

STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 21 JULY 2011

BUSINESS STRATEGY PROGRAMME

Report by Senior Policy Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Background:

1. The changing external environment means that there is much the Council needs to do to ensure we are geared up to face further financial challenges whilst continuing to serve the people of Oxfordshire well. To deal with this we have developed a new Business Strategy.
2. Our current structures have served us well in a period of growth but we are now moving into some very lean years and there is a need for a shift in the way we do business to reflect more difficult times. Last year the level of savings in our efficiency programme was increased to set some very ambitious targets. We need to change quickly, be really customer focused and lose some of the professional silos that remain in place. Now the time has come to put the delivery of the efficiency strategy at the heart of our business.

What does it mean in practice?

3. To deliver the Business Strategy, a number of different work streams are being brought together to manage the Council's approach to delivering the estimated £200m of savings required by 2015. These are:

1. Changing the way we work

This project will drive cultural change across the organisation to equip and empower staff to do their jobs differently. This includes setting clear expectations of staff and streamlining central processes through, for example, delegating decision making to lower levels, developing an effective staff engagement strategy and encouraging better use of technology to support more flexible working.

2. Reshaping Management

To enable the organisation to become more streamlined and deliver more cost-effective services, this project will aim reduce the numbers of managers by 25%, rationalise management layers and ensure there is support for employees leaving the organisation.

3. Future of Shared Services and creation of Customer Service Centre

This work stream aims to deliver the next-generation of Shared Services, by evaluating different operational models and developing a cost-effective solution which will deliver high levels of customer service.

4. Developing a comprehensive Asset Management strategy

The strategy will set the vision for OCC property assets, to ensure they are properly planned, used and managed to support the work we do and will enable significant savings to be made.

5. Customer Focus

This project will ensure we are working to achieve better customer service and effectively managing the Council's reputation in difficult financial times.

6. Streamlined Service and Resource Planning processes and delivery of efficiencies by Directorates

This will develop a 'light touch' process to ensure that delivery of previous years savings are managed, new savings identified and re-invested savings are challenged. Each Directorate's leadership team will monitor and review the projects that comprise the individual directorate strategies on a monthly basis. Quarterly updates on progress against the strategies will be reported to the Business Strategy Group.

7. Community self-help/ Big Society

This project aims to reduce barriers so that individuals and communities are more able to help themselves and to facilitate joint working to enable partners and voluntary organisations to support this.

8. ICT underpins many of these projects and will be crucial in ensuring we can transform into a more modern, effective organisation.

What will we achieve?

4. Integrating these workstreams will ensure that over the next few years we will become a more streamlined and more dynamic organisation in which the workforce feels more empowered to develop our services to reflect our customers' aspirations through difficult financial times.

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