

**REPORT FOR STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE – 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2006  
CABINET MEMBER (CORPORATE & CUSTOMER SERVICES AND  
HUMAN RESOURCES)**

**CORPORATE & CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE – 2005/06**

The new Corporate & Customer Services Directorate draws together those services that act as the 'engine room' powering corporate improvement and development and championing quality customer services delivery throughout the authority.

Running in tandem to the establishment of the new Directorate, the Director took the lead role in co-ordinating the recent Corporate Assessment; and the Directorate has sponsored the Herefordshire Connects programme.

Key achievements for the past year for the individual service elements of the Directorate are outlined below.

**Communications**

A new Head of Service post has been created and in post since February 2006. A restructure of the Communications Unit is underway.

Internal Communications successes include:

- New monthly team briefing system – News & Views
- Improved employee news system replacing Core News – 'First Press' effective from 25<sup>th</sup> June
- Weekly communications update provided
- Manager's Forum reviewed
- Revision of the Communications Strategy
- Development of a network of Communications Champions
- Progress in development of a communications toolkit for personnel
- Development of Communications protocols
- Development of individual communications strategies and promotional campaigns

External Communications successes include:

- Productivity on press releases and statements increased from 16 to 47 per month
- Improved strategic management of communications activity including evaluation of effectiveness

**Information, Technology and Customer Services**

The role of the existing Head of Service was revised during the Senior Management restructure. Successes during the year have included:

- A third of the new network in place
- Plough Lane Data Centre up and running
- Launch of the Herefordshire Portal
- 99% of e-enablement achieved
- Website being named as No1 Council website of the 461 UK Council websites, and achieving Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark
- Regaining the Charter Mark for Info
- Development of a Corporate Customer Complaints management system
- Incorporation of Benefits staff within Customer Services
- Development of the Migrant Workers Website

### **Legal & Democratic Services**

A revised Head of Service post has been created and in post since April 2006. A restructure of both the Legal and Democratic Services is underway. Successes during the year have included:

- Regaining ISO9000 (Registration Services, Land Charges & Electoral Registration)
- Regaining LEXCEL for the Legal Service
- Taking over day to day management of the Registration Services pending unification

### **Policy & Performance**

A revised Head of Service post has been created and in post since February 2006. Successes during the year have included:

- Review of and revisions to the Integrated Performance Report
- Development of an Annual Performance Improvement Cycle
- Developing the structure for a performance network throughout the authority
- Conducting and disseminating the results of the first annual customer satisfaction survey
- Review of performance review process for Chief Executive and Directors
- Development of the Overall Improvement Plan and support to the JAR and Adult Services Improvement Plans
- Supporting the development of Performance Indicators for the Herefordshire Partnership's Performance Management Group
- Supporting SMT in developing initial management 'Non-negotiables'
- Achievement of Level 1 of the Equalities Standard
- Establishment of regular Performance management meetings between myself, Cabinet Colleagues and Directors

### **Emergency Planning**

Successes during the year have included:

- Restructuring to meet the demands of the Civil Contingencies Act
- All Business Continuity Plans in place
- Planning for influenza and Avian Flu pandemics

### **CHALLENGES – 2006/07**

Overall the Directorate faces the challenges of unifying the Directorate's component services; delivering the major programmes already listed above; and delivering the Council's Improvement Plan.

Key challenges for the year ahead for the individual service elements of the Directorate are outlined below.

### **Communications**

Internal Communications challenges include:

- Development of the Internet as a communication and information tool
- Introduction of a daily 'press watch' service
- Promotion of equality in the workplace
- Enabling effective communications on key corporate projects including the Customer Satisfaction Survey, Herefordshire Connects and The Big Move

External Communications challenges include:

- Delivery of a single council 'brand' underpinning 'one council one vision'

- Review of Hereford Matters
- A range of service specific campaigns including: marketing campaign to increase percentage of citizens and businesses paying rates; customer satisfaction; Annual Review and Accounts; communications between the Council and Schools; livestock market; improvement planning progress.
- Create a government relations framework at regional and national levels.

