

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Policy & Performance (Assistant Chief Executive)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2007

## **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT – POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the Policy and Performance Business Improvement Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. To note the report

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

2. During this quarter we have made significant progress on developing and strengthening our approach to data quality, business planning, project management and equality and diversity, all areas which will have a positive impact on any future CPA re-assessment.

The production of the Annual Report (Best Value Performance Plan) and the development of the Beacon bid for “Transforming Services, Citizens Engagement and Empowerment” were both key, large pieces of work that were high quality and delivered by their end of June deadline. The audit of the Annual Report will take place in July and August, the findings of which will be reported on later in the year, and Chorley will be notified if we have been shortlisted for the Beacon award in October.

Our lead regarding the development of enhanced two-tier is resulting in improved collaborative working across Lancashire and a paper on the next steps produced by the Director of Policy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive) is being considered by Leaders and Chief Executive’s across Lancashire in early August.

Development of the Chorley Partnership is now moving on a pace with the development of a new performance management framework for the LSP and the launch of a re-refresh of the Community Strategy, with the final document expected to be agreed by the Chorley Partnership Board in September. Finally, the new website was launched to deadline and a major national marketing and PR showcase for the Council’s Intranet system has been successfully delivered with both being well received.

Sickness levels within the Directorate are low. However, due to a change over in authorisation responsibilities we experienced problems in approving a few invoices within the 30 day timescale and as a consequence did not meet the target this quarter. This has now been resolved and every effort will be made to recover the position and aim to achieve

the target. However, due to the limited turnover of invoices within the Directorate, it is possible that the target may not be achieved.

The Directorate now has a full complement of Staff covering the Directorates Policy & Performance and Communications functions and we are on track to deliver our planned cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region		Improved access to public services	√
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance	√	Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving People in their Communities	√	Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	√

## BACKGROUND

4. The Business Plan Monitoring Statement reports progress against the key actions and performance indicators included in the 2007/08 Business Improvement Plan for the Policy and Performance Directorate. The report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

## KEY MESSAGES

5. During the first quarter 2007/08, all the remaining vacant posts within the team were filled covering both policy and performance and communications activity, and for the first time since October 2006 the Communication and Policy and Performance elements of the Directorate is now fully staffed. This is a very positive position to be in given that the Council will from quarter 2 onwards be concentrating on seeking application for CPA re-assessment and preparing for the on-site inspection expected in the early part of 2008.

A key focus of the Directorate during this period was the development and publication of the Annual Report 2006/07, the Council's Best Value Performance Plan by the statutory deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June. The document is available on the Council website and hard copies are available in libraries and the One Stop Shop. The Directorate also included extracts from the Annual Report in the June edition of Borough News.

The Annual Report looked back over the past year and outlined how we used our resources, some of our key achievements in 2006/07 and included details of how the council performed against the range of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for District Councils. The document also looked to the future and set out some of the activity we will be undertaking during the next twelve months to deliver our vision, priorities and strategic objectives.

Overall, the Annual Report provided a very positive picture of performance by the Council. The Annual Report (Best Value Performance Plan) and in particular the BVPIs will be subject to audit during July and August, the outcomes of which will be reported to the Council later this year, usually around Christmas time.

## BUDGET UPDATE

## 6. SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/2008

### POLICY & PERFORMANCE

<b>JUNE 2007</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>626</b>
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
<b>ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>626</b>
Less Corporate Savings:		
- Corporate & Policy (vacant posts)	(20)	
		<b>(20)</b>
<b>CURRENT CASH BUDGET</b>		<b>606</b>
<b>FORECAST</b>		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
- Staffing Costs (Communications)	(8)	
- Computer Equipment - Purchase	7	
- Staffing Costs (Corporate & Policy)	(3)	
- Consultants Fees	3	
- Other	1	
<b>Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget</b>		<b>-</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved</b>		<b>-</b>
<b>FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2007/2008</b>		<b>606</b>

**Key Assumptions**

**Key Issues/Variables**

**Key Actions**

## SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

7. During this period there has been considerable focus on supporting the implementation of our revised business planning arrangements ensuring greater integration of equality, risk, efficiency and vfm within the directorates business improvement plans for 2007/08.

