

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE

Meeting Held on 26th June, 2006

Membership:

Councillors: T.M. James (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman), W.L.S. Bowen, H. Bramer, A.C.R. Chappell, J.H.R. Goodwin, Mrs M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, J.P. Thomas, W.J.S. Thomas.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Council's Overall Performance Improvement Plan

1. The Committee has noted the Council's Overall Performance Improvement Plan, produced in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and arrangements for reporting progress against the Plan. Both Cabinet and the Committee will receive reports on progress against the Overall Plan on an exceptions basis as part of the Integrated Performance Report.

The Council's Performance Improvement Cycle

2. In accordance with the Council's Overall Performance Improvement Plan the previous corporate planning and budget processes have been brought together to ensure that there is a direct relationship at all stages between the planning of budgets (and other resources) and the outputs and outcomes they are allocated to achieve. The proposed performance improvement cycle is intended to ensure that performance reports, and performance management generally, address financial and service performance in the round. The integrated performance reports that have been in place since June 2005 have already sought to do this, but the full integration of corporate, service and financial planning will provide a much better basis to do this well.
3. The Committee has been advised that the new performance improvement cycle is recognised best practice: to secure the maximum value for money; to raise performance in the context of tight financial constraints and increased demand for essential services; and to have this recognised in external assessments. The cycle will culminate in the presentation to Council of the Annual Operating Plan, including the proposed budgets to deliver the outputs and outcomes in the Plan. The proposed cycle will therefore replace the previous arrangements for budget planning. The Committee has noted that further consideration needs to be given to the detailed arrangements for wider Member involvement, including through scrutiny. Members of the Committee have had regard to the new cycle in informal discussions about the development of the scrutiny programme.

Integrated Performance Report – 2005/06 End-of-Year Report

4. The Committee has received the end of year Integrated Performance Report for 2005/06. The outturn against the AOP indicators is considered disappointing and the Committee has noted steps being taken to achieve future improvement. Regarding the Best Value performance Indicators it has noted that 58% had either improved or maintained performance compared to 57% last year, that 36% had deteriorated, compared with 43% in 2004-05, with information awaited on 6% of the indicators.

Final Revenue Outturn 2005/06

5. The Committee has noted Cabinet's decisions in relation to the Final Revenue Outturn for 2005/06 which showed an underspend of £3.7 million on Directorate budgets. In relation to the carry forward of unspent budgets to 2006/07 the Committee noted that while robust financial monitoring reports were now in place, greater financial management was needed by directorates to ensure that improved services were delivered at budget. The Committee has also noted the importance of the Herefordshire Connects Programme in driving efficiencies to release resources.

Integrated Performance Report – 2006/07 April-May Progress Report

6. The Committee has been informed of performance to the end of May 2006, against the Annual Operating Plan 2006/07 and the remedial actions taken to address areas of under-performance. The Committee has noted that 42 of the 72 performance indicators relating to the Local Area Agreement (which now incorporates the indicators under Local Public Service Agreement 2G) had been marked "red flagged" (that is where the target was not achieved, not expected to be achieved or where no targets/milestones were identified.) The Committee was advised that this was of particular concern and remedial action would be required. The Committee also noted that exception reports on the overall performance improvement plan were being regularly provided to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP

7. The Committee has considered Cabinet's response to the Committee's review of the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership. It has noted the action plan prepared in response to the Review's recommendations and the statement that a number of concerns were already being addressed as part of existing management initiatives. Cabinet has also agreed that consideration be given to engaging an external consultant to undertake a brief piece of work to verify a number of aspects of the services supplied by the Partnership including value for money under the partnership agreement.

ICT SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW – PROGRESS REPORT

8. Work on the Committee's review of ICT Services is continuing with interviews and fact finding visits being undertaken.

SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

9. The Committee has approved a revised and updated Improvement Plan for Scrutiny having regard to the Council's Corporate Assessment. The Plan is based on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's self-evaluation framework.

WORK PROGRAMMES

10. The Committee has noted the Scrutiny Committees' current and future work programmes. It has recognised that the current work programmes do not substantially reflect the Council-wide themes and issues identified as priority areas in the Council's Overall Improvement Plan, the Annual Operating Plan and the Herefordshire Community Strategy including the Local Area Agreement. Consideration is accordingly currently being given to pursuing the following matters:
 - **Recycling:** How is it working? What message is the Council sending out (eg use of green recycling bags, opening hours for Recycling Centres and capacity.) Is the Council responding to the public's comments about the Council's approach? What

are we doing, are we doing it well enough? What can be done to improve?

- **Planning (Development Control) Policies:** What is the scope for local discretion, noting implications of some decisions on adult social care provision and other Council priorities?
- **Understanding and Responding to Customers:** how well are we doing this?
- **Every Child Matters:** Transition from Social Care to adult life. Exchange of information between Schools and Social Workers. Are the plans being put in place with the Council's partners working well in practice? Is the Council fulfilling its Corporate Parent Role?
- **Older Peoples Strategy:** Is it robust enough, how does it fit with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, what are the implications for other services?
- **Improving Adult Social Care:** considering and commenting on the assessments of adult social care needs and services that are being produced, including the wider implications for health services and housing.
- **Rural Schools Review:** Is the review addressing all the issues? What part do schools play in the Community? What is link to other Council plans?

PRESENTATIONS BY EXECUTIVE (LEADER, CABINET MEMBER (CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES) AND CABINET MEMBER (RESOURCES))

11. Following presentations by the Leader, Cabinet Member (Corporate Services and Human Resources) and Cabinet Member (Resources), the Committee questioned the Leader and Cabinet Members on issues and concerns in their respective programme areas.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

12. The work of the Committees is analysed below as far as practicable under the following five roles for overview and scrutiny: holding the executive to account, best value reviews, policy development and review, external scrutiny, and improvement (performance management and review), the first four of which are identified as key roles in the report on "The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister". Issues considered by the Strategic Monitoring Committee are listed for completeness.

Summary

13. The **Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee** met on 2nd June 2006 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Presentation by Cabinet Member (Adult Social Care and Health)
Best Value Reviews	Provision of Private Sector Housing – Stage 4 Report – Improvement Plan
Policy Development and Review	Learning Disability Services – Scrutiny Review Needs Analysis Phase 1 Report
External Scrutiny	

Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Adult Social Care Improvement Planning Performance Monitoring
Other	Co-opted Membership

14. The Committee has received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) informing the Committee of progress in 2005/06 and the challenges in 2006/07 and future years.
15. An interim report on the Committee's Scrutiny Review of services for people with a learning disability has been considered and the Committee will now consider the recommendations it wishes to make to the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health).
16. The Committee has also received a report on progress with the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan
17. The **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee** met on 31st May, 2006 and 19 June 2006 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Presentation by Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Scrutiny Review of Behaviour and Discipline Management in Schools Effect of Homelessness on Young People in Herefordshire
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Revised Management Arrangements and Structure in Children and Young People's Directorate Safeguarding Children in Herefordshire Joint Area Review Improvement Plan
Other	

18. Following a briefing on the revised management arrangements and structure in the Children and Young People's Directorate, the Committee have identified a number of outcomes it would wish to see from the revised management arrangements. 18. The Committee have been informed of progress in relation to the Joint Area Review (JAR) Improvement Action Plan. The Committee conveyed to the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) its concern over the availability of suitable housing for young people and young people and families experiencing homelessness. A further report on the JAR Improvement Plan and a report on the effect of homelessness of young people will be received at its meeting on 19th June.
19. The Committee has decided to undertake a scrutiny review of Behaviour and Discipline Management in Schools and has approved a scoping statement for the Review.
20. The **Community Services Scrutiny Committee** met on 6th June, 2006 and 16th June, 2006 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Presentation by the Leader of the Council on the Economic Development matters Presentation by the Cabinet Member (Community Services)
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Scrutiny Review of the Courtyard Centre for the Arts Preparations for the Three Choirs Festival Scrutiny Review of Hereford City Partnership Economic and Tourist Benefit of the River Wye in Herefordshire
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Performance Monitoring
Other	-

21. At its meeting on 6 June 2006 the Committee considered the final report of the Courtyard Review Group. The Review had taken place over an 8 month period and its findings were reported to the Committee by the Chairman of the Review Group, Councillor H. Bramer. The Review Group believe that the Courtyard can seriously improve its income generation activity which would allow it to address its budget deficit and reduce its reliance on the grants from Herefordshire Council and the Arts Council. The Review Group also felt that in order to encourage the Courtyard to increase its income generation activities then any future funding agreement with the arts centre should decrease in value over the course of the contract. This and other recommendations, as appended to this report, were approved by the Committee and passed onto the Cabinet Member (Community Services) for consideration.
22. The Committee also received a presentation by the Leader of the Council on Economic Development matters, approved a Review of the Hereford City Partnership and considered work undertaken in preparation for the Three Choirs Festival.
23. At its meeting on 16 June 2006 the Committee hosted a discussion on the economic and tourist benefit of the River Wye in Herefordshire, inviting a number of interested parties to participate.
24. One other point to highlight is the commencement of the Museum and Heritage Review Group which is now underway with a number of meetings and visits scheduled over the summer.
25. The **Environment Scrutiny Committee** met on 5th June 2006 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Presentations by Cabinet Member (Environment) and (Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation)
Best Value Reviews	Improvement Plans
Policy Development and Review	Biofuels briefing
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	Capital Programme Revenue Budget GEM report

Other	
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26. Following presentations by the Cabinet Members for Environment and Highways & Transportation, the Committee questioned the Cabinet Members on issues and concerns in their respective programme areas. The meeting also debated the subject of Biofuels and how it related to aspects of Planning, Environmental Health and Trading Standards. Arising out of the debate on Biofuels the Committee have requested a briefing paper on hydro generation systems.
27. The **Health Scrutiny Committee** met on 15th June, 2006 and considered the following issues:

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Presentations on behalf of the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, the Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust and the Cabinet member (Social Care Adults and Health)
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	Cost Saving Proposals – Provider Arm of Herefordshire Primary Care Trust
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	
Other	

28. In receiving the presentation from the Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) the Committee has recognised the challenges facing the Primary Care Trust and the importance of the work taking place with the Council to develop a Public Service Trust. It has also recognised the challenges facing the Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust and its plans to become a Foundations Trust hospital.
29. The business conducted by the **Strategic Monitoring Committee** at its meeting on 26th June, 2006, 2006 is summarised below.

Theme	Reports
Holding the Executive to Account	Review of the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership – Cabinet Response Presentations by Executive (Leader, Cabinet Member Corporate and Customer Services and Human resources), and Cabinet Member (Resources).
Best Value Reviews	
Policy Development and Review	ICT Services Scrutiny Review – Progress Report.
External Scrutiny	
Improvement (Performance Management and Review)	The Council's Overall Performance Improvement Plan. The Council's Performance Improvement Cycle.

	Integrated Performance Report 2005/06 End -of-Year Report. Final Revenue Outturn 2005/06. Integrated Performance Report – 2006/07 April-May Progress Report.
Other	Scrutiny Improvement Plan. Work Programmes. Scrutiny Activity.

**T.M. JAMES
CHAIRMAN
STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Agenda Papers of the Meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 26th June, 2006.

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