### **Information, Technology and Customer Services**

Challenges include:

- Continuing network delivery
- Completion of Disaster Recovery Framework
- Providing the technical foundations for the Herefordshire Connects Programme
- Ensuring outstanding IEG priority outcomes are incorporated in the Herefordshire Connects programme
- Rolling out the Complaints handling system
- Refurbishment of Garrick House to provide Info shop in Hereford City
- Delivery of Phase 1 of Info by Phone
- Customer Service training for customer-facing staff
- IT staffing
- Feasibility study for Archive and Modern Records accommodation
- Strategic Review with Members
- Structuring of the finances for Customer Services and IT
- Establishing an improved relationship with Schools

### **Legal & Democratic Services**

Challenges include:

- Addressing base budget issues, including a review of the Legal Services charges structure
- Resource implications of proposed changes to the Coroner's Service and Monitoring Officer role
- Future competitiveness of Land Charges
- Implementing unification of the Registration Services, and associated accommodation issues.

### **Policy & Performance**

In addition to the overall challenge of embedding performance management throughout the authority, specific challenges include:

- Implementation of the revised Integrated Performance Reporting process
- Implementation of the Annual Performance Improvement Cycle
- Implementation of the new performance network within the authority
- Supporting services to use the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey in service improvement
- Conduction the 2006 customer satisfaction survey
- Implementation of the performance review process for Chief Executive and Directors
- Monitoring delivery of the Overall Improvement Plan and those plans that underpin it
- Achievement of Level 2 of the Equalities Standard
- Supporting the continuance of regular performance Management meetings between myself, Cabinet Colleagues and Directors

## **Emergency Planning**

Challenges include:

- Verification of existing Service Continuity Plans

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Council's Pay and Workforce Development Strategy 2005-8 was agreed by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005. Highlights from 2005-6 are as follows:

### **Pay, Reward and Recognition**

- Numbers in receipt of pay protection reduced by 43% (from 838 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, to 475 at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006). Evaluation appeals concluded and Single Status implemented Post Job Evaluation support was provided for employees on protection.
- Implemented framework for corporate consultation, including improved Directorate consultation mechanisms and Joint employment policy workshops for managers and Trades Unions.
- First phase completed in the project to develop generic skills and career pathways linked to pay progression throughout the Council

### **Resourcing**

- Social Work identified as a key resourcing issue. Response to the Joint Area Review contains detailed actions aimed at improved recruitment and retention in Social Work.
- Recruitment processes modernised to deliver improvements and savings.
- New Deal introduced – 11 placements; 2 people employed permanently.
- Employee turnover steady at just under 8% for 2005-6, compared with a target of 9%. and a median average for Unitary Councils of 16.5%.
- Market forces supplements mechanism is in place, and the comprehensive employment package has begun to be promoted both internally and externally.

### **Developing Leadership Capacity**

- Reviewed management development provision is being progressed via Senior Management Team.
- Introduced Certificate in Leadership and Management.
- Won a Regional Award for the Leadership Development Programme commissioned and developed in partnership with the seven Worcestershire Councils.
- Supported establishment and development of Corporate Management Board and Senior Management Team.

### **Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce**

- Expanded Social Care National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Centre to become corporate Skills For Work Centre to better support the Council's drive to improve customer services.
- Carried out Light Touch assessment against the Investor in People Standard to identify areas for improvement.
- Delivered minimum qualifications and skills for social care workforce across Herefordshire.
- Staff Review and Development completion improved from 72% to 76%. The SRD process is firmly linked to the Council's performance management cycle.
- Nearly 2,000 attendees on corporate training events.

### **Organisational Development**

- Set in place a programme of tailored Diversity awareness training. Voluntary language register for employees established. Introduced mandatory Diversity and Equality half-day induction for new employees.
- Achieved 10.5 FTE days lost per employee per year to sickness absence, against target of 10 days for 2005-6 and a median average of 10.2 days for local government. The long-term sickness absence rate in the former Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate was halved. A series of events to focus on employee well being were held and well attended.
- Improved response rate to Staff Opinion Survey – 40% in 2005 against 38% in 2004, and introduced on line completion option.

Priorities for 2006-7 include:

- **Pay, Reward, and Recognition** – a formal approach for recognition developed and in place, a pay policy developed and agreed, progress generic skills and careers pathways project.
- **Resourcing** -, embed Recruitment Centre approach, develop a workforce planning system including targeted activity to address identified shortage areas e.g. Children's Social Work, Youth Service. Remove known barriers to employment.
- **Developing Leadership Capacity**- implement review of management development findings including succession management, aspiring manager development, induction of new managers.
- **Developing Skills and Capacity of the workforce**- develop workforce development plan for social care workforce, address workforce planning, skills and development, career pathway requirements in Children's and Adults Social Care. Set timeline and critical steps for Investor in People assessment accreditation.
- **Organisation Development** - meet an absence target of no more than 9 days per FTE per year. Continue Equality and Diversity training and awareness to support Equality Impact Assessments.