



**WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2008/2009



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WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2008/2009

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. The Efficient Government initiative is a central part of a programme of investment, reform and modernisation which focuses on getting the right people with the right skills and in the right numbers, working in the right way.
- 1.2** 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. Local Authorities have a continuing role to demonstrate the efficiency gains delivered each year which are invested back into delivering high quality responsive public services.
- 1.3** An Efficient Government Strategy¹ was agreed by Council in August 2005. This was produced in conjunction with consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC).
- 1.4** The Audit of Best Value in conjunction with work undertaken by SOLACE consultants on Efficient Government resulted in the setting-up of five project boards covering five workstreams.
- Organisational Development
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Managing Resources
 - Risk & Performance Management
 - Efficient Government

The groups are led by an Executive Director, supported by a nominated lead officer(s) and have trade union representation. They report to the Improvement & Efficiency Executive (I&EE) who oversee the progress of the five Groups and report to Council. Membership of the Executive was agreed to total 8 Elected Members – comprised of 4 Labour, 2 Other Opposition and 2 SNP councillors. The Executive would be supported by the Chief Executive, the other members of the CMT and led by the Leader of the Council.

- 1.5** The Efficient Government Group meets approximately every six weeks and receives progress reports from the five main workstreams of Efficient Government as defined in the strategy (Procurement, Absence Management, Asset Management, Customer First and developing Shared Services) as well as the service departments in order to identify efficiencies and track progress. The group have already produced annual efficiency statements for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

¹ [Report to Council August 2005 on Efficient Government Strategy](#) and [Appendix](#)

1.6 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 2008/09.

2.2 The Council was faced with a number of significant budget pressures when setting the budget for 2008/09. As a result, we required to apply £4,564,590 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 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.

2.8 This is the Council's third efficiency statement which has produced efficiencies of £2.5m of cashable savings for the financial year 2008/2009.

2.9 West Dunbartonshire Council is the lead authority for the Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board. Work is underway to gather information from the Valuation Joint Board for inclusion in future efficiency statements.

3. KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY - 2008/2009

3.1 This section describes progress made in the main projects during the year 2008/2009. It concentrates on the work programmes for the five efficient government workstreams and also includes efficiencies made on projects outside of these 5 themes.

3.2 Where possible we have continued to use the appropriate National Efficiency Measures (NEM)² developed in late 2006 by the consultants Aspiren working for the Improvement Service and CoSLA. We have calculated the 2008/09 efficiency figures by using the respective formulas for 2007/08 and 2008/09 to allow a calculation of the movement in the measure from April 2008 to March 2009.

3.3 Procurement

The Corporate Procurement Team continues to work towards improving procurement processes and activities across the Council.

Over the last year, the national procurement landscape has changed quite considerably with the establishment of Scotland Excel and Procurement Scotland, the National Centre of Procurement Expertise. As these organisations have evolved, the number of new opportunities for collaborative contracting has increased considerably.

The Procurement Team in West Dunbartonshire Council has been actively involved in these developing opportunities, taking part in User Intelligence Groups, assisting with the formation of procurement strategy, pulling together information to ensure our requirements are accurately communicated and participating in the contract award process.

The team is currently overseeing a total of 16 national contracts and 28 sectoral contracts. Some of these require a high level of procurement participation in order to ensure maximum benefit for the Council. For example, the new Scotland Excel Personal Protective Equipment framework contains over 500 different items and impacts on all Council departments. We are actively working with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure maximum uptake and benefit.

Examples of some of the benefits that have accrued through these collaborative contracts are as follows:

IT Hardware National e auction	-	estimated annual saving of £30,426
National office supplies contract	-	estimated annual saving of £74,659

The team has also supported internal stakeholders on a number of local contracts which have delivered benefits for the Council e.g. a temporary agency staff contract delivered estimated annual savings in excess of £50,000. In addition, we have collaborated with East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde on two trade supplies contracts.

² [National Efficiency Measures – link to Improvement Service Website](#)

Improving the quality of information for internal and external stakeholders has been a high priority and both the web portal and intranet procurement sites have been upgraded to provide better information for suppliers and staff. In addition, the Council has also started to publish contract notices on the national Public Contracts portal and work is underway on a local procurement policy for SMEs.

