

CPA 2008 – IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Areas for improvement	Audit Commission recommendation	Agreed Action
Ambition		
The Community Strategy does not provide clear direction for framing most local ambitions. The council should:-	Support the LSP in developing a Sustainable Community Strategy which contains a clear vision, fewer high level priorities and is underpinned by outcome focussed targets.	The Council is continuing to support the LSP in refreshing its Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council has helped the LSP draft and agree a new constitution as part of implementing the recommendations of the recent LSP IDeA Peer Review. A list of clear priorities and 7 thematic groups have been agreed and work is continuing to develop a clear vision and focussed targets that are SMART. A final version of the Strategy will be presented to Council in July 2008.
The public cannot see what LSP is trying to achieve		The Council has approved the inclusion in its magazine, Your District Council Matters, a full page free of charge for the LSP to promote itself and communicate with the public and raise awareness. The Council is also assisting the LSP to develop its own communication and engagement framework.
There is no consistent approach to community engagement		The Council has included in its 2008/9 Corporate Plan a medium term objective "To ensure that local communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered and decisions that affect them are made". This objective is supported by 4 priorities linked to establishing a consistent approach to community engagement.

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Prioritisation		
<p>There are a number of issues hampering political leadership and in order to address these the council should:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure clarity around political direction is communicated internally and externally ▪ Support portfolio holders in embracing their new roles by responding to identified development needs and reviewing portfolios in order to streamline decision making, aligning portfolios, services and PRTs 	<p>Awareness programme to take place following annual council in May 2008 that covers Corporate Plan targets and outcomes responsibilities and also details of new portfolios.</p> <p>Council to undertake a review of its Democratic Renewal arrangements and report accordingly. In addition, Cabinet will consider the format and portfolios for Cabinet members following the annual council meeting in May 2008.</p> <p>Council Business Committee will be reviewing the Member Development Strategy at its meeting in June 2008 to ensure issues highlighted by the CPA report are reflected in the Development Strategy priorities.</p> <p>Performance Mgt arrangements will be reviewed and amended accordingly during the summer. However PRTs have already been streamlined and are now reported on a service basis greatly reducing the number of PRT meetings.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities not always supported by outcome focussed targets and action plans not always robust Plans and strategies not always 'grounded' by action plans</p>		<p>SMART targets have been developed wherever possible for the 2008/9 Corporate Plan priorities.</p> <p>A Review is to take place to ensure that</p>

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		major plans and strategies have an action plan
No clear strategy for rolling out neighbourhood management		Corporate Plan includes priority to “Develop Neighbourhood Mgt arrangements for the District”.
Capacity		
Progress in relation to equality and diversity has been slow and there is an inconsistent approach to engaging with local communities. The council should :-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide leadership to the equalities and diversity agenda, ensuring it is prioritised ▪ Strengthen mechanisms for community engagement in order to ensure a consistent approach in relation to all the council's business 	<p>To be developed through the community engagement and cohesion Corporate Plan priority.</p> <p>To be developed through the community engagement and cohesion Corporate Plan priorities.</p>
Progress in finalising key people management and workforce development issues has been slow. No action plan is in place to address this which means the council does not have a clear picture of the capacity it has now and that it needs to develop in the future to deliver its ambitions and priorities		Priority included in the HR business plan to continue to implement Workforce Planning and Development.
Support to voluntary and community sector is ad hoc and not co-ordinated or comprehensive – compact does not guide relationship with council – not making best use of the community and voluntary sector to achieve its priorities		<p>Individual Council services have now been allocated responsibility for existing SLAs with the voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>Cabinet decision in July 2007 to commence a review of the Local Compact in consultation with the voluntary sector and LSP and utilise the Local Compact as a Council policy for all grant giving Services – this has been included in Democratic Services’ Business Plan for 2008/09 subject to sufficient</p>

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		resources being available. Priority outcome included in Corporate Plan to “Continue to evaluate our services to ensure they are delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way”. This will include a review of opportunities for maximising contributions from the voluntary sector in conjunction with the LSP.
Strategic procurement is under-developed – not maximising its use of procurement		Priority included in Corporate Plan to “Continue to evaluate our services to ensure they are delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way”. Participation in the countywide Team Lancashire Procurement Hub will address this.
Training provision in place but delivery is slow in relation to meeting specific development needs, this means that staff may not possess the skills they need to carry out their work.		The evaluation of the effectiveness of staff appraisal system is included in the HR business plan.
Performance Management		
Performance management arrangements are not effective in relation to all key partnerships. The council should:-	Strengthen these arrangements to ensure progress and the impact of all partnership activity can be performance managed.	Framework agreed for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of Partnerships. Will be rolled out during 2008/9
Performance Management is not embedded at all levels.		This recommendation was challenged by officers. However, a review of the effectiveness of existing PM arrangements is scheduled to take place by Sept 2008
Service performance and financial monitoring is not integrated		As above.