

Minutes of: PERFORMANCE TASK GROUP

Date of Meeting: 17 January 2007

PRESENT: Councillor Sandiford (in the Chair)
Councillors Dickinson, Morris, Lamb, Neal
Starkey (substituting for Lynskey)

IN ATTENDANCE: Lesley Noble, Head of Policy Change Management
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Brian Essex, Portfolio Holder, Policy and
Performance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised under this item.

4. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed Members that at the Overview and Management Committee meeting in December it was agreed that the new arrangements would continue. Therefore once the names of the three main Scrutiny Groups had been approved by Council on 31 January, then the group would be called the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The Policy Task Group had referred three policies to the Performance Task Group to monitor a number of Action Plans, which were; Community Leadership Action Plan; Partnership Working Action Plan and the Asset Management Action Plan.

The Chair indicated that at the present time a Committee Schedule is being prepared and it was envisaged that this Committee would continue to meet on a 6 weekly basis, which would allow for the quarterly BVPI reports and also asking Officer and Portfolio Holders of any underachieving BVPI to update members on future improvements to their service.

The Chair informed members that as well as Quarter 3 BVPIs there would also be the Housing Benefits and Council Tax Service.

The Chair indicated that with Member's agreement, the Head of Policy and Change Management would present the Performance Management and Data Quality report to the Group.

Resolved:

That Members agreed that the report be presented as an 'urgent item'.

5. BVPIs Reported Annually

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance indicated that Covalent training was available to Members and that details would be sent to all Members inviting them to attend training. He also informed members that it was important for them to attend the CPA Member Development Session on Tuesday, 23 January.

The Head of Policy and Change Management presented an update on the BVPIs reported Annually. She explained that an approach was made to each Officer responsible for annually BVPIs and asking for an explanation and update as to what position their BVPI was at. Not all Officers indicated definitively that they were on target or not.

It was agreed that, as it was the first time this information had been requested, this was a learning exercise and that greater clarity of the notes that explains the progress against each BVPI would be given the next time they are asked for an update of those BVPIs reported annually.

The Head of Policy and Change Management provided a summary which gave a breakdown of the statistics.

Of the 34 BVPIs reported annually 20 were on target, 3 were not on target and 11 were either don't know, or did not have a target attached to them. The reason for the don't knows was because the Officer providing the report did not give a clear enough explanation to establish whether or not their BVPI was on target and it was agreed the next time the report was produced, officers would be expected to give a definitive statement about this.

In relation to all BVPIs (those collected monthly/quarterly/annually, 61% were on target, 25% not on target and 14% don't know. As a comparison, at the end of last year 67% were on target.

A member indicated that this Committee should be calling to account the Officers of the under-achieving BVPIs. The Chair informed

Members that the Portfolio Holders of those under-achieving BVPIs should also be asking questions.

Councillor Essex informed Members that the BVPIs are taken to Cabinet on a quarterly basis and Portfolio Holders are asked to explain the reasons for any BVPIs which are underachieving.

The Head of Policy and Change Management explained that all Heads of Service set their own targets. There is a statutory obligation to publish new targets for the following three years by end of June to publish in their Business Plans.

Members asked questions in relation to the BVPI report and the Culture and Related Services which they asked for further clarification as to who monitors how money is being spent and how it is accounted for. The Head of Policy and Change Management indicated that it was recognised that it was a very difficult task to set a target for an amount of money spent on giving advice, and that even the Audit Commission had admitted that this was a difficult indicator and there were several problems around the collection of it. The Chair asked that the Head of Communities and Partnership attend the next meeting to explain in more detail how the money is spent and what criteria is used to award grants to outside bodies.

Members agreed that the Head of Street Scene and Liveability should be invited to attend a future meeting, as there were a number of issues that individual Members would like to raise. The Chair indicated that Members should send in their questions to the Scrutiny Support Officer so that they can be forwarded to the Head of Street Scene and Liveability to enable her to have a clearer understanding of member's issues prior to attending the meeting. It was also agreed that all Members should be given the opportunity of raising any issues through the Scrutiny Support Officer so that they can be discussed with the Head of Street Scene and Liveability at the next meeting.

There were a number of other BVPIs which would not achieve their targets and it was agreed to look at these more closely in the Quarter 3 report being presented to the Committee in March.

The Head of Policy and Change Management updated Members on the Key Success Indicators. The KSI's represent the Council's 8x8x2008 targets which we are most committed to improving. Of the 33 KSI's, 48% were on target, 27% not on target and 24% don't know.

Resolved:

1. That the Task Group note the report.
2. That a letter be sent to all Members asking them to contact the Head of Policy and Change Management if they would like covalent training.

3. That the Head of Communities and Partnership be invited to the next meeting of the Group.
4. That the Head of Street Scene and Liveability be invited to a future meeting.

NOTE: The Chair considered that the following item was urgent on the grounds that the report needed the Groups approval to enable it to be presented to Cabinet in February and the next meeting of the Performance Task Group would not be held until March.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DATA QUALITY

The Head of Policy and Change Management presented a report of the proposed Performance Management and Data Quality Policy for the Council.

The Policy had been developed to set out the Council's approach to performance management by securing a high level of data quality within the context of performance information, to support the Council's approach to performance management.

The policy will be supported by a strategic action plan that demonstrates how the Council intends to continually develop and improve its approach to performance management.

The Government want to be more confident that outturns published are accurate and as a Council we need to ensure all information is correct and be able to demonstrate that we have adequate arrangements to demonstrate this. The purpose of the Performance Management & Data Quality Policy and the supporting strategic action plan is to provide this.

Members agreed to look at the report and send comments through the Scrutiny Support Officer.

Resolved:

That the report be approved, subject to additional comments by Members.

7. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that at the last meeting Members raised concern about BVPI 8 invoices paid on time, which showed that both Legal and Democratic Services and Street Scene and Liveability were below target.

As the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services was in attendance at the last meeting she was able to provide details on the under achieving targets.

The Finance Manager provided information on the latest results for December 2006 which showed a positive impressive increase by all departments with 95.33% of invoices paid on time (92.5% target).

Resolved

That the information be noted.