

Doncaster Council

Cost: £34,200 Length of review: 57 days Benefits: Savings of 33.7% identified across 10 service areas

Service areas: building cleaning, catering, stores, education catering, building maintenance, technical services, bereavement services, transport, home / school transport and printing.

Local authorities in England are faced with an unprecedented reduction in the funds they receive from central government, a freeze on Council tax revenues and a squeeze on capital finance. Front loading of the cuts means achieving significant savings in the coming year. Government calculations indicate that this Council will need to reduce its expenditure in 2011/12 by the maximum level of 8.9%.

To this end the Council commissioned APSE to undertake a study of current service delivery arrangements with a view to testing their competitiveness against alternative arrangements. This approach centred on the collection and comparative analysis of key performance and cost data across a full range of direct services.

Objectives:

- Identify areas for **cash-releasing efficiency savings** in the short to medium term. These savings are ones that are readily identifiable from initial diagnostic work and delivering these would result in some quick wins.
- **Make recommendations to address further areas where more substantial savings could be identified.**
- **Develop detailed proposals to assist the Council in preparing evidence based business cases to address issues identified.**

Outcomes:

- **Short to medium term savings of £1.87 million** which equated to 5.2% of the budgets for the service areas examined
- Savings identified in the longer term amount to an **additional £9.62m** (21.3%)
- Savings have been identified within each service area

APSE spent three months exploring the prospects and likely benefits of service redesign in the various service areas. APSE and the Council took this need to make efficiency savings as an opportunity to transform the way in which its services are delivered. Following the review, APSE believes that with a change in culture and workforce buy-in, a redesigned service delivery will achieve the required savings with minimal loss of service. Service redesign is concerned with meeting the overriding necessity of ensuring that services are fit for purpose and meet the delivery requirements of the customer. Efficiency savings will flow from service improvement.

Since autumn 2010, APSE has examined each service through collecting baseline data, (using APSE's Performance Network data where appropriate), and carrying out a high level diagnostic workshop for each service area. Service management teams were fully involved in the work in order to take a degree of ownership of the output, which will be essential to the successful implementation of recommendations.

The workshops were followed up with demand analysis and individual service reports were produced. The reports produced are high level diagnostic reports and seek to identify opportunities for improvement and to make efficiency savings. These opportunities will include a mixture of savings, prospects for income generation and new and innovative methods. APSE is confident that there is scope for savings through improvements to business processes, work systems, shared supervision, management and resources rationalisation.

A supplementary report sets out the level of savings that the Council can expect to make if it implements the full recommendations set out in the main report.