

**POLICY & REVIEW (PERFORMANCE) PANEL**

MINUTES OF A MEETING of Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held in the Civic Offices at 4.30pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

(NB: These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting)

**Present**

Councillors Tom Blair (Chair)  
Michael Andrewes  
Malcolm Hey  
Leo Madden  
Hugh Mason  
Lee Mason

Education Representatives Roger Bentote, Teacher Liaison Panel  
(until 5.00pm)  
Karen Parvin, Parent Governor

**72 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillors Nické Bentley, Caroline Scott and Mr. Raymond Fisher, Diocesan Representative.

**73 Declaration of Members' Interests in Accordance with Standing Order 14 (AI 2)**

No interests were declared.

**74 Minutes of the Meetings held on 15 and 22 September 2004 (AI 3)**

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held on 15 and 22 September be confirmed as a correct record.

**75 Matters Arising (AI 4)**

There were no matters arising.

## 76 Ofsted Inspection Report (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Mike Fowler, Senior Assistant Director (Resources) from the Local Education Authority.

Mr. Fowler introduced the results of the recent Ofsted Inspection. The LEA was very pleased with the results of the Inspection as Ofsted had not identified any areas as unsatisfactory and had given no key recommendations for improvement. Six areas for development had been identified and these were picked up in the Action Plan. Ofsted had also praised the quality of corporate planning by the LEA and felt that leadership from members was exceptionally strong.

### **RESOLVED that**

- (i) **the contents of attached Ofsted LEA Inspection Report and the Authority's Action Plan be noted; and**
- (ii) **the LEA be congratulated on its outstanding achievement in the recent Ofsted Inspection.**

## 77 Quarterly Review of Key Issues from Performance Monitoring (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mrs. Kelly Nash from the Strategy Unit. Mrs. Nash gave a brief introduction to the report and explained that the new Strategic Management Board has subsumed the role of the former Performance Management and Improvement Board (PMIB).

Members received an update on some of the key issues in performance monitoring:

- Business planning – under the new organisational structure, the Strategic Directors have agreed that business plans should be produced for each directorate and for the corporate priority teams. Operating plans should then be produced for each of the teams within the directorates.
- LPSA Monitoring – The PMIB agreed that remaining pump-priming money should be directed towards targets where scope remained to influence achievement of the target.
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Two important pieces of work had been undertaken: an analysis of progress against the Improvement Action Plan, and the CPA self-assessment of progress submitted to the Audit Commission.
- Best Value – PMIB agreed that it would be appropriate to ensure

that 'communications' is picked up in the Best Value Review of IT Services and also issues around 'future proofing' the authority are considered. It was also agreed to ensure that the support services task group, which has been set up as part of the 'Moving Towards Excellence' Review, is involved in the review.

- Future performance management work programme – The items that would be considered over the next quarter will include: performance management approach in PCC, LPSA spending plans, Crime & Disorder Best Value Review monitoring update, risk management and business planning.

A discussion ensued and members made the following points:

- A statement within the report that related to the development of a working group to take forward progress against the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process was queried. It was questioned whether this alone would 'ensure that excellence is achieved'.
- Members queried how actions contained within service business plans were monitored.

Mrs. Nash responded that work was being undertaken by the the Chief Executive to address issues around project management within the CPA process.

Mrs. Nash reassured members that a six-monthly review process for service business plans will be introduced and a paper on this would be coming forward to the Panel for the next meeting

The Panel agreed an additional recommendation to request that the way in which project management is undertaken by the City Council be considered by the Strategic Management Team.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) **The Panel note the performance issues considered by the Performance Management and Improvement Board and Strategic Directors in the last quarter, and the plans agreed to address performance issues;**
- (ii) **That the way in which project management is undertaken by the City Council be considered by the Strategic Management Board; and**
- (iii) **A report from the Strategy Unit, including reference to the ongoing monitoring of service business plans be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.**

## 78 Supporting People Strategy Update (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Alan Cufley and Mr. Dave Adams from the Housing Service.

The Panel heard that the Supporting People project was based around a pot of money provided by the Government to provide services for vulnerable adults. £9.5m had been provided this year, although this would be reduced next year. The Supporting People Strategy for Portsmouth was being developed and must be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by the end of March 2005.

Mr. Cufley explained that the project aims to support people to whom the Council does not owe a statutory duty of care but who, without the help from this project, may later become a person to whom the Council does owe a duty of care.

Members heard that the Supporting People project had recently been inspected by the Audit Commission. Although the inspection report has not yet been completed, officers from the project have had the opportunity to meet with the Audit Commission to discuss their comments so far. The issues raised included publicity, governance, communication and member involvement.

A draft action plan to address the outcomes of the Inspection was presented to the Panel and this would be sent to the Audit Commission to show a proactive response to their comments. Members agreed that they would like to receive regular update reports on the project and attention was drawn to the paper received by the Panel from the ODPM which stated that members should challenge officers if they do not feel that the project is moving forward appropriately. The Panel agreed that they would like to receive an update on the project every three months.

