

**DOCUMENT CENTRE REVIEW
(Report by the Working Group).**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 3rd November 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) established a Working Group to review the costs of the District Council's Document Centre and to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness. Councillors G J Bull, S Greenall, R B Howe, A MacKender-Lawrence, T V Rogers, and A H Williams were appointed to the Working Group.
- 1.2 For the purposes of undertaking the review and to establish a trial methodology for future reviews, the Working Group agreed to form two teams to investigate:-
- ❖ the financial costs of the service; and
 - ❖ the operation of the service.
- 1.3 This report contains a summary of the work carried out and the Working Groups' findings and recommendations so far.

2. THE DOCUMENT CENTRE

- 2.1 The Document Centre was established in 2007 as part of the review of the Council's Headquarters and other accommodation. Its main roles are:
- ❖ Production and Procurement of printed matter;
 - ❖ Cheque Management;
 - ❖ Design and artwork;
 - ❖ Bulk despatches of mail;
 - ❖ Multi-Functional Devices;
 - ❖ Receipt, sorting, scanning and distribution of incoming post;
 - ❖ Preparation and despatch of outgoing post;
 - ❖ Courier service;
 - ❖ Procurement & provision of postal services; and
 - ❖ Generating external income.
- 2.2 The Financial Position of the Centre as at December 2011 is set out below:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| • Original Budget | £605k |
| • Latest Budget (2011/12) | £487k |
| • Savings Achieved Early | £14k |
| • External Income (to date 11/12) | £16k |
- 2.3 The current number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff is 12.08. This represents a reduction of 0.73 FTE since 2007.
- 2.4 An update financial summary of revenue expenditure is attached at Appendix A.

- 2.5 The Centre has a target to achieve £75,000 in efficiency savings by 2015/16 and is currently ahead of target.

3. INVESTIGATIONS

- 3.1 To assist them with their investigations, the Working Group has met with:-

- ❖ Mr A Lusha, Document Centre Manager;
- ❖ Mrs L Jablonska, Central Services Manager;
- ❖ Mr Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal & Democratic Services;
- ❖ Mr Nigel Green, Principal Accountant;
- ❖ Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader;
- ❖ Mr C Hall, Head of IMD; and
- ❖ Mrs S Campbell, Document Centre Team Leader.

- 3.2 The Group has also met with representatives from the One Leisure Service and the Planning Division. A tour of the Document Centre and its facilities has been undertaken. The Working Group is grateful to the staff for being open and accommodating and assisting them with their work.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 4.1 Overall, the Working Group is very impressed with the way the Document Centre is run and they are of the opinion that it operates effectively and efficiently. They recognise that the cost of running the Centre has been reduced by 10% in the last 3 years, that the level of operation has increased and they are not aware of any capacity issues. The Working Group has formed the view that there is scope to improve the financial performance of the Document Centre and a number of options have been considered through which this might be achieved. These are discussed in more detail below. However, in order to achieve this improvement in financial performance, significant levels of investment will be required.

(a) Internal Printing and Design

- ❖ The Working Group has recognised that to achieve further efficiency and cost savings, Document Centre facilities need to be used more by Council departments. The Centre is a more cost effective way of completing design and print jobs and all departments ought to be compelled to use their facilities for their design and printing requirements wherever possible. The Group has noted that there are a number of departments within the Council who were not fully utilising the Document Centre's facilities. Whilst there is already a Corporate Policy, the Working Group is of the view **that there is a need to establish a corporate mandate for all officers to use the services provided, as opposed to using MFDs and other commercial agencies.** The use of commercial agencies is something that will be referred to later. Greater use of the design service will ensure that the Council's corporate branding is consistently employed.
- ❖ It was evident that a number of individuals are making tens of thousands of copies on their MFD's which is not cost or time effective. **The Group has concluded that the number of Multi-Functional Devices per floor in Pathfinder House should be reduced to encourage more use of the Document Centre service.**
- ❖ From their discussions with representatives from the One Leisure Service it has been apparent that the Service is not aware of the Document Centre's capabilities and the Working Group has asked the Document Centre Manager

to meet with One Leisure representatives to discuss their printing requirements. In a similar light it was suggested that the Document Centre Manager should contact the NHS occupants of the Civic Suite to ascertain whether they might make use of any of the services provided by the Document Centre. **More generally, the Group is of the opinion that the Document Centre needs to clarify and advertise the services it can provide to internal users and that Council officers need to be educated on the use and cost of using ink colours in their printing requirements.**

- ❖ The Working Group has queried why the GIS department are in possession of their own wide format printer and whether this is cost effective.
- ❖ In terms of the preferred list of suppliers who are invited to undertake specialist printing work for the District Council, the Working Group has expressed concern that this might not be the most cost effective way to select an external supplier. **The list of suppliers should be subject to a rigorous procurement process.**
- ❖ **It is recommended that an investigation be undertaken to establish what marketing material is despatched from other services to establish whether higher quantities can be pooled together for printing at a lower rate.**

(b) Post, Mail Handling & Scanning

- ❖ The Working Group is content that overall the mail handling facility is working well and provides a cost effective service. **However Members are of the view that the existing arrangements for issuing Councillors' Mail should be reviewed.** For example Members have commented that a number of the letters they currently receive could be issued by email and that they often receive more than one individual posting on the same day.
- ❖ The Working Group has noted that there were only 6 departments currently involved within the Electronic Document Management project. It is not as far advanced within the District Council as might be expected and a significant number of licences are still available. (Annex A EDM Service Status Update provides further information). **The Group is of the opinion that the progress of EDM should be the subject of a separate investigation.**
- ❖ The Working Group has identified a potential issue which might hinder the roll out of EDM. MFD's cannot scan into Anite. At the time the MFD's were purchased this was not an option due to incompatibility issues. An update to Anite has since made this possible, however this option was not pursued due to MFD limitations e.g. there are no screens for checking scanned images. This would have an impact on the high degree of checking and verifying scanned images against original documents carried out as part of the strict control measures identified in Document Centre protocols.
- ❖ The Working Group has also noted that the Leisure Centres still have their own franking machines and that this was not a cost effective way of distributing mail. **Members are of the opinion that this could form part of the review of the postal arrangements referred to previously.**

(c) External Printing / Business Development

- ❖ The Working Group has formed the opinion that the Document Centre has the capacity to develop significantly its financial performance. This is discussed

