

Salisbury District Council
Annual Efficiency Statement
2007/08 Forward Look

(a) Strategy For Securing Efficiency Gains

Achieving value for money is at the heart of everything we do. We aim to keep council tax and spending down, while achieving high levels of performance and satisfaction. Achieving efficiency is our preferred mechanism to continually improve and deliver more community value in the context of finite resources. We target genuine cashable savings from all services to reinvest into priority areas. Our efficiency programme aims beyond the current targets set by central government.

The council has had its own efficiency agenda for several years, originally outlined in our five-year vision for the development of the council that was set out in "Moving Us On – Controlling Our Future", approved in June 2003. This vision acknowledged that continuing change is an accepted fact and describes five key drivers for change:

- Our political priorities
- Our emphasis on partnership working
- The transformational prospects of e government and its importance as we bring the new office project to fruition
- The challenging financial outlook
- The increasing importance of performance management

Since the inception of the National Efficiency Programme for Local Government, the council has consistently demonstrated a sound track record in delivering efficiencies and this agenda is now becoming embedded in the council's culture.

Efficiency gains are achieved through our Integrated Improvement Programme based on our political priorities and organisational themes. Each year efficiency targets are set out in our Portfolio Plans. Progress on targets is routinely captured through the performance management system (PACE) and monitored by Cabinet through quarterly performance and financial management reporting. All targets will be subject to a six-month update using the ESD toolkit.

Our efficiency targets are realistic and sustainable. In terms of capital we have not included one-off savings arising from routine procurement practice. Although we use standstill budgeting for supplies and services it is not assumed that these will lead to efficiency gains over the longer term.

The political priorities and organisational themes, which will contribute most significantly to meeting our efficiency targets, are as follows:

Political Priorities:

Improving Services For Our Customers:

Building a centralised office at Bourne Hill (comprising the restoration of the listed house and a new extension) together with the development of a strong Customer Services Team and supported by a comprehensive customer relationship management system (CRM), will:

- Maximise the efficiency of our assets through the reduction of the number offices required; replacing inefficient offices with purpose built accommodation; and, where possible, allow joint use of facilities with partners.
- Lead to increased public satisfaction in transactional services whilst reducing the number of staff involved in those transactions.

- Ensure increases in productive time for “back office” staff through business process re-engineering.

The office project is subject to Gateway Reviews to check value for money and benchmark against standard project management methodology. In addition, the Design Team hold regular value engineering workshops.

Maintaining Council Housing To A High Standard

Following the overwhelming support from tenants to remain with the council as landlord, the council is revising its business plan to ensure high standards consistent with financial sustainability. This will include permanent revenue savings from the HRA from 2007/08 onwards. The council will strive to achieve as much of this through efficiency savings to reduce the impact on tenants.

Creating More Affordable Housing

Our work with Assettrust to deliver large scale affordable housing, the development of a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) scheme and an improved registered social landlord partnership continues to deliver more housing units for less direct contributions. Utilisation of Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Local Development Framework are being continually developed as vital tools for achieving positive outcomes.

Reducing Traffic Congestion In Salisbury And Improve Public Transport

There is further potential to use City Centre Car Parks more efficiently as commuters transfer to new park and ride sites. As more park and ride sites open there are efficiencies to be gained through the combination of bus routes serving the sites and innovative ways of serving the sites using technology. Efficiency gains in car parking management have enabled quality improvements in the concessionary fares scheme.

Improving Recycling And Reducing Household Waste

The council's revised Waste and Recycling Strategy due to be rolled out this year based on alternating weekly collections of recyclables and household waste aims to achieve recycling targets. The strategy embraces invest to save/improve principles.

Creating Better Places To Live

The Salisbury Vision Project will present opportunities for efficiencies to be realised through using assets more effectively as well as improving the economic vitality of the city.

Organisational Themes:

Improving The Performance Of The council

- An increased focus on performance management through the further development of our performance management system, support and development for managers and targeted peer reviews will drive performance improvements.
- Efficiency indicators and quality crosschecks continue to be built into our performance management framework.

Partnership Working And Community Engagement

- We are working with our partners through the countywide Customer First Partnership to develop a programme to join up the delivery of a number of services.
- We are working with the Wiltshire Improvement Partnership on a shared services agenda.

Building The Capacity Of The Organisation

Capacity to achieve our ambitions was highlighted as an area for improvement in our CPA assessment. The work we are undertaking to increase our capacity will have a direct bearing in achievement of our efficiency target through:

- Reducing expenditure on Agency Staff through internal arrangements
- Fully exploiting IT systems.
- Improving productive time through sickness management.
- Implementing innovative ways of working such as home working and flexible working patterns.
- We have appointed a permanent External Funding Officer to maximise opportunities from a wide range of external funding opportunities to support the delivery of our political priorities and objectives. It is intended that we will continue to build on the great success we have had in this area over the last couple of years.

