

Reconciling Policy and Resources

Chief Executive's Department Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The Department is now very different to that which existed just three years ago. In addition to the customary 'Chief Executive' role of corporate leadership policy and support, the Department now has a very broad remit that includes direct public services that are highly regarded by residents of the County and are at the heart of delivering the objectives that will raise standards, quality and performance. The Department is directly engaged in the delivery of 17 separate Policy Steers across two portfolio areas.

1.2 Since the introduction of the Reconciling Policy & Resources process, the Department has achieved all the required savings targets whether as part of the County Council's overall RP&R planning assumptions, or from specific initiatives such as the unification of Personnel & Training Services or the Strategic Economic Development Best Value Review. Over this period, including the target for Libraries, the Department will have delivered real cash savings in excess of £1.7m

1.3 The table below summarises the breadth and mix of services that are delivered by the two directorates across two Lead Member portfolios.

<i>Portfolio</i>	Strategic Management & Economic Development. <i>Cllr Jones</i>	Community Services <i>Cllr Tidy</i>
<i>Directorate</i>		
Law & Performance Management Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel & Training • Law & Performance, including Democratic Services & Member support, Performance & Scrutiny, Legal Services, Finance & E-Business, Corporate Governance • HM Coroner • Emergency Planning • Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trading Standards • Archives & Records • Registration
Policy Management & Communications Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Economic Development & Europe • Communications, Media & Web Team • Policy and Executive Office inc support to Leader, Chairman & Lord Lieutenant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries & information Services, inc Schools Library service and arts & Museums • Community Partnerships & Safety • Adult Community Learning • Student Support • Support to the Arts

2. Achieving the financial target

2.1 The Department has responded to the requirement to model first 5% and then 6% (exc. Libraries) levels of savings though the increased target has removed much of the flexibility that original proposals were intended to allow. A prioritised approach to meeting the savings target for 2006/07 has been adopted and the savings proposals are set out in Appendix E. In prioritising services and savings targets, the Department takes into account the prioritisation both within and across both portfolios and has identified;

- Community Partnerships & Safety,
- Trading Standards,
- Archives & Records;

as areas that should receive limited protection within the overall target.

2.2 In bringing forward proposals to achieve that target the Department must wrestle with a number of distinct issues.

- a) Levels of expectation on driving forward performance improvement remain high and the strategic initiative for, and co-ordination of, this work falls on the Chief Executive's Department.
- b) For many of the services within the Department the cost profile is still overwhelmingly staff based and can rise to 80% - 85% in the smaller service area budgets. Substantial reductions in basic expenditure require an acceptance of lower levels of core service, but there are some irreducible minimum levels of service to safeguard, for example, strategic leadership, corporate governance, monitoring officer, etc.
- c) Other services delivered by the Department have benefits to the corporate body that, unlike those services we clearly identify as central support services, are not recognised in the spending profiles of other departments e.g. the Modern Records Service which absorbs the consequences of departmental decisions on document storage (and so assists in achieving the corporate accommodation standards), but receives no financial recognition within those departmental budgets.
- d) In some areas the Department acts as the budget holder, but with limited ability to control spending, e.g. the payment of Members' Allowances to carry out their democratic role, or the Coroner's Service where the County Council is required to meet the costs of H.M. Coroner in carrying out his statutory duty.
- e) Increasingly, the County Council, as a first tier authority, is used by Government to take an accountable body/fund holding or co-ordinating role for delivering specific targets. This inevitably means increased responsibilities not matched by sufficient increases in resources.

2.3 The proposals will allow the Department to meet the savings target. They require proportionately more than 5 or 6% in some areas. Where possible support costs have been targeted in advance of service delivery costs and they afford some protection to many of the areas covered by Policy Steers in addition to the prioritisation outlined above. Some noticeable impact on service levels must, however, be expected.

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