

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Policy & Performance)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 November 2007

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT – POLICY & PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To report progress against the key actions and performance indicators in the Policy and Performance Business Improvement Plan for 2007/2008.

RECOMMENDATION

2. To note the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. With the exception of a couple of actions around Equality and Diversity, the Directorate has delivered all the actions set out in the Business Improvement Plan scheduled for completion during the 2nd quarter of 2007/08. In particular, there has been considerable activity undertaken to work with partners to develop and agree the Sustainable Community Strategy whilst at the same time, undertaking our own annual review of the Council's Corporate Strategy which will see the introduction of a range of new projects and further measures which will enable us to monitor and demonstrate delivery against our key priorities over the next twelve months.
4. Over the Summer period since the recruitment of the Performance Advisor (Environment and Regeneration) in July, we have seen considerable development in our approach to consultation and participation through the development of a Consultation and Participation Strategy, action plan and supporting toolkit and we have instigated the re-tender of the Chorley Citizen's Panel which is seen as a key method for measuring our communities' satisfaction and perception as it is designed to be representative of the wider population and can track change over time.
5. The Directorate developed and submitted the Council's application for CPA re-assessment, which will be considered by the Regional Panel on the 31st October 2007 and if successful, we will be eligible for a Corporate Assessment some time from mid May 2008 onwards.
6. Sickness levels within the Directorate remain low and well below the target and our performance in processing invoices has improved significantly and subject to there being a sufficient turnover of invoices we should be on track to achieve the target by the year-end.
7. All risks identified are being managed and we are on track to deliver our planned cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. 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

9. 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 1st July to 30th September 2007.

KEY MESSAGES

10. Two key areas of focus for the Directorate during this period was the development of a re-freshed Sustainable Community Strategy for Chorley and in line with our business planning process, undertaking an annual refresh of the Council's three-year Corporate Strategy.
11. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) was approved by the LSP Executive on 10th October and includes a re-freshed vision, five priorities including a new priority on tackling climate change and a range of indicators and targets that we will monitor with our partners to measure our success. A joint action planning workshop with thematic leads and supporting officers from partner organisations is being planned for November in order to develop the accompanying SCS action plan and to identify future joint working projects.
12. The Council's re-freshed Corporate Strategy has taken into account the revisions to the Community Strategy highlighted above, the 'big issues' currently facing the Council and the lessons learned from the delivery of the Strategy in 2006/07. As a consequence the one page format, current vision and priorities have been retained. However, in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy we have a new Strategic Objective to Develop Local Solutions to Climate Change. At the time of writing this report, the Executive Cabinet at its meeting on 4th October, approved the Corporate Strategy which contained 30 key projects and 47 measures. However, the Corporate Strategy will be debated and approved by full Council on 30th October.
13. In the last Business Plan Monitoring Statement we informed Members of our Beacon bid development and submission for the theme "Transforming Services, Citizens' Engagement and Empowerment." On 9th October Chorley was short-listed along with four other authorities (15 authorities originally applied for this theme). As a consequence, an on-site visit took place on the morning of 8th November and the Council will present our bid to a panel of judges in London in January 2008. The final results will not be announced until March 2008. However, we are hopeful that Chorley will be recognised for our excellent and innovative practice under this theme.
14. In line with the Council's commitment to be recognised as an Excellent Council under CPA methodology, as planned, the Directorate compiled and submitted by the 1st October deadline, a three-page submission requesting a CPA re-categorisation. The Council's Relationship Manager will present Chorley's submission to a Regional Panel on 31st October and the Council will be informed of the outcome by 12th November. Should our bid be successful, we can expect a corporate assessment anytime from mid May onwards.

BUDGET UPDATE

15. SERVICE LEVEL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/2008

SEPTEMBER 2007	£'000	£'000
ORIGINAL CASH BUDGET		626
Add Adjustments for In year cash movements		
Virements to/from other Services		
- Chief Officer Car Lease Scheme		(2)
ADJUSTED CASH BUDGET		624
Less Corporate Savings:		
- Corporate & Policy (vacant posts)	(25)	
		(25)
CURRENT CASH BUDGET		599
FORECAST		
EXPENDITURE		
- Staffing Costs (External Funding Officer)	(16)	
- Staffing Costs (Communications)	(8)	
- Computer Equipment - Purchase	8	
- Conference costs	5	
- Consultants Fees	3	
- Copyright Licence Fees	(2)	
- Other	1	
Expenditure under (-) or over (+) current cash budget		(9)
INCOME		
Contributions to Conference fees	(5)	
Income under (+)/ over (-) achieved		(5)
FORECAST CASH OUTTURN 2007/2008		585

Key Assumptions

- Assumes no cover provided for External Funding Officer maternity leave.