In addition, as part of the work to further embed project and performance management across the organisation, there has been considerable activity working alongside colleagues in Internal Audit to ensure our new Data Quality Policy is applied, which will ensure robust data collection and validation methods are in place for all Best Value Performance Indicators. The Directorate also supported the introduction of regular project manager briefings involving all Chorley's project managers to share the benefits and good practice currently operating and to discuss and resolve any barriers.

During May/June the Directorate facilitated a working group and wrote a Beacon bid under the theme "Transforming Services, Citizen Engagement and Empowerment" The bid was submitted on 29<sup>th</sup> June, one of 15 for this theme and we will find out if we have been successful in making it to the next stage on 9<sup>th</sup> October. If we progress through to the shortlist, the Beacon assessors will visit Chorley sometime between early November and early December.

During the last quarter of 2006/07, the Directorate chaired and led a cross-Lancashire Policy Group comprising representatives from all twelve Districts and the County Council to develop Lancashire's response to the White Paper on enhanced two-tier. As a consequence, the "Transforming Local Government in Lancashire" document was submitted to the DCLG on 25<sup>th</sup> January providing a joint vision for improved two-tier working and some outline proposals for a way forward. Following the announcement of the short list for the Unitary submissions in April, the Policy Group re-convened in May and Chorley have led on pulling together proposed next steps for taking this document forward which will be considered by Lancashire Leaders and Chief Executives in early August.

One of the proposals includes the development of a Locality Plan for the District setting out what the County Council and the District Council will be delivering in Chorley during the next twelve months. The Directorate is currently in the process of developing a Locality Plan for Chorley and liaising with the other Directorates and the County Council on its contents. A draft plan is expected to be available for consideration and approval by members in September.

Further work on strengthening Chorley's Strategic Partnership has continued a pace during this period. The directorate has been working with the theme groups and the Local Public Service Board in developing the action plans for the projects receiving a share of the £80k pump priming monies allocated by the Council to the LSP and most projects are now underway.

At the beginning of this year, Lancashire County Council launched a re-refresh of the Lancashire-wide Community Strategy "Ambition Lancashire", in order to have in place an agreed community strategy which will be used as the basis for the second generation LAAs being introduced from Summer 2008.

Given that Chorley's priorities would need to feed into the Ambition Lancashire refresh and the priorities in Chorley's Community Strategy are now three years old, in-line with the approach being taken by other districts in Lancashire it was considered appropriate to revisit and if necessary re-refresh Chorley's Community Strategy. As a consequence, at the

Chorley Partnership meeting in June, the Directorate launched a re-refresh of the Chorley Community Strategy and workshops were held with the LSP Board representatives present at the meeting on the future priorities of the Community Strategy.

Based on this feedback, a draft Community Strategy is currently being developed and is scheduled for release to all partners and stakeholders including elected members at the end of July for a four-week consultation period, following which a final draft will be considered and approved by the Chorley Partnership at its meeting in September. The agreed priorities for Chorley will then be fed into the current consultation on the re-refresh of Ambition Lancashire.

Finally, a performance management framework has also been developed and approved by the LSP Executive and work will commence to introduce the new arrangements post September when new action plans and targets are developed to ensure delivery of the re-freshed Community Strategy.

After considerable work in the latter part of 2006/07 including source and installation of a new content management system and full content provision of circa 3000 new pages, the Council's new website was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The communications team will continue to provide on-going web support to the entire Council, further develop the Council's website and ensure it is kept fresh and up to date.

The Marketing and Communications Strategy was finalised during this period and approved at Cabinet. Work is now underway to develop action plans to support the delivery of the Strategy and ensure the Council's profile and reputation both locally, regionally and nationally is further developed.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, the Communications Manager led the preparations for a national joint SOCITIM event held in the Lancastrian, to showcase the Council's success with the Loop. Around 80 local authority delegates from across the country attended, the majority from outside the North West and the event raised £7000.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

8. There are only two performance indicators that can be reported on this quarter as the remainder are reported on at year end:

Indicator Description	Annual Perf. 06/07	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr Target 07/08	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr Perf. 07/08	Comments
Sickness absence	13.56 fte Days	2.31 fte Days	0.66 fte Days Green Star	On track
% of undisputed invoices processed within 30 days	89.03%	96.71%	90.63% Red Traingle	Action plan appended

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

9. During this quarter as planned, benchmarking has been undertaken against the requirements for level 2 of the National Equality Standard and work is in progress to ensure all Equality Impact Assessments are completed. In line with the Equality Scheme, the Council is currently on track to achieve level 2 of the Standard in the Autumn of 2007.

During the first quarter the review of the Council's complaints system was completed and a new procedure developed for recording complaints which will now allow us to analyse complaints by race, gender and disability. The 'Dialogue' recording procedure will be introduced over the Summer of 2007.

The Directorate alongside the Director of Finance who has the responsibility for Property, is continuing to work with the Disability Liaison Group to ensure their access requirements to Council and other public buildings are met.

Finally, during this period, the Directorate in conjunction with Human Resources reviewed the Council's approach regarding Equality and Diversity training and as a result have revised the induction programme for new starters to ensure they are made aware of the Council's Equality Scheme.

## RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

10. One of the risks identified which would have implications for the delivery of the Business Improvement Plan was the inability to recruit to the vacant posts within the Directorate covering communications staff and in particular the Performance Advisor post which we had been unable to fill in two previous recruitment attempts. However, following a series of actions including re-configuring roles and responsibilities of the posts we have been successful in recruiting high calibre staff to the organisation.

## VALUE FOR MONEY/EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

11. The Directorate anticipates in the region of £77k of cashable and non cashable efficiency savings in 2007/08, most of which arising from the re-structure of the Directorate in 2006, changes to the way in which we communicate to staff and a revision in our approach to the development of our marketing, publicity and communications materials. So far we are on track with achieving our efficiencies and to date have achieved £31k from the restructure of the directorate and £13.5k from introducing an on-line staff newsletter rather than a printed version. The other savings are also expected to be realised but will not be known until later in the year.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	√
Legal			

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE

13. The actions outlined above will support the delivery of the Council's Equality Scheme approved by cabinet in December 2006.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE (ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lesley-Ann Fenton	5323	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2007	***

**% Invoices Processed within 30 days****FINANCIAL YEAR 2007 / 2008***Indicator Short Name: Invoices processed*

Q3		End of Year Target
Performance	Target	
90.63%	96.71	96.71
	%	

**Please explain the reasons why progress has not reached expectations:**

This indicator is the joint responsibility of the Finance Directorate and Policy and Performance.

Due to a change in staff turnover a request was made to Exchequer to revise the named officers responsible for authorising invoices. Unfortunately, when the revisions were made, a technical problem arose where one of the two main authorisers (Communications Manager) who generates most invoices for the Directorate was no longer receiving invoices for approval. As a consequence, unknown to the Director, a few invoices during this period were automatically being passed to the Director's area in radius for authorisation. Normally, the Director is aware of the limited no of invoices she has authorised, therefore only checks the system periodically. As a consequence the failure to pick up these invoices for payment has had a disproportionate impact on processing performance due to the relatively small number of invoices processed by the directorate.

**Please detail corrective action to be undertaken:**

The technical issue has now been resolved and as previously, the Communications Manager is now able to authorise invoices.

- A Senior Exchequer Officer attended Policy & Performance Team meeting in June to support the Directorate in improving their BVPI performance and reinforce good practice. In addition, the Director will examine weekly reports issued by finance listing those invoices which are in danger of moving out of the prescribed timescales and will intervene where necessary.

**Action planned through financial year:**

See above

**Please give an objective assessment as to whether the year end target will be met:**

Every effort will be made to achieve the target however given that this is a cumulative indicator and the Directorate has limited invoices it may not be possible to achieve the target.

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