
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) **Enterprise Zone Business Rates Discount Scheme** – The Localism Act 2011, gives billing authorities powers to grant local Business Rate discounts to businesses that locate on certain Enterprise Zones sites and, in accordance with that Act, we are required to design and set out a discount scheme. Cabinet have therefore agreed to adopt a Business Rates discount scheme for Central Park.
 - (b) **Corporate Planning and Performance Framework** – Cabinet have approved the Corporate Plan and its supporting Performance Management Framework. Members will be aware that Corporate and service planning form critical components in the prioritisation, planning and delivery of services, and it is important that they play a key role in directing and shaping services and maintaining a focus on outcomes and customer needs give the pace and scale of change driven at both national and local level. The adoption of the Plan and framework will ensure that we do have effective arrangements for maintaining and improving our performance and will provide reassurance to inspecting bodies.
 - (c) **Accommodation Review** – Cabinet have released funding to enable the next phase of the accommodation review to be implemented. Since 2009, the Council has been rationalising its leased office portfolio to make efficiencies and, to date, over £0.200 million per annum has been saved. This next phase which will see staff based at the Studios and the Beehive at Lingfield Point relocated and those premises vacated, achieving a further saving of £0.430 million in 2013/14.
 - (d) **Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Outturn 2011/12** - We have received information on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme, together with the outturn position as at 31st March, 2012, and details of all the live construction projects currently being managed by the Council. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work, with the current project position statement showing that there are 66 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall project outturn value of £64.1 million, with the majority of the projects running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.
 - (e) **Treasury Management Annual Report and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2011/12** – In accordance with the Council's reporting procedures, we have received information regarding the regulation and management of the Council's borrowing, investment and cash flow and seeking approval of outturn Prudential Indicators for 2011/12. The financial year 2011/12, has again presented exceptional circumstances

with regard to treasury management and activity during 2011/12 has been carried out in accordance with Council policy and within legal limits. Financing costs have been reduced during the year and a saving of £0.560 million achieved from the original Medium Term Financial Plan as a result of a number of actions taken throughout the year to manage the financing costs in the changing economic climate.

- (f) **Council Tax Support** – Members will be aware that, from April 2013, the Council Tax Benefit scheme will be replaced by a new local Council Tax Support scheme, which will be designed and administered by local authorities. The new scheme will need to be designed and published by the 31st January, 2013, in order for it to be implemented in time for the annual Council Tax billing in 2013/14 and Cabinet have therefore agreed a draft Council Tax Support scheme for this Council as a basis for public consultation.
- (g) **Stressholme Golf Course** – Cabinet have considered a number of options for the future of Stressholme Golf course, and have agreed, in principle, to the merging of the Club with Blackwell Grange Golf Club for them to run a joint club at Stressholme. Stressholme continues to be well used, with its membership and usage increasing, however, over the last three financial years, the level of subsidy from the Council has increased. This option is considered the most financially beneficial option and best meets the criteria set out in the options analysis. Further discussions and negotiations on this option are required and a further report will be brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet.
- (h) **Resources Group Collaboration Update** - Work is on-going with Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland Councils to develop a business case for collaboration of services currently provided by the Resources group including Xentrall. The project started after the People Services Collaboration project to enable that project to inform the Resources work. It is planned that by late October, initial reviews will have been completed and this will enable officers to consider where real opportunities are available for collaboration. The current MTFP already anticipates savings of £600,000 in future years for this collaboration.
- (i) **Business Operations Transformation Programme** - The Procurement Project has achieved savings in excess of £1m since it was initiated, and is now in the final phase which is focused on implementing the Contracts module within Agresso. New business processes have been embedded, and a strong governance structure has been put in place including the Procurement Board who reviews all spend requests over £5,000.
- (j) **Corporate Landlord** - The new Corporate Landlord process for operational buildings is live, and transition into the new structure supported by re-engineered business processes continues. To date savings of £0.095 million have been achieved from the targeted savings of £0.400 million. Work is underway to achieve these savings, in parallel with bedding in the new process and team.
- (k) **Association of Public Service Excellence Awards 2012** - Xentrall Shared Services has been selected as one of the top finalists in the Association of Public Service

Excellence Awards 2012 – in the category Public/Public Partnerships. The winner was announced at the APSE Annual Seminar, which was held in Glasgow on Thursday, 13th September 2012. The submission described Xentrall’s journey in delivering ‘back office’ services in a ground breaking public/public partnership between Stockton and Darlington Borough Councils. The partnership has enabled both Councils to retain control over their services and deliver efficiencies, whilst improving service provision, and, at the same time, deliver £9.2 million of savings.

- (l) **Printer Consolidation** - A suite of new Multi-Function Devices (MFDs) is to be installed under the Printer Consolidation project. These devices will deliver everyday copy/scan/secure print functionality as a minimum, and have fax capability where they will be replacing existing multi-function devices. High volume and/or complex printing and copying needs should continue to be driven through the corporate Print and Design process. It is a joint project with Stockton Borough Council, with implementation being led by Xentrall Shared Services. A savings target has not yet been agreed, however, it is anticipated that savings can be made via a demand management approach to printing, driving down print volumes over time. It is expected that the first devices will start to appear on site from mid-October, with the Town Hall, Central House, Central House Annex and North Lodge included in Phase 1.

- (m) **Police and Crime Panel** – Police and Crime Commissioners will be elected this November. Their work will be scrutinised by Police and Crime Panels. The Police and Crime Panel for Durham Constabulary has had its inaugural meeting. The Panel is composed of three Councillors from this Council and seven from Durham County Council. There will be a further two independent members appointed by the Panel

2. I have also attended various meetings since the last meeting of Council.

Councillor Stephen Harker
Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio