

From: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member Commercial & Traded Services
Geoff Wild - Director of Governance & Law

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 22 April 2015

Subject: Legal Services' *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* Update for Quarter 3 – 2014/15

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides a further update on the extensive work that is continuing within Legal Services, as the *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* project moves towards the end of its third and final year

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At various of its meetings over the past three years, the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee has received reports that provide an overview of the Legal Services *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* project. The project was developed in response to a growing need for legal services at a time of significant budget restraint.
- 1.2 This report provides a further update on progress on the project. An end-of-year - and end-of-project - summary report will follow in July.
- 1.3 Detailed information about the achievements and progress of the project in the last quarter are set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the report.

3. Contact details

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KENT LEGAL SERVICES



Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise **Quarter 3 Update Report – 2014/15**

Introduction

As we reach the final stages of the final year of Legal Services' *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* project, this report provides an update on activity in Quarter 3.

During this quarter, we restructured our Litigation, Employment and Education team to better align it to the needs of our clients. As a result, we have retained and promoted existing talent and reduced reliance on external support in key areas such as child sexual exploitation, asylum and adult social care. These changes have been made in readiness for taking over the council's insurance legal work in late 2015 and are due to provide savings in future years that are anticipated to exceed **£500,000**.

Through siting our Canterbury staff next to the court building, KLS has saved over £200,000 through reduced travelling time, greater availability for court and reduced use of counsel

Using the County Hall Lecture Theatre, KLS delivered a number of profitable seminars and conferences in the past quarter. These seminars are designed not only to generate an income stream but to also improve KCC service delivery, helping train both lawyers and staff across the council. Highlights from the KLS Training Programme include:

- Record attendance at the annual Community Care Conference, which drew outstanding feedback, and included attendees from over 200 miles away and contributed a profit of **£3,000**.
- Training for procurement staff on the highly litigious subject of evaluation criteria. The training will reduce both future legal spend and the future risk of litigation (estimated saving **£10,000**).
- A sell-out multi-agency Family Law Conference made a profit of **£3,264**. The conference provided another first, as the entire event was streamed live across the county. Lawyers came together at Maidstone and Canterbury to take part and social workers and other attendees were able to gain valuable training without leaving their offices.
- KLS now delivers 60% of its own training. In this quarter alone, savings on external training amounted to **£15,000**.

KLS developed a ground-breaking resource with the Local Government Association and ESD-toolkit which, for the very first time, catalogued the entirety of local government legal powers and

duties. In return for this nationally-valuable work, KLS received **£19,000** with more to follow by the end of the year.

KLS worked with Specialist Children's Services to reduce the costs of legal processes required to bring children into care. The partnership is on track to deliver over **£1 million** of savings through a combination of a reduction in court fees, improved information sharing, more advocacy being undertaken by KLS lawyers, and process improvements.

KLS and Trading Standards were the first to successfully prosecute a company where horsemeat was found in a food item. The case resulted in a significant fine and positive publicity for KCC from the BBC and Daily Telegraph

KLS protected Kent residents by successfully prosecuting two people illegally selling fireworks on Facebook

KLS and Clean Kent worked with borough council colleagues to successfully prosecute an individual for illegally dumping tyres across Dartford

KLS continued its commitment to Kent Jobs for Kent Young People by adding two further trainee solicitors, creating permanent jobs for 10 legal assistants and adding more apprentices. Many of these are from educational institutions across Kent, including the University of Kent. Our work experience programme continues to provide opportunities for young people interested in a legal career in local government. A key part of *Evolution* has been the replacement of external locum staff with junior, developing lawyers as part of a "right person, right job" methodology (**saving £150,000 per year**).

New External Clients

In Quarter 3 there were 10 new clients bringing the total this financial year to 42 new external clients trading with KLS, generating to date **£52,316** of new income.

An Academies Seminar was held for Brighton and Hove Council and this has generated a number of leads which are being followed up.

We continue to expand our bespoke Legal Schemes for Parish Councils, Schools, Charities and Empty Homes, providing much needed and cost effective advice to sectors of the community who desperately need good quality, affordable legal advice.

Major Work

A key part of *Evolution* has been to extend the nature and scope of work that KLS does, in order to reduce KCC's reliance on external law firms. Over the past quarter the following activity has led to savings of over **£75,000**:

- Loan agreements for the Expansion East Kent project (giving loans to SMEs on the Pfizer site at Sandwich)
- Major complex litigation against the council

- A complex conditional land swap agreement involving KCC and EKO LLP to provide for the relocation of the Laleham Gap SEN school to new build, state of the art educational facilities
- Significant victories in major judicial review challenges to the council's decision-making on age assessments of unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Procurement, litigation and governance issues involving KDAAT contracting
- Human rights assessments, securing concessions from the Home Office to protect KCC
- Acquisition of numerous strategic residential and commercial sites as part of the Live Margate project to help deliver the long-term regeneration of the town

Geoff Wild

Director of Governance & Law

February 2015