

Annual efficiency statement - forward look

Details

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Statement

Strategy for making and monitoring efficiency gains

In February 2004, the Council instructed officers and Members to work together to identify ways of reducing the Council's expenditure to meet both budget constraints and allow additional funding to be allocated to the Council's priorities. This review identified a mixture of savings, some being reflected in this, and the previous statement, as efficiencies. However, the scale of change required to balance the budget caused an Efficiency Review Group to be set up (Cabinet, October 2004) led by the Deputy Leader and supported by leading Members and the Council's Management Team. The aim of the group was to critically assess the current management structures and the sometimes disparate working arrangements with the idea of streamlining processes, reducing duplication and unnecessary administration, and joining services where there is synergy to gain 'economy of scale'.

Since that date, the group have interviewed and challenged all senior managers to come up with ideas on how to meet this objective. Current management structures have been examined and compared to other authorities'. Members' structures and the democratic process have also been considered to streamline the process, improve communication and reduce unproductive time and costs by realigning meeting times. Priorities and non-priorities of the Council will also be spelt out to ensure that focus is concentrated on what is important to the Council and not spread thinly over too many services.

This led to a streamlined management team, each member of which was tasked to critically review their services in terms of structures and working practices. This resulted in a 'lower level' review of each service that, in turn, led to both staffing and other efficiency savings. The changes will be carefully reviewed to ensure that they are effective and to challenge to seek further efficiencies.

Like any good project, there will be periods of review throughout the coming months and years to ensure that every possible efficiency is considered and implemented where possible to further improve services and provide value for money. This will include taking advice from the Regional Centres of Excellence and considering collaborative working with both public and private sector bodies. East Kent authorities are already working closely on Internal Audit and are actively progressing discussions on other services.

The Council have prepared a Value, Improvement and Review Programme for 2007/2011. This identifies significant areas on which the new administration (elected May 2007) will need to provide early policy direction. The programme will be an important vehicle for addressing the

ongoing and increasing revenue gap facing the Council, ensuring value and affordability.

Finally, the Council has been working in partnership with all other Kent authorities in areas such as ICT and procurement. This partnership approach will continue while all authorities try and identify economies of scale and achieve improved communication.

Key actions to be taken during 2007-08

To finalise and implement outstanding service reviews.

To review the implementation of service reviews.

To commence work identified in the service planning process regarding value for money and procurement.

To improve collaborative working throughout the authority, with a lead from Heads of Service and support from Human Resources.

To investigate and implement more efficient use of staff resources and processes.

To continue discussions with other East Kent Authorities on joint working areas.

To commence the Value, Improvement and Review Programme 2007/2011, Bridging The Gap, with early policy decisions from the new administration.

	Expected annual efficiency gains (£)	...of which cashable (£)	Related links
Adult social services	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Children's services	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Culture and sport	0	0	Documents People

			Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Environmental services	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Local transport (highways)	5,000	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Review of the parking and fixed penalty notice processes. Key actions: Introduction of an integrated system for issuing parking and fixed penalty notices.		
Local transport (non-highways)	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
LA social housing (capex)	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
LA social housing (other)	32,890	32,890	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: 1. Review level of Housing vans required to carry out the service. 2. Streamline service provision. 3. Consider other options on the expiry of the Mobile Support Officers contract with Thanet Community Housing Association. Key actions: 1. Improved allocation of staff resources. 2. Reduction in the number of Housing vans. 3. Implementation of a centralised alarm call service.		

Non-school educational services	0	0	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Key actions:			
Supporting people	0	0	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Key actions:			
Homelessness	50,000	50,000	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Reduction in Bed and breakfast cost due to improved measures in preventing homelessness. Key actions: Improved recovery of temporary accommodation expenditure through better management of HB claims and identification of re-chargeable accounts.			
Other cross-cutting efficiencies not covered above			
Corporate services	7,200	7,200	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Reduce costs of Cabinet Agendas and Minutes. Key actions: Some officers will be restricted to access by intranet or e-mail.			
Procurement - goods and services	221,733	221,733	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Review procurement options and efficiencies to include working in partnership with all other Kent authorities. Key actions: Please note that the procurement savings along with the productive time savings will attribute to more than 50% of the total value of gains expected. It was felt that these efficiencies could not be allocated to the specific service areas.			

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Parks and Waste procurement arrangements. 2. Extension of the insurance long term agreement. 3. Review of recruitment arrangements. 4. No inflation applied to the 2007/2008 budget. 5. Photocopier and printer rationalisation. 6. Free service offered to develop a program of activity on Leadership. 7. General review of procurement options. 		
Procurement - construction	0	0	<input type="button" value="Documents"/> <input type="button" value="People"/> <input type="button" value="Projects"/>
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Productive time	559,390	498,510	<input type="button" value="Documents"/> <input type="button" value="People"/> <input type="button" value="Projects"/>
	Strategy: To critically review services in terms of structures and working practices. Key actions: Please note that the procurement savings along with the productive time savings will attribute to more than 50% of the total value of gains expected. It was felt that these efficiencies could not be allocated to the specific service areas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and rationalisation of the Waste, Beach Cleaning and Community Warden services. 2. Human Resources review of job recruitment process. 3. Closure of the cash desks. 4. Review of the Housing Service. 		
Transactions	0	0	<input type="button" value="Documents"/> <input type="button" value="People"/> <input type="button" value="Projects"/>
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Miscellaneous efficiencies	18,740	16,240	<input type="button" value="Documents"/> <input type="button" value="People"/> <input type="button" value="Projects"/>
	Strategy: 1. Streamline merchant accounts		

		<p>used by cash desk. 2. Wardens covering town centre locations to use public transport. 3. Introduce BACs payments for Housing Benefits.</p> <p>Key actions: 1. Saving in charges as all credit and debit cards so via Adelante - annual fee. 2. Reduction in number of vans for community wardens by 2.</p>	
Total	894,953	826,573	