

## **CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP**

### **NOTES OF MEETING HELD 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2009**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan Working Group met on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 when Councillors J D Ablewhite, S J Criswell, P M D Godfrey, D Harty and R J West were present. An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor G S E Thorpe.
- 1.2 Miss H Ali, D Buckridge, S Couper, H Thackray and A Roberts were in attendance.
- 1.3 The purpose of the meeting was to continue the Working Group's investigations into the budgets associated with each of the Council's aims and objectives and to consider the quarterly report on the authority's performance against its priority objectives.

#### **2. WORKING GROUP INVESTIGATIONS – BUDGETS ASSOCIATED TO PRIORITY & CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The Working Group has received the following information:-
  - Growing Success Priority Areas – Budget by Service;
  - Growing Success Budget Analysis – Corporate Objectives; and
  - Final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group.
- 2.2 In opening the discussions, the Head of Financial Services reported that the Corporate Objectives do not naturally correspond with the individual service areas of the Council. In addition, Members have been advised to treat the information presented with some caution as it contains a level of subjectivity.
- 2.3 With regard to information presented in the Budget Analysis for the Corporate Objectives, in response to a question by a Member, it has been clarified that reference within the report to "unallocated" priorities refers to 1.5% (£523,000) of the Council's overall budget that Heads of Service have been unable to allocate to the Council's Corporate Objectives.
- 2.4 The Policy and Strategic Services Manager has reported upon the potential benefits that the introduction of integrated financial and corporate performance reporting could have for the Council. He has encouraged Members to investigate this further.
- 2.5 Discussion ensued on the performance management methods employed by the Council to monitor the Objectives in relation to the financial information presented. Comment has been made that some of the Corporate Objectives might not be appropriate for the Corporate Plan and could, instead, be more suited to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire; these are namely:-

- To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns;
  - To make town centres and key settlements accessible by supporting opportunities for residents to cycle, walk and use public transport; and
  - To support town centres and key settlements to become economically viable and vibrant.
- 2.6 Having regard to Appendix C of the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group's final report, Members have been advised that the "Growing Success Impact" were the views of the Budget Working Group. In addition, Members have been advised to treat with some caution those items within the MTP whose provision are designated as being a statutory requirement as the way these duties are carried out is not always prescribed.
- 2.7 Discussion has taken place on recharging and the process by which externally facing services are recharged for back office work. The Working Group also has queried the level of expenditure undertaken by the Council on the use of external consultants and has subsequently requested additional information in this respect. In particular, a breakdown by individual service area has been requested. Members then have acknowledged the range of work being undertaken by the "Making Cambridgeshire Count" initiative in encouraging efficiencies to be found by looking at opportunities for joint service provision across the County.
- 2.8 In discussing the proposed way forward, Members have concurred with a suggestion that detailed investigations should be undertaken into one of the Corporate Objectives, with a view to identifying the contributions made to it by the relevant service departments of the Council. The aims are to understand better the Objectives that the Corporate Plan comprises and to establish a methodology through which further work might be undertaken. In that light, Members have requested the Head of Financial Services to provide information on to the Objective relating to "A strong and local economy" for the Working Group's next meeting.

### **3. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

#### **Social Well-Being**

- 3.1 With regard to the Leisure Division and in noting that performance against the key measure relating to the "Number of admissions /participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council" is lower than the quarterly target by 3%, it has been reported that admissions levels are continuing to grow and that the measure has improved when compared with the previous quarter.
- 3.2 Performance information relating to the key activity to "Provide and facilitate arts activities directly and in partnership" will be included in the performance report to be submitted to the Social Well-Being Panel in December.
- 3.3 The key measure relating to the "Number of households living in temporary accommodation" is making progress towards achieving the target and this will, hopefully, be reflected in the next quarterly performance report.

## **Environmental Well-Being**

- 3.4 It is anticipated that the key measure relating to the “Tonnes of CO2 saved from year one carbon management projects” will achieve its target by the end of the next quarter.
- 3.5 Following a previous Working Group request that the key measure relating to energy efficiency installation is amended, Members have been advised that a new measure has now been introduced to determine the “Number of tonnes of CO2 saved through installation of energy efficiency measures and renewables in domestic properties”. Performance will be measured by identifying the number of referrals/interventions made by the District Council over the reporting period.
- 3.6 Two new Key Activities have been introduced by the IMD Service; namely; “Implement new technology to reduce power consumption” and “Reducing number of commuting miles by sole car usage (e.g. working from home, car sharing, walking, cycling, use of public transport)”. The Working Group has concurred with a suggestion that the latter should become a corporate measure. Comment has been made that variances in the performance levels achieved across the different service areas of the Council are to be expected owing to the varying nature of the work undertaken by departments.

## **Economic Well-Being**

- 3.7 It is anticipated that the target for the key measure relating to the “% of thematic groups reviewing their performance and delivery” will be achieved by the end of the next quarter.
- 3.8 The Working Group’s attention has been drawn to a series of new activities and measures for the Objective “To be an employer people want to work for”, which have been introduced following a previous request by the Working Group. In response to questions relating to the flexibility of employee contracts to enable inter/cross-departmental working across the Council, it has been reported that a revised HR Strategy will be considered by the Employment Panel in December, which will seek to encompass this matter.
- 3.9 Performance for the key measure for the Leisure Centres relating to the “Actual income received compared to budget” is 9% lower than the quarterly target. Members have discussed the schools’ use of the pools. In noting that the schools are currently reviewing their usage agreements with the individual Leisure Centres, Members have requested that additional information is made available for the Economic Well-Being Panel.

## **4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 4.1 The Working Group has discussed their programme of work for the next quarter which includes:-
- Additional information from the Head of Financial Services relating to the priority objective “A Strong and Local Economy”;
  - Information relating to the level of expenditure undertaken by the Council on the use of external consultants,

- Investigations into central departmental recharges;
- A review of the targets for “Growing Success” for the 2010/11 financial year; and
- Quarterly performance information for the next quarter.

In that light, it has been agreed that two meetings of the Working Group would be held in January and February next year. Details to be confirmed.

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