

Environment Select Committee

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of Care for Your Area



February 2012

Environment Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
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Foreword

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**Councillor
David Wilburn
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The report presents the findings of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of Care for Your Area (CFYA) undertaken by the Committee between June and December 2011.
- 1.2 The review forms part of a three year programme of EIT reviews covering all services provided by the Council. The programme aims to ensure that all services are reviewed in a systematic way to ensure that they are provided in the most efficient manner, provide value for money and identify opportunities for service improvements and transformation.
- 1.3 The topic was identified for review and included in the Select Committee work programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2011.

2.0 Background

A scope and project plan for the review were drafted and approved by the Select Committee on 20 June 2011.

The review examined the following services delivered by CFYA:

- Cowpen Depot
- Yarm Road Depot
- Vehicle maintenance
- Refuse collection
- Kerbside recycling
- Grounds maintenance/horticulture
- Urban parks
- Street cleansing
- Public conveniences
- Markets management

The remaining CFYA services had already been included within the scope of other EIT Reviews and were therefore excluded from the EIT Review of Care for Your Area:

- Bulky household waste
- Commercial waste
- Countryside parks
- Highway maintenance

The overall aim of the review was to identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that will deliver efficiency savings while sustaining/improving high quality outcomes for SBC residents.

The Select Committee received paper based evidence on changes and improvements to the service since 2003 and a position statement on how each service operates in its current state. The Committee received the following information as part of its review:

- Baseline information and financial analysis of each service area
- Performance and benchmarking information based on Tees Valley and Family Group Comparisons

3.0 Evidence and Findings

CFYA delivers a number of services across the borough to ensure the environment is clean, safe and well maintained, and has a net expenditure of £8,510,443. It is nationally recognised as being one of the top performing services in the country. The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), which works with over 300 local authorities throughout the UK and specialises in front-line services, named Stockton Borough Council as its Overall Council of the Year in 2010. The authority also received the Best Employee and Equality Initiative award in the 2011 APSE Awards.

Cowpen and Yarm Road Depots

CFYA runs its services from the Cowpen Depot in Billingham and Yarm Road Depot in Stockton. Cowpen Depot houses refuse, cleansing, highway maintenance and the remaining recycling services, while horticultural and some recycling services are run from Yarm Road. Both depots are limited in terms of their size and capacity, and are included in the Building Assets Review. The gross expenditure for Cowpen Depot, including management costs, is £539,310, with income of £1,859, with net expenditure at £537,451. The expenditure for Yarm Road Depot is £122,432 with no income for the depot.

Vehicle Maintenance

CFYA carry out programmed and un-programmed vehicle repairs at the Cowpen Depot to ensure that the service has a reliable and effective fleet. All vehicles are inspected, tested and repaired at either Cowpen Depot or at a partner organisation if the vehicle is too specialised to be tested at the depot. The service employs a team of a workshop manager and six fitters to provide cover from 6am to 6pm, with standby arrangements in place out-of-hours. The vehicle maintenance service has a gross expenditure of £982,456 and income of £1,158,559.

The size of the depot places restrictions on its operating capacity, making income generation opportunities limited.

Refuse Collection

A weekly domestic waste collection service operates for the 82,600 properties within the borough. There are currently 12 collections rounds and the service operates four days a week, Tuesday to Friday, using 14 refuse vehicles, 11 of which have one driver and two loaders. One vehicle has one driver and three loaders and is responsible for the cleansing of 'back lanes' and associated properties, and two vehicles have one driver only and provide a service to farms and properties that cannot be accessed by a conventional refuse vehicle. This service employs 33 employees and additional temporary staff to cover vacancies, holiday and sickness absences, has a gross expenditure of £2,660,487, an income of £682,338 and therefore a net expenditure of £1,978,149.

The performance for refuse collections are measured by a 'missed bins per 100,000' collections indicator. This indicator has not formed part of the national performance

framework since 2001/02, however it is seen to add value in Stockton and therefore has continued to be collected and reported as part of the Corporate Basket of Indicators. Stockton's current performance is 0.21 missed bins per 100,000 collections for refuse collection which is one of the best performance levels in the country.

Initial details have been released of a Government fund of £250m that Stockton Borough Council may be able to apply to for additional funding to support and develop its waste collection services through the creation of a Weekly Collections Support Scheme. It is therefore advisable that the Council should await further details of this scheme before considering making any changes to collection frequencies. Officers will be examining the details as they emerge to identify whether Stockton would be eligible for any funding under the scheme.

