



The issues of optimal efficiency in frontline service delivery; bigger is not always better when it comes to neighbourhood level services. So how does the sector manage expectations of savings through reform? How can service delivery models meet expectations of efficiency?

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People and Leadership

- Effective leadership is essential, not just at the top but all through the organisation.
- A commitment to staff development and team building, succession planning, investment in apprenticeships.
- Development a of a 'One council ethos and culture'.
- Create team cohesion and ownership.
- Develop a single OD strategy, aligned to best people strategies

Risks

- Poor behaviours, at times sabotaging!
- Lack of investment in staff .
- No clarity of roles and an embedded culture.
- Varying rates of pay, be prepared to address head on and avoid potential conflict.



Good Governance

- Development of a single constitution, ensuring managers are fully aware of their roles.
- Evaluate the current business models for effectiveness and compliance, Risk management, Performance, Financial management, People plans, Business continuity, “ **Effective service plans**” etc etc.
- Through consultation and cohesion, develop a business plan methodology, ensuring buy in to the principles and models. Different councils may approach differently (Six sigma v basic evaluation).
- Create a single mission and vision, ensuring buy in and understanding from top to bottom.



Legislation

- It is important to have and create a common understanding of legislation (Simply Recycling).
- Are there differences in approach?(Who has derogations in place).
- What contractual agreements exist, within what contractual periods.
- Specifically for waste disposal, what arrangements exist? Segregated, Comingled, Autoclave? Incineration.
- Need to create master plans, ie Waste/Asset's/Vehicle's , aligned to MTFP'S
- How can you utilise current arrangements , ie PFI's/Relationships with government?



Transparent Communications

- What is reform and why, must create understanding and buy in, Clearly outline what can and cannot be achieved with reforms.
- Early days, will require robust monitoring and evolution.
- Create positive messages, however, manage poor perception. Don't be afraid of negative comments.
- Evaluate current methods of communication – building on good practice develop Macro and Micro (local level) communication plans
- Ensure all staff have the requisite skills (don't blame others! Create buy in)
- Be upfront with stakeholders—whether they are the public, employees, or policymakers—about the potential impact of reforms on service delivery quality and coverage.



Members

- It is important that ALL members are clear of the reform process and benefits and challenges.
- Just because its created, It doesn't mean it's the end!
- Extensive works with members must take place to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding.
- Clear plans developed with meaningful timelines and where possible utilising robust evaluation methodologies.
- Structured and documented meetings should be established
- The council should develop and mange a complaints and compliments!

Assets

- Creation of a single a Asset register, Properties(Depots, Waste disposal sites, Transfer stations, and Vehicles)
- Explore ‘proximity principles’ new opportunities.
- Carry out a full review for Health and safety compliance, and development of a single asset register.
- Create a life cycle analysis and explore the development of a replacement plan aligned to the Councils MTFP.
- Review the current procurement arrangements, exploring efficiencies from the economies of scale.
- Does re alignments of Assets, create financial savings and efficiencies?



The personal touch

- There needs to be an understanding that some services—especially in a neighbourhood context—require a personal touch or proximity to function effectively.
- Specific areas, have their own needs and demands. Be it social issues, deprivation, poverty
- Create a Council wide action plan, identifying complex areas of need.
- Develop a workforce plan, aligning to partners and volunteers (we can't do this alone!)
- Work with stakeholders/Partners to explore single ways of working (Area based models)
- Maximise the use of data from all stakeholders, create a central depository of data.
- While savings are a priority, it's important to emphasise that reducing costs shouldn't come at the expense of quality.
- Do individual areas need to lose their identity? **NO!**



Partners ,Stakeholders and Volunteers

- Work closely with Communities teams and Public Health colleagues.
- Be prepared to think outside the box.
- We must sometimes learn let go!
- As we work in bigger organisations, consider the whole system impact, Health, True corporate parents, Social isolation ,Homelessness etc etc.
- Be prepared to learn from others, create a whole team approach.
- Hybrid models that combine centralised management with local service delivery can also provide flexibility while maintaining economies of scale.



Incremental Change

- **PLAN- DO -CHECK – ACT (PDCA)** Culture
- Rather than implementing sweeping, large-scale reforms, consider piloting new models in specific neighbourhoods or services.
- Any savings can be evaluated without risking the disruption of services that people rely on.
- Involve residents in the process, allow consultation and buy in for change.
- Embed comprehensive communication channels.



Technology Integration

- Apply a systems thinking methodology.
- Review current Technology and IT provision, Digital tools can enhance service delivery efficiency, especially in outreach, case management, and information dissemination.
- It important to ensure that these tools complement rather than replace the human element, particularly in services that require personal engagement.
- Variations in use of technology? Standardise tools and explore new ones(AI)?



Value based outcomes-Focused Metrics

- It is recognised that performance measurements will be a key outcome for reform as we progress.
- We must create standardised reporting methodologies.
- Ensure all responsible staff are trained and must form part of the organisation culture.
- Ensure tools to collate data are consistent and adaptable to multi council's and partner demands
- Rather than focusing purely on financial savings, shift the focus to value-driven outcomes. This means measuring service delivery in terms of customer satisfaction, long-term outcomes (e.g., health, education), and cost-effectiveness rather than just short-term savings.



Flexibility and Adaptability

- Create a culture of continuous improvement
- Develop key skills for all staff, enabling effective evaluation following industry tools. (Six sigma)?
- Be willing to listen and create systems for receiving feedback.
- Service delivery models should be designed to allow for continuous improvement. Regular feedback loops, data collection, and community engagement can ensure that services evolve to meet changing needs without compromising efficiency.
- Is criticism negative? or is a chance to put things right or provide appropriate messages?



How can service delivery models meet expectations of efficiency?

- Economies of scale, purchase of goods in bulk?
- Standardised procurement activities.
- Better use of Assets, Buildings, Vehicles. Explore new equipment.
- Review of staffing, back-office provision/Front line efficiencies. Utilising route optimisation tools.
- Embed a whole systems thinking approach. How can we influence each other's agendas?
- Maximise use of technology and new approaches.
- Maximise stakeholder/Volunteering opportunities
- Embrace Net Zero, creating sustainable plans. Possible working with partners?
- Introduce a true Value for money culture. "Every penny counts"
- Explore commercial opportunities, creating a strong business culture.



Bigger isn't always better!

- Balancing efficiency with quality in frontline service delivery is a complex challenge, especially at the neighbourhood level.
- While there's often a drive to consolidate services or create larger-scale operations for cost savings, it's important to recognise that "bigger" isn't always "better"
- When it comes to localised services. In fact, smaller, more community-centered models can sometimes be more responsive and effective in meeting specific needs.
- The services approach to management , must align the Councils master plan.



Finally!

Ultimately service delivery reforms should be viewed as an opportunity to innovate and improve, rather than merely cutting costs. If done thoughtfully, these reforms can not only meet savings expectations but also enhance the overall effectiveness of the Business and more locally improve satisfaction and services at a neighbourhood level .