

**BUDGET AND  
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**4.30 P.M.**

**15TH JULY 2008**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Roger Sherlock (Chairman), Tina Clifford, Jean Dent, Sarah Fishwick, Mike Greenall and Ian McCulloch

Apologies for absence:-

John Whitelegg (Vice-Chairman), Keran Farrow and Peter Williamson

Also in attendance:-

Edmund Southworth, Lancashire County Council Museums Officer

Officers in attendance:-

David Owen	Head of Cultural Services
Bob Bailey	Principal Auditor
Liz Stokes	Corporate Performance Manager
Jon Stark	Democratic Support Officer

**8 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**9 PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND SCRUTINY**

The Principal Auditor introduced a report to advise Members of the Panel of the proposed actions to strengthen performance management in relation to partnerships and to seek their views on the introduction of a framework for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships and the Council's involvement in them, and the proposed arrangements for the future scrutiny of the Council's major partnerships.

The Panel was advised that an internal audit had been carried out which demonstrated that the Council had no overarching strategy in place to guide partnership activity; there was no formal definition of what the Council considered to be a partnership and had no framework for evaluating the effectiveness of individual partnerships and the Council's involvement in them.

It was reported that a Partnership Assessment Scorecard (PAS) had been developed providing a scoring mechanism based on a high-level assessment of eight fundamental characteristics of partnership working, including consideration of service provision and reputational and financial matters. Members were advised that the PAS was designed to establish 'major' partnerships that would be initially subjected to further evaluation.

Members were advised that a 'Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit' had been developed by Internal Audit in consultation with others Services that would enable existing partnerships to take stock of how effective their partnership working arrangements were and identify areas where remedial action and/or further development was required.

It was reported the toolkit was designed to provide a consistent assessment of individual partnerships against a set of criteria and provide essential information on membership, funding, risk management, governance and value for money. The toolkit had also been designed to provide an important means of evaluating the costs, risks and opportunities afforded by the Council's ongoing contribution and future participation in individual partnerships.

It was reported that the review of partnership arrangements was included in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2008/09 and that performance management in relation to key partnerships had been noted as a deficiency in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) judgment of 2007. It was suggested that the Panel be responsible for the overview and scrutiny of partnerships, in line with its terms of reference to carry out this function in respect of corporate performance.

Members were advised that if the proposals were agreed, the evaluation would be piloted on the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Museums Partnership and the results brought back to the Panel. It was suggested that training needs be considered following delivery of the results of the pilot study.

The Panel were asked to consider the proposals so that their preferences could be reported to the Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility for performance management for formal decision.

**Resolved:-**

That the following recommendations be referred to the Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility for performance management prior to formal decision:-

- (1) That the following definition and types of partnership be formally adopted for the purposes of future partnership working, evaluation and scrutiny:-

Partnership definition:-

*'those agreed methods of working together as an integrated and co-ordinated team to achieve common objectives and shared benefits'*

Partnership types:-

- Partnerships that involve contractual arrangements
  - Partnership arrangements to deliver joint objectives but no formal contract
  - Partnership arrangements to develop key relationships
- (2) That the evaluation tools and techniques set out in the report for the purposes of scrutinising the Council's major partnerships be agreed.
  - (3) That all responsibility for partnership overview and scrutiny be formally transferred to the Budget and Performance Panel.
  - (4) That the Panel recommends that Part 4, Section 5, Sub-Section 20(c) of the Constitution be amended to read:-

*'Following any investigation or review, the Overview and Scrutiny meeting shall prepare a report for submission to Cabinet, Council, external body or partnership, as appropriate, and shall make its report and findings public'*

- (5) That the process of partnership evaluation commences with the Community Safety and Museums Partnerships with the results of the evaluation being reported to a future meeting of the Budget and Performance Panel for scrutiny.
- (6) That potential Member training focusing on the skills and techniques needed to ensure effective partnership scrutiny be considered following completion of the pilot study.

## **10 SCRUTINY OF FUNDING TO THE MUSEUMS PARTNERSHIP**

The Head of Cultural Services presented a report to provide the Panel with background information in respect of the Museums Partnership and introduced Edmund Southworth, Lancashire County Council's Museum Officer. Members were advised that subject to discussion of the previous item the Museums Partnership would be subject to review using the Partnership Evaluation Toolkit.

It was reported that the Museums Partnership was one of the first of its kind to be established in Lancashire and had provided a model for subsequent arrangements at Rossendale and South Ribble Councils. It was noted that the close links between City and County Council had vastly improved working arrangements and the partnership had also become part of a Vision Board sub-group.