Kerbside Recycling

Following two extensive scrutiny reviews in 2004 and 2008, fortnightly recycling services were introduced across the borough. The service collects paper, cans, glass, plastic, cardboard, batteries and garden 'green' waste via six bespoke Kerbsider vehicles and traditional refuse vehicles and materials are segregated at the kerbside ready for re-sale. The green waste service operates for 26 weeks and uses seasonal staff. There are also two additional reserve kerbside vehicles for use as contingency when vehicles have scheduled repairs and also in times of increased tonnage collections. Each kerbside vehicle has one driver and two loaders. A separate vehicle operated by one driver provides the recycling service to farms collecting plastic and cardboard recycling and green waste, all of which is sorted into separate containers on the vehicle during collection.

The service had previously been provided by a private contractor but was brought back in-house in 2004 following quality and cost concerns.

Customer satisfaction ratings for recycling in 2010/11 is 93.08%. The 2008 MORI poll showed 87% satisfaction with recycling services within Stockton and 83% satisfaction for communal recycling facilities.

The Authority has an agreement with a local recycling company to purchase the 8,000 tonnes of separated dry recycling material at full market price, and this provides an income to this service. The service has a gross expenditure of £1,844,484 and an income of £333,000, with net expenditure at £1,511,484.

Ground maintenance/Horticulture and Urban Parks

A range of seasonal activities are carried out by grounds maintenance, including grass cutting from April to October on a weekly cycle, the planting of bedding in both winter and summer, the associated maintenance of flower beds, and maintenance (e.g. white lining) of formal sport pitches and changing rooms. There is a core workforce of 35 to carry out a service in the winter and 40 – 50 seasonal staff are employed during summer months.

Grounds maintenance also includes the maintenance and burial services within the borough's five open cemeteries and 12 closed churchyards. The service employs 12 cemetery staff to provide this.

The service had previously been provided by two separate contractors, however due to concerns regarding quality and cost was brought back 'in house' in 2003. In 2011 the arboriculture service was also brought back 'in house' and as a result four qualified tree surgeons were also brought back to the service under TUPE arrangements.

Urban parks provides day to day management and maintenance functions for John Whitehead, Littleboy, Village, Ropner, Preston and Newham Grange urban parks, as well as a number of newly created park/play areas such as Romano Park. This includes grass cutting, flower beds and litter picking services provided by Horticultural and Cleansing services, and working with 'Friends', 'Supporters', and other residents groups to provide a variety of support e.g. assisting with funding applications or running café facilities. The service also has responsibility for the provision of allotments, and charge £28 per annum rent for a plot, with a discount rate of £14 for pensioners.

Some play areas and parks are staffed on a full time basis seven days a week, and the Security and Surveillance team undertake park closing and CCTV monitoring on a chargeable basis. The urban park service utilises staff from the street cleansing and horticultural services.

Although there is no national industry measure for horticultural services, there are a range of local, national, and international recognitions, and urban parks performs well against a range of performance indicators as part of APSE. Green Flag status has been awarded to three countryside parks, one local nature reserve, an urban park and a cemetery in the Borough. Stockton has also won awards for 'Best City' in Northumbria in Bloom since 2004, and also won awards in Britain in Bloom achieving the highest gold standard in both 2009 and 2011. Internationally, Stockton received the highest five bloom awards in Communities in Bloom in 2008, and achieved gold award in European Entente Florale in 2010. CFYA were also awarded Best Service Team of the Year in 2010 for Horticultural and Parks Maintenance (which includes Urban Parks). This year Stockton won a Gold Award in Britain in Bloom and won the Best City category. Customer satisfaction is high with monthly telephone surveys showing 86.63% satisfaction rating with urban parks and the 2008 MORI satisfactions survey showing a 76% overall satisfaction rating with parks.

The grounds maintenance/horticulture service has a gross expenditure of £2,422,896 and an income of £448,680, therefore a net expenditure of £1,974,216. Gross expenditure of the urban parks service is £602,919 and an income of £20,222 is received, making net expenditure £582,697.

Street Cleansing

Both manual and mechanical cleansing functions operate throughout the borough's town centres, shopping parades and other busy areas. There is a fleet of 11 vehicles cleansing each area at least once a week and five mechanical sweepers provide road channel cleaning on a 4 – 6 week cycle. Back lane sweeping is carried out after refuse collection and 22 manual sweep operatives operate daily.

The performance of street cleansing is measured by a grading, or percentage presence, of litter, detritus, fly-posting and graffiti in any given area that was deemed to be unacceptable (ex NI 195). In 2010/11, litter scored 1%, detritus 2%, fly-posting 0% and graffiti 2%, which are very strong levels of performance.

Street cleansing has a gross expenditure of £2,106,184, and an income of £195,195, with net expenditure of £1,910,989.

Public Conveniences

Public conveniences are located in Stockton town centre, Yarm High Street, Norton High Street, Ropner Park and Preston Park. All public conveniences are unmanned except Stockton town centre which has male and female toilet attendants. All facilities are free of charge, with the exception of Norton High Street which charge 20p per visit bringing in a small income of £264 per annum. The service employs two full time members of staff and three part time members of staff and has a net expenditure of £93,856.

Customer satisfaction levels with public conveniences was 77% in 2009/10 (based upon monthly telephone satisfaction surveys conducted by the corporate customer services team) and in the last three years the service received only five customer complaints and eight compliments.

Markets Management

The markets operational service is provided by CFYA, based at Cowpen Depot. Markets are held in Stockton High Street on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, Thornaby Town Centre on Thursdays, and Billingham Town Centre on Mondays and Fridays. Although ownership of Billingham Town Centre was transferred to a private franchise in July 2007, the Authority has a license agreement to hold a market in the centre. Similarly, a long term lease agreement was entered into for Thornaby Town Centre in March 2008, however market rights were retained by the Authority. There are currently three full time members of staff working within the markets operational area.

The 2009 Viewpoint survey regarding satisfaction with markets showed that customers returning to shop at Stockton market are satisfied with quality, friendliness of traders, prices of items, streetscape, facilities and access for disabled people.

The service has a gross expenditure of £260,272 and an income of £285,000 and therefore net income is £24,728.

Options Considered

The Select Committee were presented with possible options grouped by the degree of impact on frontline services. These are set out below:

Efficiencies with Limited Frontline Impact

- Management / Supervision
- Round Reconfiguration
- Parks Improvement Fund
- Reduce Supplies and Services (across all services)
- Street Cleansing / Grounds Maintenance
- Income from recyclable material.
- Depot relocation

- Workshops

Efficiencies with Further Frontline Impact

As above but including:

- Further staff reductions

Efficiencies with Significant Frontline Impact

As above but including:

- Alternate weekly collections
- Stop green waste collections
- Reduce number of grass cuts from 16 to 14
- Further reduce supplies and services budgets
- Reduce annual inflation and growth increases from general fund

The savings that these options would create are summarised in the table below:

Net Expenditure 2011/12	£8,510,443	% of total budget
Minimal Impact	£830,000	9.75%
More difficult/some Impact on service delivery.	£905,000	10.63%
Major impact with a reduction and/or loss of some key services	£1,300,000	15.27%

Given the high visibility nature of the service and high performance and satisfaction levels, the Select Committee were of the view that only those efficiency savings having minimal front line impact should be pursued at this stage. The options considered and recommended options are set out below:

1. Management and Supervision

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change – remain as per current structure and work areas
Option 2. Undertake a review of management and supervision structures across each CFYA service
Option 3. Undertake a review of management and supervision structures where recent staffing changes have taken place, e.g. Countryside Parks, Markets
Recommended Option – Option 3
Efficiency savings:
Following on from recent EIT reviews and staffing changes, a reduced number of managers and supervisors will provide opportunities to make efficiency savings

2. Round Reconfiguration

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change – refuse and recycling rounds to remain unaltered
Option 2. Completely reconfigure all waste related collection days, changing collection days and recalculating refuse and recycling round requirements
Option 3. Reconfigure refuse and recycling rounds where known efficiencies can be made without disruption to collection day
Recommended Option – Option 3
<p>Efficiency savings:</p> <p>The completion of planned shutdown works at EFW during 2011/12, will allow for much greater plant reliability, reducing requirement to divert to landfill. This in turn will reduce the time to dispose of waste, allowing for round re-configuration to take place from April 2012</p>

3. Parks Improvement Fund

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change
Option 2. Reduce budgets by £50k
Option 3. Reduce budgets by £100k
Recommended Option – Option 3
<p>Efficiency savings:</p> <p>Whilst creating efficiency savings, a £100k reduction will still allow any essential repairs to be carried out. Non essential repairs can be scheduled and undertaken as and when sufficient budgets exist</p>

