SUBMISSION FROM THE STRATEGIC FORUM PARTNERS EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

Introduction

In the 2011 Comprehensive Spending Review, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance set out efficiency savings targets of £20m, £25m and £40m, to be found from across the Scottish public sector. In addition to this, and as a separate but related piece of work, the Strategic Forum partners were asked by their respective Cabinet Secretaries to identify efficiencies from across their five organisations which would contribute towards the overall target. This will be done by establishing joint projects that will also assist other public sector organisations to make their own savings.

Specific projects have yet to be identified by the Strategic Forum, but it is anticipated that the greatest opportunity to achieve these efficiencies across the wider public sector will be found through better utilisation of premises, more effective and efficient use of marketing budgets and savings from wider IT shared services. The CEOs of the Strategic Forum partners have established an efficiency programme which is outlined in this paper.

Background

The Strategic Forum Partners Efficiency Programme was established by the CEOs of the five organisations that constitute the Scottish Government’s Strategic Forum:

- Highland and Islands Enterprise;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Scottish Enterprise;
- Scottish Funding Council;
- VisitScotland.

The objective of this programme is to achieve significant efficiency gains and increased economic impact through closer alignment and collaborative working practices. To realise these goals, the steering group commissioned seven projects to be established. These projects are sponsored and led by one of the five organisations with the project team being made up of representatives from each of the five organisations.

The project is being taken forward initially by the Strategic Forum partners with the recognition that in time it should be extended to include Government and other public agencies in order to achieve the efficiency targets presented in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The table below lists the projects and the sponsor/lead organisation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Lead/Sponsor Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>VisitScotland (VS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT Services</td>
<td>Skills Development Scotland (SDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadband and Digital</td>
<td>Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)</td>
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The five CEOs constitute the programme’s steering group. To support the steering group, manage the activity of the programme and co-ordinate the deliverables of the project teams, VisitScotland is providing a Programme Management Office service.

**Progress to Date**

Each of the project teams has established a Project Initiation Document that defines the scope and objectives of each project. These projects are currently focussed on the collection of quantitative and contextual data to support a review of the current activities, costs and staffing levels across the organisations within their area of review.

This exercise will be comprehensive to ensure that the findings and opportunities identified from this phase of the programme form the foundation of delivery projects to realise efficiency savings.

The programme is currently in the analysis phase and following this, in early 2012, the programme will be in a position to identify the cost savings and operational efficiencies that will be achieved from each of the projects.

To conclude, it is important to stress that the benefits of this programme will not be restricted to the five members of the Strategic Forum. It has been agreed that there will be a communication plan to share this initiative with other public sector agencies and they will be invited to join appropriate projects.

2 November 2011