

#### Details

**Local authority** South Holland District Council

**Contact name** Emma Booker

**Job title**

**Email address** ebooker@sholland.gov.uk

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**Statement**

**Strategy for period to 2007/08**

The Council's Corporate Plan specifies as one of our 6 priorities the objective of improving our business practices so that the authority delivers its services more efficiently. Our strategy for delivering such efficiencies has 5 main strands:-

- To develop systems that mainstream efficiency.
  
- To equip officers and elected members to challenge traditional ways of providing services and deliver efficiencies.
  
- To maximise opportunities offered by partnering and sharing of services.
  
- To improve the way we procure goods and services.
  
- To make full use of the potential of information technology to deliver services more efficiently.

The way in which we will harness the potential of better procurement and information technology is described later in this submission. The first 3 strands of this strategy may, however, be usefully amplified as follows:-

1. A fully integrated system for corporate, financial, service and performance management will be established, a key objective of which will be to require all managers to conduct an annual review of opportunities to provide services more efficiently, to identify these in their business plans and account for their delivery. The Council's Senior Management Team and the Cabinet will thus be placed in the position of being able to challenge existing practice and lead improvement.

2. The mainstreaming of the efficiency agenda will be complemented by a more strategic approach to organisational development, which will put in place systems to both equip managers and elected members with the skills they need to innovate, plan and implement change and improve service delivery; provide specialised in-house “consultancy” support in the form of project management, business process reengineering and IT design and implementation; and through the introduction of appropriate pay and reward and recruitment and retention policies.
  
3. Within the broad organisational framework that has been described the Council will pursue a range of initiatives, namely:-
  
4. The authority will participate fully and enthusiastically in a joint review of opportunities for the provision of shared services in Lincolnshire that has been commissioned by the chief executives of Lincolnshire local authorities, which it is anticipated should bring forward substantial innovative proposals for vertically and horizontally integrated and thus more “joined up”, effective and efficient delivery of services across local government and other public sector bodies in the County in the short to medium term.
  
5. The Council will also explore other opportunities to partner with other public and private sector organisations where this would offer clear benefits to the people of South Holland. To this end it has held preliminary discussions with Peterborough City Council and neighbouring authorities in Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Norfolk. It is anticipated that this may result in the formation of formal partnerships in certain “back office” support functions across several local authorities and more restricted “cluster working” with one or two partners, especially where it is apparent that synergy could be realised quickly.
  
6. The Council’s approach to partnering and the development of shared services will compliment its desire to engage constructively in the on-going debate about the most appropriate form of local government in England and Wales and Lincolnshire in particular having regard to its potential to contribute significantly to the delivery of better and more efficient services to local people.

Key actions in 2006/07

In summary the Council's efficiency gains will be found in five principal areas :-

1. Procurement
2. Housing and property management
3. Customer service access channels
4. Service delivery review
5. Document management systems

	Expected annual efficiency gains (£)	...of which cashable (£)	Related links
Adult social services	0	0	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Key actions:			
Children's services	0	0	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Key actions:			
Culture and sport	62,300	62,300	Documents People Projects
Strategy: Grounds maintenance returned in-house in May 2004. By delivering the service directly service standards and cost have been kept under review and efficiency savings sought. 2005/06 also sees the re-opening of the Ayscoughfee Museum and following a			

	<p>review of staffing salary savings have been achieved.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferring services provided by residual sub-contractors to the in-house team eg riverside mowing</li> <li>• Review of leisure staffing resources</li> </ul>		
Environmental services	42,800	42,800	<p>Documents People Projects</p>
	<p>Strategy: This service has recently undergone a restructuring and combined the separate grounds maintenance and refuse and cleansing service within the Environmental Health Service. This will involve the establishment of a combined unit called "Street Scene" and will have the benefit of giving a clear focus and identity to these activities which are a corporate priority and which the Local Government Association, working with MORI, tells us are the key services to establishing a Council's reputation. The Council is committed to securing continuous improvements for customers through service re-engineering. The reshaping of street scene is considered an essential element in ensuring that we give the best service to customers.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase recycling provision throughout the district and move resources out of refuse collection</li> <li>• Re-organisation of refuse collection rounds</li> <li>• Achieve waste reduction in the district</li> <li>• Work in partnership with others to achieve national, regional and local targets and objectives</li> <li>• Use generic working for performance monitoring posts</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>		
Local transport (highways)	0	0	<p>Documents People Projects</p>
	<p>Strategy:</p> <p>Key actions:</p>		
Local transport (non-highways)	0	0	<p>Documents People Projects</p>
	<p>Strategy:</p>		