4. Reduce Supplies and Services Budgets

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change
Option 2. Reduce budgets by £200,000
Option 3. Reduce budgets by £100,000
Recommended Option – Option 3
Efficiency savings:
Whilst creating efficiency savings, a £100,000 reduction will still allow for any essential supplies and services purchases to be made, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), weed spraying chemical etc. Non-essential purchases can be scheduled and undertaken as and when sufficient budgets exist

5. Street Cleansing and Horticulture Workforce

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change – cleansing and grounds teams to remain unaltered
Option 2. As part of discussions with TU partners, job role changes to be agreed and implemented. Expressions of interest to be formally sought from those employees who may be unable to adapt to changes for a potential ER/VR scheme
Recommended Option – Option 2
Efficiency savings:
A new workforce to developed/recruited resulting in a fully integrated, flexible workforce able to work on a range of different tasks, flexibly and effectively, embracing new technologies were appropriate

6. Income from Sale of Recycling Materials

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change –additional income included as part of managed surplus
Option 2. Increase income targets from the sale of recycling materials by £130,000
Option 3. Increase income targets from the sale of recycling materials by £230,000
Recommended Option – Option 3
Efficiency savings:
Due to increased re-sale market prices for dry recyclable materials, efficiencies can be made by virtue of increased income targets

7. Depot Relocation

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change – Direct Services to remain split across three different locations (Cowpen and Yarm Road Depots and Stirling House)
Option 2. Explore feasibility of acquiring land or existing Council-owned land suitable to house entire service at one location
Option 3. Explore feasibility of acquiring land or using existing Council-owned land suitable to merge Cowpen and Yarm Road Depots
Recommended Option – Option 2
Efficiency savings:
Long term spend to save project, offset to some extent by capital receipts from sale of existing accommodation. In the longer term, efficiencies will be created by housing all staff together.

8. Workshops

Options Considered:
Option 1. No change – workshop provision to remain unchanged working Monday – Friday 6.00 am – 6.00 pm
Option 2. Explore feasibility of partnership working, alternative delivery models
Option 3. Outsource
Recommended Option – Option 2
Efficiency savings:
Long term project to explore possible alternative delivery models that could deliver 24/7 workshop support service to a range of internal & external customers, including other local authorities

Further analysis of each option including risks is set out in **Appendix 1**.

4. **Conclusion**

The Select Committee were mindful that the service was a highly visible front line service achieving high performance and customer satisfaction levels. The Select Committee were also aware of the impact of the environment on the health and well being of Stockton residents and economic regeneration. By reviewing the operational structures efficiency savings could be achieved whilst minimising the impact on front-line delivery, and thereby ensuring that both the services performance and customer satisfaction levels remain high.

5. Recommendations

(1) That the following efficiencies (minimising the impact on front line service delivery) be implemented:

Efficiency Measure	Potential Savings £
- Management/Supervision - undertake a review of management and supervision structures where recent staffing changes have taken place, e.g. Countryside Parks, Markets	100,000
- Round Reconfiguration - reconfigure refuse and recycling rounds where known efficiencies can be made without disruption to collection day	100,000
- Parks Improvement Fund - reduce budgets by £100,000	100,000
- Reduce supplies and services budgets (across all services) by £100,000	100,000
- Street Cleansing / Grounds Maintenance - As part of ongoing discussions with TU partners, service condition changes to be agreed and implemented. Expressions of interest to be formally sought from those employees who may be unable to adapt to changes for a potential ER/VR scheme	200,000
- Income from recyclable material - Increase income targets from the sale of recycling materials by £230,000	230,000
Total saving	830,000

(2) That the feasibility of acquiring land or existing Council-owned land suitable to house the entire service at one depot location be explored.

(3) That the feasibility of partnership working and alternative delivery models be explored to deliver 24/7 workshop support service to a range of internal and external customers, including other local authorities.

(4) That Officers examine the details of the newly announced Weekly Collections Support Scheme to identify whether Stockton would be eligible for any funding under the scheme.

**APPENDIX 1
EIT REVIEW OF CARE FOR YOUR AREA
OPTIONS APPRAISAL FORMS**

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 1: MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Description of the current service

- Each separate service within CFYA has its own Operational Manager with expertise within this work area, supported by a team of supervisors. Recent EIT reviews have led to staff numbers being reduced, such as Countryside Parks, offering the potential to review management levels. Other recent changes include the transfer of operational aspects of markets and this also creates the potential to review supervision requirements.

Future aims and objectives of the service area

- To continue with the effective management and supervision of all CFYA staff across a variety of front line services to ensure staff safety and efficiency. Continue to operate markets efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Open Market Regulations 2009.

Options considered

- **Option 1** – no change – remain as per current structure and work areas.
- **Option 2** – undertake a review of management and supervision across each CFYA service.
- **Option 3** - Undertake a review of management and supervision structures where recent staffing changes have taken place, e.g. Countryside Parks, Markets.

Risks/Issues considered with each option

- **Option 1** - this option will not create any efficiency savings.
- **Option 2.** - CFYA is split over two different sites making reduced management and supervision impractical over existing shift systems.
- **Option 3** - following on from recent EIT reviews and staffing changes, a reduced number of managers and supervisors will provide opportunities to make efficiency savings. Achievable low risk staffing review due to previous EIT reviews having been completed.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

- As part of ongoing discussions with TU partners, service condition changes to be agreed and implemented. Expressions of interest to be formally sought from those employees who may be at risk of redundancy for a potential ER/VR scheme or redeployment opportunities to be considered.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 2: ROUND RECONFIGURATION

Description of Current Service

Recent expansion of the Council's recycling collection services has led to a reduction in residual household waste tonnages. Unfortunately, a combination of planned and unplanned maintenance issues at EFW has led to a significant diversion from EFW to landfill, resulting in additional travelling time to dispose of wastes. That has meant until 100% disposal at EFW is assured, round re-configuration cannot take place. From April 2012, EFW works will be complete, giving the opportunity of reconfiguring waste rounds to reflect reduced residual waste tonnages.

Future aims and objectives

To review domestic refuse collection rounds, farms rounds and recycling rounds to ensure each are operating at maximum efficiencies.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change – refuse & recycling rounds to remain unaltered. This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Completely reconfigure all waste related collection days, changing collection days and recalculating refuse and recycling round requirements. Whilst possible, this would result in significant disruption to residents due to changing collection days. Once longer term waste strategies become clearer, this can be re-visited.

Option 3. Reconfigure refuse and recycling rounds where known efficiencies can be made without disruption to collection days. No disruption to collection days not impacted by any other waste review and can deliver efficiency savings.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

Round reconfiguration to be operationally effective from Tuesday 3rd April.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 3: PARKS IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

Description of Current Service

Until recent years, limited funding was available to invest in the Borough's parks, play areas and open spaces. Reflecting MORI survey's the Council agreed to remedy the situation and has invested significant amounts in the redevelopment of its parks and open spaces. This included £200,000 work of Headroom funding, subsequently built in to revenue budgets for upkeep and maintenance.

Future aims and objectives

To continue to ensure the Borough's parks, play areas and open spaces are maintained to a high and safe standard.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change. This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Reduce budgets by 50%. This would allow essential works to be carried out, maintaining high standards of maintenance in the borough's parks, play areas and open spaces without risk to park users. Any aesthetic improvements/non-essential repairs can be scheduled and undertaken as/when sufficient budgets exist can be (see comments above in summary section).

Option 3. Reduce budgets by 100%. This would mean that the Council's parks, play areas and open spaces would not be maintained to a high standard and may risk the safety of park users. It could also mean a park/play area may eventually close.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

Asset inspection programme will continue to identify any repairs needed to be undertaken. Park improvement plan can be devised to schedule any aesthetic improvements / non essential repairs as / when sufficient budgets exist.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 4: REDUCTION IN SUPPLIES AND SERVICES BUDGETS

Description of Current Service

Supplies and services budgets pay for a wide range of items from clothing, uniforms, PPE through to litter bins, recycling containers, wheeled bins, weed spraying chemicals, litter picking equipment, bedding plants, plant & equipment and so on.

Future aims and objectives

To continue to provide essential items of clothing and equipment to ensure front line staff have the tools and equipment to carry out their duties effectively and safely.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change. This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Reduce budgets by £100,000. Whilst allowing essential terms of clothing and equipment to be provided, some reduction in purchases is inevitable to deliver the efficiency savings. New bedding, new litter bins etc, will need to be considered as part of a schedule and delivered as / when funds become available.

Option 3. Reduce budgets by £200,000. To deliver this level of efficiency savings would mean a reduction in bedding areas, weed spraying, replacement bins, bags or boxes.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

Whilst delivery efficiency savings, and whilst a £100,000 reduction in revenue budgets will have an impact on what can and cant be purchased, essential front line services can continue to be delivered effectively and safely. Where budgets don't exist for some purchases, such as additional litter bins, these will need to be considered as part of a schedule and delivered as / when funds become available.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 5: STREET CLEANSING AND HORTICULTURE WORKFORCE RECONFIGURATION

Description of Current Service

Unlike the Waste Services, the Street Cleansing and Horticulture workforce has not carried out a review for many years. Whilst there have been many operational improvements over the years, reviewing service conditions, introducing flexible working patterns and closer integration of the two teams have not been done. The necessary changes will undoubtedly impact on the workforce and that extensive consultation will be required in implementing new practices and procedures.

Future Aims and Objectives

A fully integrated street Cleansing & Horticulture team able to work on a range of different tasks, flexibly and effectively.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change – cleansing and grounds teams to remain unaltered. This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Option 2. A reduction in establishment which will be negated by having a more flexible approach with multi-skilled workforce engaged on Horticulture and Street cleansing activities. This will deliver significant efficiency savings.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

A fully integrated street Cleansing & Horticulture team able to work on a range of different tasks, flexibly and effectively with effect April 2013.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 6: INCOME FROM SALE OF RECYCLING MATERIALS

Description of Current Service

Due to increased re-sale market prices for dry recyclable materials, efficiencies can be made by virtue of increased income targets. Re-sale market prices are strong and have remained so over the last 12-18 months. As demand for high quality segregated materials for recycling remains high, so to should market prices, allowing the service to increase the income targets that are in current years' budgets.

Future Aims and Objectives

To increase and meet future years income targets from sale of dry, segregated recycling materials.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change – any additional income to be considered as part of Departmental managed surplus. This option does not allow for any strategic financial planning as part of the considered medium term financial plan.

Option 2. Increase income targets from the sale of materials for recycling by £130,000. Not a stretching target and with limited efficiency savings created.

Option 3. Increase income targets from the sale of materials for recycling by £230,000. A stretching & realistic income target that generates significant efficiency savings.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

Increased income targets, allowing efficiencies to be made, are met with effect April 2012.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 7: DEPOT RELOCATION

Description of Current Service

Direct Services remain split over three separate buildings – Cowpen Depot, Yarm Road Depot and Stirling House. The depots are at operational capacity, meaning opportunities for growth and taking on new business/services is limited (see workshops also). Having teams split over a number of different locations is operationally difficult at times.

Future Aims and Objectives

To rationalise the number of buildings in order to co-locate in so far as possible.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change – Direct Services to remain split across 3 different locations (Cowpen Depot, Yarm Road Depot and Stirling House). This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Explore feasibility of acquiring land or existing Council land suitable to house entire service at one location. This would provide a long term and sustainable solution, allowing the division to develop its commercial activities from its current position.

Option 3. Explore feasibility of acquiring land or using existing Council land suitable to merge Cowpen and Yarm Road Depots. Although better than the existing situation, it still means that Direct Services would still be split over two locations.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

A long term project that may not even prove to be possible, though feasibility options and outline business case can be started.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL 8: WORKSHOPS

Description of Current Service

Based at Cowpen Depot, the workshops provide a range of vehicle maintenance functions for the Council as well as Tees Active and Tristar Homes. The service has always been the designated Council testing facility for Private Hire and Hackney Taxis. There are vehicles that the workshops cannot service/test due to vehicle size outweighing depot space and capacity and there is a large MOT market that cannot be tapped into, again due to capacity issues.

Future Aims and Objectives

Explore possible alternative delivery models and develop outline business case that could deliver 24/7 workshop support service to a range of internal & external customers, including other local authorities.

Options and Risks/Issues Considered

Option 1. No change – workshop provision to remain unchanged working Monday – Friday 6.00 am – 6.00 pm. This option will not create any efficiency savings.

Option 2. Explore feasibility of partnership working, alternative delivery models. Will enable the Council to retain control of services whilst generating additional income.

Option 3. Outsource. May not create any additional income streams for the Council as any additional business growth may not benefit the Council.

Effective implementation of the recommended option

Longer term piece of work to develop outline business case and explore alternative delivery models.