The Panel was advised that a team based in Preston was now responsible for approximately a dozen heritage sites in Lancashire, utilising an expensive software programme across the sites which produced economies of scale and the partnership as a whole represented greater prestige in the eyes of the Tourism Board. It was reported that the partnership had achieved greater ability to make acquisitions, improved publicity and become more accessible to schools arranging visits.

Members were advised that the number of exhibitions staged had reduced in number but improved in quality and had greater success in touring other museums. It was reported that the storage of artefacts had improved and a greater number were increasingly being made accessible online.

The Panel was advised that maintenance of premises had been difficult to deliver in a number of cases and there had been some disagreement between the City and County Council with regard to maintenance responsibilities in relation to health and safety issues. It was reported that the City Council held responsibility as the landlord of museum premises and they paid an annual fee of over £500k to the County Council for management duties.

Members were advised that some members of staff had been relocated due to health and safety concerns raised at a Lancaster workshop, however, many of the Museums Service management staff, responsible for heritage sites across Lancashire, were based in Lancaster. It was reported that Museums contributed approximately £5.5m to the district's economy and it was aimed for an SLA to be drafted with the Museums Partnership to ensure the City Council's priorities were met.

**Resolved:-**

That the report be noted.

**11 ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

The Corporate Performance Manager introduced a report to advise Members of the publication of the Annual Report (formerly known as the Corporate Performance Plan). Members were advised that the report should be used as a baseline reference document for considering the Council's performance in the coming year and, where appropriate, to inform the work programme of the Panel.

It was reported that the Annual Report now contained a section detailing the Council's environmental footprint. The Panel was advised that the report contained performance tables which highlighted the Council's performance against targets set nationally for its services and the goals it set itself. It was reported that where both performance worsened and targets for 2007/08 were not met, the indicators could be identified by two sad faces (or 'double glums').

Members requested that the Actual result for BV218b be circulated as soon as it was confirmed. Members also requested further information on the Council's progress with engaging with local residents and so it was agreed that the Consultation Officer be requested to address the Panel on the work ongoing in that area. The Panel also requested information on the total number of households in the district that were paying Council Tax by Direct Debit.

The Panel requested a briefing note from the Head of Economic Development regarding the Local Indicators ED01 and ED02 regarding the physical and financial performance of the Economic Development Zone, and that the briefing note on the increase in planning appeals being allowed be re-circulated. Members were advised that the increase of local authority homes designated as 'not decent' had followed the introduction of more stringent criteria and action had already been taken to rectify this.

Members requested a briefing note giving additional information for poor performance in relation to BV66b, representing the number of local authority tenants with more than 7 weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a % of the total number of council tenants.

In consideration of the Annual Report as a whole, Members noted a great deal of information had failed to be submitted for inclusion in the report by Service Heads. Members therefore agreed that information must be submitted in advance of the June deadline so that it is available for Members and the public's consideration. It was also agreed that Service Heads should be reminded to forward information that is clear and understandable for public consumption.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) That the Actual result for BV218b be circulated as soon as it is confirmed.
- (2) That the Consultation Officer be requested to address the Panel on the work ongoing to improve the Council's engagement with local residents.

- (3) That the total number of households in the district that were paying Council Tax by Direct Debit be circulated to Members.
- (4) That a briefing note be circulated regarding the measures being taken to address the poor performance with Local Indicators ED01 and ED02 regarding the physical and financial performance of the Economic Development Zone.
- (5) That the briefing note on the increase in planning appeals being allowed be re-circulated.
- (6) That a briefing note be circulated giving additional information for poor performance in relation to BV66b, representing the number of local authority tenants with more than 7 weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a % of the total number of council tenants.
- (7) That Service Heads be reminded that information for the Annual Report must be submitted in advance of the June deadline so that it is available for Members and the public's consideration. Service Heads should also be reminded to forward information that is clear and understandable for public consumption.

## **12 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT**

The Democratic Support Officer introduced a report to update Members with regard to the Work Programme. Members were advised that at the special meeting scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008 the Panel would be considering the Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn report for 2007/08 and the backward looking 2007/08 Annual Efficiency Statement.

The Panel was also advised that the North Lancashire Teaching Primary Care Trust would be delivering a presentation to the Panel regarding their Strategic Plan for the area at the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

### ***Resolved:-***

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a report be brought before the Panel following the results of the Evaluation Toolkit in the scrutiny of Partnership Working.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.22 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
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or email [jstark@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:jstark@lancaster.gov.uk)**