

**BUDGET AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

2.00 P.M.

8TH MARCH 2005

PRESENT:- Councillors Keith Budden (Chairman), Mike Greenall, Tony Johnson, Janie Kirkman, Peter Robinson and John Whitelegg

Apologies for Absence

John Gilbert (Vice-Chairman) and Tina Clifford

Officers in attendance:-

Nadine Muschamp	Head of Financial Services (Part to Minute 32 only)
Richard Tulej	Head of Corporate Strategy (Minute 33 only)
Helen McMahon	Procurement Officer, Financial Services (Part to Minute 32 only)
Alison Kinnon	Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy Services (Minute 33 only)
Elizabeth Stokes	Best Value Officer
James Doble	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Georgina Atkinson	Democratic Support Officer

27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2005 were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

28 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman the Panel that, in accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, he had agreed to consider two items of Urgent Business regarding the Budget and Performance section of the Annual Scrutiny Report 2004/05, and a letter to Members from Councillor Ian Barker regarding Open Source Software.

29 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2004/05

The Principal Democratic Support Officer outlined the Budget and Performance section of the Annual Scrutiny Report 2004/05. He informed Members that the draft Report was to be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9th March 2005, and upon approval be submitted for the Annual Business Council meeting in May.

He invited Members to forward any comments or amendments that they wished to make regarding the Panel's section within the next week.

Members agreed that a paragraph should be added that outlined how the Panel's work had been hampered over the past year due to the lack of information being available at their request. It was felt that this had both slowed down the process and prevented them from being as they have liked to have been.

30 LETTER REGARDING OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the letter dated 24th February 2005 from Councillor Ian Barker regarding Cabinet's consideration of the Panel's Open Source Software report.

Members felt that the tone appeared negative in respect of the work carried out by the Panel in seeking ways to create a more cost-effective computer system.

31 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Helen McMahon, Procurement Officer, outlined the Council's Procurement Strategy to Members and outlined the work that had been carried out recently towards developing the Strategy. The Council's Corporate Objectives and Core Values were summarised as key drivers for the plan, as well as the targets established by the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government.

She informed Members that the Council's Procurement Strategy was now a live document that was last updated in November and would continue to be updated on a regular basis. This included continued monitoring using the traffic light system to represent progress towards the targets.

Members raised a number of issues, including the potential impact that the Strategy could have towards the economic development of the district if it were to target buying from the local area. It was felt that this could help maximise employment and economic development from the Council's own spending, which would therefore be more cost-effective. The Procurement Officer agreed that this was a policy that would need to be considered, with the limitations of current legislation. The Procurement Officer had in the past approached other Local Authorities to share their policy in the use of local resources, but each authority approached did not have a policy. Councillor Whitelegg agreed to provide some information regarding Local Authorities who have adopted this strategy. It was also requested that the legality of targeted buying to the local area be considered.

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor Whitelegg provide information on Local Authorities who have adopted a policy of buying locally in their Procurement Strategy.
- (2) That Legal Services be contacted to ascertain the legality of choosing to buy local products, and that the Procurement Officer be kept updated accordingly.

32 PARTNERSHIP MONITORING

Richard Tulej, Head of Corporate Strategy, outlined briefly the background to the development of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and drew Members' attention to the Community Strategy document which contained a 'vision' for the district for the year 2020.

Alison Kinnon, Policy Officer, briefed Members on the role of the LSP Executive and "Building Blocks". It was reported that at the next LSP Conference planned for June, the Building Blocks would produce a self-assessment of their performance in delivering Community Strategy objectives for discussion at the Conference. She outlined the

Community Safety Partnership's draft review as an example. She informed Members that the LSP were committed to review the Community Strategy on a three-yearly basis.

Members raised some concerns over the targets used and felt that they provided only a partial picture. It was felt that targeting needed to be more insightful towards 'the bigger picture' rather than based on certain targets only, and that the reasons why targets had increased/decreased needed to be considered as influencing factors.

The Head of Corporate Strategy advised Members that the policy and funding streams from Government were beginning to focus on the wider picture and recognise the independence of various areas of policy.

The Principal Democratic Support Officer outlined the self-assessment tool that had been produced by Internal Audit for the purpose of Partnership Monitoring and invited Members to consider this.

It was agreed following discussion that the Partnerships who were considered to be performing ineffectively, following consideration of the self-assessments from the annual conference in June, would be invited to attend a future Panel meeting to discuss plans for improvements and the achievement of targets.

Resolved:

That the outcome of the LSP's conference be reported back to Members of the Panel and that as a result they consider inviting Building Block representatives to attend future Panel meetings to consider plans from improvement and the achievement of targets.

33 WORK PROGRAMME

The Principal Democratic Support Officer informed Members that the meeting was the last to be held in the municipal year 2004/05 and that outstanding work on Performance Monitoring would be included in the 2005/06 Work Programme.

Liz Stokes, Best Value Officer, updated Members on the Escendency software programme and said that City Contract Services data had now been transferred to the programme for monitoring. She explained that the indicators currently being used focused on recycling and waste collection by CCS and therefore there was a limited amount of data ready to show to Members. Escendency had provided 100 free licences which would enable the software to be extended throughout the Council. She added that planning had to be carried out as to how the rollout would take place. The Best Value Officer added that she intended to bring CCS data with her to the next meeting to demonstrate to Members.

The Principal Democratic Support Officer advised Members that the Escendency programme would help solve the predicament of working with out-of-date indicators, as it would provide real-time data.

He also updated the Members on other areas that they might like to be covered under the Performance Monitoring work:

- The additions and amendments made to the Best Value Performance Indicators, in particular BV199.

- The Breakthrough Model that the Council was adopting to try and help significantly improve Performance Monitoring.
- The un-audited Performance Indicators, which could be used to highlight Services that were not performing to standard, and would be available at the start of the Municipal Year.
- The agreed Service Business Plans for 2005/06 and a summary from each Service of any targets that had not been met for 2004/05.

The Principal Democratic Support Officer also informed Members that the Homelessness research, that had been commissioned by the Budget and Performance Panel, would be carried out by Lancaster University and was due to proceed in October 2005. He added that Health and Strategic Housing Services were keen to obtain the research to aid them with their work.

Resolved:

- (1) That a report be requested at a future Budget and Performance Panel meeting on the plans to extend the Escendency software across the Council, and an update regarding CCS performance Indicators at a future Budget and Performance Panel meeting.
- (2) That reports be requested as included on the Work Programme outlined by the Principal Democratic Support Officer as set out in the bullet points above.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at Time Not Specified)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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