

POLICY & REVIEW (PERFORMANCE) PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING of Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held in the Civic Offices at 4.00pm on Wednesday 15th September 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

55 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Simon Boshier.

Councillor Eleanor Scott, Executive Member for Education, Children & Families, sent her apologies as she was attending a children's services event in Paulsgrove. She had intended to attend for agenda item 5 on Corporate Parenting.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

57 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28th July 2004 (AI 3)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel held on 28th July 2004 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

58 Matters Arising from the Minutes (AI 4)

(a) Minute 48, pg. 32 – Crime and Disorder Best Value Review

The Chair asked if there was a new lead officer for the Crime and Disorder Best Value Review. Members were informed that a new officer had just been appointed.

(b) Minute 48, pg. 33 – Continental Ferry Port Best Value Review

DSM

Councillor Madden advised that he had not received a copy of the response from Councillor Mike Hancock CBE MP. Officers from Democratic Services undertook to forward a copy of this letter to Councillor Madden.

59 Monitoring Report on Corporate Parenting Review (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Stuart Gallimore from Social Services, Mr. Hayden Ginns from Education and Miss Kathryn Smale from the Strategy Unit who introduced the report.

The Chair queried the statement under recommendation 2 of the report, which concerned the adoption of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children. The report stated that the target of 80% of looked after children to have PEPs had not been achieved, which contradicted the findings of the recent Ofsted report which advised that PEPs were in place for all looked after children.

Mr. Ginns explained that the Ofsted report was correct in stating that all looked after children have plans in place but these are not all PEPs as defined by Portsmouth City Council's definition and structure. PEP paperwork is being introduced for all looked after children but will not duplicate details that are already set out elsewhere, but rather the PEP will contain signposting information to other relevant plans. This will avoid unnecessary paperwork and simplify the process for social workers. This will also echo the message from central government for the simplification of plans for vulnerable children.

Councillor Hey asked if all elements of the PEP are duplicated in other plans. Mr. Ginns stated that this was not necessarily the case and advocated the development of a long-term PEP for each looked after child as soon as possible.

**Strat/
DSM**

Councillor Madden requested that an update report be brought back to the Panel in 6 months time to update members on progress made towards those targets not yet achieved.

DSM

The Panel agreed to add a further recommendation that asked the Executive to respond to the Panel with regards to what action they are taking in relation to recommendation 1 of the report, which stated that the Executive should collectively take responsibility for looked after children in the Council's care.

RESOLVED that

- DSM/
Strat**
- (i) the current performance in terms of looked after children be noted;**
 - (ii) the progress against recommendations agreed in the review's final report be evaluated;**
 - (iii) the requirement of any corrective action be agreed where recommendations have not been achieved;**
 - (iv) an update report on progress towards targets which have not yet been achieved be brought to the Panel in six months time; and**
 - (v) the Executive be asked to respond to the Panel on what action they are taking in relation to recommendation 1 of the review's final report.**

DSM

60 Portsmouth 2nd Generation Local Public Service Agreement (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Paddy May from the Strategy Unit who introduced the report.

Mr. May circulated a supplementary sheet which contained details of the revised 2nd Generation Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2G) priorities for Portsmouth following a meeting between the Council and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (copy attached to these minutes). The outcomes were now simpler and linked more directly with the target. The original report, with a verbal update of information from the supplementary sheet, had been approved by the Executive on 13th September and a copy of the supplementary sheet would be circulated to all members of the City Council.

The Chair asked how Portsmouth City Council would be able to reduce the levels of domestic violence in the City. Mr. May explained that the target related not just to the work of the City Council but what the Council can do with other local organisations.

Mr. May explained the changes which had been made from the original report. The following points emerged:

- The ODPM would not accept an outcome in relation to adult learning that was not supported by a certificate and this would affect the target relating to skill levels.
- A target relating to volunteering would only be acceptable if it could be shown that this action confers an actual benefit.
- The housing maintenance target has been taken out and is now part of the decent homes target.

- The ODPM would be happy to accept voter turnout as a target (this issue is on the agenda as item 11).
- The extended schools target has gone. The target should focus on outcomes, such as better education.

The proposed themes and outcomes would need to be submitted for agreement to the ODPM by the end of September. The ODPM would then respond a month later to say whether they accept the targets and the Council would have until the end of December to work up more specific details. Mr. May explained that the Council would only be expected to submit 12 targets but would be submitting 16 in case not all of these were accepted.

The Chair asked if some of the targets would be too stretching, as they had proved to be in the past. Mr. May responded that the government must see targets in areas which are causing the Council the most concern which may prove more challenging.

Mr. May explained that if the Council is 100% successful in reaching all the targets, it will receive 2.5% of the net budget for the Council (between £400,000-£500,000 per target) which will be payable over 2 years. The Council will also receive a pump-priming grant to help achieve the targets.

Councillor Hey asked about a possible target based around congestion. Mr. May responded that this requires further discussion with the ODPM as they have concerns over the reliability of data on congestion.

With regard the decent homes target, Councillor Madden asked how 'homelessness' was measured. Officers responded that this referred to the number of people who applied to the Council as homeless. Councillor Madden also asked how affordable housing was defined. The City Council has a measure of affordable housing, in essence it relates to Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) housing, The Government have said that they do not have an agreed definition of affordable housing.

Councillor Andrewes asked if the target focusing on raising the proportion of the population meeting basic literacy and numeracy targets had been abandoned. Mr. May responded that this had been absorbed into the target on skill levels as data on literacy and numeracy was hard to quantify on a local basis.

Councillor Andrewes felt that seeking a rise in voter turnout as a target was not advisable as voters have the right to stay at home and also voter turnout fluctuates widely depending on the national or local bigger picture.

RESOLVED that the Panel endorse the themes, outcomes and possible indicators for the 2nd generation local public service agreement.

61 Best Value Review of Statementing (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Ken Bowen and Mr. Mike Fowler from the Education Department who introduced the report and action plan.

Mr. Bowen gave the Panel some background information on the review. It had encountered some delays, such as the recent Ofsted inspection, and had taken longer to complete than anticipated.

Mr. Bowen explained that some of the actions were already in progress although some, such as recommendation 3.2 on reducing the number of statements produced on transfer to secondary school, would take longer to complete.

Once the working group has produced the recommendations, the Panel asked if they were then seen by the Executive Member. Mr. Bowen advised that the recommendations were seen by the Executive Member and also by the Schools Funding Forum to agree the actions.

Councillor Mason asked if the working group were given an open view of funding models or a closed one. Mr. Bowen responded that they had tried to give the working group an open view but guidance had been issued at the same time as the review with details of a best practice funding model which was helpful.

Members asked when the work would finish. Mr. Bowen advised that the work on the funding model would be completed by October 2004 and that recommendations would then be made to the schools funding forum, although they expect only small refining modifications rather than wholesale changes

DELL/ The Panel agreed that they would like to monitor the action plan to see how
DSM the recommendations were being implemented.

RESOLVED that

- (i) **the Panel support the action plan and recommend it to the Executive for approval; and**
- (ii) **a progress report on the action plan be brought back to the Panel in 6 months time.**

DELL/
DSM

62 ICT Best Value Review – Proposed Approach (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Dr. Bob France, Head of IT Services, who introduced the report and explained he two stages, the first being necessary to meet the timescales of the Moving Towards Excellence Review.

The Chair asked if any radical changes were likely to arise out of the review. Dr. France responded that he expected some changes but hoped that they would predominantly be small ones but it was too early to predict at this stage. In response to a question he advised that as with all such reviews, externalisation would be considered along with other supply options during stage 2.

**HIT/
MA**

The Panel agreed that they would like to see a member on the Best Value Review Board and nominated Councillor Andrewes. Councillor Andrewes stated that he would need further information about the level of time commitment required before he could confirm whether he would be able to take up the position.

In response to a question regarding the breakdown of the review Dr. France advised that stage 1 would consist of approximately 20% of the review and stage 2 would form the remaining 80%.

Members wished to make an additional recommendation concerning the involvement of the Executive Member in the review.

RESOLVED that

**HIT/
MA**

- (i) **the proposed two-stage approach to the ICT Best Value Review be adopted;**
- (ii) **priority be given to Stage 1 (i.e. to address the organisation of ICT Support Services by end October 2004) in order to meet the needs to the Moving Towards Excellence implementation programme;**
- (iii) **consultation on the scope of Stage 2 (i.e. the full BV review) takes place with a range of stakeholders, including the new Strategic Directors, and that a full scoping document be submitted to PMIB and then to the Panel in November 2004;**
- (iv) **the review address ICT across all of Portsmouth City Council and not just the IT Services department;**
- (v) **Councillor Andrewes be nominated to serve on the IT Best Value Review Board, subject to his availability; and**
- (vi) **the Executive Member be asked to take an interest in the review.**

63 Results of Portsmouth Residents' Panel Survey, Spring 2004 (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Ms. Justine Read and Mr. Adam Reeves from the

Strategy Unit who introduced the report.

Ms. Read gave some background information to the survey. The branding and communications strategy does not currently exist but is in the early stages of development as part of the 'Moving Towards Excellence' review

Members agreed that the issues raised by the results of the survey needed to be addressed, although it was acknowledged that some of the issues were of a transitory nature, such as the Millennium Tower. The levels of dissatisfaction were higher than ever before and it was emphasised that the results of the survey were a summary of people's views rather than tick boxes. It was agreed that there was a currently a poor link between information and communication which would need to be strengthened.

Councillor Hey added that members could look to their own language and behaviour in order to help improve the Council's image. He also hoped that relationships with 'The News' could be improved.

Strat

Councillor Hey requested to see the report and the draft branding and communications strategy. Mr. Reeves undertook to supply these documents.

RESOLVED that

- (i) **the Panel note the results of the Portsmouth Residents' Panel Survey Spring 2004; and**
- (ii) **the Panel note the intention to develop a branding and communications strategy.**

64 Homelessness Strategy – Implementation (AI 10)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Dave Adams from the Housing Service.

RESOLVED that

- (i) **the Panel note performance since the publication of the Homelessness Strategy in July 2003; and**
- (ii) **the Panel support the undertaking of a new review of homelessness services in the city by July 2005, in preparation for publishing a new strategy in July 2006.**

65 Voter Turnout and Democratic Engagement (AI 11)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. John Haskell, Democratic Services Manager,

who introduced the report.

Members discussed the report and agreed that the siting of polling stations was one of the main factors related to poor voter turnout. Mr. Haskell reported that the Council has already received over 40,000 responses to the new electoral register canvassing so the data on the register will hopefully become more accurate. The Council was also working with the University of Portsmouth to try and get more students on the electoral register.

RESOLVED that

- DSM**
- (i) the Policy and Review (Oversight) Panel be asked to re-classify as a 'high priority' a review of voter turnout and democratic engagement; and**
 - (ii) the Oversight Panel be asked to refer the proposed review and arrangements for its scoping to an ad hoc panel to undertake at an early date, with a recommendation that -**
 - (a) in respect of voter turnout, as part of its work the panel examines recent local voting trends; considers various initiatives that have been proposed nationally to increase the vote at elections, and brings forward for consideration by the City Council recommendations on ways and means of seeking increased voter turnout;**
 - (b) in respect of democratic engagement, as part of its work the panel focuses on some of those areas that are not currently the subject of examination elsewhere and that the detail of this part of the review be settled by the ad hoc panel.**
- DSM**

66 Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Progress on the Action Plan – July 2004 (AI 12)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Panel welcomed Mr. Martin Evans, Head of Strategy, who introduced the report.

Mr. Evans advised the Panel that the Executive had seen this report on Monday 13th September and added a recommendation regarding the establishment of a cross-party working group to assist in the Council's CPA preparations.

RESOLVED that the Panel

- (i) note that progress is being made on all seven improvement priority areas;**
- (ii) note that implementing the Moving Towards Excellence**

Review should add to the drive for improvement, particularly by creating units which will focus on the priority issues such as benefits administration, cleansing, performance management, project and risk management and communications;

- (iii) in future to consider progress on the CPA improvement plan quarterly;**
- (iv) agree that the points in paragraph 4.9 should be included in the summary sought by the Audit Commission for their annual assessment of the Council's progress; and**
- (v) agree that a cross cutting CPA member and officer working group be set up to assist in the Council's CPA preparations, with the practicalities of membership being delegated to the Strategic Management Team.**

67 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Policy & Review (Performance) Panel will be held at 4.00pm on Wednesday 22nd September 2004 in the Executive Meeting Room (Room 3), 3rd Floor, The Guildhall.

Meeting closed at 5.40pm

Chair