**HHS**

The Executive Strategy Group of the project commissions services from Portsmouth City Council and others (approximately £2-3m of the funding goes to PCC) and the largest amount of funding goes to single homeless people. Mr. Cufley explained to the Panel that the reduction of funding next year would need to be managed carefully and equitably to be sure that services from external providers are not reduced by a greater extent than services from Portsmouth City Council. The reduction in funding next year reflects a national cutback and is not specific to Portsmouth.

(At this point, Councillor Madden declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as he is a Non-Executive Director of Portsmouth PCT)

In response to a query from the Panel about the Housing Strategy, Mr.

Cufley advised members that the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) had deemed it not 'fit for purpose' as it did not contain a robust review of housing need. He was confident that the Strategy would be fit for purpose by the end of the year.

**RESOLVED that**

- HHS
- (i) **The Panel notes progress made so far in the development of the Supporting People Strategy;**
  - (ii) **The Panel notes the initial comments arising from the Audit Commission Inspection; and**
  - (iii) **An update report on the project be brought back to the Panel in three months' time.**

**79 Update on District Audit Management Letter Action Plan (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Ms. Valerie Lane, Head of Financial Services. Ms. Lane briefly introduced the report and advised members that the next Audit Letter would probably be due in February 2005.

**RESOLVED that the Panel note the report.**

**80 Internal Audit Status Report – September 2004 (AI 9)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Ms. Lyn Graham from Internal Audit to the meeting. Ms. Graham introduced the report which contained a six-monthly update on audit matters. The significant areas of weakness in control included petty cash, corporate credit cards, schools and direct payments and Ms. Graham gave details on each of these. Resourcing within the Internal Audit unit has been an issue but temporary staff have now been employed to bridge the gap.

DFR

The Panel was concerned to hear of the problems relating to corporate credit cards and requested that a more detailed response on this issue be given to them as soon as possible. Members were pleased to hear that corporate credit cards were being discontinued as Portsmouth City Council would be piloting the use of purchasing cards.

**RESOLVED that the Panel**

- (i) **Note the Audit performance for 2003/4;**
- (ii) **Note the Audit performance for 2004/5;**
- (iii) **Approve the revised audit plan for 2004/5;**
- (iv) **Note that Audit to report essential and important (red and**

amber) control weaknesses to the Policy and Review (Performance) Panel once officers have been given an opportunity to respond;

- (v) Note that Audit to report these weaknesses to the relevant Executive Member, once officers have been given a chance to respond;
- (vi) Note the highlighted weaknesses in essential and important controls for the first 23 weeks of 2004/5;
- (vii) Note that action is being taken to address Audit resourcing;
- (viii) Note the Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2003; and
- (ix) Receive a more detailed response from the Director for Finance and Resources on the issues around corporate credit cards.

DFR

**81 Valuing Diversity – Annual Update 2004 (AI 10)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mo Love, Principal Equalities Adviser. Ms. Love gave a introduction to the Valuing Diversity Survey, which was undertaken by MORI in 2001/02.

Although the Survey was extremely thorough, Ms. Love explained the funding no longer exists to carry out a fresh Survey. However, other checks and balances were now in place to ensure that the necessary standards were being adhered to. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Equality Standard and the introduction of Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessments have all come into force since the first Valuing Diversity Survey was done. In light of these changes, the Panel agreed that an annual update is no longer necessary. The Panel agreed that the Executive and each political group leader should have responsibility for monitoring performance on this area.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) The Panel note the attached update; and
- (ii) The Panel note the changes which have occurred over the past two years and agree that there is no longer a need to receive an annual update on this topic.

**82 Best Value Review of Lifelong Learning (AI 11)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Paddy Bradley, Assistant Director from the Local Education Authority and Ms. Janet Swinney, independent consultant.

The Panel received a presentation from Ms. Swinney (PowerPoint slides attached to these minutes) which set out the key areas of the proposed Best Value Review of Lifelong Learning. The focus of the Review would be on non-formal learning and would take a cross-cutting approach, examining the contribution of all Council departments and how these feed into many aspects of the Community Strategy. Few other local authorities have carried out a Best Value Review of Lifelong Learning so there is limited comparative data available.

Ms. Swinney explained that the Council is only under an obligation to provide education for young people between the ages of 2-16 years old but outside of this is only under an obligation to procure 'adequacy and sufficiency' of provision. The funding for this comes jointly from the Learning and Skills Council and Portsmouth City Council.

Ms. Swinney advised the Panel that the Review was expected to finish within a year. Mr. Bradley assured the Panel that he would be able to provide them with updates on the progress of the Review throughout the year. He would also be reporting regularly to the Executive Members for Culture & Leisure and Education, Children & Families.

Mr. Bradley advised the Panel that there was an expectation that the Adult Learning Inspectorate would inspect the Council's adult learning provision in the future so this Review would provide valuable preparation for this.

Members asked that the title of the Review be subtitled to show that it would be focusing on non-formal learning.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) **The scope of the Lifelong Learning Best Value Review be agreed; and**
- (ii) **The title of the Review be subtitled to show that it will focus on non-formal learning.**

DELL

**83 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel will be held at 4.00pm on Tuesday 14 December 2004 in Conference Room B.

This has been rearranged from the scheduled meeting on 8 December 2004.

Meeting closed at 6.15pm.

Chair