

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – BEING BOLD

A Programme for Better Outcomes, Lean Delivery (BOLD)

BOLD – An introduction

Worcestershire County Council were judged to be "excellent" and "improving strongly" by the Audit Commission in 2008/2009. We are rated as a top performing council for Use of Resources, with an excellent track record for delivering value for money and are on target to deliver £27m of savings and efficiencies through the current Medium Term Financial Plan (2008-11).

However, whilst the government grant for 2009-10 and 2010-11 has been set and budgeted for, the picture for future years is uncertain and significant reductions are likely in public spending, as the government responds to the global financial crisis and recession. As such we recognise that Worcestershire County Council is subject to the same pressures as every other public sector organisation, we are not protected or isolated in anyway, and cannot afford to be complacent or bury our head in the sand.

So although Government spending figures are not yet confirmed for 2011-12 and beyond, there is a need to start planning now. We anticipate that over the next three years (2011-14) we will have only 85% of the current budget i.e. a reduction of about £45m in total. It is inevitable that spending will have to be cut back, leading to a reduction in the range and volume of services provided. However, the aim is to see how far the need for service reductions can be offset by being more innovative and creative.

Alongside the BOLD programme we will be working with our partners through the Worcestershire Enhanced Two-Tier and Total Place programmes to work in the most efficient way possible.

Throughout all of this work we will be putting even more emphasis on achieving value for money, and maintaining low Council Tax.

BOLD – The Vision

We will seek to achieve better outcomes for the objectives in the 2009-2013 Corporate Plan (to be decided by Council in December 2009), and as far as possible to maintain other services.

There will be three strands of the BOLD Programme:

- a. Efficiency and cost control – standardising common functions across Directorates, ceasing to deploy resources no longer needed and taking the cash savings out of budgets, focusing on leaner systems and delivery
- b. Service Reform – at the heart of the BOLD programme, looking for alternative ways to meet customers' needs at lower cost. We will not seek to continue to deliver services ourselves, if this can be done better, at lower cost, by others.

We will explore options with partners, including enhanced-two tier with District Councils, and joint arrangements with the NHS and others.

- c. Spend less, do less – given the level of budget reduction, cuts will be inevitable. The challenge is to reduce the needs for cuts as far as possible, by achieving efficiencies and reforming services.

We believe that by planning ahead, we can do more to protect those services which will help to achieve the Corporate Plan priorities. Where changes or reductions in service are necessary, the BOLD programme gives us the time to involve staff, partners and customers in designing and managing those changes to minimise disruption and upset.

Bold – The Underlying Principles:

The following principles will underpin the BOLD programme, and each of the projects which it will oversee:

- (a) Customer focused addressing the things that matter to customers
- (b) Outcome focused securing effective outcomes against Corporate Plan and Local Area Agreement objectives
- (c) Joined up working together to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, with partners where appropriate
- (d) Empowering of communities and people
- (e) One Council solutions joined up services that simplify, standardise and share ways of working across the Council
- (f) Cost reducing delivering outcomes within 85% of baseline revenue expenditure

We will undertake appropriate consultation with residents, service users, partners and staff as specific proposals are developed and then brought forward for decision.

BOLD – The Programme Structure

A Programme Board has been created which is chaired by the Chief Executive, and includes all Directors, the Deputy Leader of the Council, and a number of Heads of Service. It is proposed, subject to Member agreement, to recruit a Programme Manager to co-ordinate the various project workstreams, and to provide additional capacity to manage a programme of this size effectively. The programme will also draw support from a range of professional disciplines across the Council, including Finance, HR, IT and Procurement amongst others. The Programme Board is accountable to Cabinet.

BOLD -The Projects

The BOLD Programme will be made up of about 30 projects over a three year period. The majority of these will be areas of front-line service delivery, focusing on the areas of greatest spend.

There will also be a number of cross-Directorate projects, some focusing on service delivered across several Directorates, such as transport, and some focusing on support/back office functions. An early draft of proposed projects is set out at Appendix 1

From September 2009, each BOLD project will start to be developed. The aim is to have phase 1 projects ready to implement by April 2011, but it may be possible for some to start earlier, giving a head start on making the savings needed.

BOLD – The Future

Government funding beyond 2014 is currently extremely uncertain. Further plans will be developed as the picture becomes clearer.

[N.B The council will meet targets in the current 2008-11 Medium Term Financial Plan for efficiencies and spend less-do less. BOLD targets are in addition to those, not in place of them].