

**Performance  
Improvement Scrutiny  
Committee**



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| Date              | 23 November 2006   |
| Venue             | Town Hall, St Annes  |
| Committee members | Keith Hyde (Chairman)<br><br>Fabian Wilson (Vice-Chairman)<br><br>Christine Akeroyd, Eric Bamber, Derek Lancaster, John Prestwich, William Thompson, Hilda Wilson. |
| Other Councillors | Albert Pounder   |
| Officers          | Paul Norris, Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Brian White, Mark Evans, Peter Welsh, Carolyn Whewell, Annie Womack  |
| Others            | -  |

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 September 2006 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor John Prestwich for councillor Elizabeth Clarke and councillor William Thompson for councillor John Dolan.

4. Second Quarter Performance Report

Allan Oldfield, Executive Manager for Policy and Performance presented the report which provided an update to the committee on the arrangements for monitoring performance across the council in which the committee had a primary responsibility.

Details were provided of performance against the key indicators agreed by the committee highlighting both good and challenging performance. It was noted that overall the majority of the key performance measures were on target and performing well against the top quartile for all English District Councils. The hard work and dedication of service teams across the council was reflected in the very good overall performance.

It was reported that figures for the benefits service key quarterly BVPI's (79a and 79bi) and the Planning best practice checklist BVPI 205 could not be produced in time for the committee reporting deadline due to the nature of the calculations and the systems used to produce the figures.

It was also reported that performance against the planning indicators 109a, 109b and 109c was well below target and compared with the bottom quartile performance.

Areas where performance was improving included the customer service team, council web site (second highest ranking in Lancashire), online transactions, sickness levels and the collection of council tax and business rates.

Following Mr Oldfield's presentation of the report, Mark Evans (Development Control Manager) addressed the committee and informed them that performance on the planning indicators had already improved and that performance figures in the New Year were expected to show a significant improvement.

Following consideration of the report members raised a number of issues, which included long-term sickness, collection of debts and the impact on the planning service now that it had a full complement of staff and how to avoid long term staff vacancies re-occurring in the future.

Following a full debate the Committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the report and the progress made to date.
2. That the committee agrees to the revised local indicator to record all online transactions together.
3. That the committee agrees for the Chair and Vice Chair to receive the second quarter figures for BVPI's 79a, 79bi and 205 as soon as they are available and make any appropriate recommendations to the Portfolio Holder if action is required.
4. That the planning performance information contained in a report by the Department for Communities and Local Government be submitted to the next meeting.
5. That the senior management team examine incentives for the retention of staff at their forthcoming risk management workshop

#### 5. Annual Asset Management Report and Capital Strategy Update

Paul Walker, Executive Manager for Strategic Planning and Development and Brian White, Executive Manager for Finance presented the detailed report on the annual asset management report and capital strategy update.

Following the presentation members raised a number of issues, which included staff problems due to long-term sickness and whether there was sufficient budget provision for the outstanding works detailed in the report. Committee members were assured that the sickness problem was being addressed, and that the outstanding works were within budgets.

Members asked that Mr Walker and his team should be congratulated on their achievements whilst understaffed especially the improvement in BVPI 156.

Following consideration the committee RESOLVED to note the report.

#### 6. Customer Services Review

Councillor Fabian Wilson presented the report on customer services, which was identified at an IDeA training session for Cabinet and Scrutiny Members as an area of concern which needed to be addressed as a priority through an in-depth review.

A Task and Finish Group was selected by the Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee to undertake the review.

Throughout the review it had been recognised that customer contact centre staff were already working to near capacity, and it was felt that further and continual improvement could only be achieved by adopting a number (or all) of the recommendations contained within this report.

The report was discussed at some length, and Mr Norris, executive manager with responsibility for customer services, supplied some costs as they related to the recommendations e.g. the cost of an extra member of staff, and the cost of a messaging system. With regard to the messaging system, Mr Norris explained that capacity within the current system may already exist and further enquiries regarding this would be made by IT. This was considered to be a “quick-win” option, with the potential for an immediate beneficial impact on the contact centre service, and so was given the highest priority of all the recommendations.

Of the other recommendations, some are cost-neutral and the committee were keen to endorse those which could be implemented within existing resources, and wanted to deliver a strong message about the need to establish sound processes between front and back office services, to ensure that the customer is always able to speak to someone who can deal with his or her enquiry.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr Albert Pounder, thanked the Task and Finish Group for their work.

Following consideration of the report the Committee RESOLVED:

1. To consider purchasing a messaging system for the telephone service in the contact centre
2. To establish processes which ensure that at least one member of back-office staff in each department is always available to take calls from contact centre staff
3. To increase the provision of service-specific training for contact centre staff to underpin (6) below - or as a necessary stand-alone option
4. To regularise meetings between contact centre manager and service managers to highlight and act upon issues affecting service provision
5. To establish processes which ensure that every service provides at least an annual timetable of actual or potential operational activities which could impact upon customer contact centre - this to be cross-referenced between all services
6. To explore the use of Skill Routing for the customer contact centre to better utilise the skills of the staff

7. To consider the employment of one additional staff in the contact centre - additionally to consider whether remote working should be investigated as a possible resolution to accommodation issues
8. To explore ways of fostering co-operation and a sense of unity between all Council departments, leading to optimal service delivery to the citizens of Fylde.
9. To consider the use of a wider pay Scale than 3-5 currently used by Fylde
10. To explore commissioning Business Process Re-engineering

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