

Annual efficiency statement - forward look

Details

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Statement

Strategy for making and monitoring efficiency gains

Lancaster City Council's strategy for securing efficiency gains is a key element of its wider Value for Money (Efficiency) Strategy, which was formally adopted by the Council in December 2005. This framework document recognises that many initiatives and other activities generate efficiency savings, and it sets out how all these differing strands contribute to the achievement of the Gershon targets, as well as other financial targets such as those contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy – under this, the Council aims to limit Council Tax increases to 4.5% in 2008/09 and 4.0% in 2009/10, whilst achieving its key priority outcomes as set out in the Corporate Plan.

The Value for Money (Efficiency) Strategy focuses particularly on cross cutting activities and processes that will contribute to meeting the efficiency targets. In particular the Strategy encompasses the following :

- Corporate Property Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- e-Government Strategy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Corporate Consultation Strategy
- Access to Services
- Performance Management Framework and Budget Review
- The role of Overview and Scrutiny
- The role of Internal Audit

As part of the Council's recent Use of Resources Assessment undertaken by the Audit Commission, the Council's overall score was "3" but only scored '2 in the Value for Money element. The outcome of this, and other peer challenge reviews, will be used to inform and develop the Council's strategy for securing efficiency gains in current and future years.

Key actions to be taken during 2007-08

As part of the Council's business re-engineering programme, the Customer Services Centre will be further expanded to include other key front line services such as Local Taxation and Housing Benefits, Planning and Leisure. Community consultation will be improved in line with Customer Services developments and the Access to Services Programme to ensure spending reflects community needs.-Regarding procurement, the Council will continue with implementation and review of its Procurement Strategy in line with the National agenda and the results of its recent IDeA Healthcheck Review, encompassing the planned implementation of e-procurement solutions

Further opportunities for collaborative working with neighbouring Councils and other partners will continue to be progressed. The Council's new Performance Management Framework has now been embedded, but to support this, a corporate approach to Project Management has been devised and will be implemented. The Council's Improvement Plan has been updated to take account of recent external assessments and inspections, with progress being monitored to ensure that any further efficiency opportunities are identified and taken forward as appropriate. In particular, a new 3 year business improvement plan has been approved to further its business re-engineering programme. Service delivery methods continue to be challenged through the Star Chamber process in search of further efficiencies than those mentioned in this statement.

	Expected annual efficiency gains (£)	...of which cashable (£)	Related links
Environmental services	166,700	0	
<p>Strategy: The Council has a corporate objective to make the District a cleaner and healthier place. The Cleansing Improvement Officer is continually reviewing the operation in order to improve efficiency. The improvement is measured against BV199 (which relates to the percentage of land below an acceptable level of cleanliness), and the target is for a 3% reduction for 2007/08.</p> <p>Key actions: Implementation of the final stage of the Three Stream Waste strategy will be completed in 2007/08.</p>			
LA social housing (other)	364,200	204,200	
<p>Strategy: The Council has already achieved the Decent Homes Standard and has its 30 year Business Plan approved. At present, the plan is being reviewed to ensure it is still effective, and where possible efficiencies are being identified and implemented in order to ensure the plan is deliverable.</p> <p>Key actions: To build on the efficiencies identified in previous years, and specifically for 2007/08 to reduce the average relet time from 40 days to 35 days.</p>			
Other cross-cutting efficiencies not covered above			
Corporate services	49,000	49,000	
<p>Strategy: In 2004 the Council produced a Framework for Partnership Working and Procurement through Partnering Guidelines. These were produced in support of the Council's Procurement Strategy and set out clear guidance on how the Council will meet the strategic objectives of delivering better services to citizens through the creation of sustainable partnerships.</p> <p>Key actions: The Council will continue to explore collaborative working arrangements with partners from all business sectors.</p>			
Procurement - goods and services	328,000	232,000	
<p>Strategy: The Council's Procurement Strategy is owned by Members (the Leader of the Council is the Member Procurement Champion) and senior officers, and scrutiny of progress and effectiveness towards implementation is monitored by the Budget and Performance Panel. In addition, further initiatives are progressed through the Regional Centre of Excellence.</p> <p>Key actions: The Council is anticipating efficiencies to develop through electronic procurement. In addition, invest to save measures are being investigated in order to generate energy efficiency savings.</p>			
Productive time	637,000	453,000	
<p>Strategy: As well as managing the Pay and Grading Review, and supporting Investors in People accreditation the HR section is committed to improving strategic HR planning, providing support to the Access to Services review, and continuing to support effective management of sickness absence. In addition, to the specific HR initiatives, all services are required to deliver improved efficiency as part of the Business Planning process. This in turn is monitored and reviewed as part of the Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>Key actions: The HR section is currently working on the Pay and Grading review and will be looking to achieve IiP accreditation within City Council (Direct) Services during 2007/08.</p>			
Transactions	470,000	193,000	
<p>Strategy: The Business Planning process provides a strategic link between the Corporate Plan, Service actions and performance measurement. The Performance Management Framework monitors Service performance against Business Plans, and focuses on monitoring on priorities and outcomes and enables Members and managers to understand variations against targets. The Business Planning process also links directly with the Employee Development process with the aim of encouraging staff to take part, learn and contribute towards driving forward service improvement.</p> <p>Key actions: Significant efficiencies have already been achieved in the processing of benefit claims. Further efficiencies are anticipated with the implementation of electronic statements, e-billing, and the extension of e-payment methods.</p>			
Miscellaneous efficiencies	11,000	11,000	
<p>Strategy: There is no specific strategy that is not covered in the areas detailed above.</p> <p>Key actions: The Council continues to review its assets and has identified surplus property and land which will generate capital receipts, and subsequent additional interest receipts through increased cash flow.</p>			
Total	2,025,900	1,142,200	