
OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio :-
 - (a) **Annual Review of Significant Partnerships 2008/09** – In accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission, Officers have undertaken the third annual review of its significant partnerships using the partnership toolkit previously approved by Cabinet in 2007. The toolkit was adopted to demonstrate fulfillment of the Council’s responsibilities in relation to its partnership arrangements and provides a means to record the performance and ensure that adequate governance arrangements are in place. One of the responsibilities of the Council in relation to this is to know the partnerships it is involved in and how much money and other resources it invests in them; and
 - (b) **Schedule of Transactions** - A number of transactions, provisionally made by the Director of Corporate Services, have been approved.
 - (c) **Use of Resources Judgement** - External Audit have recently concluded their work on the Council’s arrangements for achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The outcome from the assessment was positive. Overall the Council scored a level 3, on a scale of 1 to 4, that equates to performing well – exceeds minimum requirements. This Use of Resources opinion is the first under the more rigorous framework that forms part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment.
 - (d) **Budget Management** - The latest projection of the Council's revenue budget to 31st March, 2010 is an overall surplus of £381,000 compared with the Medium Term Financial Plan 2009/13 and the 2009/10 revenue budget. This is an improved position compared with previous projections. The outlook for the Council is, however, still very challenging and management action is ongoing to control expenditure and income, seek further opportunities for savings within existing policies and commitments and to review future service and spending plans.
2. I have also chaired a number of meetings of the Human Resource Panel (sitting as an Appeal Panel) and have attended a number of briefing meetings in accordance with my Portfolio.
3. **Procurement**
There is a continuing drive to get savings from better procurement throughout the Authority. Below are examples of some of the savings achieved during the past few months:

- (a) **Agency Workers** - The Council has established a Framework Agreement with recruitment agencies for the supply of temporary staff. This has reduced the number of suppliers to just 36 across fourteen categories of staff. The new framework and process was implemented on 1 May 2009 and should result in savings of £0.100m in 2009/10.
- (b) **Mobiles** - A recent tender exercise has resulted in a saving of £0.110m over the next two years.
- (c) **Energy** - The flexible energy contract allows the Council to buy gas and electricity requirements in small chunks which helps to achieve a lower overall price. Using this approach has resulted in a reduction in energy costs for 2009/10 of £0.200m.
- (d) **ICT** – The Council has taken part in an Office of Government Commerce (OGC) framework for the purchase of ICT equipment. A number of e-auctions have been completed which has significantly reduced prices to the Council that will save the Council approximately £30,000 per year.
- (e) **Computer Room** - Work on the new Xentrall computer room has started. This should be ready by Christmas and will result in a more efficient ICT service together with reduced energy costs through the joint facility and server consolidation.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio