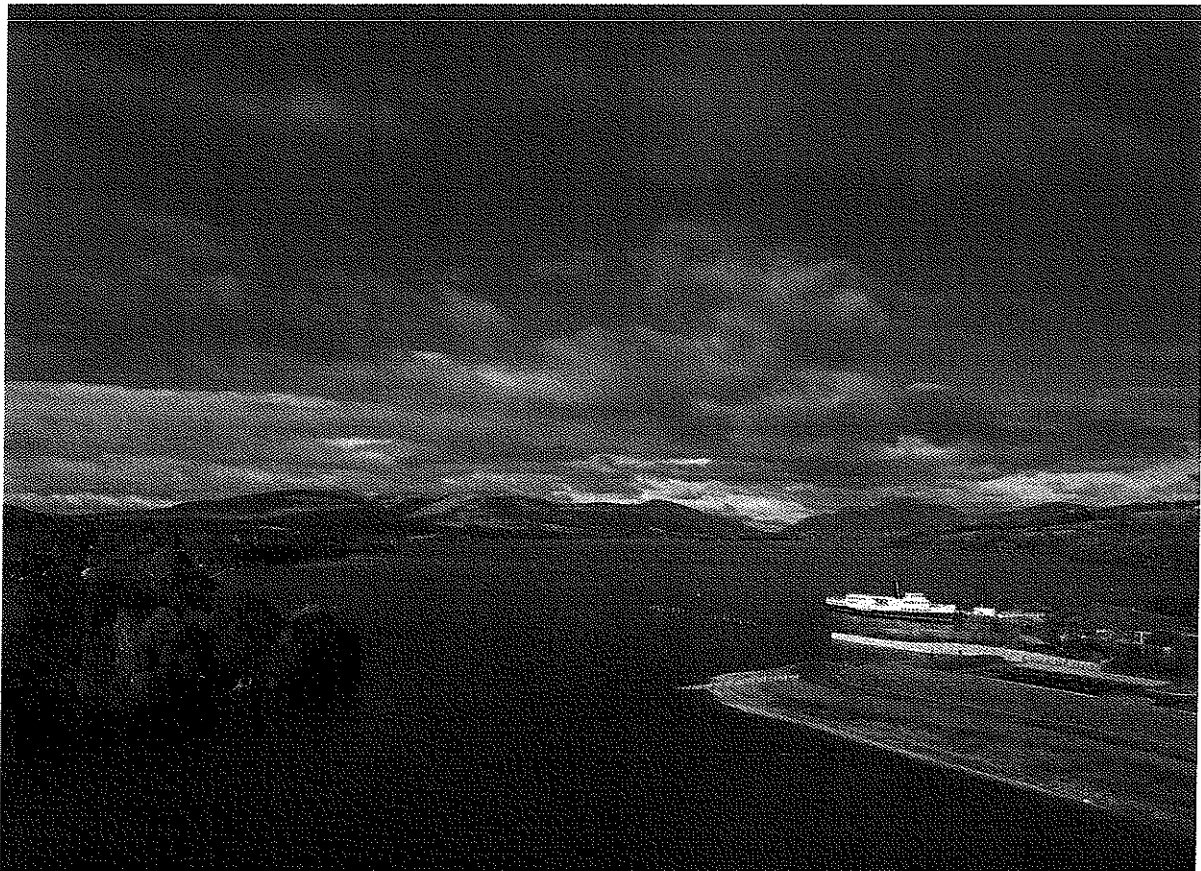


**WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2009/2010



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WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2009/2010

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Efficient Government initiative was launched by the Minister for Finance and Public Services in June 2004 and is an integral part of the continuous improvement agenda under the 'Best Value' regime established by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
- 1.2 The Efficient Government initiative is directly related to National Outcome 15 which requires the Council to provide high quality, continuously improving, efficient and responsive services.
- 1.3 As part of the 2007 Spending Review the Scottish Government re-affirmed its commitment to the Efficient Government Agenda and required the public sector to meet in-year efficiency targets of 2%, 4% and 6% for each of the three years of the Spending Review 2008/9 to 2010/11.
- 1.4 Local Authorities have a continuing role to demonstrate the efficiency gains delivered each year. These savings are invested back into delivering high quality and responsive public services.
- 1.5 The Annual Efficiency Statement provides details of efficiencies being claimed for the current financial year and highlights areas which are under investigation for future years.
- 1.6 The Efficient Government Group within West Dunbartonshire Council was redefined in order to meet the requirements of the Best Value Review. It is made up of the Accountancy Section Heads from each service and receives input from the five main areas of Efficient Government as defined in the Council's Efficient Government Strategy (Procurement, Absence Management, Asset Management, Customer First and developing Shared Services) in order to identify efficiencies and track progress.
- 1.7 The Covalent system is being used to provide an update of the Best Value Improvement Plan to Council on a quarterly basis and appropriate actions and milestones have been developed and monitored in relation to efficient government objectives.

2. OPENING POSITION

- 2.1 This section outlines our position at the start of the financial year in terms of efficiencies and notes the financial pressures that the Council faced in 2009/10.
- 2.2 The Council was faced with a number of significant budget pressures when setting the budget for 2009/10. As a result, we required to apply £3.350m of both service efficiencies and service reductions to the budget to finance a 0% increase in council tax.

- 2.3** The main opportunity to capture efficiency savings is from the annual budget process. Proposals are itemised with indicative savings against which actual performance can be measured. Additional efficiencies are being sought from the outcomes of Best Value, PSIF and Kaizen Blitz Reviews which have been used to streamline service delivery in specific areas under the Continuous Improvement Agenda.
- 2.4** Efficiencies are achieved by altering the ratio of inputs to outputs in two main ways:
- by maintaining the same outputs with fewer inputs, or
 - by providing more or better services with the same inputs.
- 2.5** Service cuts which result in reduced public services or increased income from higher fees and charges to the public are not classed as efficiencies. Verification is required to ensure that efficiencies claimed are genuine and no reduction to the level or quality of service is evident. Efficiency savings are retained by the Council and reinvested in local service priorities.
- 2.6** Efficiency targets are now included in a Medium Term Financial Strategy document.
- 2.7** The five efficient government workstreams (Absence Management, Asset Management, Customer First, Procurement and development of Shared Services) are now well established and have been progressing initiatives within their individual areas. Progress is reported directly to the Corporate Management Team.
- 2.8** This is the Council's fourth efficiency statement which has produced efficiencies of £2.2m of cashable savings for the financial year 2009/2010.
- 2.9** Work is underway to embed the principles of efficient government within the strategic planning and budgeting process to make services more streamlined, effective and efficient.

3. KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY - 2009/2010

- 3.1** This section describes progress made in the main projects during the year 2009/2010. It concentrates on the work programmes for the five efficient government workstreams and also includes efficiencies made on projects outside of these five themes.
- 3.2** Where possible we have continued to use the appropriate National Efficiency Measures (NEM)¹ developed in late 2006 by the consultants Aspiren working for the Improvement Service and CoSLA. We have calculated the 2009/10 efficiency figures by using the respective formulas for 2008/09 and 2009/10 to allow a calculation of the movement in the measure from April 2009 to March 2010.

3.3 Procurement

Collaborative procurement activity has further increased during 2009/10. During the year, the Procurement Team was actively involved in 29 national contracts through either OGC Buying Solutions or Procurement Scotland and 43 local authority contracts through Scotland Excel. Spend through collaborative contracts is relatively high in WDC and final spend figures for 2009/10 are expected to show an increase over the previous year's level of £10.7 million or 12.27% of core trade spend.

Cash savings of £277,000 have been identified from Category A and B collaborative contracts however there are significant additional non cash savings and benefits resulting from the Council not having to carry out full tendering processes locally for these 72 different commodities. Audit Scotland have identified an average cost of £4,500 per public sector tender which represents a "cost avoidance" for the Council of £324,000.

The team has also provided support to departments on a number of local tenders and procurement projects which have resulted in cashable savings in excess of £171,000.

Tendering and quotation processes have become much more streamlined with the increased use of the Public Contracts Scotland portal. Contract documentation is now uploaded on to the site and accessed directly by interested suppliers without the need for any further procurement intervention. Time previously spent responding to multiple supplier enquiries has also been drastically reduced as each question and answer can be automatically accessed by all interested suppliers.

During the year, many more additional departmental users have joined up and there are now 22 users in total.

Following on from the successful introduction of electronic statement billing for gas, electricity and telecoms in 2008/09, 220 metered water bills from Business Stream transferred on to monthly electronic statement billing in October 2009. This means that hundreds of utility bills that were previously manually keyed every month have been consolidated and are now interfaced electronically into the Council's payments system.

The appointment of a dedicated Purchasing Card Officer within the Procurement Team in March 2009 has allowed the card programme to be extended from the pilot area in Roads to a further eleven work bases across the Council. There are currently 106 cards in use with a further 45 about to be issued. Over the year 2009/10, there were 5,027 purchasing card transactions with 230 suppliers with a total value of £939,000. The use of cards streamlines the purchase to pay process and provides a flexible alternative to petty cash in Social Work establishments.

The development of the WeBuy eProcurement system continues and provides:

- improvement through enhanced operational processing time
- improved visibility of spending and control
- heightened awareness for internal collaboration

3.4 Absence Management

Corporate Human Resources are developing strategies to improve the absence level for West Dunbartonshire Council which has been above the Scottish Councils average for several years. The average full time equivalent days lost per full time equivalent employee improved by 0.2 days from 2008/9 to 2009/10 providing an estimated non cashable efficiency of £83,760.

	2009/10	2008/09
Local Government Employees	13.26	13.61
Teachers	7.41	7.05
Council wide: average days lost per employee	12.28	12.48

Absence Reporting and Recording Pilot

West Dunbartonshire Council has consistently reported high levels of employee sickness absence. A pilot commenced in December 2009 in the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services departments. This pilot utilised the Workforce Management Systems (WMS) Absence Module to centralise the reporting of absence and special leave, and to promote the consistent application of the Maximising Attendance Policy. Early success has led to the extension of the pilot until end of April 2010. Further evaluation and modification of the WMS is required before roll out to all Departments within the Council. Managers are encouraged to intervene early where employees are absent due to sickness.

Occupational Health

Recognition of the health surveillance requirements has led to the provision of a new Occupational Health Suite. Comprehensive medical assessments are carried out which will result in more effective absence management.

Stress Management

A targeted approach to managing stress within the workplace will lead to a reduction in the reported sickness absence related to stress and will further improve employee/employer relations leading to high levels of productivity.

Dignity at Work

A Confidential Contact and Mediation Service is now available to support confidential contacts, mediators and investigators in an attempt to resolve issues at the lowest level.

3.5 Asset Management

Improvements and efficiency developments achieved during 2009/2010 in relation to the management of building assets are as follows:

Schools

The schools regeneration PPP project has delivered on the three new secondary schools and associated primary school provision. In addition, two new primary schools are currently under construction to be handed over in 2010. Consultation will continue on the schools regeneration programme.

Housing

Following the appointment of a stock transfer manager the Council's strategy for transfer is being progressed with a likely date of transfer of 2012.

Successful implementation of the standard delivery plan may enable disposal of housing stock identified as being in high risk stock categories following a positive ballot outcome from tenants.

West Dunbartonshire Council Members approved the 2010-11 Housing Capital programme which proposed investment in the housing stock amounting to £20m. The investment is primarily aimed at meeting obligations towards the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 for proposed retained stock with cognisance of landlord responsibilities and safety issues for proposed non-retained stock.

Office Accommodation

Development work on the current and future use of existing office accommodation is currently progressing but will be influenced by the outcome of the review of staffing structures within individual service departments.

Non-operational Properties

Further to Corporate Management Team approval of the review of the Council's non operational property in 2008, development work continues on a disposal programme and further investment will depend on available funding.

All Building Assets

In accordance with E.U. directive 2002/91/EC, resources are being established to progress the production of Energy Performance Certificates. The outcome and recommendations of these inspections will inform our ability to reduce energy usage and carbon emissions which, in turn, will provide a financial saving to the Council in future years.

Corporate Asset Management Strategy

The revised Asset Management Plan was approved by the Housing Environment and Economic Department Committee in September 2009. The aim of the plan is to strategically manage assets and to align them with the organisation's corporate goals and objectives.

3.6 Customer First

The Customer First group has delivered several successful projects to enhance the customer experience whilst using Council services.

The Council web site is continually enhanced to provide a self serve 24/7 information and payment service for customers. Additional information has been made available on the web site which reduces the number of customer contacts to the Council. Staff resources can be redirected to added value activities and cashable savings are achieved in printing and postage.

In addition to delivering a range of diverse services via our web site, we are continually developing new services for the customer contact centre. This facility has improved the quality of the services we provide to our customers by attempting to deal with queries at the first point of contact and taking payments for various services which releases specialist knowledge in the back office. The contact centre has taken on new services during the year which have increased the call volumes and lowered the cost per unit. It is expected that additional opportunities will be identified through the Customer First Programme during a planned period of transformation and restructuring of services.

New telephony technology has recently been installed and has already provided comprehensive management information on the Contact Centre's performance. This system incorporates a skills based routing system, increasing first time resolution and reducing avoidable contact.

Management information now available from the Contact Centre is being reviewed in order to improve the customer experience and efficiencies will be delivered by the continued improvement in customer service and increased satisfaction results.

Several new services have been made available via the Council's web site, most noticeably licensing applications. This new feature provides a facility for a wide range of Council licences to be applied for and paid for electronically. In addition there have been major improvements to pest control online services in that the service can be requested, paid for and the request is then transferred electronically to the back office system for action.

Printer rationalisation has saved approximately £29,800 in the first six weeks of the project. This includes the cost of new printers, faxes and consumables.

The Customer First Group meets monthly and includes representatives from all service areas. Business cases are prepared by the service department and implemented in conjunction with ICT. The customer response is then measured post implementation to ensure that expected outcomes are achieved.

3.7 Shared Services

Involvement in key national and regional shared service initiatives (eplanning, eprocurement and the Criminal Justice Partnership) is continuing.

Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership (CVCPP) Shared Services Review

The Clyde Valley Review offers opportunities to provide a joint working/shared service approach to both new and existing services for the eight Councils (or sub groups of these) and community planning partners to find different ways of delivering services. Opportunities exist for both cost savings and improved services.

The review has identified seven priorities in the first phase which are:

- Integrated Waste Management
- NHS Integration
- Back office services
- Joint Economic Strategy
- Social Transport and Fleet Management
- Property sharing and local management in hubs
- Common charging framework

It is proposed that West Dunbartonshire Council remains involved in all of these except the Common Charging Framework, but that it prioritises Waste Management, NHS Integration and Back Office Services. The CVCPP has particularly identified the need for robust information to ensure that any cost benefits of shared services are accurately assessed and initial set up costs are fully costed.

Diagnostic Pathway Project

During 2008, the National Shared Service (NSS) Diagnostic Pathway Project was carried out within WDC by a team of five seconded officers from all Council departments. The desired outcomes of the project were to identify opportunities to simplify, standardize and share a range of Council service delivery and support functions, with shared service arrangements being considered, both within the Council and with other partners. This work was completed in November 2008 and progress has been as follows:-

- Initial customer contact activity is continuing to move to the Contact Centre and the development of a Customer Engagement Strategy is underway. Plans to redevelop the website will improve information and online facilities available to customers.
- The new Workforce Management System is being implemented
- The roll out of WeBuy and Purchasing Cards has resulted in more efficient procurement activity.
- Opportunities to maximise income for the Council have been realised by the introduction of new charges and significant increases to existing charges.
- The work of the Strategic Leadership Group will be used to drive forward transformational change and improvement.

3.8 Other Efficiency Gains achieved during 2009/2010

Chief Executive and Corporate Services

The recommendations of a Kaizen review were implemented during the year and the Contact Centre was used to take debtor account payments. The saving in staff time was used to pursue large unpaid debts which reduced the total debt owing to the Council by £1.4m. Other efficiency savings generated included debt rescheduling, procurement and an increase in the overall Council Tax Collection Rate.

Educational Services

A small saving and an improved service have been achieved by designing teacher resource packs on CDROM. This provides a more flexible resource for teachers and reduces design and printing costs.

Housing, Environment and Economic Development

A critical review of administrative support resulted in a number of posts being deleted from the establishment saving £139,470 and energy savings measures have been put in place which will reduce consumption of gas and electricity by £15,850.

Social Work & Health Department

A review of services and negotiation with service providers resulted in a saving of £141,000 to the department with no reduction in service to clients.

4. SUMMARY OF OTHER EFFICIENCIES DELIVERED - 2009/2010

- 4.1 The attached summary (Appendix 1) shows efficiencies both by service and by efficient government themes. This uses the standard template developed by COSLA and shows cashable efficiencies of £2.2m and non cashable savings of £1m for the year to 31 March 2010.

5 VERIFICATION

- 5.1 A description of the impact on service delivery and performance of the efficiencies being claimed are contained in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 A schedule of efficiencies has been certified by the manager of each service and where possible verification has been provided to show that there has been no change to the level and quality of the service being delivered.
- 5.3 Regular customer surveys are also undertaken for some services and provide a quality check on the services being provided to customers.

6. KEY AREAS TO BE TARGETED FOR EFFICIENCIES - 2010/2011

- 6.1 In setting its budget for 2010/11, the Council included a number of savings targets within its financial planning which will provide savings of £2.6m which will be reinvested in front line services.

6.2 Competitiveness Review

A competitiveness review is being carried out in 21 services which will benchmark the cost and quality of current services with other service providers. Alternative options for service provision will be investigated and appraised if appropriate.

6.3 Social Work & Health Department

A local integrated partnership model will be developed for the strategic planning and delivery of local authority and community health services within a new combined Council/NHS structure.

6.4 Corporate Services Department

An option to borrow £4.4m has been taken up to allow investment in new technologies, staffing restructures and streamlining of services in order to provide savings targets to close the funding gap over the coming years.

6.5 Educational Services

An external review has been commissioned to identify efficiencies in excess of £500,000 from within the Education Department's budget.

6.6 Housing Environment and Economic Development

A Leisure Trust model is being developed and could deliver benefits in the region of £350,000 per annum by reducing the amount of non domestic rates payable as a charitable trust and VAT advantages.

A West Dunbartonshire Carbon Trust has been formed and a Carbon Management Plan containing various initiatives designed to reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy costs has been prepared. Two projects have been awarded funding and savings will be achieved in 2010/11

A review of community facilities identified a requirement to further explore the following proposed changes:

- Consultation on proposals for rationalisation of community facilities
- Review of letting policy across community facilities
- Potential of Community Management of some facilities
- Potential for reducing operating costs through greater staff flexibility
- Standardisation of caretakers/centre supervisor duties
- Centralisation of bookings and review of opening hours

6.7 Procurement

Output from the Procurement Best Practice Indicators and the Procurement Capability Assessment will be used to identify Procurement priorities for 2010/11.

There will be a restructuring of the Procurement service within the Council which will provide an opportunity for greater efficiencies to be identified and achieved.

Procurement toolkits will be produced to ensure a standard approach to Procurement across the Council.

The We Buy eProcurement system will be rolled out to all departments which will enhance system maturity and credibility and provide new opportunities for efficiencies.

6.8 Customer First

Website themed design is the main improvement planned for 2010/11 which is aimed at ensuring citizens can easily access the online services they require. This redesign also plans to encompass staff portal features. Development of online forms will continue as will integration with payment and back office systems.

Proposals to transfer some high volume transactions to the contact centre are being investigated releasing specialist staff to deal with more complex enquiries.

One Stop Shops to deliver citizen facing services from single locations are currently being evaluated and the potential benefits quantified.

6.9 Shared Services

WDC will take forward the opportunities identified during the Diagnostic Pathway Project although it is anticipated that any efficiency savings identified will not show significant benefits until 2010/11 and beyond.

6.10 Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership Shared Services Review

Following publication of the Clyde Valley Review Report in November 2009, development work is in progress across the seven areas referred to at paragraph 3.7 above. It is likely that many of the options will require 'spend to save' investment and the majority of efficiency savings are anticipated in subsequent years.

6.11 Asset Management

The Council, at its meeting of 29 October 2008, approved a Standard Delivery Plan to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 for its housing stock and selected its preferred option of transferring approximately 45% of its stock to a registered social landlord. A Stock Transfer Steering Group meets quarterly to implement and deliver this plan by 2012. In addition, the recommendations of the Asset Management Review will be implemented to align the asset base with the goals and objectives of the organisation.

6.12 Absence Management

The ongoing development of the absence module of the Workforce Management System will permit full integration of absence data to support the effective and timely management of sickness absence by line managers. Continued promotion of the Occupational Health service will provide an early intervention tool to reduce and effectively manage sickness absence.

6.13 Budget Considerations

In addition, the Council also outlined a number of efficiency commitments to be investigated during 2009/10 to allow for full consideration to be given to their inclusion within forthcoming budgets including:

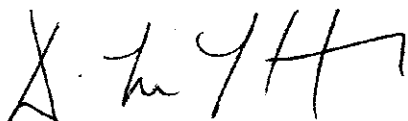
- Consolidation of work related functions within administrative and support areas continues to be considered.
- A Service Improvement Plan will be developed to review service delivery and deliver continuous improvement.
- A Best Value Improvement Plan has been prepared to encourage continuous improvement throughout the Council. One of the key elements is the implementation of the Public Services Improvement Framework (PSIF).

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Council has made significant progress in addressing the Efficient Government Agenda and has developed a sound governance framework to enhance our project and performance management.
- 7.2 Appendix 1 summarises that the Council was successful in achieving £2.2m of cashable savings during 2009/10. Although much of this was planned within the corporate budget process, these actions made a major contribution towards allowing the Council to absorb a number of budget pressures that arose during the year.
- 7.3 The Council substantially achieved all of the targets set for 2009/10 and returned a small in year surplus against budget of £1.380m.
- 7.4 West Dunbartonshire Council met or exceeded 28 local targets set for the 54 Statutory Performance Indicators.
- 7.5 While some performance and efficiency targets are included within medium term corporate financial plans it is intended to embed this process throughout the Council.
- 7.6 The development of the PSIF framework and continuous improvement is a key step in embedding a culture of continuous improvement and efficiency throughout the Council and progress will be monitored using the Covalent system.

8. APPROVAL

- 8.1 The Efficiency Statement will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.



David McMillan
Chief Executive



Ronald McColl
Council Leader

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL - EFFICIENCY GAINS 2009/10

Appendix 1

Efficiencies by Service

Department	Cashable	Non-Cashable	Impact on service delivery and performance / other information
Aspiren			
Corporate Services & Chief Exec Department	4,930	54,590	
Educational Services	-	383,010	
Housing, Environment and Economic Development	95,620	-	
Social Work & Health Department	-	-	
Total	100,550	437,600	
Other			
Corporate Services & Chief Exec Department	1,632,410	574,400	
Educational Services	25,720	-	
Housing, Environment and Economic Development	155,320	-	
Social Work & Health Department	241,000	-	
Total	2,054,450	574,400	
Total	1,637,340	628,990	
Educational Services	25,720	383,010	
Housing, Environment and Economic Development	250,940	-	
Social Work & Health Department	241,000	-	
TOTAL	£2,155,000	£1,012,000	

Theme:

PR: Procurement; WP: Workforce Planning; AM: Asset Management; SS: Shared Services; CF: Customer First; O: Other

summary

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL - EFFICIENCY GAINS 2009/10

Appendix 1

Efficiencies by Service

Department	Cashable	Non-Cashable	Impact on service delivery and performance / other information
Aspiren			
Procurement			
Workforce Planning			
Asset Management			
Shared Services			
Customer First			
Other	100,550	437,600	
Total	100,550	437,600	
Other			
Procurement	535,240	347,210	
Workforce Planning	221,630	118,470	
Asset Management	65,850	-	
Shared Services			
Customer First	-	81,310	
Other	1,231,730	27,410	
Total	2,054,450	574,400	
Total			
Procurement	535,240	347,210	
Workforce Planning	221,630	118,470	
Asset Management	65,850	-	
Shared Services	-	-	
Customer First	-	81,310	
Other	1,332,280	465,010	
TOTAL	£2,155,000	£1,012,000	

Theme:

PR: Procurement; WP: Workforce Planning; AM: Asset Management; SS: Shared Services; CF: Customer First; O: Other

Themes

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL - EFFICIENCY GAINS 2009/10

Efficiencies by Service: Corporate Services & Chief Executives Department

Theme	Description of Efficiency Measure	R/NR	Cashable	Non-Cashable	Impact on service delivery and performance / other information
	Efficiencies identified from Aspiren Measures				
O	CS1: Cost of Council Tax collection per property	NR	4,930	54,590	
	Total		4,930	54,590	
	Other efficiencies				
O	Overall council tax collection rate improvement	NR	347,160		
O	Council Tax Payment Method	R	20,870		
O	Debt rescheduling	NR	830,500		Increase in Direct Debit/decrease in Post Office payments
PR	Procurement	R	336,990	324,000	Cashable savings and cost avoidance from fewer tenders
PR	Procurement	NR	42,950		Non recurring cashable savings from procurement activities
O	Printer Rationalisation	R	29,800		Estimated cashable saving - fewer purchases and consumables
PR	Electronic Ordering (Pecos)	R		23,210	Estimated Process saving from electronic ordering
WP	Electronic Statement Billing	R		1,670	Estimated process saving from automatic input of transactions
PR	Sheriff Officers Commission	R	14,300		New contract in operation and more efficient working practices
WP	Online Recruitment	R	9,840	33,040	Fewer recruitment packs sent out by post
CF	Contact Center improved performance	R		81,310	Unit cost per contact has improved.
O	Creditors improved performance	NR		6,700	Unit cost per invoice has improved
WP	Absence Management Improvement	NR		83,760	
O	Kaizen Review	R		20,710	Streamlining service provision
	Total		1,632,410	574,400	
	TOTAL		£1,637,340	£628,990	

Theme:

PR: Procurement; WP: Workforce Planning; AM: Asset Management; SS: Shared Services; CF: Customer First; O: Other

CORP

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL - EFFICIENCY GAINS 2009/10

Efficiencies by Service: Educational Services

Theme	Description of Efficiency Measure	R/NR	Cashable	Non-Cashable	Impact on service delivery and performance / other information
	Efficiencies identified from Aspiren Measures				
O	CL1: Unit cost per visit to museums, libraries and sports and leisure facilities	NR		383,010	
	Total		-	383,010	
	Other efficiencies				
O	Media on CD Rom - saving on printing	R	3,400		Service has been improved.
WP	Welfare Officer post restructured	R	22,320		Service has been maintained.
	Total		25,720	-	
	TOTAL		£25,720	£383,010	

Theme:

PR: Procurement; WP: Workforce Planning; AM: Asset Management; SS: Shared Services; CF: Customer First; O: Other

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL - EFFICIENCY GAINS 2009/10

Efficiencies by Service: Housing, Environment and Economic Development

Theme	Description of Efficiency Measure	R/NR	Cashable	Non-Cashable	Impact on service delivery and performance / other information
	Efficiencies identified from Aspiren Measures				
O	EC1: Gross cost of municipal waste collection per premise	NR	95,620		
	Total		95,620	-	
	Other efficiencies				
AM	Energy Management Efficiencies	R	15,850		
WP	Rationalise Administrative Support	R	139,470		
	Total		155,320	-	
	TOTAL		£250,940	£0	

PR: Procurement; WP: Workforce Planning; AM: Asset Management; SS: Shared Services; CF: Customer First; O: Other