The Purchasing Card programme is currently being extended throughout the Council following a successful first phase in the Roads department. The next phase will see cards being rolled out to all four Executive Directorates by a dedicated officer, supporting the modernisation agenda by streamlining the purchase to pay cycle.

Additional improvements in the purchase to pay process have been achieved by the movement to electronic statement billing for electricity, gas, water and telecoms.

Finally, the Council has uploaded data on local procurement activity to the Scottish Procurement Information Hub to allow the development of Best Practice Indicators. This will enable us to track our performance year on year and demonstrate continuous improvement.

The implementation of the We buy e Procurement system is well underway and is on track to provide efficiency savings in the following areas:

- Less manually intensive processes providing time releasing savings to be achieved
- Improved management information providing control of spend
- Consolidation of supplier base increasing the potential for economies of scale

The system currently has 363 users who have raised 1601 purchase orders to the value of £1,078,590.

3.4 Absence Management

Corporate Human Resources are developing strategies to improve the absence level for West Dunbartonshire Council which has been above the average for Scottish Councils for several years.

The reporting methodology for the Statutory Performance Indicator on Sickness Absence changed in April 2008 to reporting on the average number of days lost per employee rather than the percentage of work days lost. The absence figures for 2007/2008 were retrospectively calculated according to the new criteria and the average number of days lost per full time equivalent employee was 14.31 days for local government employees and 7.57 days for teachers. In 2008/09 this figure was recorded as 13.61 days lost for local government employees and 7.05 days lost for teachers and a marginal improvement can be seen in the SPI.

Minor illness was the main reasons for absence in 2008/2009. This category covers ailments such as coughs and sore throats, colds and flu, headaches and migraines. Stress and musculo-skeletal injuries were the second and third main reasons for absence. The absence reasons follow the trends for both public and private sectors.

A number of measures were introduced in 2008/09 to improve attendance levels:

- The Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy was introduced in February 2009 and encourages employees suffering from the effects of alcohol and substance misuse to seek help and to acknowledge that this impacts on their health and conversely their performance and attendance at work.
- An external consultant was engaged to deliver absence management training to a number of managers. During the training 'Guiding Principles' were agreed by delegates and these will feed in to the review of the Maximising Attendance Policy.
- The Occupational Health and Physiotherapy service was contracted to a new provider, Serco, on 1 October 2008. Staffing levels increased and a dedicated Health Surveillance Nurse introduced for one day a week. Several awareness raising sessions for Managers have been held since the start of the contract. Clear guidance on the use of Occupational Health, detailing changes to a number of procedures was issued to managers with the aim of increasing attendance and promoting health by emphasising the importance of early intervention and proactive management.
- More robust practices were introduced in terms of pre-employment screening as these are now screened by Occupational Health.
- The Stress Steering Group is overseeing the work of 11 Working Groups covering 11 discrete workstreams. The project will span 3 years and good progress is already being made.
- A new and comprehensive Dignity at Work Policy was implemented in October 2008. This policy outlines a framework for employees who feel discriminated against, harassed, victimized or bullied to raise this as a complaint and have it dealt with quickly and positively. A number of roles (Confidential Contacts, Mediators and Investigators) were implemented to support the policy.

The implementation of a Workforce Management System will allow us to reduce the number of systems currently in use throughout the council such as databases, spreadsheets and manual records. Through the creation of a single source of data we will be able to use employee information more effectively.

The Workforce Management System will act as catalyst to implement other efficiencies, such as streamlining internal processes for absence data collection and recording.

Robust and reliable Management Information will be available to managers and HR staff for all employees of the council. Access to this information will support strategic decisions relating to workforce planning and absence management.

The Workforce Management System will generate a time releasing efficiency by eliminating data input of large volumes of data.

Utilisation of web based technology will also go towards the reduction in the cost of paper, photocopying and fax distribution of information, especially timesheets as this data will be able to be viewed directly from the system. The system is capable of storing copies of correspondence which will lead to a reduction in data storage and archive costs.

The ability to achieve closer integration with other business processes, due to the single source of reliable data will drive efficiencies further.

3.5 Asset Management

Improvements and efficiency developments achieved during 2008/2009 in relation to the management of building assets are as follows:

Schools

The Schools Regeneration PPP project is progressing well with construction at an advanced stage at various locations on three new secondary schools and one primary school. In addition the detailed design of two new primary schools funded by traditional methods has been completed and it is anticipated that construction will commence in summer 2009. Consultations continued during the year in respect of the Schools Regeneration Phase 2 which will consider the upgrade, adaptation and/or renewal of the remainder of the schools estate.