Key Issues/Variables

- Contribution of £5k to Corporate Savings target in September from salary savings.

Key Actions

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

16. In line with the Business Improvement Plan, over the summer period, an area of focus for the Directorate has been on strengthening the Council's approach to consultation and participation. As a consequence a new Consultation and Participation Strategy has been developed and was approved by Executive Cabinet on 4th October. To support delivery of the Strategy, a consultation toolkit and action plan has been produced and an intranet/internet based consultation database is being developed in conjunction with ICT which will enable improved co-ordination of consultation activity and provide further evidence that we are using feedback to inform service improvements and policy development.
17. The Directorate has also led the re-tendering of the recruitment and management of the Citizens' Panel and the contract has been awarded to NWA Social and Market Research who will over the next few months recruit a new Citizens' Panel of 1,000 representative people from across the Borough. The Citizen's Panel will then be surveyed three times over the next 12 month period.
18. Following feedback from some Elected Members and members of the public regarding issues with the distribution of the Council's newspaper "Borough News", during the Summer the current distribution methods were audited, reviewed and options and issues explored. As a consequence, the next issue of the Borough News will be sent out in November to every household in the Borough using the Royal Mail. In addition, copies will be available for the public to take in the Council's reception in the Town Hall, the One Stop Shop and Booths supermarket. The Communication's Team welcomes feedback on the new distribution methods and if there are still delivery issues in some areas please inform the Council's Communication's Manager.
19. The Communication's Team continued to implement the Communications and Marketing Strategy designed to support the delivery of the Council's key priorities and strategic objectives. In particular, there was considerable work done this period to support the Chorley Markets project through the development of a communications strategy for the markets, launching of a major marketing campaign including targeting coach drivers from across the UK to organise trips to the town and a focus on media relations with a considerable increase in the number of press releases publicising activities taking place at the market. Other publicity and communications included supporting the launch of the Town Centre Heritage Trail and the production of the successful "Get Up and Go" Summer brochure.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

20. 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 st Qtr Perf 07/08	2 nd Qtr Target 07/08	2 nd Qtr Perf 07/08	Comments
Sickness absence	13.56 fte days	0.66 fte days	4.61 fte days	1.05 fte days Green Star	On track
% of undisputed invoices processed within 30 days	89.03%	90.63%	96.71%	95.35% Blue Circle	Within 5% tolerance level

21. Sickness absence continues to be low within the Directorate and there has been a marked improvement in the Directorates performance in the processing of invoices and every effort will be made to achieve the year-end target for this indicator.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

22. In line with the Business Improvement Plan, there has been considerable activity during the Summer period to strengthen the Council's approach to Equality and Diversity and included establishing the Equality Champions Working Group from across the Council and subsequently working with departments to ensure our Equality Impact Assessments are up to date. This work has provided key evidence of our approach to Equality and Diversity, and the self assessment completed in September 2007 can demonstrate that we are at level 2 of the Equality Standard and on track to achieve level 3.
23. The Directorate also produced a revised Equality Scheme to cover the seven strands of diversity (taking in the urban and rural element) and meet the requirements of the revised Equality Standard. In addition, the Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit was also revised taking account of the new Council structure. Both documents were approved at Executive Cabinet in October.
24. This revision to the Equality Scheme was not foreseen in the Business Improvement Plan and as a consequence, there were a few Equality and Diversity actions in the Business Improvement Plan which have slipped including publishing a list of approved consultation venues on the Loop and the Council website which ensure that they are appropriate consultation venues which cater for the needs of people with a disability; and the introduction of briefings and bulletins on equality and diversity issues for all staff and members. These areas will be addressed during the third quarter.
25. Finally, as planned the draft LSP Community Cohesion strategy was developed which is currently out to consultation for a three month period concluding at the end of December. The intention will be to produce a final Strategy in the new year for endorsement by Executive cabinet and approval by the LSP.

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

26. All risks are currently being managed in line with the planned actions and to-date have not been an issue e.g. The Directorate is fully staffed, the initial view of the impact of job evaluation on the Directorate is minimal, we are on track to achieve the savings target and through the "keeping in Touch" days, the External Funding Officer currently on maternity leave is keeping abreast of funding opportunities.

VALUE FOR MONEY/EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

27. 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, £16.5k from introducing an on-line staff newsletter rather than a printed version and £6k from a communications re-structure. The other savings are also expected to be realised but will not be known until later in the year.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

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

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	√
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY & PERFORMANCE)

28. Please note the comments in paragraphs 17-20.

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

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lesley-Ann Fenton	5323	25/10/2007	V:/DPPREP2007/BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT