

Subject: Length of Policies, Strategies and Committee Reports **Status:** For Publication

Report to: Performance Scrutiny
Cabinet Agenda Setting
Cabinet **Date:** 19th October 2010
28th October 2010
17th November 2010

Report of: Director of Business

Portfolio Holder: Finance and Resources

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult with members on proposals to reduce the length of policies, strategies and committee reports.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering quality Services to our customers
- Providing value for money services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- If reductions in the length of documents is not made there will be no productivity savings to the amount time spent by officers and councillors in reading reports and to the cost of copying documents for committees.
- Those writing reports may have to take marginally longer in writing them as they will have to think very carefully about making the most important points in the most succinct way.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 To create productivity savings, members are asked to consider setting a corporate target to reduce the length of all policies, strategies and committee reports by 40%.

- 4.2 This will result in 40% less paper being used and productivity savings in the time spent by officers and councillors in reading reports.
- 4.3 Those writing reports may have to take marginally longer in writing them as they will have to think very carefully about making the most important points in the most succinct way. It is proposed that as an incentive those with the shortest word count should be first on the agenda and the longest reports should be last.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 At present Council staff are making every effort to reduce costs to meet the deficits anticipated in future years. These savings can be both in terms of reduction of cash expenses and non-cash time savings for staff to spend on other duties.
- 5.2 Though the savings achieved from this proposal will be difficult to measure and monitor, if the agenda for the October 2010 Full Council was used as an example the cashable cost savings might be as follows:

Total cost of printing a pack	£3.27 (308 b/w page and 36 colour pages)
Total cost of all printing	£166 (36 members, 5 chief officers, 10 public)
40% reduction might save	£66

- 5.3 Translating this to an annual target cashable saving to monitor is extremely complicated, and possibly dependent upon determining which policies, strategies and reports are due to be presented in any given year. In the past 12 months there have been several major reports on items, such as the Core Strategy and the Leisure Review, which might distort any year-on-year cost comparisons.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 No additional comments.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 No HR comments.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Reductions in the length of documents will create efficiencies and costs saving benefits.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 That members recommend to Cabinet that a corporate target be set to reduce the length of all existing policies, strategies and committee reports and that existing documents should be reduced by 40% when being revised.
- 9.2 That where possible the shortest reports be listed first on the agenda, unless there are items of significant public interest requiring prioritising, or at the discretion of the Chair.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Director of Business/ Monitoring Officer.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a Community Impact Assessment required No
- Is a Community Impact Assessment attached No

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No
- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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Background Papers
None