DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF DELIVERING SERVICES

LOCAL AUTHORITY SAVINGS PLANS

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

1. Council Submission

The submission by the Council addresses the questions posed by the Local Government and Regeneration Committee. It references that:

1) Options for savings have been developed through widespread engagement with local communities and the public with findings reported to Council

2) Through the Council’s Stakeholder Engagement Programme, there is widespread engagement with a range of local stakeholders, including local community and voluntary sector organisations, employees and young people and the wider public, over budgetary priorities and options for savings

3) The findings from the Stakeholder Engagement Programme are reported to Elected Members to inform the Corporate Budgetary Strategy

4) As agreed by Council, external support was provided to enable facilitation of the Stakeholder Engagement Programme

2. Local Context

The Council has a sound tradition of engaging widely with local communities over budgetary priorities. Since 2010, when it became evident that substantial savings would be required due to the continuous resource constraints placed on local government and the wider public sector, engagement has been consolidated through the Stakeholder Engagement Programme.

The Programme was underpinned by the Council’s commitment to reducing inequalities between our most and least deprived communities and protecting the less advantaged and vulnerable from the budget reductions being implemented across the public sector. It had the core aim of undertaking widespread engagement with local people and communities to identify and consider a range of savings options and prioritise areas for future public service delivery.

During 2009-10, the Council engaged widely over the achievement of £8 million savings for the 2010-11 budget. However, with savings of £10 million required for 2011-12 and similar levels for future years, Council agreed the development of a more strategic and inclusive programme of engagement in order to inform the development of strategic priorities set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and the medium term budgetary strategy.
The development of the Programme supported the work which was already being implemented to help achieve the required level of savings, in particular:

- A comprehensive review of the organisation at every level to strengthen our customer focus and enhance the delivery of effective services
- Implementing improvements to buying practices to drive down costs
- Developing new service delivery models for leisure and cultural services
- Rationalising the Council’s property portfolio
- Cutting back on energy use and making sure we reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint
- Exploring options for the sharing of services with other Councils and community planning partners

3. Strategic Planning and Resource Framework

Our Strategic Planning and Resource Framework sets out how the Council is implementing an integrated framework which enables resources to be geared to support outcome delivery. (see Diagram One below)

The Transformation Programme is the major organisational and cultural change programme. As well as supporting outcome delivery, the Programme is aimed at achieving efficiencies through developing new ways of working and more effective ways of working across services and across organisational boundaries. The revised Organisational Planning arrangements approved by Council in February 2013, based around six strategic remits will strengthen the impetus on integrated approaches to
delivery as well as maximising the resources deployed to early intervention and prevention.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Programme

a) How it Works

The methodology for the Stakeholder Programme was based on the principle that the level of engagement had to be as inclusive as possible with participants provided with a wide range of information and support in order to make their contributions as effective as possible. (see Table One below) Council recognised that as well as undertaking comprehensive engagement with local people there was also a need to engage with key internal stakeholders, in particular with employees and young people.

The 2010 Programme had the following specific objectives

1) To identify the key principles which should underpin the corporate budgetary strategy
2) To consider options for savings and the potential impact on service users
3) To identify potential alternative delivery models
4) To identify any other areas for income generation or other budgetary options the Council should be considering

In accordance with these objectives, Council wide Stakeholder Working Groups comprising over two hundred representatives from community and voluntary sector organisations and local Elected Members were established. These Working Groups met during August and September to consider savings options proposed by services covering the following areas:

- Education
- Caring for Children and Families
- Caring for Adults and Older People
- Waste and Recycling
- Infrastructure
- Community Services
- Customer Services

The support for community representatives was comprehensive through involvement in Scoping Workshops and Briefing Sessions where each representative was provided with a range of information relevant to the service areas under discussion. All Working Groups were independently facilitated whilst senior officers were present to provide detailed information about the services.

The Council also recognised the need to engage with those closer to home and a series of independently facilitated Employee Engagement Workshops took place during October which enabled every service team in the Council to contribute. The Workshops were supported by an on-line survey accessible through the Council Intranet with hard copies available at the main Council locations and depots.
Whilst some young people participated in the Stakeholder Working groups held during August and September, Council acknowledged the need to undertake a more comprehensive review of their priorities. During October, independently facilitated Focus Groups were held with S4 – S6 pupils in the eight secondary schools. This activity was supported by a Young People’s Survey which was sent to pupils via GLOW and made available on school websites.

Table One – Stakeholder Engagement Programme - Methodology

- Detailed Design of Consultation Process
- Invitation to Participants
- Briefing Sessions
- Working Group Events
- Review of Workshop Findings
- Quantitative Household Survey to Review Budget Issues and Emerging Options
- Analysis of Responses
- Reporting and Feedback

Participants were written to and asked to sign up to groups that were of interest to them.

These provided background to the budget challenge and also details on the consultation process itself.

There were a total of nine workshops covering the seven thematic areas identified above.

Issued to a random sample of 10,000 East Dunbartonshire householders and made available at public buildings and online.
b) Core Findings – Reporting

The findings from the Working Groups were tested through a large scale survey questionnaire in October which was distributed to ten thousand households covering all communities in East Dunbartonshire. The survey was also available for accessing through the Council website with hard copies obtainable from leisure centres and the four main libraries.

The findings reflected the need for the Council to take a long-term view in terms of future service provision to ensure effective outcome delivery and a sustainable East Dunbartonshire. Wherever possible, protection should be provided for those services which impacted on vulnerable people, including older people and children and young people, though there was a widespread view that these services should be delivered as efficiently as possible.

There was also a preference for services to be charged at a genuine cost for those with the ability to pay whilst there was openness to the development of new and alternative models for service delivery.

The findings from the Programme were initially reported to the all party Budget Stakeholder Monitoring Group which had been established by Council to inform the corporate budgetary strategy with formal reporting to full Council in November.

The Council valued the widespread engagement of all stakeholder groups and feedback sessions took place with all groups to provide detail on the Programme findings and the scheduled implementation of the corporate budgetary process during November and December.

5. Partnership Focus

a) Involving Partners

Feedback from participants in the 2010 Programme identified that community representatives and local people welcomed the opportunity to work with Elected Members to consider future service delivery. However, there was a widespread view that the functioning of the Working Groups would have been enhanced if partnership organisations had been present to enable discussion on how local public sector resources could be used more effectively to support outcome delivery and achieve savings.

Based on this feedback it was a logical progression to involve partners in the work of the Programme for 2011. Reflective of the findings from the Christie Commission on Future Public Service Delivery, the 2011 Programme had the following core objectives:

1) To identify ways in which public sector resources could be used more effectively to maximise the outcomes delivered to local people and communities
2) To consider alternative delivery models which would enhance outcome delivery through more integrated partnership working and local sharing of services

Similar to 2010, Stakeholder Working Groups comprising community and voluntary sector organisations and Elected Members were core elements of the Programme and took place during September. Senior managers from the Council and the main partnership organisations also attended to respond to queries and provide requested information.

The Working Groups were based around the local priorities set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and focused on the following areas. They considered a range of issues, including sharing services and assets and the potential for effective delivery models elsewhere being implemented in East Dunbartonshire.

- Local Economy and Environment
- Services for Children and Young People
- Health and Community Well Being
- Services for Older and Vulnerable People
- Customer Delivery and Business Support

b) Core Findings - Reporting

The arrangements were similar to 2010 with the findings tested through a large scale household survey which was widely accessible on line and throughout local communities. Employee Engagement Workshops were held together with focus group activity in secondary schools.

The findings supported the initial work being implemented by the Council in work with partners to strengthen the resource focus on prevention and assist in reducing service demand. In particular, there was extensive support for social work and health to work better together to provide more integrated care and involve local people more extensively in the design of services.

In relation to Services for Children and Young People, there was widespread agreement over the need to review the primary school estate in order to address the substantial under capacity and consolidate the Council's asset base. There was also widespread support for the establishing of Community Hubs which would operate as an accessible and flexible ‘one stop shop’ where customers could carry out a range of transactions.

As in 2010, the findings were reported to the Budget Stakeholder Working Group to inform the corporate budgetary strategy with formal reporting to full Council in November. Feedback sessions with all participant stakeholders in November and December.
6. New Ways of Delivering Services

a) New Ways of Working

A core element of the corporate budgetary strategy is the continuous review of strategic improvement and efficiency opportunities. Supported by feedback from the Stakeholder Engagement Programme, the Council is currently implementing a Transformation Programme. The Programme is the major organisation and cultural change programme, aimed at continuing the improvements in outcome delivery and achieving further efficiencies through developing new ways of working and improving the customer experience through the setting up of Community Hubs.

