

## **POLICY & REVIEW (PERFORMANCE) PANEL**

MINUTES OF A MEETING of Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held in the Civic Offices at 4.00pm on Tuesday 14 December 2004.

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

### **Present**

Councillors Tom Blair (Chair)  
Michael Andrewes  
Nické Bentley (from 4.25pm)  
Simon Boshier (from 4.25pm)  
Malcolm Hey  
Leo Madden  
Hugh Mason (from 4.20pm)  
Lee Mason (until 4.55pm)

#### **84 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

No apologies for absence were received.

#### **85 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

No interests were declared.

#### **86 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 October 2004 (AI 3)**

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held on 27 October be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **87 Matters Arising (AI 4)**

There were no matters arising.

#### **88 Education Funding report (AI 5)**

The Panel approved the final report from its Review of Education Funding and a copy was signed by the Chair.

**RESOLVED** that the report from the Panel's Review of Education Funding be approved and signed by the Chair.

## **A strategic approach to performance management in Portsmouth City Council (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mrs. Kelly Nash and Mr. Paddy May from the Strategy Unit who introduced the report.

Mr. May advised that this report would be considered by the Executive in January 2005. The report is in response to a request by the Strategic Directors that the approach to performance management be consolidated into an overall strategy.

A discussion ensued regarding Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets and whether they were too stretching. Mr. May assured members that the Council was not expected to meet all of its targets and that, if it did, the Government's view would be that the targets were not sufficiently challenging. The Government wishes the Council to focus on areas where it is having difficulty. Mr. May advised that there would be an update on the progress of developing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation LPSA targets in this week's Members' Information Service. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has agreed to most targets and now wishes to ascertain how Portsmouth City Council aims to achieve these.

Mr. May advised members that workshops would possibly be held in Spring 2005 for members for the themes of the Corporate Scorecard. Strategic Directors would be involved in running the workshops. The Panel was very supportive of this proposed approach.

### **RESOLVED that the Panel**

- (i) agrees in principle the strategic approach to performance management in Portsmouth City Council, outlined from page 2 of the report onwards;**
- (ii) agrees**
  - a) the roles of individuals and officer and member groups, outlined in section three of the report, specifically that the strategic policy, partnerships and performance management box should report quarterly to the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel, and the Executive, on performance issues considered by the Strategic Directors Board in the previous quarter**
  - b) the suggested process for involving members more closely in the development of the corporate scorecard; and**
- (iii) notes the suggested action plan outlined in section six of the report.**

**90 Review of achievement of targets set against Best Value Performance Indicators (AI 7)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Mrs. Nash introduced the report which updated members on progress made against Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) targets set in the Corporate Plan.

Members asked how close the Council was to achieving a 2% efficiency saving as directed by the Government. Mrs. Nash responded that the methodology by which this target is to be measured has yet to be decided so the answer was presently unclear.

**Strat/  
DSM**

The Panel felt that they did not have the power to consider whether further actions should be taken by departments to ensure that the targets are met. Instead, members decided that they should be informed by portfolio holders and/or Strategic Directors if the targets were not going to be hit and receive an explanation as to why not. Mrs. Nash advised that a number of these targets are already reported to the Panel through other guises and any updates should slot into the existing reporting framework.

A discussion ensued around several BVPIs and Mrs. Nash responded to questions regarding why certain targets were not expected to be hit. Mrs. Nash also warned that, although this Council was performing well in terms of the technical definition of some targets, this may not reflect the truth of the situation and vice versa.

Mrs. Nash advised that, where systems were not currently in place to report on particular targets, work was being undertaken with Internal Audit to try and improve this situation, although there was a need to balance the cost of extracting the data with the impact of the target.

**RESOLVED that the Panel**

- (i) **notes the progress made against the targets set out in annex 1 to the report; and**
- (ii) **invites Executive Members to provide an explanation for any BVPIs which have not been achieved at the end of the year.**

**Strat/  
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**Risk Management (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Mrs. Nash introduced the report which provided an update on progress in developing risk management systems.

