

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE KEY PRIORITIES 2008/09 – PROGRESS AS AT 30 JUNE 2008

<p>OUR CUSTOMERS</p> <p>Getting things right for our customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving communication with our customers and acting on feedback • Completing our equality impact assessments and implementing the findings • Meeting agreed service performance targets • Working more closely with the PCT and others to provide improved outcomes for service users 	<p>The benefits team has a particular focus on customers and is currently working with the Performance Development Team from the Department of Work & Pensions to see how the team’s customer service offering can be improved. This work will link in to a review of the Council’s overall customer services strategy being led by the Interim Deputy Chief Executive. The aim is to ensure that we deal with customer enquiries in one contact, right first time.</p> <p>A Plain English training programme is being organised for the directorate. Over half our staff will be attending the training, details of which will be announced shortly once dates have been agreed with the Plain English Campaign trainers.</p> <p>All teams have arrangements in place for gathering feedback from customers that will be reviewed during the course of the year to ensure they are effective and, most importantly, that the information is used to improve services.</p> <p>The directorate’s training day on equality issues was held on 10 June. Those not able to attend this session will join another directorate training day so that our equality impact assessments can be finalised on time by September.</p> <p>We have produced five service plans – one at directorate level and one for each of our four services. All our plans have been approved by the Policy & Performance team. We completely redesigned our directorate performance management arrangements for 2008/09 based on a simple checklist system that starts at team level, is aggregated at service level and culminates in a monthly performance meeting at directorate level. We provide monthly feedback to staff using the Team Talk briefing system on performance against priorities.</p> <p>The Director is closely involved in discussions with the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and other joint management team (JMT) colleagues on how to carry out a strategic review of shared services for the council and primary care trust. A proposal will be ready for JMT to consider in the first instance by September.</p> <p>Joint working opportunities are already being exploited by the Asset Management & Property Services team (developing an integrated office accommodation strategy) and by the Audit Services team (a joint internal audit plan for 2008/09 has been agreed by the council and primary care trust).</p>
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<p>OUR STAFF</p> <p>Making our staff feel valued and involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting corporate HR targets • Preparing for Investors in People accreditation • Responding positively to the 2007 Employee Opinion survey (EOS) with a particular emphasis on making sure all channels of communication with staff are effective, encouraging staff to help us make communications a two-way dialogue and empowering staff to get involved in Directorate and service decision-making • Preparing for the end of the current Single Status JE pay protection arrangements • Recruiting, retaining, motivating and developing high quality staff 	<p>We are working with HR colleagues to ensure that the information needed to manage directorate performance against corporate HR targets is suitable and timely. This SRD was completed in the week after the reporting deadline.</p> <p>All 231 SRDs due by 31 May had been completed by the reporting cut-off date of 27 June.</p> <p>The corporate action plan in response to last year’s feedback from the IIP pre-accreditation assessment is currently being developed. We will plan the directorate response and incorporate it into our service plans as soon as it is available.</p> <p>There are twenty four members of staff within the directorate responsible for delivering the monthly Team Talk briefing. All twenty four Team Talk briefings for June were confirmed as having been held as at 27 June. Plans are in place in some teams to hold quarterly staff meetings to discuss team performance.</p> <p>All teams have identified those members of staff still in receipt of pay protection and are opening discussions with the individuals concerned to look at options. This process is being supported by HR.</p> <p>A key concern is staffing capacity generally but in the AMPS team in particular. Plans are being developed with HR colleagues to tackle the issues and progress will be monitored carefully as this could affect our ability to provide support to a number of important Council projects. The office accommodation project will be supported by external programme management support when it enters implementation phase.</p>
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<p>VALUE FOR MONEY Providing excellent, value for money services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the Council's Use of Resources assessment • Preparing for the new Benefits assessment process • Preparing for the new Comprehensive Area Assessment arrangements • Working more closely with the PCT to improve VfM • Improving ICT audit and corporate procurement capacity (the Crookall Review refers) • Continuing to improve performance management in line with the corporate framework • Continuing to improve financial management & reporting across the Council • Demonstrating improvements in value for money including use of benchmarking techniques • Beginning a revised accommodation strategy to rationalise the Council and PCT estate • Monitoring and supporting the Council's efficiency project 	<p>Preparation of the Use of Resources self-assessment by the August deadline is going according to plan. Elements will be ready in July to assist the Audit Commission with their work loads.</p> <p>The statement of accounts for 2007/08 was published earlier than ever and approved by the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee on 20 June.</p> <p>The Department of Work & Pensions is providing free consultancy to help the benefits team prepare for their new assessment regime.</p> <p>Developments with the Comprehensive Area Assessment framework and the Use of Resources assessment are monitored very closely and we have assisted in officer and member briefings.</p> <p>The new Audit Services structure is in the final stages of implementation.</p> <p>Performance reporting arrangements are being further improved with support and challenge from our Performance Improvement Manager.</p> <p>Plans are in place to improve financial management in the Children & Young People's directorate and enhance the capacity of finance team supporting this directorate following independent review.</p> <p>The West Midlands Centre for Excellence is reviewing the Council and PCT's corporate procurement resource requirements at no cost to the council. Their report is due by the end of the summer.</p> <p>A training programme is in place to improve financial management skills and a programme of events for members through to 2009 has been arranged.</p> <p>All teams are developing their approach to benchmarking.</p> <p>A revised accommodation strategy is being prepared in line with the process and timetable agreed by members. Formal decisions are programmed for November. A plan has been agreed to create a joint headquarters at Brockington and a joint provider unit at Belmont. Staff moves will begin in July so that Brockington is operating as planned by September.</p> <p>The Council's efficiency programme is being on track and a 'mini guide' to doing business with the council published.</p>
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