

CABINET MEMBER (RESOURCES) PRESENTATION

Report By: Cabinet Member (Resources)

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To outline the key elements of the Resource portfolio and the future direction that has been agreed with the Director.

Financial Implications

2. Not applicable.

Background

3. DIRECTORATE ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The Directorate consists of approximately 230 staff divided into four key areas of activity:
 - a. Asset Management & Property Services (AMPS).
 - b. Audit Services (AS).
 - c. Benefit & Exchequer Services (BES).
 - d. Financial Services (FS).
- 3.2 The Resources directorate management team (RMT) consists of the following members of staff:
 - a. Director (Sonia Rees).
 - b. Head of Asset Management & Property Services (Malcolm MacAskill).
 - c. Audit Services Manager (Tony Ford).
 - d. Head of Benefit & Exchequer Services (Mike Toney).
 - e. Head of Financial Services (David Powell).
- 3.3 The Resources management team meets twice a month. Meetings scheduled for the beginning of the month are geared around prompt delivery of the corporate Team Talk briefing. Meetings scheduled for the middle of the month focus on:
 - a. Progress achieving key priorities.

- b. Monitoring of directorate budgets.
 - c. Review of the directorate risk register.
 - d. Progress achieving corporate HR targets.
- 3.4 The Director keeps the Cabinet Member (Resources) briefed on key issues on a weekly basis. The Cabinet Member (Resources) and the Director have a monthly briefing meeting with the Leader to discuss strategic finance issues as the Leader has prime responsibility for this area of Council policy whilst the Cabinet Member (Resources) supports. Quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive, Director, Leader and Cabinet Member (Resources) are held to agree the Director’s key priorities and discuss progress.
- 3.5 Performance to date against the directorate and service plans for 2008/09 is as expected at the end of the first quarter. More detail is provided in the accompanying report on this agenda from the Director of Resources. Key priorities and issues going forward are identified in a later section of this report.

4. SERVICE PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 Performance against the directorate’s key priorities for 2007/08 is outlined in the Annual Report for 2007/08 attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The Annual Report also sets out the key priorities at directorate and service level for 2008/09.
- 4.2 The Annual Report shows how the directorate and service priorities support themes and priorities set out in the council’s Corporate Plan for 2008 – 2011. These are as follows:

CORPORATE PLAN 2008 – 2011	
THEME	Organisational improvement and greater efficiency
PRIORITY	Better services, quality of life and improved value for money

- 4.3 The directorate has established three key priorities in support of the Corporate Plan theme and priority as follows:
- a. Our customers.
 - b. Our staff.
 - c. Value for Money.
- 4.4 These priorities have been defined as set out in the directorate’s Annual Report for 2007/08. Each of the four services has added specific issues to the directorate priorities as can also be seen in the Annual Report.
- 4.5 The directorate and four service plans for Resources have all been approved by the Policy & Performance team as compliant with the corporate standard.

- 4.6 The directorate and service plans have been used to establish and agree personal objectives for the year for all members of staff in the directorate. Individual priorities are therefore linked to Corporate Plan priorities for 2008 – 2011.
- 4.7 An improved performance management system for the directorate will have been fully implemented by the end of July. The Policy & Performance team has approved the improved arrangements as compliant with corporate requirements. A checklist system has been devised to track progress at team, service and directorate level. This culminates in a monthly report from RMT to all staff outlining progress against the directorate plan that circulated as part of the Team Talk briefing system. The latest directorate performance report for 2008/09 is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. Progress at the end of June is as expected at the end of the first quarter of the year.

5. KEY PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The Director's key priorities for the year relate to directorate and service priorities as set out in agreed plans for 2008/09. The Director's priorities have been agreed with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member (Resources) as follows:
- a. Continue to improve financial management across the Council, both in terms of financial support provided and financial management skills of managers, with particular emphasis on the Children & Young People's directorate.
 - b. Ensure all directorates have a robust budget management plan for 2008/09 in place.
 - c. Resolve staffing and capacity issues in AMPS team in order to be able to support corporate priorities for capital and regeneration projects.
 - d. Develop a revised accommodation strategy to rationalise the Council and PCT estate, keeping to the agreed timetable for preparing a business case for the preferred option for Cabinet to approve in November 2008 after Strategic Monitoring Committee has had an opportunity to comment.
 - e. Implement the preferred option resulting from the Service Delivery Review of the Amey Wye Valley Limited contract in the AMPS team.
 - f. Complete a review of the Council's procurement strategy and a review of the Council and PCT's corporate procurement function.
 - g. Focus on improving customer service and ICT aspects of the benefit service.
 - h. Prepare for 2008 Use of Resources assessment and the new Benefits service assessment.
 - i. Work with the Policy & Performance team to develop a consistent approach to measuring value for money across all services.
- 5.2 Progress on the above issues is noted in Appendix 2 to this report.

6. FUTURE SCRUTINY

- 6.1 The key issues within the Resources portfolio that will warrant scrutiny by the Strategic Monitoring Committee are as follows:

- a. Accommodation strategy.
 - b. Financial strategy.
 - c. Smallholdings strategy.
- 6.2 These items are already included in the Strategic Monitoring Committee's work plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Resources Directorate continues to direct all its efforts into supporting corporate priorities through effective management of resources. The links from the Corporate Plan to personal performance plans are created via the directorate and service plans.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Resources Directorate Annual Report 2007/08.

Appendix 2 – Resources Directorate Key Priorities 2008/09 – Progress as at 30 June.