

STAR CHAMBER PROCESS – 2008/9

PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Star Chamber is an informal meeting of Cabinet supported by senior officers. Its purpose is to consider options recommended by individual cabinet members in respect of current and future service spending plans with the aims of ensuring value for money, identifying efficiencies and diverting resources into Council priorities and away from non-priorities, as well as alternative methods of delivery. Through this, it also provides the framework and focus for achieving the financial savings targets included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy(MTFS) and those efficiencies required under the Comprehensive Spending Review CSR07. Consequently, the options that it will consider will look at financial, physical, human resource and transformational matters. This will be done through the following :-

Terms of Reference

- (1) To consider options brought forward by individual cabinet members in respect of their service portfolios in respect of :-
 - information regarding Service and Corporate activity, particularly what is and what is not an explicit Council priority informed by :-
 - to what extent services are mandatory and where they are mandatory if they are enhanced above minimum legislative requirements
 - Service functions or activities that no longer contribute (or make less of a contribution) to the Council's priorities
 - any new legislative issues with future spending pressures
 - a programme of service efficiencies/savings (including reductions)
 - an investment programme for service improvements or invest to save initiatives (This could be revenue or capital)
 - other Service efficiencies/savings arising from opportunities from improved procurement and/or business process re-engineering
 - potential sources of additional external funding, or increased income opportunities through a review of fees and charges
 - opportunities for joint working/shared services either through collaboration or partnership arising from participation in Team Lancashire
- (2) To prepare for Cabinet, a schedule of efficiencies/savings and improvement investment opportunities that can be recommended to Cabinet for inclusion in their annual budget and policy framework proposals (This could be revenue or capital)

The options brought forward by individual cabinet members as set out in (1) above will be undertaken by:

1. Challenging existing service provision levels and how they are delivered to provide Value for Money. This will necessitate where appropriate, a functional or activity analysis and eventually information on the costs of certain activities. Activities should demonstrate how they meet key Corporate Plan priorities and any statutory obligations.
2. Requiring Services (as appropriate) to produce options for efficiency gains/savings in net revenue expenditure/strategic increase in service charges that would help achieve the Medium Term Financial Strategy targets.
3. Considering organisational change reviews to improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of Council services.
4. A thorough examination of how electronic and transformational business processes can re-engineer current service delivery
5. Considering opportunities for shared services and joint working arising from participation in Team Lancashire ie. what can be done more effectively in partnership or collaboration
6. Considering not only how to implement Council priorities, but also to disinvest in Services which are being/can be provided by other public services or partnerships and to disinvest in those Services that are primarily the responsibility of other public service agencies.
7. Receiving reports from the Asset Management Group on capital programme bids.

Process

Star Chamber will continue to meet throughout the second half of the year, initially from September onwards, on each Wednesday at 10.00 am and limited to 2 hours maximum.

Core Membership

Full Cabinet (Leader as Chairman)
Chief Executive
Corporate Directors
Head of Financial Services

Other officers will be invited when appropriate.

Reporting Mechanisms – Presumption in favour of openness

Informally reporting to Cabinet / Management Team informal meetings and a short Leader's report to Cabinet covering the work commenced with timescale if available. In addition, the Leader will report regularly to the Budget & Performance Panel on progress.

Formal decisions will be taken by Cabinet