
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) **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Arrangements** – Following a review of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), which enables local authorities to carry out certain types of surveillance activity provided that specified procedures are followed, the Home Office has published new Orders and Codes of Practice which came into force on the 6th April, 2010. There are a number of changes in relation to the use of the powers and the Council will be revising its RIPA policies to accord with the revisions and has appointed the Director of Corporate Services as the Council's Senior Responsible Officer who will be responsible for ensuring integrity of the process; compliance with the Codes; engagement with those undertaking inspections; and the implementation of any inspection plans. Further quarterly reports reviewing the policy and the Council's practices will be submitted to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
 - (b) **Xentrall Shared Services** – Following the establishment of Xentrall Shared Services, the partnership between Darlington and Stockton Councils to provide ICT, transactional finance and HR and design and print, we have received the second annual report which shows that the service is continuing to deliver the objectives as set out in its original business case and all of the service areas have exceeded their savings targets with the exception of Design and Print. The efficiencies contained within the business case will be realised two years earlier than set out in the original business plan and further savings have also been identified to enable each Council to meet their Medium Term Financial Plan challenges.
 - (c) **Annual Procurement Plan** - In accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, we have considered the Annual Procurement Plan and determined, again, in accordance with criteria, which contracts for the forthcoming year shall be delegated to the Officers and which are deemed to be strategic. Subsequent contracts will necessitate a revised Plan being brought to Cabinet.
 - (d) **North Eastern Purchasing Organisation** - I am a member of the North Eastern Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) Joint Committee, meetings for which are held four times a year, the meetings are held to make decisions about contracts, decision on policy and also to inform members on the progress of NEPO. I attended the last Joint Committee meeting in March where reports were presented on the way we procure Genuine and Non-Genuine Vehicle Parts, and the method Middlesbrough have adopted to embed Whole Life Costs into the procurement process, both of these reports had been requested by members. In order to achieve the savings from procurement that central government are suggesting the region needs to work more collaboratively and

to this end the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in conjunction with NEPO members have appointed consultants to review the current state of procurement across the region including the role of NEPO. A business case has been developed and presented to Elected members, Chief Executives and Chief Officers. This report suggests a radical change to the current arrangements of NEPO including an increase in the number of staff and changes to governance arrangements. The new organisation will operate as a strategic body carrying out less tactical procurement. The intention is to employ a manager who will then work with members and officers on the new structure.

- (e) **Possible Future Partnership Working** - Darlington is working closely with Stockton in reviewing a number of service areas, looking at the possibility of partnership working and also challenging each of the services. The first phase is a feasibility, looking at all the possible options. The Managers leading these reviews have already met and the services have all been scoped. The next stage is to collect detailed information about each of the services and then to robustly challenge the way in which the services are delivered. It is hoped that a range of options will be available for Members to consider as part of the next MTFP.

I attended the Governing Board meeting of the Institute for Local Government on the 24th March, 2010 on behalf of the Leader and I chaired a meeting of the Council's Joint Consultative Committee on the 16th April, 2010.

I have also continued to have briefing meetings with Lead Officers in the Corporate Services Department.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio