

**Committee:** Community & Leisure Committee  
**Date:** 2 September 2003  
**Agenda Item:** 4  
**Title:** Performance Management System:  
**Author:** Ian Orton (01799) 510402

### **Summary**

- 1 The authority introduced a limited form of Performance Management two years ago based on the quarterly reporting of sixteen Best Value Performance Indicators to Corporate Management Team. This approach made a lot of sense at the time because it used data that the authority was already collecting.
- 2 However as part of the audit of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2001/02 the District Auditor requested the council to:  
  
*Consider whether quarterly monitoring of performance information is providing a comprehensive picture of progress.*
- 3 In addition the CPA Corporate Self Assessment asks:  
  
*Do Members and managers have the right mechanism and information to enable them to both manage and measure effectively?*
- 4 To meet the above the authority needs to strengthen the range of Performance Information and report this on a regular basis to both Members and managers.

### **Background**

- 5 To achieve this a comprehensive performance system has been developed using around 60 performance indicators that are already collected within the authority. A copy of these indicators is attached at Appendix A. The revised system builds on existing good practice but has been extended to include all the sections within Uttlesford District Council.
- 6 Members will note that the system provides a snap shop of both the service and corporate health of the council. In addition the system will measure the requirements for our Public Service Agreements with Essex County Council. The performance information will be reported quarterly to Members via Scrutiny One and Two and to managers via Corporate Management and Service Management Team. Information will also be shared throughout the council and with our partners via our monthly Policy & Performance Newsletter.
- 7 The format for reporting the performance information is important. To keep the process simple and straightforward it is recommended that the reporting of

Performance is linked to a Traffic Light System. All performance measures will have a quarterly target and the reporting will be based:

*Green for On Target to achieve agreed Performance Target*  
*Amber for 10% slippage from agreed Performance Target*  
*Red for more than 10% from agreed Performance Target*

- 8 This report is being circulated to all Committee's of the council so that both the Policy and Scrutiny processes have the opportunity to comment on the Targets, Traffic Light System and methodology for the future. The report is linked to the piloting of the process and a further report outlining any changes to the process will be brought back to all Committees in the early New Year. The next stage of the Performance Management system will outline making use of the data to improve performance within the authority.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1 The comments of Members are sought on the Range of Performance Measures, Performance Targets and use of a Traffic Light System
- 2 Note that comments from Committees will be incorporated into a report on Performance Management for 2004/05. This report will be referred to all Committees in the early New Year.









**Committee:** Community & Leisure Services  
**Date:** 2 September 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 5  
**Title:** Leisure & Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford 2003 - 2005  
**Author:** Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

**Summary**

- 1 This report provides the Committee with a prioritised, resourced programme for the delivery of the Leisure & Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford over the next two years. It recommends approval of the programme.

**Background**

- 2 At the last meeting of this Committee, Members were presented with and discussed a revised Leisure & Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford 2003 - 2005. A new Strategy will need to be developed during 2005 to enable the delivery of leisure & cultural objectives for a further five year period. This new strategy will need to be mindful of emerging priorities leading up to the introduction of the new Quality of Life Plan from 03/07 onwards.
- 3 Members noted the draft strategy and asked officers to consult on the document with key partners and then produce a prioritised, resourced programme for the next meeting of the Committee.

**Consultation Response**

- 4 Officers sent a copy of the draft Strategy and a questionnaire to 70 groups and organisations with whom the Council works with or which have an interest in Leisure & Cultural services in Uttlesford. 19 consultees had responded at the time of writing the report, including BAA, Sport England – East, ECC, Uttlesford PCT and Saffron Walden Museum Society. The key issues raised and suggestions for how to address them are set out below :-

	<b>KEY ISSUES RAISED</b>	<b>SUGGESTION FOR ADDRESSING</b>
A	Include reference to emerging Regional Sports Board, its strategy, the County Sports Partnership arrangements and the Essex Rural Partnership	Include reference in Introduction to document
B	The Council should do more to support the development of the Arts and an Arts Centre	Officers monitor impact of the lack of an Arts Development Officer Officers continue dialogue with parties

		interested in developing an Arts Centre and report as necessary
C	There should be more emphasis on encouraging residents of all ages into a more healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through further targeted work with the PCT and ECC	Opportunities for projects and partnership work will be pursued by officers through work programmes that will be developed to address the actions
D	A Marketing Strategy for Tourism must encompass the whole district, not just individual pockets and emphasis all four main towns, not just one or two	This will be addressed through the development of the Strategy
E	Need to be mindful of the impact that an expanded airport will have on the development of tourism in the district	As 4.
F	The Council should do more to help promote and develop the Thaxted Festival as a cultural experience	In the absence of an Arts Development Officer, the ability to do so will be minimal

- 5 As the timescale for consultation was short, officers will provide the Committee with a verbal report of any further feedback that is received after the consultation closing date.

### **Programme to Deliver the Revised Strategy**

- 6 Appended is a proposed programme for delivering the revised Leisure & Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford over the each of the next two years, together with an indication of the priority associated with each action and whether the action is deliverable within the time scale and given the available resources.
- 7 The Committee is asked to consider the programme, the priority placed against each action and officers indication of how likely it is that the action is deliverable. Where Members consider that an action should be of a higher or lower priority, or there is dissatisfaction with its deliverability status, it is important to acknowledge that there will most likely be knock-on implications on other actions within the plan.

Recommended that the programme for the delivery of the revised Leisure & Cultural Strategy for Uttlesford 2003 – 2005 by approved.

Background Papers: Leisure & Cultural Strategy 2000 - 2005















**Committee:** Community & Leisure Services  
**Date:** 2 September 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** Best Value Inspectors Report on Leisure & Cultural Services  
**Author:** Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

### **Summary**

- 1 The report provides Members with suggested actions to be taken to address the recommendations following the Audit Commission's inspection of the Council's Leisure & Cultural Services. It recommends the actions be confirmed.

### **Background**

- 2 In March 2003, two Best Value Inspectors from the Audit Commission attended at the offices to carry out an inspection of the Council's Leisure & Cultural Services. The Inspectors were provided with relevant material and information prior to and during their week in attendance. They interviewed staff and Members and met with key partners and service users.
- 3 The Inspectors provide Members and staff with a presentation of their conclusions from the inspection and then delivered a draft report to which officers made a robust and comprehensive response. The final report was produced and sent to the Council in June.
- 4 A copy of the full report is in the Members Room. The Summary of the report is appended. Officers have considered the report and the recommendations that can be addressed within the Leisure & Cultural section have been built into the following Action Plan. Those that are of a more corporate nature will be considered as part of the work that is currently being undertaken to address Council priorities and corporate working practices.

**Recommended** that the Action Plan to address the recommendations of Best Value Inspectors for Leisure & Cultural Services be approved.

Background Papers: Best Value Review of Leisure & Cultural Services.  
Audit Commission Inspectors Report of Leisure &  
Cultural Services – June 2003