Mrs. Nash explained that a working group would be meeting from early 2005 in order to prioritise the risks which appear in the report. Members requested that they received an update from this group. In future, it was hoped that the Panel would be able to endorse the prioritisation of risks and examine the actions/controls being taken to address these risks. Mrs. Nash advised that this was a work in progress at present but member involvement would be key.

The Panel agreed that they would like to receive an initial report showing the prioritisation of risks and would then be able to request further information on any risks that were causing particular concern.

**Strat** Councillor Madden queried risk no. 19 regarding corporate governance and the comment that a local code was being introduced and would be given to members in December. Mrs. Nash undertook to investigate this and respond to Councillor Madden.

**RESOLVED that the Panel**

- (i) notes the progress with risk management issues;**
- (ii) notes the list of risks identified at appendix 1 of the report; and**
- (iii) receives an update report from the working group on the prioritisation of risks as soon as practicable.**

**92 Social Services Annual Review of Performance (AI 9)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Nick Davey from Social Services who introduced the report. The report was considered by the Executive on 13 December and had not been amended.

Mr. Davey reassured members that areas identified for improvement by the inspection were being tackled – some areas related to BVPs and were thus already subject to performance recovery plans.

Mr. Davey explained some areas within the report. The following points emerged:

- In relation to Adult Services, Social Services is working with accountants to ensure that costs are reported accurately. When compared to nearby local authorities, Portsmouth's costs seem reasonable but there are some other local authorities that supply services at a much lower cost and this skews the data.
- The national Care Standards, the last of which will come into force in April 2005, will have an impact on costs in Part III homes for older people. Members wished to find out the cost implications of these changes and Mr. Davey undertook to respond with further information.

**DSS**

- Mr. Davey explained that the high numbers of emergency hospital admissions was partly as a result of the hospital admission systems wrongly classifying certain admissions. Mr. Davey advised that there was increased liaison with the Primary Care Trust to work on improving this score. In response to a request, Mr. Davey undertook to supply to Councillor Bentley further information on the action plan in place to tackle this issue.
- Of the 16 local authorities which are comparable to Portsmouth, there are only two 3\* authorities and seven authorities rated at 0\* or 1\* with the remainder rated at 2\* so Portsmouth compares favourably. Mr. Davey undertook to circulate the list of the 16 authorities with which Portsmouth is compared.
- All children on the Child Protection Register have now been allocated a social worker.

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The Panel requested that the performance recovery plan be brought back for consideration at its March 2005 meeting.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) **the Panel notes the report; and**
- (ii) **the performance recovery plan be brought back for consideration by the Panel at its meeting in March 2005.**

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**93 Housing Benefits CPA/Inspection 2004 (AI 10)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Tony Nicholas, Head of Revenues & Benefits, who introduced the report which provided an overview of the 2004 re-assessment of Portsmouth City Council's Housing & Council Tax Benefit Service carried out by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate.

Mr. Nicholas explained that the Council's self-assessment is very rigorous and this was reflected by the decision of the Department for Work and Pensions not to inspect the Council this year.

It was also highlighted that future BFI assessments would place higher priority on service delivery performance indicators.

The Panel wished to extend its congratulations to all those who had worked to improve the service.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) **the Panel notes the achievement of the City Council's Housing Benefit Service in improving its CPA rating from 2 to 3 in 2004;**
- (ii) **the Panel notes the progress made in maintaining low levels of HB processing backlogs since May 2004;**

- (iii) **further reports be provided to the Panel on a regular basis for awareness of any changes to the BFI's approach to assessment and to provide updates on the progress made towards further improvement of the City Council's CPA score; and**
- (iv) **congratulations be given to all those who had worked to improve the service.**

**94 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Panel will be held at 4.00pm on Wednesday 12 January 2005 in Conference Room B.

Meeting closed at 5.45pm

Chair