
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD (SPECIAL)

A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 8 June 2004.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Booth, Dryden, Mawston, Rogers, Rooney, T Ward and Wilson.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, C Burnham, P Clark, T Gilling, K Robinson and C Taylor.

****AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE** was submitted on behalf of Councillor Robson.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the special meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 May and 24 May 2004 were submitted and approved.

NOTED

CENTRAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2004/05

As part of the reporting arrangements for Best Value Performance Indicators the Corporate Performance Manager submitted a report which provided details of the end of year performance information for the year 2003/04 and performance targets for 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07.

The process of reporting Service Performance information occurred three times a year, at the end of the first, second and final quarter.

In the current BVPP 2003/04, Central Services were responsible for 17 key commitments and 33 Performance Indicators (PI's) 13 of which informed the CPA scorecard, which included 2, considered to be High-Risk indicators. It was noted that the Audit Commission was likely to pay particular attention to such indicators and may examine in detail the underlying data collection process.

Appendix A of the report demonstrated that good progress had been made in 2003/04 with 10 commitments achieved, 6 commitments having not been achieved mainly as a result of slipped target dates and one commitment, which could not be calculated until further information from Social Services, had been received.

It was noted that there were 29 PI's with an applicable target where performance was being met or exceeded the target i.e. 11 PI's as shown in Appendix B (2003/04).

Details were provided of PI's where the targets were not being met i.e. 18 of which 8 informed the CPA scorecard as shown in (Appendix C) (2003/04) in particular: -

Diversity:

- BV 002b 83% score in relation to the Council's Race Equality Scheme
- BV 174 66 racial incidents recorded by the Council per 100,000 population
- BV 175 100% of racial incidents resulting in further action.

It was noted that BV 002b was a new indicator and race equality scheme priorities had changed and new policies were being developed.

Human Resources:

- BV 011a percentage of the top 5% of earners that are women (CPA)
- BV 011b percentage 1.6% of the top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities (CPA)

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- BV 012 working days lost due to sickness absence per full time employee (CPA and High Risk)
 - BV 016a percentage of employees declaring that they meet the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act disability definition (CPA).

The Board was advised that a full investigation into previous data collection methods and the robustness of the current system had been undertaken and steps had been taken to ensure that the data provided was accurate. Where performance in the Human Resources PI's had changed significantly from previous years it was noted that this was mainly owing to differences in data collection and did not necessarily constitute a change in performance. It was also suggested that anomalies had arisen as a result of the wording of the questions, which were set by the Audit Commission.

Finance:

- BV 09 percentage of council tax collected (CPA)
- BV 079b percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding council tax) recovered in the year.

It was noted that for both the above indicators, performances had deteriorated from 2002/03 and were the subject of ongoing discussions to ascertain the reasons in order to identify actions required to achieve improvements.

Customer Satisfaction:

- BV 03 percentage of citizens satisfied with services provided
- BV 04 percentage of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaint

It was reported that the above indicators based on surveys, which were undertaken tri-annually had significantly decreased compared to the results of the previous survey undertaken in 2000/01 the reasons for which were currently being investigated. It was considered that one of the main difficulties related to the ambiguous nature of the questions.

The Board considered the targets required for 28 PI's details of which were outlined in Appendix D of the report. In relation to BV 156 in respect of the percentage of Council buildings accessible and suitable for disabled people, Members were advised of the reasons for the level of target set and noted that in some cases although a building may not be suitable for disabled people this would not necessarily prevent access to a particular service.

During the ensuing discussion Members sought clarification on a number of points including:

- (a) monitoring procedures which incorporated three performance clinics and included an assessment at the half yearly stage following which Action Plans were formulated where considered necessary,
- (b) in a number of cases it was noted that improved data collection and recording systems had resulted in more accurate information resulting in significant changes to PI's which did not necessarily constitute deterioration in performance,
- (c) it was suggested that the questions and the sequence of such questions set by the Audit Commission had resulted in ambiguous responses in several cases,
- (d) in commenting on the measures being pursued to address the issues in relation to the Race Equality Scheme, Members suggested that further information be provided on how performance was measured against the respective targets.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.

