

CABINET REPORT
19 February 2013

Cabinet Member: Coun Peredur Jenkins

Topic: Council Strategic Efficiency Schemes

Liaison officer: Emyr Edwards, Resources Policy Manager

The decision sought/purpose of the report

The approval of the Cabinet is sought to implement the savings schemes developed up to now by the Council's Strategic Efficiency Project Board.

Views of the local member

Not a local matter

Introduction

The Council's current Financial Strategy sets the following financial targets for corporate or cross-departmental efficiency savings schemes, together with a mandate to look for further potential ideas beyond that:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
£0.5m	£1m	£1.5m	£2m	£5m

A Project Group is responsible for researching possible efficiency opportunities across the Council and developing schemes for realising these savings. These are of course additional to the departmental 1% efficiency schemes which have already been approved.

Reasons for the recommendation

The project has been investigating a number of potential schemes and a number of these are now sufficiently developed to proceed to the implementation stage. This is on the basis that a robust business case is in place with a reasonable certainty of being able to realise the savings.

The Financial Strategy Panel (and the Savings Programme Board previously) has been receiving regular reports on the progress of the project and supports the transfer of these schemes for implementation.

Relevant considerations

The **Appendix** provides details of the savings schemes which are recommended to be implemented.

The Project reflects the Council's intention to find as much as possible of the financial gap through efficiency rather than cuts to services. The Cabinet will need to be satisfied that these schemes can be implemented without impacting on results for residents (there could be an impact on how residents receive those results).

Equality issues and requirements have been given appropriate consideration in drawing up the schemes, and the Equalities and Language Officer has looked at the schemes in order to consider whether a more detailed assessment is required. Based on the information we have it is not considered that any of the schemes in question need to be substantially redesigned or cannot be justified from an equality perspective. The Equalities and Language Officer will continue to work with the relevant departments to ensure that attention continues to be given to equality considerations as schemes are implemented.

Next steps and timetable

Once schemes are approved they will transfer to the relevant Project Leader for implementation and the Savings Realisation Panel will monitor progress against the scheme timetable.

Views of the Statutory Officers

Chief Executive:

Continuing to develop and implement efficiency schemes is a vitally important part of the Council's longer term strategy for facing the financial challenge, which attempts to minimise the need to implement cuts to services. Of course, it is one thing to develop and approve the intention to make savings, there is also a need for robust arrangements for implementing them and I am aware that the Cabinet Member and officers are totally committed to ensuring this.

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add regarding propriety.

Head of Finance:

I confirm that I have cooperated with relevant members and officers to develop the savings schemes under consideration over a period of time. By now they are all developed schemes with a fair estimate of the financial savings involved. A number of schemes have already been implemented and have contributed towards corporate savings targets for 2011/12 and 2012/13, whilst others are to be achieved in 2013/14. I support the recommendation for the Cabinet to formally approve the implementation of these savings schemes, which have already been informally promoted by the Savings Programme Board (up to 2011/12) and the Financial Strategy Panel (in 2012/13).

Appendix

- Strategic efficiency savings schemes

Strategic efficiency savings schemes

Title	Sum £	How results for residents will not be affected
Advertising vacant posts	95,310	Increase the use of the internet for advertising vacant posts. Trialling has shown no impact on the number / standard of applicants (although applicant standard is more difficult to prove conclusively, one way or the other).
Savings on Council insurance costs	326,000	Success in achieving lower costs without affecting the insurance provision.
Travelling allowances	231,000	The result of successful negotiations with the Unions to reduce the travelling allowance rate (further to the Council Board's decision 13 December 2011). No impact on services.
IT supplies contracts	9,500	Re-tendering contracts to obtain the same product at a lower cost.
Combining voice and data networks	128,000	Change to the Council's telephone and IT systems; no impact on services.
Secondary Inclusion Strategy Resources	451,000	Corporate resources which no longer need to be allocated to this issue, since we have succeeded in obtaining the same outcomes by securing other sources of funding and reprioritising resources.
Not adding inflation to the Highways Structural Maintenance budget in 2012/13	265,790	Research work has shown that the current level of investment in Gwynedd is high relative to other authorities. Since the Council has received resources from the Welsh Government to invest in roads, there is no need to also add inflation (for 2012/13 at least) in order to achieve the same outcomes. This service area

Title	Sum £	How results for residents will not be affected
		is the subject of a Strategic Review, which will consider the priorities and resource requirements in more detail.
Restructuring the Strategic and Improvement department to include rationalising partnerships in Gwynedd and Anglesey (further to the Council Board's approval of the partnership structure on 6 March 2012)	73,708	The rationalisation is intended to enable better and more effective use of resources and there is no impact on front-line services. The restructuring has also enabled the provision of democratic services to fulfil the requirements of the legislation.
Reduction in Wales Audit Office fees	12,240	Lower fees for the same service.
Social Services regional commissioning, procurement and monitoring hub (confirmation of the saving following the Council Board's approval of the scheme, 14 February 2012)	100,000	New, more efficient commissioning arrangements, rather than a change to the services themselves. The savings figure is a prudent assessment – the figure could eventually prove to be somewhat higher.
Income generation – collecting waste from holiday homes	90,000	Confirmation of the sum resulting from the Council Board's previous decision (3 May 2011) to charge a commercial fee for collecting waste from holiday homes.