	Key actions:		
LA social housing (capex)	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
LA social housing (other)	39,100	28,700	Documents People Projects
	<p>Strategy: Rent Collection - The rent collection service is being phased out by June 2006 and savings reinvested in offering alternative payment methods for our tenants e.g. Direct Debit, Paynet, in addition to the alternative ways to paying rent.</p> <p>Sewage Contracts - South Holland is unique in that it has responsibility for 48 sewage treatment works and 52 associated pumping stations. We have placed a 5 year partnering contract with a local provider to which has resulted in significant savings whilst maintaining the high quality previously achieved.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to press sewerage authority to adopt sewage treatment works and pumping stations to reduce future capital expenditure</li> <li>• To phase out the rent collection service by June 2006 and offer new payment methods</li> <li>• Restructure of Housing Management operations to provide a generic service for all tenancy related issues,</li> <li>• Review of the tenancy agreement, making a more robust contract between tenant and landlord</li> <li>• Review of the tenants handbook, providing advice, assistance and details of tenants and landlords responsibilities</li> <li>• Upgrade of ICT to improve and automate services</li> <li>• Stock surveys to improve the information about our assets and link to the allocations policy to ensure that properties are offered to and linked with housing need</li> </ul>		
Non-school educational services	0	0	Documents People Projects

	Strategy: Key actions:		
Supporting people	0	0	Documents People Projects
	Strategy: Key actions:		
Homelessness	2,000	0	Documents People Projects
	<p>Strategy: We have a strong performance in respect of dealing with homelessness. We have a Homelessness Strategy that was developed in partnership with five other authorities in Lincolnshire. We have a dedicated Housing Needs and Advice Team, headed up by an innovative Homelessness Team Leader. We offer a range of housing options to assist us in the prevention of homelessness including a contract with the Citizens' Advice Bureau to provide a specialist advice service and a reliable networking infrastructure for effective signposting to alternative providers.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative options for providing temporary accommodation, rent deposit schemes, rent in advance, mediation with families, joint working with Women's Aid to assist in the provision of specialist hostels for victims of domestic violence, the night stop initiative and the use of both Council and private sector properties</li> <li>• Review of the homelessness strategy</li> <li>• Range of well developed Housing Advice leaflets</li> <li>• Action plan to reduce the use of temporary accommodation in accordance with government guidance</li> <li>• Continue to reduce the number of acceptances through homelessness</li> <li>• On-going training and development</li> <li>• Supporting People grant application for the provision of Floating Support, to support homeless households and assist in sustaining tenancies</li> <li>• Review of the allocations policy to support people in housing need</li> </ul>		
Other cross-cutting efficiencies not covered above			
Corporate services	79,400	2,500	Documents

			People Projects
	<p>Strategy: Strategy - to review business processes to arrive at efficiencies in back office functions especially with regard to recruitment processes, integrating human resources function and payroll and economies on the publication of public documents. Systems in place to ensure effective and consistent customer relationship management across all channels and to provide a first time fix for citizens and business enquiries using a common data base which holds customer records to deliver services across different channels and enabling joined up and automated service delivery.</p> <p>Using matrix working, best value reviews and joint working initiatives we will target savings on audit, ICT and debt collection.</p> <p>e-gov strategy - the Councils e-gov strategy is in line with the e-gov agenda. Our strategy is documented in our IEG Submissions. One of the key areas for us is to promote the Web and take maximum advantage of the workstream efficiencies that can be gained through such means as shifting customers to more efficient channels and deploying best practice within each channel; and making a major shift from manual to electronic processing.</p> <p>Smarter working in-house - using the intranet and sharepoint to provide a central location for all departments' information to facilitate the quicker sharing of documents, contact lists, tasks, records management, discussions and more.</p> <p>Key actions: • Organisational Development Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Documents on-line</li> <li>• Best Value Reviews debt, ICT</li> <li>• Joint working on Legal Advice</li> <li>• Online facilities to be available to allow public access to reports, minutes and agendas from past council meetings.</li> <li>• Document Management and work flow systems</li> <li>• Integration of front and back office</li> </ul>		
Procurement - goods and services	28,000	23,900	Documents People Projects

	<p>Strategy: We have strong financial management systems &amp; a track record of good decision-making in procurement. We have a Procurement Fitness Plan, a Procurement Manual, Procurement Policy &amp; a 'Selling to the Council Guide'. Our Policy is consistent with the National Procurement Strategy &amp; aims to deliver effective procurement by determining its strategic role within our business framework. We have a commitment to develop &amp; improve procurement skills &amp; we have performance measures to manage suppliers which include targets to demonstrate best value. Although we have added capacity to this area of development we are aware of the need to improve in some key areas. We need to have a clearer understanding of our performance as it compares to others &amp; to develop the use of benchmarking to help us to inform our service development &amp; to measure progress. We will continue to take advantage of the services and knowledge provided by the Regional Centre of Excellence.</p> <p>Key actions: • Continue to promote cheaper alternative channels  • Rationalise our supplier base  • Implement the e-market place  • Promote the use of purchasing cards  • Joint working via the Lincolnshire Procurement group  • Collaborate with key suppliers  • Streamline supplier invoicing</p>		
Productive time	10,000	0	Documents People Projects
Transactions	2,900	0	Documents People Projects
	<p>Strategy: Our strategy is to investigate the potential for significant financial savings and more importantly enhanced and sustainable service provision by reviewing a number of transactional services both in-house and across all partners in Lincolnshire.</p> <p>Key actions: Benefits and Revenues</p>		

EDM: The introduction of a one-stop shop has improved the customer experience for access to all Council services. In addition, a project is also underway to provide a corporate Electronic Document Management (EDM) solution (this is essentially document imaging, document management and workflow software) for those parts of the Council where a clear business cases emerged during earlier Business Process. This project is being extended into the benefits service with the use of performance standards funding and will go live in the Winter of 2006. We are also implementing the National Performance Management Framework so that on-going operational efficiencies and performance information can be identified from a single source providing significant reductions in the time and resources required to collect data and compile reports from stand alone systems. Also enabling successful benchmarking across local authorities and the ability to electronically cleanse data and submit statistical returns to the Department of Works and Pensions. We continue to absorb the annual increase in our HB/CTB caseload (estimated to be 7.5% in 05/06) without any additional assessment staff by utilising the features of electronic document management systems to streamline processes and enhance service performance

Verification Framework : Progressing with the verification framework achieving first time compliance with the DWP Verification Framework for the Reviews module.

Revenues Collection : Introducing BACSTEL and paperless direct debit processes and take-up campaigns.

- Online facilities to be available to allow payments to the council in ways that engender public trust and confidence in local government electronic payment solutions (eg email receipting/proof of payment, supply automatic transaction ID numbers) reviewing our current enforcement strategy, maximising the use of the new Anytime/anyday telephone payment facility
- undertake a direct debit marketing campaign and target specific groups to increase the numbers of customers paying by this more cost effective method
- promote online and touch tone telephone payment and balance enquiry services for council tax, business rates, housing rents and sundry debtors thereby increasing use of self-service channels and access to services 24/7.

	<p>Grounds Maintenance :  Absorbed the additional workload for support services arising from the in-house provision of the grounds maintenance within existing resources.</p> <p>Parking  E-forms for "parking contravention mitigation" (i.e. appeal against the issue of a penalty charge notice), including email notification of form receipt and appeal procedures.</p>		
Miscellaneous efficiencies	24,600	6,700	Documents People Projects
	<p>Strategy: Asset disposal - Our policy for the disposal of General Fund surplus assets will realise receipts and thereby attract additional investment income. The council also holds a number of sites within the Housing Revenue Account which may have development potential. Our strategy is to take an approach that provides some affordable housing but also directly or indirectly helps us meet the decent homes target for our existing properties. Targets are included in our Affordable Housing Delivery Plan.</p> <p>We will work in partnership with local developers to develop properties that meet our required specification at a reduced capital cost.</p> <p>Cash management - we will be reviewing our transaction costs.</p> <p>Community and economic development : We have set up one team to bring together the community development and economic development functions. This strengthens the Council's ability to engage with the regional and sub regional agenda including the Lincolnshire Assembly, Local Area Agreement funding stream and other strategic partnerships. Efficiencies achieved through the new ways of working which will be enabled by these structural changes will enable a reduction in staffing so as to produce savings.</p> <p>Key actions: • Initial identification of sites with development potential  • Partnership arrangements with developers or Registered Social Landlords  • More pro-active investment  • Review of banking and cash arrangements  • Review operation of the cash office</p>		
Total	291,100	166,900	

