

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A NON-KEY DECISION
CABINET**

ITEM:	PERFORMANCE MONITORING
Members Present:	Councillors: RJ Phillips (Leader), Mrs LO Barnett, PJ Edwards, Mrs JP French, JC Mayson, DW Rule MBE (Deputy Leader), RV Stockton, DB Wilcox, RM Wilson.
Date of Decision:	14th Dec 2006
Exempt:	No -
Confidential	No
Urgent Decision:	No
Purpose:	To report the results of the recently completed audit of performance management and the process for responding to the Audit Commission.
Decision:	THAT the report be noted and that an Action Plan be brought back to Cabinet prior to being submitted to the Audit Commission.
Reasons for the Decision:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 2005, the corporate assessment process found that performance management was the weakest area of the Council’s overall arrangements. The Audit Commission has now re-examined performance management and assessed progress over the last twelve months. The two-week audit covered processes, systems and procedures as well as the extent to which these are now embedded in the culture of the Council. Three key services were used to test the development of a performance management culture – adult social care, children’s social care and benefits. 2. The main conclusion of the audit is that the Council is making steady progress in strengthening its performance management arrangements and in embedding a performance culture. However the report makes it very clear that the Council still has a long way to go and needs to move even faster in future if it is to bridge the gap between itself and what the Commission has identified as best practice local authorities. 3. The audit found that arrangements for managing performance in the two social care areas are improving steadily. These arrangements have been criticised in the past by various inspectorates. As a result of these improvements, the Commission consider it less likely that serious under-performance will go unreported in future. However, as with corporate arrangements, more needs to be

done, particularly in children’s social care, to ensure that improvements are sustained in line with corporate policy and embedded across the services.

- 4. Arrangements for managing performance in benefits were found to have improved significantly over the past year with particular strengths around workload monitoring and the setting of individual targets.
- 5. The audit report makes fourteen recommendations grouped under four headings:
 - Performance management culture and organisation
 - Partnerships, priorities and planning
 - Monitoring, analysing and reporting and
 - Managing individual performance

These recommendations are attached at Appendix 1

- 6. The recommendations are now being considered by those directly involved in the audit, directorate improvement staff, policy and performance, communications, human resources, the senior management team and corporate management board. An action & communications plan will be developed for the Audit Committees meeting on 19th January 2007. A formal response will then be made to the Audit Commission.
- 7. Performance management has been the subject of considerable work and investment since the corporate assessment in 2005. It is one of the key areas in the overall improvement plan and central to the Herefordshire Connects transformation programme. The network of improvement managers is being established with two officers in post and a third appointed. The children and young peoples post is still not filled on a permanent basis and this remains a risk.
- 8. The audit clearly expects the Council to maintain its current focus on:
 - streamlined, fit for purpose, processes and crucially,
 - establishing a culture of continuous improvement across members and officers

if it is to achieve, and demonstrate that it is achieving, fundamental service improvement over the next 12 months.

Options Considered:	None, the Council has to respond to the audit recommendations.
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Declaration of Interest:	
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COUNCILLOR RJ PHILLIPS: Date:... 14th Dec 2006.... LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