Through implementation of the Strategic Asset Review, the Council has substantially rationalised its property portfolio. It is now concentrated on a Civic and Corporate Headquarters, office accommodation for non public facing services, a centralised operational depot supported with the establishment of a network of integrated community hub facilities in the main towns in East Dunbartonshire.

The Community Hubs are an expansion of the Customer Services Strategy based on the service delivery model of “Click-Call-Come in”. The Hubs provide an easily accessible and flexible ‘one stop shop’ where customers can carry out a range of transactions such as paying bills, reporting faults, applying for services and reporting changes in circumstances.

The first Community Hub opened in Kirkintilloch in August 2012. Initial data indicates widespread use by the local community with over thirty one thousand customers visiting the Hub in its first month of operation. Four more hubs are scheduled to open in Bishopbriggs, Bearsden, Lennoxtown and Milngavie over the next few years which offer the potential of enhanced integrated working with partners.

Smart Working is a core element of the Transformation Programme and is about moving to smarter and more flexible ways of working across the organisation, aimed at both improving service delivery as well as supporting the development of a more effective and efficient workforce. It involves a range of work styles which employees can operate, including office based, flexible, mobile and for some employees, home working. Early evidence indicates that teams are better connected which supports an improved customer experience and performance. Importantly, its implementation has also enabled efficiencies and helped preserve jobs.

b) Focus on Place

Work on a Community Planning Partnership ‘place’ pilot in Hillhead, Kirkintilloch, commenced in early 2012. The work is aimed at regenerating the area and reducing disadvantage through targeted interventions and an enhanced focus on early prevention involving a joint programme of work with all local public services. The work reflects the recommendations of the Christie Commission and is seeking to address the inter-generational cycles of inequality that still blight too many communities across Scotland.
This area requires targeted support. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation published in December 2012, identified that four data zones in Hillhead are within the most deprived twenty five per cent in Scotland with two of these located in the top five per cent most deprived. The intention is that work in this area will help shape future targeted interventions and service design and delivery in other disadvantaged areas.

c) Current Activity

Council has agreed the building of a new Community Centre to provide a catalyst for change and support the implementation of the following core workstreams aimed at developing better outcomes for local people:

- Employability
- Community safety
- Family Centre
- Community Centre

The place employability work aims to connect with those who are not engaged with community learning and development services so that they can participate in meaningful training programmes and support those who are currently involved in training to make the next step into sustainable work.

The Community safety workstream focuses on specific issues and local priorities in Hillhead with the intention of creating a better local environment while reducing the drug and alcohol culture locally.

The family centre offers a range of services which reach beyond children to parents and families; reducing health inequalities, improving family relationships and helping to increase social belonging.

Community consultation and participation is central to place work and current activity targets the priorities of local people. In order to increase the potential for early interventions in Hillhead and to ensure initiatives are relevant to the community, focus has been placed on building local relationships. As well as continuous engagement with the main local representative body, the Hillhead Forum, a representative from the community has been invited to participate in each of the workstreams. It is hoped this approach will increase trust and illustrate openness and transparency locally.

The design of the new community centre building was led by local people. Participants were encouraged by the process, seeing first hand how their contribution was considered and included in the build requirements.

The importance of ‘familiar faces’ through continuity of staff, is crucial in building relationships over time and appreciating that a regular presence increases the likelihood of people returning and participating in activity or asking for support. In order to ensure sustainability, thorough staff handover now takes place so that internal change does not impact the programme.
Essential to success is good communication across our organisation, amongst partners and crucially with those living in Hillhead. Efficiencies can occur once staff are aware of others’ work and are better equipped to coordinate activity with partners. Without the support and participation of community representatives, local initiatives cannot make an impact.

7. Supporting Future Development

The 2012 Programme comprised a shorter and sharper area based engagement activity focusing on localised service delivery and aimed at achieving more effective use of local public sector resources.

Similar to previous years, local Stakeholder Working Groups supported by town centre drop-in sessions, were held in each of the main towns in East Dunbartonshire, focusing on the following issues:

1) Identifying local options for early intervention and prevention
2) Strengthening the involvement of local communities in service design
3) Identifying the range of services which could be developed through the community hubs

The findings have informed the implementation of the Council’s corporate budgetary strategy and are supporting the development of the Transformation Plan and the roll out of ‘place’ activity to other disadvantaged areas.