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2. That further detailed information be provided in respect of (d) above and associated targets relating to diversity issues.

LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT - SECOND GENERATION

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 11 May 2004 the Principal Corporate Performance Officer submitted a report, which outlined target proposals in respect of a second generation Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA 2G).

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had agreed that recommendations should be made to the Executive in respect of 19 cases as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted plus an additional two which had been identified since the circulation of the report.

CMT had concluded that the targets selected met the agreed criteria and clearly demonstrated links to the overall theme of the programme, 'Raising Hope' and subsequent priorities for improvement in the following ways: -

- (a) empowering the residents of Middlesbrough to expect better access to services through a number of measures for example better use of Information Technology to improve service delivery
- (b) making people feel safer in their own homes in particular elderly residents who were often the subject of targeted distraction burglaries
- (c) offering young people more opportunities to gain a better education either by traditional or vocational methods
- (d) offering young people greater opportunities to gain employment much earlier in their school careers
- (e) making the Town a more attractive place to both residents and visitors through greater focussed efforts in keeping streets from litter and graffiti and utilising the laws available to prosecute irresponsible dog owners and those who illegally dump rubbish
- (f) represented a good cross section of the organisation service priorities.

In line with Government guidance on the LPSA 2G process 'LPSA 2G - Building on Success' the proposed list of indicators would be forwarded for consultation with the LSP Advisory Panels and Government Office for the North East.

Following consultation an update report would be presented to CMT prior to consideration of the proposals by the Executive on 6 July 2004 and subsequently the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. If the timetable remained manageable it was envisaged that the Council would be in a position to agree a LPSA 2G in December 2004.

The Board considered the information provided in respect of the 21 targets in accordance with the themed approach of Raising Hope and under the following headings as priorities for improvement as follows: -

Public Access

Target 1 - percentage buildings open to the public and accessible by disabled people

Target 2 - increase access/visits to Libraries by the use of SMART card technology

Target 3 - increased in visits, Membership and levels of participation at cultural facilities

Target 4 - improve access to services for older people through the use of Information Technology by:

- (a) increasing the number of carers assessments offered using electronic means of delivery
- (b) increase speed of response in terms of self assessment

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- (c) increased speed and accuracy of access to available services across all sectors by the development of a common directory of services

Target 5 - reduction in distraction burglary committed against older people

Education, Skills and Training

Target 6 - to raise the literacy attainment of pupils in lowest quartile of achievement by: -

- (a) extension of the primary link project at KS1 to include West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust
- (b) replicating primary link for Year 7 and their families at KS2

Target 7 - increase in boy's literacy at KS3 in all secondary schools above National average

Target 8 - increase in achievement in Girls sciences at KS3 in all Secondary Schools

Target 9 - (a) an increase of 14 - 19 year olds leaving education with a qualification (either vocational or academic)

- (b) an increase in the numbers of 14 - 19 year olds that gain employment as a direct result of support given in Year 9

Target 10 - an increase in vocational provision in at least 2 new areas thus widening choice and improving pupil success rates and training of staff to deliver specialist vocational training

Target 11 - increase achievement at KS2 in at least 5 schools to level 5/6 in all core subjects

Promoting Independence of Vulnerable People

Target 12 - increase take up of direct payment (SS) across all client groups

Target 13 - increase in the numbers of people with learning disabilities gaining employment

Target 14 - delivery of services to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions of older people

Target 15 - improving outcomes and delivery of services to carers across all client groups

Target 16 - a reduction in the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households, which include dependent children and/or pregnant women

Improving the Public Realm

Target 17 - BV 199 improvement in levels of street cleanliness

Target 18 - reduction in incidents of graffiti reported in hot spot areas

Target 19 - reduction in the number of reported fly-tips

Target 20 - reduce the incidents of dog fouling in the Town

Target 21 - vacant private sector dwellings re-occupied or demolished as a direct result of action by the Council.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.