

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 29 September 2009

Subject: Performance Management Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett

Item 7(i)

Recommending:

That the report of the Performance Management Portfolio Holder be noted.

I have now started to get to grips with this Portfolio and realize how important it will be over the next few years to ensure all service areas are performing with high efficiency and delivering value for money. As well as this we need to be responsive and to invest in new initiatives and partnerships and we will be investigating opportunities in this area. We are fortunate as we are a no debt council which does help with the financial position but interest rates are low and some of the returns on our investments have dropped so to keep our position as a low tax council we need to continually identify areas where the council can improve. The economic climate will be slow to improve and with the high level of government debt we see only reductions in our income but possible increases in our expenditure.

The emphasis will obviously be on maintaining front line services and we will be looking at how we can do this yet achieving improved performance. At the same time we will be managing discretionary expenditure very tightly and budgets in this area will be closely monitored. Obviously this could impact the voluntary sector but we will be looking at helping them access other grants that are out there and our grant finder software will prove useful as it has helped us increase the grants we have accessed this year.

Improving efficiency is not only reducing costs as we can also achieve it by increasing revenues. I have spoken with officers to look for initiatives where we could offer services to businesses, such as shared emergency planning and business continuity, as well as looking at how we meet our own business requirements. It is early days but there are possibilities to be explored and I hope to provide more information later in the year.

I have started reviewing Emergency Planning and will be looking for suggestions on how we can produce a more interlinked plan with our parishes. We also have started to review the new requirements of the Pitt report on the flooding in the summer of 2007. A Task and Finish Panel has been set up to look at this and I will be reviewing their report with the Environmental Portfolio Holder on the impact to our emergency planning.

As part of the above I am looking forward to the report on the council by the Audit Commission as it will highlight some initial areas for review. However we are already working on several areas and there will be a report to the next Audit and Governance Committee on Building and Maintenance Works Unit performance improvements. I am also carefully looking at the reports from the Internal and External Audit groups again for areas which can see performance improvements.

I also have attended a meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel where Q1 key performance indicators were presented and discussed. I was disappointed in several areas and asked for copies of all improvement plans which I will be reviewing.