Housing

The housing asset management plan was completed in April 2008 and was used to inform the Council's Standard Delivery Plan (SDP). Following public consultation, the SDP was approved by Council in autumn 2008 and subsequently submitted to the Scottish Government for consideration. Notification of their approval of the SDP was received from the Scottish Government in spring 2009. Successful implementation of the SDP may enable disposal of housing stock identified as being in a high risk category following a positive ballot outcome from tenants.

In February 2009, the Council approved the recommended 2009/2010 Housing Capital Programme which proposed investment in the housing stock amounting to £17,897,000. This investment is primarily aimed at meeting obligations towards the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 for proposed retained stock.

Office Accommodation

A cross departmental survey of existing occupancy and use of the main Council Offices in Dumbarton is underway to establish space requirements and to inform a review of accommodation and possible re-provision. Other tasks included in the review process include:

- Gathering all available data on properties leased from the private sector
- Gathering all available data on current office accommodation
- Assessing future demand from "other users within schools"
- Expanding the asset database to include occupancy levels, suitability, energy use, maintenance costs etc

Non-operational Properties

The recommendations contained in the consultant's review of the Council's non-operational properties were agreed by the Corporate Management Team in autumn 2008.

In accordance with the recommendations a disposal and investment programme is being developed and all opportunities to enhance the portfolio value are being progressed. These include:

- Planned preventative maintenance improvements
- Dilapidation claims
- Rent reviews
- New lettings

All Building Assets

The objective of Directive 2002/91/EC of the European Parliament is to promote improvement of the energy performance of buildings. The Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government was tasked through the Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD) to introduce a scheme for certifying buildings with an energy rating. This measure will enable Council properties to be benchmarked as part of the Council carbon reduction plans.

Corporate Asset Management Strategy

A draft asset management plan will be considered by the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in September 2009. The plan includes a section on strategic objectives which define the mission statement for asset management as:

To strategically manage the assets of West Dunbartonshire Council to align the asset base with the organisation's corporate goals and objectives and ensure that the asset base is optimally structured in the best corporate interest of the Council.

To support the mission statement the plan identified the following strategic aims:

- To collate baseline data for all assets
- To review the existing asset base against current and future requirements
- To conduct an options analysis to reconcile the asset base and ensure future needs are met cost effectively
- To prepare a costed plan to deliver the asset requirements
- To establish a performance management framework to monitor the implementation of asset management plans.

Each Council department holds a portfolio of operational property assets with the process for making property related decisions primarily based on service delivery factors. At a strategic level corporate working groups are in place to provide an overview of all property assets to ensure their use is maximised and services are provided efficiently from the most appropriate location.

3.6 Customer First

The Customer First group has been established during 2008/9 and has delivered several successful projects to enhance the customer experience whilst using Council Services.

The Council web site has been enhanced to provide a self serve 24/7 service for various different services. Additional information has been made available to customers on the web site which enables information or on line forms to be accessed immediately. This improves the use of staff resources and can save printing and postage costs.

In addition to delivering a range of diverse services via our web site we have developed the customer contact centre that has improved the services we provide to our customers and has provided a 24/7 payment facility for various services. The contact centre takes calls relating to Trading Standards, Members Services, Council Tax, Rents, Benefits, Allocations, Enforcement, Voids, Education, Pest Control and Housing Repairs. Further services to be developed are Licensing, Waste Services, Election Services and Corporate Complaints. It is expected that additional opportunities will be identified through the Customer First Programme and Shared Services Diagnostics outcomes.

NEC Cards have been developed to provide a range of services with one card. Services currently available include Young Scot, Cashless Catering, Leisure Services and the library service. The validation centres are being increased within the council and the options for electronic registration which will allow the citizen to register on-line and receive a number of services both nationally and locally.

The Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG) is available for use by citizens accessing the Council's website 24/7 and also provides access to other service information such as planning information, councillor's details and refuse collection. Future developments include access through to external websites. Local information is forwarded to the VJB Loch Lomond Park Authority and the Improvement Service.

