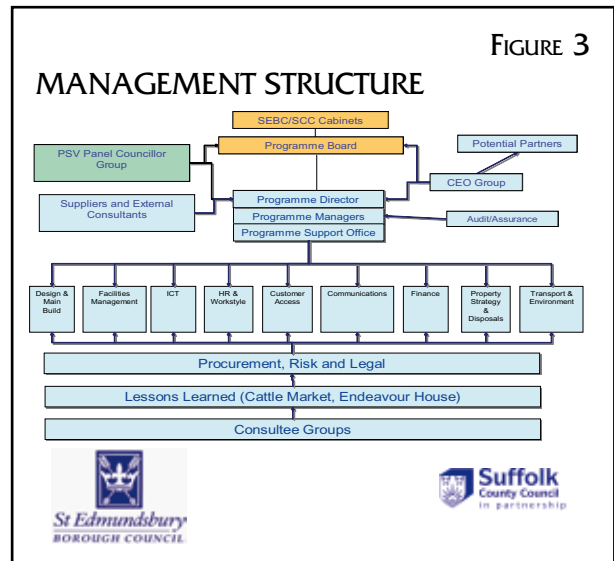
- Programme management;
- Customer access challenge;
- Cultural challenges;
- Co-location or integration with our partners.

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Programme management working across two authorities is difficult. Two political structures have to be integrated into a project board. Developing a robust performance and programme structure to manage this project has been vital too as it is a huge project containing a number of sub-projects. There are nine workstreams and more than thirty individual projects involved in delivery. This needs a lot of rigorous management processes in place to ensure that we deliver that and make our individual gateways. There is a tight timescale. We are now in the procurement and design phase. The target is to have the building open by Christmas 2008. Budget constraints are driving that tight timescale for us. Finally we aim for 4 Ps Gateway Compliance. This is fundamental. Being compliant with the 4P Gateway process so far has attracted over £180,000 of revenue investment into this project.

Figure 3 shows an overview of the formal project management structure. At the top, in orange, are the political executive bodies of both councils. Below that is the Programme Board, chaired by a member. The Board includes a mix of county and borough members and a mix of senior officers from both organisations including finance, property and project management and procurement officers. Immediately below the Board is the nucleus of the project, the programme director supported by the programme managers and the Programme Support Office. The diagram shows the workstreams of facilities management, ICT, customer access, communications etc. All of those are mini-projects that have to be delivered to achieve a successful overall outcome. Across the bottom of the diagram are cross-cutting issues around procurement, risk, legal and lessons learned from other recent big projects, the Cattle Market and Endeavour House.

Figure 4 is a better, more organic, picture of what is going on and demonstrates the inter-connections around the Programme Support Office situated in the middle. The blue hexagons show the major workstream leaders with all the thirty projects spilling out from there. One way to look at this diagram is that if you take any one of those hexagons



away the whole of the structure becomes much weaker and if you start taking two or three of those projects away the structure will ultimately collapse at any gateway or in fact at the end of the project. This is the reality of how the programme is set up. Some of the people identified are full-time dedicated to the project; others are part-time and doing it as part of their day job. As we go through the programme that will change and we will need to put more resources into certain areas to ensure delivery.

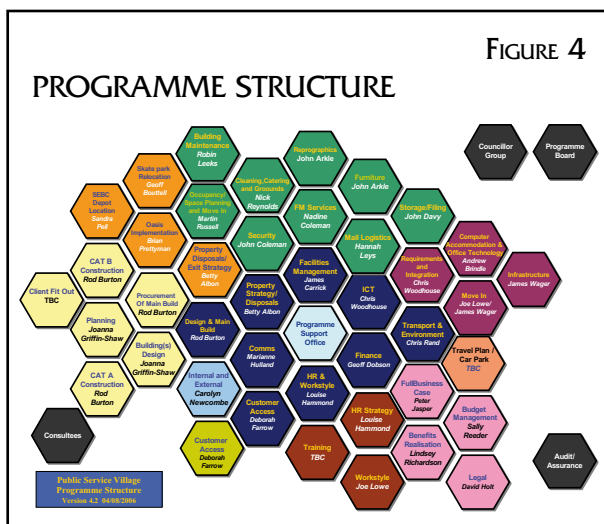
### Programme Journey

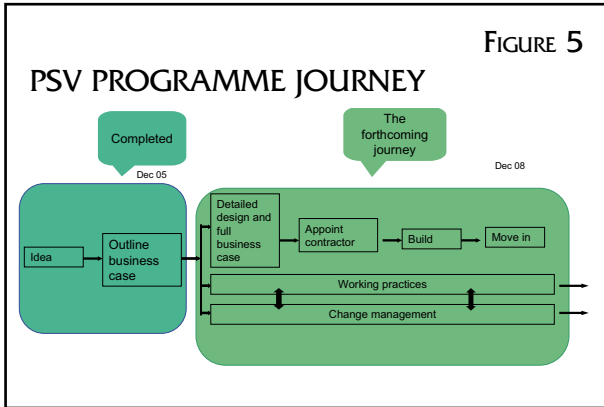
The programme journey on Figure 5 shows where we have come from and where we are going. The left box shows work completed to December 2005 and contains the original PSV idea and the compilation, with GVA Grimley, of the outline business case. Then we successfully went through a combined 4Ps Gateway 0 and 1 Review and achieved an overall amber rating. To put that in context less than 20% of all projects that go through the Gateway process come out with amber ratings; most come out with red ratings. This gave members the confidence to embark on the next phase, the forthcoming journey, and this will involve the completion of the detailed business case and the detailed design over the next three or four months. Then we can appoint the contractor, build and move in.