Meeting The Financial Challenge

- We have embraced the principles of the Efficiency Agenda and will actively seek to reduce costs by identifying suitable services where costs could be cut by joint procurement with other bodies.
- In line with our Medium Term Financial Strategy efficiency gains will be recycled into priority areas, wherever possible.
- New material capital schemes are subject to efficiency targets/measures.
- The council has revised its Medium Term Financial Strategy. A key component of this strategy is to allow the use of prudential finance for invest to save schemes on a case-by-case basis.
- The council has set aside £2m of capital receipts for invest to save initiatives in order to internally finance leasing schemes which were previously financed via operating leases.
- Where possible we will develop new business to increase income.
- We will ensure most productive use of assets in line with our Asset Management Plan, which is kept under regular review.
- External Funding Opportunities (as above).

Our consolidated value for money score (level 3) in the Annual Use of Resources Assessment built upon high performing services and low council tax (lower quartile for council tax nationally) shows that we provide good value for money. Through this strategy we aspire to build on this platform and achieve excellence.

(b) **Key Actions to be taken during the Year**

Improving Services For Our Customers

- Achieve timely and fit for purpose construction of our centralised offices during the next two years within budget.
- Extend the integration of CRM with back office systems.
- Implement e-forms and self-service in CRM to develop web-based service delivery so that customers do not need to visit or telephone the council offices.
- Integrate further customer facing services to our Customer Services Unit to improve seamless service delivery.
- Rationalise key publicly accessible offices to broaden range of services available at key locations.
- Develop arrangements for out of hours service provision to customers.

Maintaining Council Housing To A High Standard

- Revise the business plan to ensure high standards consistent with financial sustainability for the future provision of council housing. This will include permanent revenue savings from the HRA from 2007/08 onwards. The council will strive to achieve as much of this through efficiency savings to reduce the impact on tenants.

Reducing Traffic Congestion In Salisbury And Improve Public Transport

- Complete planning process and acquire land for 5th Park and Ride site.
- Review of central car parking provision within the context of the Salisbury Vision project (a major place shaping and regeneration project for the city).
- Introduce more residents only parking zones to discourage commuter parking in residential areas.

Improving Recycling And Reducing Household Waste

- Implementation of wheelie bins and alternate weekly collections.
- Introduce more efficient collection rounds.
- Adoption of Street Scene Strategy.

Making The District Safer And Reducing The Fear Of Crime

- Co-locate the CCTV operation with the Care Connect Control Centre.

Creating Better Places To Live

- The Salisbury Vision Project will present opportunities for efficiencies to be realised through asset management activity as well as improving the economic vitality of the city.

Improving The Performance Of The Council

- Develop further the Performance Management System to enable monitoring of projects and risks. Create additional live links from feeder systems.
- Continue to implement the new Procurement Strategy.
- Implement outcome of the Facilities Management Review aimed at improved service and reduced cost.

Building Organisational Capacity

- Reduce sickness absence levels to maximise productivity.
- Improve HR recording, monitoring and reporting processes and systems to ensure efficiency.
- Progress the 'Innovative Ways of Working' project to enhance work/life balance and reduce expensive office accommodation.
- Review and implement personnel policies e.g. home-working policy, to support the achievement of our priorities and themes.
- Review of capacity of Print Unit to supply external organisations to enable increased income.
- Implement Training & Development Plan for Councillors.

- Review and determine a strategy for future provision of corporate telecommunications.

Partnership Working And Community Engagement

- Implement projects to support Customer First Partnership Shared Services programme aimed at improving quality and reducing costs.
- Improve the performance management of LSPs and councillor development in partnership with other local authorities in Wiltshire supported by funding from the ODPM Capacity building Fund.
- Engage local communities in a debate on the most appropriate level of providing and funding local services.
- Work with partners to deliver the intended outcomes of the LAA and maximise the opportunities arising for grant.

Meeting The Financial Challenge

- Establish 2.5% business growth for the Leisure Facilities.
- Develop robust plans for efficiency savings with major arts organisation.
- Implement measures contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2007/08.
- Review Medium Term Financial Strategy annually to ensure the budget supports priorities.
- Review Asset Management Plan/Capital Strategy annually to ensure our assets are maximised and capital projects support our priorities.
- Continue to develop incentive schemes aimed at increasing productivity or reducing costs.