The local Citizens Account System (CAS) is currently under development and in the near future we will implement the data adaptors to send and receive data to the National Citizens Account. The local CAS has been populated with data from the Council Tax, CRM and senior citizens concessionary travel information from SPT. The National CAS is populated by information from the General Register of Scotland and once live we will receive updates to our local CAS on a real time basis of all citizen information e.g. Death notices and births. In the coming year we will investigate how this information will be disseminated to the back office systems.

The council has developed a number of on-line forms which allows the customer to either download the form or complete on line and transfer to the back office for action. In the coming year the implementation of an on-line form will allow the customer to book a service on-line and pay for the service immediately. This service will include pest control, special uplifts and requesting a repair. This will allow the citizens to access these services 24/7 and streamline the process which should improve the level of service. This will also allow the council to meet all the ESD targets for each service as it is introduced.

3.7 Shared Services

WDC Shared Service Strategy

WDC has developed a Shared Service strategy which was approved by the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee in October 2008. This strategy is structured under the following headings:

- The Council's commitment to investigating opportunities
- Definition of 'shared services'
- The criteria which we will use to take a shared service proposal through the investigative stage and to enter into any agreement
- Decision making
- Commitments to consultation with stakeholders
- Commitments to sustainability, equalities and health
- Arrangements for monitoring outcomes
- Partnership Agreements

The Strategy was launched with Senior Managers in December 2008, and implementation has been a focus of Departmental Senior Management Team meetings. The implementation of the strategy will be reviewed at the end of the first year of operation.

Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership Shared Services Review

In April 2008, the Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership Shared Services Review commenced. This is an independent review, headed up by Sir John Arbuthnott with Officer participation from all eight of the Clyde Valley Councils, these being:

- East Dunbartonshire
- East Renfrewshire
- Glasgow City
- Inverclyde
- North Lanarkshire
- Renfrewshire
- South Lanarkshire
- West Dunbartonshire

The review is aimed at identifying ways for all eight Councils (or smaller groupings of Councils), to work together / share service provision so as to achieve efficiencies. It is anticipated that a report on the most viable options for further development will be submitted to the Leaders of the eight Clyde Valley local authorities in October 2009.

Shared Service Activity in West Dunbartonshire

Much of the shared service agenda is dictated by developments at a national level. The National Shared Services Board, led by the Improvement Service, undertook national co-ordination of this work in 2006. These arrangements have continued to evolve, but the majority of activity has been taking place around ICT, Procurement and Workforce Planning, and in the development of Pathfinder projects. West Dunbartonshire Council has been involved in a number of the initiatives co-ordinated by the National Board. These include:

- Scotland Excel – Establishment of a Centre for Procurement Excellence
- e-planning – Integrated e-planning solution for Scotland, streamlining the applications, casework management, appeals and consultation processes (Report³ to Planning Committee April 2008)

Two further examples of shared service activity which involve many Scottish local authorities are:

- SEEMIS (Education Management System)
- A Recruitment Portal (myjobscotland) has recently been introduced.

At a Regional level, West Dunbartonshire is involved in a number of initiatives such as:

- Clyde Valley Learning & Development Consortium
- Criminal Justice Partnership

Over 50 shared service arrangements have now been put in place at a local level. Many of these are small scale, but provide foundations for further development. Examples of local arrangements include:

- West of Scotland Social Work Standby Service
- Learning Disability Services, Addiction Services, Mental Health Services, Community Older People's Services with the Community Health Partnership
- Young families support services
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Educational Services
- Joint funded Health Improvement Officer with CHP
- Joint funded Biodiversity Officer with East Dunbartonshire Council & Scottish Natural Heritage
- Contracts for roads, lighting and bus shelter maintenance
- Leisure Services GP referral scheme

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, standardise 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, the outcome being the preparation of eleven outline business cases as listed below.

- Customer Engagement - Contact Centre
- Customer Engagement - Council Website
- Customer Engagement - Assess & Decide
- Property - Asset Disposal & Rationalisation
- Mobile Working / Flexible Working / Hot Desking / Home Working
- HR / Workforce Planning
- Procurement
- Revenue Income Generation
- Add value to the Council by further developing administrative staff
- IT Estate Rationalisation
- Managing business change

A decision has been made with regard to which of these business cases should be collectively taken forward and the order in which they should be done within a business transformation programme. However, it should be acknowledged that some of the activity is already being progressed i.e.

