

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being, Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being have considered the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships on the Council's performance against its priority objectives. This report sets out the Panels' views on the performance levels achieved.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have endorsed the comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group, which are reflected in the following paragraphs.

Social Well-Being

- 2.2 The Social Well-Being Panel's attention has been drawn to the "number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council" at its Leisure Centres, which has not achieved the second quarter target. This is attributable to delays in the opening of the 3G football pitches at St Ives Outdoor Centre and St Neots Leisure Centre. Members have questioned the process by which targets have been set as the target figure took into account the receipt of external funding, which subsequently has not been awarded to the Council. Members have therefore suggested that, in order that underlying trends can be monitored, changes in admissions/participants attributable to these developments should be reported separately. Additionally, it has been suggested that future performance reports should include a breakdown of users visiting each of the Leisure Centres to enable more effective scrutiny to take place. Members have also reiterated previous concerns that given significant levels of capital investment have been made at each of the Leisure Centres, the financial effect of such investments should be reported. The Panel has been advised that this report will be made available to Members in early 2011.
- 2.3 Members have noted adverse trends against the target for the key measure relating to the "number of households living in temporary accommodation". The figure of 90 households in temporary accommodation represents an increase of 10 and 35 households when compared to the previous quarter and last year's comparable figures respectively. The figure can be attributed to the recession but should be viewed in the context of the number of households prevented from becoming homeless.
- 2.4 Members have queried the target for the key measure relating to the "number of new affordable homes built by March 2011" and in so doing, it was reported that the target may well be reconsidered as part of the review of the Corporate Plan currently being undertaken.

- 2.5 In respect of the various targets relating to health, Members have questioned whether dialogue is being held with the County Council and health service providers on prevention re-enablement. This will ensure that a consistent and more effective approach to the achievement of targets is adopted across the County.

Environmental Well-Being

- 2.6 The Environmental Well-Being Panel's attention has been drawn to the key measure relating to the "number of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures carried out as a result of HDC schemes and promotions", Members have been advised that the "amber" indicator is not of concern as it is attributable to the installation of the measures to five homes not having been completed during the reporting period.
- 2.7 Having sought clarification of the level of interest reported amongst potential occupiers of the St. Ives Enterprise Centre, Members have been informed that enquiries have been received from 13 companies to date, of which 4 have visited the premises and 2 have made follow-up appointments.
- 2.8 In response to a query regarding the likely timescale for the release of the St Neots East Urban Extension Masterplan and the associated new Town Centre Plan, the Panel has been advised that the St Neots East Urban Design Framework is due to be published imminently and this will then inform the preparation of related outline planning applications. Preparation work has commenced on the St Neots Town Centre Plan, it is anticipated that this will be considered by the Cabinet in spring 2011.
- 2.9 Concern has been expressed by Members at the risks associated with cuts in LPSA funding, and in particular its implications for the development of the Ramsey Enterprise Centre. Having sought clarification from the Sustainable Economic Development Manager over whether it will proceed the Panel has been advised that the cut will undoubtedly impact on the project as it represented the public sector contribution to the partnership. Other ways of financing the project with the private sector are being investigated and possible funding grants are being explored. The need for an enterprise centre is still current and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager is hopeful that the project can still go ahead, even if it is a reduced size facility.

Economic Well-Being

- 2.10 With regard to the key measure that "Regular reports on the performance of thematic groups are submitted to the HSP Executive and Board", it has been noted that the October/November meetings of the Executive and Board have been cancelled owing to uncertainties surrounding the future of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. Members have queried whether the Partnership will play a role in the delivery of the localism agenda. This is currently being discussed with the Council's partners. It has been suggested that the role of the HSP should be clarified and engagement sought with the County Council as a matter of urgency to ensure that the District is in a position to respond as localism develops.
- 2.11 Members have been encouraged to note the performance levels achieved in respect of the key measure relating to the Leisure Centres' "Actual expenditure compared to budget". Following an enquiry by the Working

Group, it has been reported that savings on premises and supplies of 20% and 21% respectively have been achieved through centralised procurement, better contract management and fewer building repairs being undertaken.

- 2.12 With regard to the “amber” indicator in respect of the key measure relating to the “Actual income received compared to budget”, Members have expressed the view that performance statistics for each of the Leisure Centres should be recorded separately in future monitoring reports.
- 2.13 Members have noted that the quarterly target for the key measure relating to the “% of External Funding actions on track” has not been achieved. This is largely attributable to a post being left vacant from May to September 2009, as the Officer covering for maternity leave had left the authority in May 2009, but this has had minimal financial effect on the Council. The post holder has now returned from maternity leave and she will resume her role encouraging Officers to be proactive in searching and applying for external sources of funding. Having queried the reasons why the Council monitors performance in this respect, it has been confirmed that attracting external funding is regarded as a priority for the Council and that a Strategy and associated Action Plan have been developed for this purpose. Having requested details of the financial benefits that have been achieved under this performance measure, it has been suggested that a six monthly report on progress of external funding, which is produced for the Chief Officers Management Team, might be circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Members for information.
- 2.14 Having discussed the Government initiative to replace the East of England Development Agency with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Members have noted that the implications of this change have been considered at the December meeting of the Economic Well-Being Panel.
- 2.15 The Panel has suggested that the Council’s performance against the measure for the “% of new employees still in post after 12 months” should be regarded as “green” because the two leavers were on fixed term contracts. All of those whose contract extended beyond the monitoring period are still with the Council. In addition, it has been suggested that it would benefit the Council to monitor staff turnover.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 All three Overview and Scrutiny Panels have reviewed the performance levels that the Council has achieved in the period to 30th September 2010. The Cabinet is invited to consider the Panels’ comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Corporate Plan Working Group Notes of the meeting held on 29th November 2010.

Minutes and Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 7th December 2010 and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 9th December 2010.

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