

PLAN ON A PAGE

EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF THE NEW SERVICE



Mark Gilmartin SSA,
is Director of Essex and
Kent (Police) Support
Services.

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A key step in the design of a shared service is evaluating the success. How do you measure that the service is effective against the business case, business plan or compared to the previous service? This article from Kent and Essex Support Services provides a case study on their *Plan On A Page* approach.

What is our collaboration?

In November 2010, against a background of significant fiscal challenges, the Joint Statutory Committee (JSC) for Essex Police and Kent Police approved the concept of an integrated Support Services Directorate (SSD), considering it to be 'the most effective delivery mechanism for providing efficient and effective support services for Essex and Kent'.

As Director of Essex and Kent Support Services, with the support from both forces, I have worked to join the services, management, staff, processes and underlying IT systems of the following departments: Procurement, HR, Estates, Transport, Finance, Business Services and IT.

The forces both introduced shared services business support centres for managing all the high volume – low complexity transactional activities for the force(s), geographically bringing together the core resources to single site centres, with limited facilities and administrative support at geographic operational locations to action physical tasks to support the force(s).

The Support Services Directorate has concentrated significant effort on rolling out 'self-service' administration tasks direct into our ERP system (SAP); cutting out double keying and allowing us to reduce resource numbers.

How are we evaluating success?

Initially the new shared services departments identified new (or refreshed existing) Service Level Statements (SLS) with the stakeholders of the force(s) to ensure that we have standards of service that we adhere to.

These were vital in the first 12 months; giving us targets to meet, and ensuring that we had turnaround times that met the expectations of the users.

The SLSs include the responsibilities of the team and where applicable included a measure: such as the turnaround time to raise a purchase order (4 hours), to change door/security access (1 day), % calls answered within 30 seconds.

These SLSs helped with the communication and buy-in from our customers – who previously had local staff that they approached and tasked work to.

Turnaround times were rarely measured at a local level as there was a perception of a task 'being in hand', and the ability to 'pop your head around the door' helped foster local working relationships and the local commander felt greater ownership of activities within their station.

Therefore the build of the SLSs, reporting on these and the completion of service requests has built up good understanding and acknowledgement of the role of the (new) joint departments.



Working together

The Support Services Directorate Plan On A Page

SSD has built a new performance management strategy: a 'Plan on a Page', that aims to focus organisational effort on our improvement activities, and less effort on gathering measures.

Future success measures

The Essex and Kent Support Services Directorate (SSD) cannot continue to use stationary SLS measures to evaluate our success; we may be hitting most of our targets and more, but still have some dissatisfied customers across the organisations.

WHY? The customer requirements have moved on; they want to see improvements in the next area of service. As such the Directorate needs to move on in its performance objectives and find out what successful delivery means to the customer now.

New Performance Management Strategy

SSD has built a new performance management strategy: a 'Plan on a Page', that aims to focus organisational effort on our improvement activities, and less effort on gathering measures. To focus on what we need to do, rather than how we got the measures. Looking forward: not defending history.

We have consulted our key stakeholder groups to ask them to help set our objectives: what do they see as important? This engagement has built a plan that requires SSD to focus improvement around four themed areas: Savings, Customers, Processes and Staff.

We have set Key Performance Questions to put these objectives into context: what are we looking to answer? Key Performance Indicators will be used to identify if we are moving in the right direction (populating our dashboard to check on our progress).

We will use customer and staff surveys to dip check our performance and gain their feedback.

We will start asking our key stakeholders direct questions about improvements.

We will benchmark ourselves with other police forces and external companies; looking to bring back new ideas for improvement.

The bedrock of our performance strategy, and of our success, is our staff: they are the individuals who collectively will impact on our successful service delivery.

Their engagement, motivation and buy-in are imperative and as such 'Staff Engagement' is a key area of our own performance strategy; to ensure we are bringing them with us in the improvements.

Where do you start?

With the experience of putting these new measures in place and being almost four years into delivery, I would suggest this to you:

- FIRST FIRST FIRST Baseline and benchmark where you are: financially, current measures, number of staff, size of estate, size of fleet etc
- Identify your performance strategy
- Where do you want to get to? What is your vision?
- Use your key stakeholders to inform your strategy
- Map out the journey to get there
- What checkpoints do you need? How will you report? What is your schedule?
- Change your questioning from 'Why did we get that score?' to 'What are we going to do about it?'
- Keep it simple, build a brand, and identify your selling points
- Market your strategy across the organisation

This Plan on a Page is in place for the Directorate and its seven constituent departments : HR, Finance, IT, Estates, Transport, Business Services and Procurement.

- Make sure the concept is understood by everyone, and they know how their activities impact on the 'big picture'.
- Add objectives to Personal Reviews and appraisals
- Repeat the selling points

The challenges of performance management

In many respects the challenges of building an effective performance management system are doubly difficult.

Firstly, certainly in the police sector, the performance regime around non-operational activities has been underdeveloped.

Secondly, our ambition was to design and implement a strategy that fitted a collaborative shared services function: one strategy, one set of objectives, one reporting method that supports our commitment to two strong organisations.

From the outset there has been a real focus on achieving savings targets, reducing costs and driving down overheads. Together with stakeholders and customers, well developed Service Level Statements helped to manage expectations, and concentrate our effort on consistent delivery of services.

The Heads of Profession, managing joint departments embarked on a process of convergence; building single staffing structures, and harmonising processes, and IT, to secure economies of scale.

As a team we reflected on this approach and subsequently revisited it to more fully represent our commitment to service improvement. In some respects convergence had perhaps become almost an end in itself. Latterly we have worked with the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) as it was absorbed by the new College of Policing (COP) and more recently, the Advanced Performance Institute (API) to refine the framework for 2014/15 onwards

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Award winning...

Most recently we won the Police Project of the Year at the 2014 iESE Awards (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise).

Our submission sought to describe our improvements against five dimensions:

- strategic alignment,
- cost/efficiency,
- service delivery,
- quality,
- and fairness and equality.

I would want to pay tribute to the Heads of Profession who have shown real commitment and enthusiasm for this task and without them this would not have proved achievable.