- Development of the Contact Centre is continuing
- The new Workforce Management System is under development
- A Corporate Procurement unit has been in existence since 2006 and is aimed at driving forward efficient purchasing behaviour throughout the Council with significant efficiencies already achieved
- Opportunities to maximise income for the Council are being considered
- The Council's IT Estate is under review

These business cases will be prioritised as it is anticipated that this will play a significant part in future efficiency plans and achievements for the Council.

3.8 Other Efficiency Gains achieved during 2008/2009

3.8.1 Chief Executive and Corporate Services

- The overall Council Tax collection rate improved from 94.24% to 94.73% resulting in a cashable gain of £192,300.
- Debt re-scheduling of public works loans has resulted in a cashable gain of £1,400,000 of which £804,000 can be claimed for the financial year to 31 March 2009.
- There have been procurement savings of £337,220 mainly due to renegotiation of various contracts.
- The unit cost of visits to museums, libraries and sports/leisure facilities has shown a favourable variance mainly due to an increase in usage (NEM CL1).

- The gross cost of environmental health services per 1,000 population (NEM PP2) has also improved with a cash efficiency of £6,050.
- Work is continuing to increase the number of on line services that are available to customers and allow payment to be made before the service is carried out.
- The Revenues team has won an award for achieving the biggest percentage improvement in direct debit uptake for Scottish local authorities and improved in house debt collection has resulted in lower charges from Sheriff Officers.

3.8.2 Educational Services

- Reorganisation of the education for children in hospital service has generated an efficiency saving of £10,000.
- Reorganisation of the Childcare Supported Development service has achieved an efficiency saving of £30,310.

3.8.3 Housing, Environment and Economic Development

- Various energy savings measures have been put in place which will reduce consumption of gas and electricity. A specific investment of £1.011m in 2007/2008 has produced revenue savings of £176,250 during 2008/2009.
- 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 are due to commence in 2009/10.

3.8.4 Social Work & Health Department

The main areas of efficiency savings in 2008/2009 were as follows:

- Re provision of sleepover arrangements for clients with learning disabilities
- A residential home for children was closed and a saving achieved which was offset by reinvestment in other children's services to maintain service levels. A saving of £160,000 was achieved.
- The home care service was reviewed to increase the number of interventions but reduce unproductive time and generated efficiencies of £298,000
- Better utilisation of recycled special needs equipment provided an efficiency of £65,000
- Supporting people services had contract values renegotiated saving £71,330

4. SUMMARY OF OTHER EFFICIENCIES DELIVERED - 2008/2009

- 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 £2.5m and non cashable savings of £653,000 for the year to 31 March 2009.

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 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 - 2009/2010

- 6.1** In setting its budget for 2009/10, the Council included a number of efficiency targets within its financial planning which will provide savings of £1.5m which will be reinvested in front line services.

6.1.1 Social Work & Health Department

- Redesign support for community representatives of vulnerable groups with an estimated saving of £100,000.
- A review of the Homecare Service with an estimated saving of £50,000
- A further review of Supporting People services will be carried out with an estimated saving of around £800,000.

6.1.2 Educational Services

- Reconfigure the staffing structure of the mobile crèche service with an estimated saving of £98,000.
- Three PPP new build projects will be fully operational by March 2010 and revenue savings in the region of £1.645m are anticipated and will be used to finance the project.

6.1.3 Housing Environment and Economic Development

- A budget savings option to redefine grass cutting and parks service to achieve an estimated saving of £113,000 has been approved.
- A budget savings option to reconfigure the Community Wardens service with an estimated saving of £260,000 has been approved.
- The Council has recently approved a Carbon Management Plan which details a number of efficiency projects which have the potential to reduce consumption thereby reducing energy costs and carbon emissions.
- The operation and management of community education centres and sports development will transfer from the Education Directorate to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Directorate which already operates halls and events. A review of the letting policy of halls is planned for 2009/10 to ensure maximum usage and efficiency of the available facilities.

6.1.4 Procurement

- The Scottish government will provide baseline information from which efficiencies generated by e procurement can be measured.
- Rolling out of e Procurement system will produce efficiency savings by controlling purchasing spend.

