

To provide members with assurance that work on the issues identified in the action plans arising from the Special Report by the Director of Resources and the subsequent Independent Review of Herefordshire Council's ICT Financial and Contractual Governance Arrangements (Crookall Review), is being progressed Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 27th March 2008 that progress be monitored within the overall performance and risk reporting framework provided by the Integrated Performance Report (IPR).

The updated action plans are attached below. Those actions previously reported as completed have been removed to avoid unnecessary repetition. Of the 20 remaining actions none have been assessed as 'red light', and a further 7 have now been completed.

Crookall Review Action Plan

| | Action | Lead | Progress |
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| 2. | Member Development Policy Group be asked to give consideration to the suggested actions in respect of member training, support and development, and bring forward an action plan to Cabinet. | Chief Executive/ACE (L&D) | <p>The Leadership Centre for Local Government is providing facilitation for this work, linked with the overall organisational development programme. An initial diagnostic has been undertaken, and a programme in response to the issues identified is now being progressed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Scrutiny Health Check to take place during November • A draft Member Development Framework will be considered by the Member Development Policy Group at its next meeting, together with a future programme to support the development of local leadership skills for frontline members. <p>Dedicated PA support for Cabinet Members has been established.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Consideration be given to the suggested actions in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure for management and effective deployment of the key corporate resources. • The development and team building of the senior management teams of the council. | Chief Executive/ACE(HR) | <p>The unified senior management structure is in place with the following outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Chief Executive - interim arrangements in place. <p>Team development is being led by the Office for Public Management (OPM) and this will be aligned with the leadership and team development processes set out in the Organisational Development Plan component of the PCT's World Class Commissioning Framework. In turn, this work is also being linked to the Member Development initiative with a proposal to provide a joint session between OPM and the Leadership Centre in the new year.</p> |
| 4 | Consideration be given to how best to re-establish trust and confidence between members and officers, and | Chief Executive | To be progressed through organisational development and member development work mentioned above, |

| | Action | Lead | Progress |
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| | between officers and officers, based on an approach which encourages appropriate challenge, resolves issues with a way forward that is supported by all, and creates the discipline to follow through and abide by decisions taken. | | ensuring both dovetail throughout the respective processes. |
| 5 | <p>Consideration be given to the suggested actions in respect of:</p> <p>(a) The need for additional specialist audit ICT resource</p> <p>(b) Proposals for strengthening the strategic procurement function</p> <p>(c) Proposals for appropriate financing models for corporate services</p> <p>and bring forward an action plan to CMB.</p> | DoR(HC) | <p>(a) Completed. The new Audit services structure has been implemented. All appointments will be taken up by December. Vacancies are currently being covered by temporary resource.</p> <p>(b) The final report on the council and PCT's procurement arrangements was received at the end of September. The RIEP has offered further funding to assist in taking this forward.</p> <p>(c) In early June 2008, the Chief Executive initiated a Shared Services Strategic Review. Integrated Shared Support Services is confirmed as one of the key strategic service improvement programmes. The shared service review will encompass consideration of appropriate funding models for each corporate support service, and will produce its full options appraisal in February 2009.</p> |
| 6 | The relevant professional officers (Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Interim Head of Human Resources) be asked to lead reviews of the Council's procedures and protocols, and the corporate rules, standards and processes to ensure they are fit for purpose, proportionate and workable. Review programmes to be reported to CMB. | Chief Executive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy approval procedure has been approved to support consistency in policy and procedure development, communication and embedding. • With the support of a project manager, lead officers are progressing review programmes, prioritised in relation to risk, which are being implemented over a 12 month period. A number of new policies have been developed with trades union colleagues across the Council and PCT. The revised Travel and Subsistence policy was approved in September. A |

| | Action | Lead | Progress |
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| | | | <p>new corporate policy regarding processes for the engagement and payment of external contractors - specifically interims - is scheduled for approval by JMT in November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the Constitution is planned, to be completed for reporting to Annual Council in May 2009. |
| 7 | <p>Consideration be given to the suggested actions in respect of refreshing and embedding an effective performance management culture, and an action plan brought forward to CMB.</p> | ACE(HR) | <p>Work with OPM (Office for Public Management) is now underway following a diagnostic phase with JMT, senior managers and the change management and communications working group which reports to the HPS Steering Group</p> <p>A framework for organisational development (OD) activity has now been drafted incorporating aspects of leadership and manager development with an emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a baseline from which progress is measured • Getting PCT and Council staff involved in delivery, learning new skills and building up expertise <p>At same time work is underway on the development of an HR strategy encompassing OD and performance targets and measures which will be aligned to new work on the development of a corporate Workforce Plan. These and other aspects will be embedded in the organisation so as to influence and change the culture of the partnership.</p> <p>Where the diagnostic work has identified skills gaps within the senior management contingent, plans will be in place to address the identified areas – including</p> |

| | Action | Lead | Progress |
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| | | | those skills relating to the Management of Performance. |
| 11 | Clear guidelines be established and embedded in respect of close personal line management relationships. | ACE (HR) | See 6 above |
| 12 | Consideration be given to the suggested actions in relation to officer training and development needs, and an action plan be brought to CMB. | ACE (HR) | Requirements are being considered within the organisational development process. Training and awareness specifically in relation to policies is now built into the new policy approval process. |