The main purpose of the diagram in Figure 5 is to emphasise that this is not a property project. It is a people project and those two bars at the bottom emphasise that changing working practices and addressing change management within the authority are vital.

### Provisional High Level Plan

Figure 6 is a standard timetable overview of the programme showing that the second formal 4Ps Gateway review coming up just before Christmas 2006. The remaining items show an extremely tight timetable up to completion at the end of 2008.





**CUSTOMER ACCESS CHALLENGE**

This is all about providing improved service delivery for less cost. The council is doing a lot of business process re-engineering work at the moment. We are two months into re-engineering that service and have taken delivery time down from 40 days to around 16 days. And we are convinced we can get that down to under 10 days once we have got the new facility. The building is to be designed around services and workflow within those services, not the other way round. We will not design the organisation and its services to fit the building.

Providing accessible service is another element of this challenge. We will have a single point of access for our services whereas now we have five. There will be much more integration between the front and the so-called back office. I do not believe in the front and back office concept. All staff work in a common system to satisfy customers. People in the back office are just as important as those out front office delivering face-to-face services. Redesigning services with everybody sitting and operating together can have some huge efficiency benefits; this building will enable us to do that.

**Driving the change agenda with customers i.e. E-gov and T-gov**

In the public sector e-government and transformational-government are Government priorities. These strategies aim to get people using the web and the telephone rather than opting for face-to-face contact. The first two options are cheaper for us and enable the faster delivery of services. But if people do choose to come to us face to face there has to be a proper building with crèche facilities, decent places to sit and private rooms in which the most vulnerable can talk to some of our specialists; all about having a building that is fit for purpose.

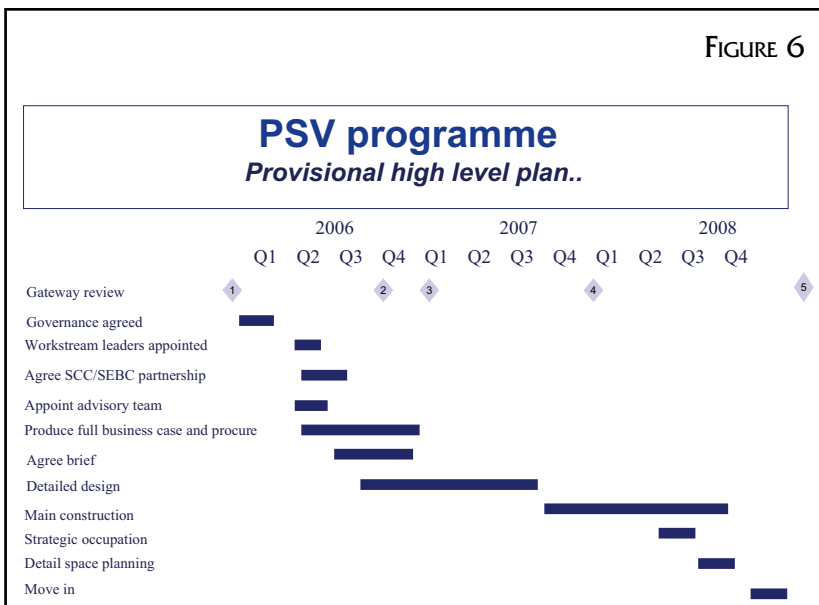
**CULTURAL CHANGE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

Developing new ways of working is a future challenge and this includes mobile working, "hot-desking", working from home and ensuring there is flexible space within the building. We are only providing enough spaces for about 75% of the people operating within that building and that is going to force us to change the way we work and change the style in which we work. There is much more flexible space within the building and breakout areas to improve communications and in the PSV there will be no cellular offices for managers, in fact there will be no cellular offices at all. It is fundamental to improve communication by eliminating internal barriers.

The other cultural challenge is bringing together two distinct and different organisational cultures and staff on different terms and conditions. It is necessary to break down organisational silos for the customer and ensure ongoing communication.

**CO-LOCATION OR INTEGRATION WITH OUR PARTNERS**

There is an issue of integration. When we started this project it was about co-locating two organisations on a single site but we moved quickly to establish a proper integration model rather than just co-locating and having two organisations with two separate buildings. We will integrate services delivered from the PSV.



Deborah Cadman  
& Dr Carlton Brand  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council