6.1.5 Customer First

- Improving the services to customers under the Customer First program will make our services easier and faster for our customers to access and in many cases providing a facility for payment in advance of the service which is efficient and reduces the time spent chasing up unpaid accounts. It is intended that the Contact Centre be the first point of contact for a range of services and developed to deal with the majority of our customer's enquiry needs.

6.1.6 Shared Services

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.

6.1.7 Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership Shared Services Review

The Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership Shared Service Review is aimed at identifying ways for all eight Councils (or smaller groupings of Councils), to work together/share service provision so as to achieve efficiencies.

It is anticipated that a report on the most viable options for further development will be submitted to the Leaders of the eight Clyde Valley local authorities in October 2009. Following initial discussion by Leaders and Chief Executives during November 2009 the options will be considered at the local level, including consultation with staff and Trade Unions as appropriate.

Although development work will begin during 2009/10, it is likely that many of the options will require 'spend to save' investment. The majority of efficiencies and savings will not show an impact until subsequent years.

6.1.8 Asset Management

- The new PPP schools will be operational for the new school term 2009-2010 and work will continue to progress the Schools Regeneration Phase 2 programme.
- Successful implementation of the Standard Delivery Plan may enable disposal of housing stock identified as being in a high risk category following a positive ballot outcome from tenants.
- The Housing Capital Programme will be progressed to meet obligations relating to meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 for proposed retained stock.

6.1.9 Absence Management

A new Human Resources Management system is being implemented which will integrate all sources of employee information including the payroll system and will assist with absence management. There will be a self serve function to view or amend selected data on the system.

Absence Management targets have been set for 2009/10 as follows:

- Days lost targets have been set at 13 days for local government employees and 6.5 days for teachers. However, the implementation of the HR System will enable much more accurate recording and analysis of absence statistics and it is therefore possible that the current recording will prove to be slightly under reported and in consequence the full time equivalent analysis may initially show an increase.
- The Maximising Attendance Policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure that it is more robust and easier for managers to implement.
- The Occupational Health Service will continue to be enhanced as well as the re-provisioning of accommodation to fully utilise the capabilities of the service. Briefing sessions will be delivered to managers to enable them to fully engage with the Occupational Health Service. Health promotion activities will be undertaken by Occupational Health and tie in with the work planned by the Healthy Working Lives Working Group.
- Pre-employment health screening will be undertaken online to streamline the current processes.
- A more structured approach to mediation and counselling to enable problems to be tackled and avoid absences attributed to work related stress.
- The development of conflict management training for managers to enable them to effectively deal with conflict.
- Continue training for managers to enhance their knowledge and skill particularly in managing short term absences as well as better use of rehabilitation techniques for long term absence returnees.
- Continue the development of alternative therapies to support those with health conditions, including piloting a yoga class and evaluating the benefits of the class.
- The Stress Steering Group will continue with year 2 of the 3 year action plan.

6.1.10 Budget Considerations

In addition, the Council also outlined a number of efficiency commitments to be investigated during 2008/09 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. General workforce planning actions may generate efficiencies in the region of £200,000 for 2009/2010 in addition to an expected saving of £400,000 from actions taken in a previous review.
- 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). Five services have successfully participated in the national PSIF pilot (Sports Development, Cultural Services, Leisure Services, Welfare Rights and Forward Planning) and results are being analysed and improvement plans developed. A project plan for the phased roll out of PSIF across the Council is being prepared.
- A Kaizen Blitz exercise was carried out on the Sold Property section and actions are being put into place to streamline processes and achieve efficiency savings. Further Kaizen exercises are planned for 2009/2010.

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. A number of significant projects have been identified for future implementation which will address two areas of the single outcome agreement. Projects to enhance self serve and web based services will enhance the reputation and status of the Council (13-1) and there are various projects to re-provide services and improve efficiency (15-3).
- 7.2** Appendix 1 summarises that the Council was successful in achieving £2.5m of cashable savings during 2008/9. 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 2008/9 and returned a small in year surplus against budget of £0.844m.
- 7.4** West Dunbartonshire is continuing to exceed the targets of 36 Statutory Performance Indicators (36 out of 51), placing the Council significantly above the national average.
- 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. Progress will be monitored using the Covalent system.
- 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.

8. APPROVAL

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

Joyce White
Executive Director of Corporate Services

Iain Robertson
Council Leader