| Special Report Action Plan | | | | | |
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| | Issue to address | Agreed corporate response | Responsible officer(s) | Revised date | Progress |
| 2. | Ensure the corporate response to the travel and expenses audit review is implemented effectively and to timescale. | CMB to consolidate the corporate responses to the travel and subsistence review and the corporate response to this report into one action plan. | DoR MO | September 08 | Completed. A revised Travel & Subsistence Policy was approved in September. |
| 4. | Establish permanent managerial arrangements for ICT and Customer Services. | CMB to discuss and agree proposals from DC&CS. | DC&CS CMB | Subject to substantive DCE appointment | Interim managerial arrangements have been in place since April 2007. Permanent managerial arrangements will be established as part of the revised senior management structure. |
| 9. | Improve the quality of working papers/files recording business activity. | Guidance on the standards of record keeping needs to be devised. | Information Manager Democratic Services Manager CIA | April 2009 | Work is being undertaken by DCE and ACE (L&D) across the council & PCT re governance and reporting arrangements including quality of reports presented. Aligned to this, standards are being developed linked to the Data Quality Policy and information management requirements, for the maintenance of efficient and effective records, and to ensure consistency of approach. |
| 11. | Improving financial governance in ICT and Customer Services. | DC&CS to implement agreed action plans for the FMS system in ICT, travel and expenses and use of contractors audit reviews. | DC&CS DoR | October 2008 | Actions have been completed to time. Internal Audit were scheduled to complete an 'Audit of Audits' during the first quarter of 2008/09; this was rescheduled to the second quarter. The audit visit has been undertaken and although the final report is not yet available, the Chief Internal Auditor advises that early indications are that good progress is being made. |

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| 16. | Enhance Key Manager's financial skills and knowledge of the Council's approved corporate governance framework, ensuring the message is constantly reinforced through effective training. | Make attendance on training courses a pre-requisite to getting a "licence to practise" as a manager. Attendance at refresher training courses will also be mandatory. | HoHR HoFS MO CIA | 2009/10 | Financial Management training (including procurement) has been revised to incorporate the new Financial and Contractual Procedure Regulations. A leadership framework has been developed as part of the organisational development work facilitated by OPM. During 2009/10 this will be further developed to include the identification of key skills for managers, and mandatory training requirements. Member training is also diarised through to 2009. |
| 18. | Enhance Audit Services' capacity. | CMB to agree restructure proposals identified during the PIC process costing £45k. This can be met from the existing base budget for the Resources Directorate. | CMB DoR | October 2008 | Completed. Restructuring proposals for Audit Services have been agreed. The first stage of implementation is complete with staff at risk interviewed and confirmed in new posts in line with the council's Change Management Policy. The remaining vacancies were externally advertised in July 2008 with interviews completed in September. All posts are expected to be filled by December. |
| 19. | Enhance strategic procurement capacity to ensure compliance with the Council's contracting policies and procedures. | CMB to agree additional resources to centralise monitoring of contract procedures within Resources. This can be met from the existing base budget for the Resources Directorate. | CMB DoR | December 2008 | Council's Procurement Strategy was revised as reported to Cabinet in July. The West Midlands Centre for Excellence completed a review of the council and PCT procurement arrangements. The RIEP has offered further funding to assist in taking this work forward. |

Travel & Subsistence Action Plan

| | Agreed action | Responsible officer(s) | Revised target date | Progress |
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| 4 | <p>Revise guidance on travelling claims to require separate confirmation by attaching a signed memorandum that the line manager certifies overnight stays within the Council's area.</p> <p>Payroll to reject all claims for overnight stays in the Council's areas that are not accompanied by separate written authorisation by Head of Service and Director.</p> | Head of HR | Sept 2008 | Completed. The revised Travel and Subsistence Policy was approved by JMT in September. |
| 6 | <p>Revise guidance on travelling claims to require monthly submission of travel and expenses claims within a month of the period they relate to.</p> <p>Payroll to reject claims that are received after the deadline indicated in the Councils' Travel & Subsistence Policy.</p> | Head of HR | Sept 2008 | Completed. The revised Travel and Subsistence Policy was approved by JMT in September. |

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| 7 | <p>Payroll to reject claims that are incomplete and in contravention of the Council's policies unless all exceptions are individually certified by the relevant Head of Service and Director in writing.</p> <p>Travel & Subsistence Claim Form to be reviewed to ensure the disclaimer the claimant and authorising officer make on signing the form is clear that failure to comply with the Council's policies on travel & subsistence could lead to disciplinary action.</p> | <p>Head of HR</p> <p>Head of Benefit & Exchequer Services</p> | <p>Sept 2008</p> | <p>Completed. The revised Travel and Subsistence Policy was approved by JMT in September.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Travel & Subsistence policy to be revised to so that all overseas trips are authorised at Director level.</p> | <p>Head of HR.</p> | <p>Sept 2008</p> | <p>Completed. The revised Travel and Subsistence Policy was approved by JMT in September.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Contractors should support charges for travel and subsistence included in their invoices with a completed travel and subsistence claim form where the contract allows for reimbursement of costs as incurred.</p> | <p>Head of HR advice to Key Managers.</p> | <p>Sept 2008</p> | <p>Completed. The revised Travel and Subsistence Policy was approved by JMT in September.</p> |