

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 February 2010

Subject: Performance Management Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett

Item: 6(i)

Recommending:

That the report of the Performance Management Portfolio Holder be noted.

Draft Cabinet Key Objectives 2010/11

Work is continuing on creating the Key Objectives for 2010/11. We have reduced the number down from last year to just 12 with much clearer actions and targets all linked back to Medium-Term Aims and budget for 2010/11. All of this will be used in the Council Plan for 2010/14. These are still draft but are currently in the review cycle starting with the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel on 23 February.

Performance Improvement progress

Work on areas where we may be able to improve efficiency or save money has been progressing. The following is a brief update of projects currently being progressed.

Country Care

Looking at sharing a site with other EFDC services and possible sharing a workshop, tools, etc

Building Control

Looking at shared services with Harlow and Uttlesford. Improvement East are prepared to support investigation into such a project and officer meeting are progressing.

Legal

Civil litigation can lead to officers being out of the office attending court proceedings outside the District. The Civil Litigation Team attend court or may have to employ Counsel to attend on approximately twenty five occasions a year to arrange for charging orders. About half of these cases are in the Harlow County Court. The team is in negotiations with Harlow Council for members of their Legal Team to undertake this work for the same rates as charged to the Essex Partnership

Framework Agreement entered into with Cambridge City Council to provide legal services for Planning and Environment and conveyancing and Landlord and Tenant. EFDC is one of the local councils in the area which is entitled to use this framework. Useful for one – off jobs probably more complex. Free training periodically provided. Have used Kent County Council Legal Services at set rates in the past.

Reprographics

Details of work undertaken by Reprographics during the course of a year have been compiled. This runs to five pages! We will be reviewing these to see why and how they are used so we can look for savings.

Community Services and Customer Relations

This service area includes: Sports & Health Development; Community Development; Young People and Youth Council; Community Arts; District Museum Service and Public Relations and Marketing. All of these functions, with the exception of PR and Marketing, work with people of all ages to improve health and well being; build community capacity and address safer community issues. As part of this exercise, all core delivery budgets are being considered.

Community Services:

A report was presented to Pre -Cabinet in December regarding a proposal to potentially outsource the Council' Community Arts Programme. This was in response to a direct offer by Theatre Resource, to deliver the District's Arts programme at a reduced cost to the Council. This arrangement hinged on the Council providing £250k Capital Funding towards the organisation's major building project.

Due to the timescale involved with meeting European Tender Legislation and the fact that Essex County Council had already covered Theatre Resources' shortfall, this option was rejected by Pre- Cabinet. A decision was however taken to give officers a greater period of time to investigate other alternative ways of delivering the Arts Service at a reduced cost. This work is being undertaken currently and lead officers will be attending a conference on 'Alternative Delivery of Cultural Services' in mid February.

In regard to other Community Services, including Sports and Health Development, Community Development and the District Museum, it has been agreed with accountancy, that all activities will see a minimum of 5% increase in fees and charges, with some sessions up to 10%. In addition, direct service budgets have also been considered and minimal savings have been identified.

Public Relations and Marketing

The key suggested saving in respect of PR & Marketing, is the deletion of the Marketing Officer post which is currently vacant and provides approximately £35k saving per annum.

A further post that has also become vacant and subsequently offered as a saving is a part time PR and Information post, amounting to approximately £10k per annum.

A particular reference was also made to consider savings on the Forester publication and this has resulted in a proposal to reduce the number of editions from 4 to 3, presenting a saving of approximately £17,000.

Further to the above, officers are currently pursuing the relocation of the Waltham Abbey Information Desk to the District Museum. This will realize a saving on approx. £6k pa office rental at Waltham Abbey Town Hall and potential for increased opening hours at the Museum therefore improving BVPI targets.

Insurance Procurement

We held a meeting on the collaborative procurement idea as we are now seeing ideas coming forward for efficiencies. There is one in particular which is a consortium purchase as each district will retain its own contract with the insurers with their preferred levels of excess. (There is a report on how by increasing our excess we have already saved a considerable amount of money). This is a way forward that may encourage insurance companies to quote more competitively on policies like motor or engineering would be for one authority to act as the host authority so the insurer only has one point of contact. That host authority would then make an administrative charge to any other authorities that it provided the handling service for.

This collaborative procurement is being sponsored by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and involves eleven other authorities. The procurement itself is being run from St Edmundsbury DC with the assistance of consultants appointed by the RIEP. The Invitations to Tender were issued on 15 January and tenders are due back on 10 February.

Administration

There are three main areas identified within the Administration Section which have made savings in various ways:

Postage

Cleanmail Advance is a postal scheme which gives discounts based on volumes posted, the greater the volume, the higher the discount. It uses pre-printed envelopes, which are very similar to the Pre-Printed Impression (PPI) envelopes that we also use for larger items of post. The maximum weight per item allowed is 100g, and the maximum size of envelope to be used is C5. The Council uses this scheme to send all second class letters.

The savings made using Cleanmail Advance total just over £14,000 which relate to the start of Cleanmail Advance in mid February 2009 to the end of December 2009.

Corporate Vending Contract 2004-2009

The Corporate Vending Contract runs for a period of five years and provides vending facilities for all staff within the Civic Offices. The contract was due for renewal at the end of August 2009 but has been extended until April 2010 to allow sufficient time for the tendering process to take place.

As part of the current contract arrangements, monthly royalty payments are returned to the Council based on the level of sales of drinks and confectionary. Because of the seven month extension of the contract, it has been possible to renegotiate a more favourable agreement for service charges and the price of hot drinks resulting in additional savings of £1,711.84. Royalty payments already returned to the Council total £16,450.

Corporate Photocopier Contract 2007-2010

The Corporate Photocopying Contract runs for a period of three years and provides photocopying facilities for all staff within the Civic and Satellite Offices. The contract is due for renewal at the end of February 2010 and preliminary work has been carried out earlier in the year by the Procurement Hub to source available photocopying frameworks.

Presently the machines on the current contract are not networked and are used to photocopy only. It is proposed to replace the current photocopiers with networked Multi-Functional Devices (MFD's) which would allow copying, printing, scanning, faxing and e-mailing to be carried out from one machine at a fraction of the cost of using separate desktop printers, fax machines and scanners. Networking the machines would also allow printing to the MFD directly from the PC which should lead to lower printing costs, whilst scanning and e mailing direct from the MFD would reduce the need for hard copy, thereby saving paper and printing costs. There is no cost to scan and e-mail from the MFD's.