BEST VALUE INSPECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS	BY WHEN
<b>As an immediate priority the Council should:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and Councillors with respect to published standards of conduct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Details of Member/Officer Protocol and Code of Conduct are provided in the Members Handbook. Workshops have been held</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>To improve the way it determines its priorities for Leisure the Council should:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Undertake a thorough analysis of local needs to drive future planning and develop clear objectives that meet the needs of all the community, including minority or under-represented groups of people.</li> <li>◆ Develop, through consultation, a stronger long-term vision for the Council and the district it serves.</li> <li>◆ Develop a consultation strategy and improve consultation processes so that it becomes more inclusive and representative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Appointment of Community Development Officer will enable C&amp;L to carry out programmed needs analysis work</li> <li>➤ Officers to work with new Communications &amp; PR Officer to consider opportunities for structured and objective consultation</li> <li>➤ As above</li> </ul>	<p>October 03</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>End 2003</p> <p>End 2003</p>
<b>To improve how to set about delivering its Leisure priorities the Council should:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ensure that financial plans and service plans are clearly linked and form a medium term strategy for service improvement.</li> <li>◆ Re-examine its approach to partnerships and ensure that it operates in a genuinely collaborative way rather than seeing partnerships as solely a means to securing external funding.</li> <li>◆ Refine its performance management system to simplify and strengthen current arrangements and introduce robust mechanisms to ensure that it is consistently applied.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community &amp; Leisure Officers to work with Finance to improve links/service improvement between financial and service plans</li> <li>➤ Officers to discuss partnership arrangements with existing partners and, where appropriate, formalise these to defines roles and responsibilities</li> <li>➤ The corporate performance management system is currently being refined</li> </ul>	<p>Annually during Budget process</p> <p>As appropriate</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



BEST VALUE INSPECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS	BY WHEN
<b>To improve on what it achieves in Leisure Services the Council should</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identify outcomes for local people in all its plans and link outcomes to inputs.</li>   <li>◆ Improve awareness of access and inclusion issues throughout the Council through training, best practice, developing strong partnerships with voluntary sector and user groups.</li>   <li>◆ Improve information and access through the use of ICT.</li>   <li>◆ Improve its use of evaluation so that it knows what works best and use the knowledge gained to make improvements to service planning and delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Outcomes will be identified through needs analysis and consultation work and fed into service planning</li>   <li>➤ Access and inclusion issues will be assessed through needs analysis and consultation work and fed into service planning</li>   <li>➤ Officers to work with IT section and new Communications &amp; PR Officer to improve information and access through use of ICT</li>   <li>➤ Needs analysis and consultation work will be used to inform improvements and fed into service planning</li> </ul>	<p>Annually during Service Planning process</p> <p>Annually during Service Planning process</p> <p>End 2003 &amp; ongoing</p> <p>Annually during Service Planning process</p>

## **Summary and recommendations**

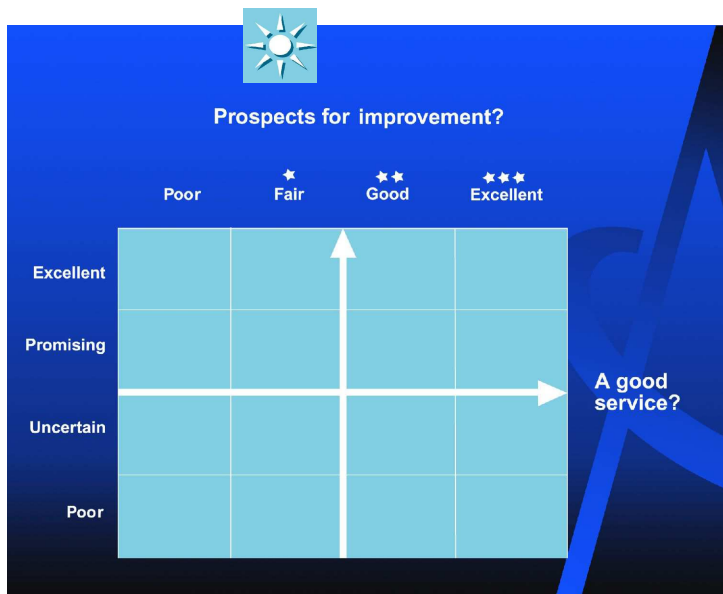
### **Summary**

- 1 Uttlesford District Council is a small district council in the North Essex area of England. The population is 69,000 of which less than one per cent is from ethnic minority communities.
- 2 At the time of the inspection the Council was led by a coalition of Conservative and Independent Councillors. The political composition of the Council was 18 Liberal Democrat, 15 Conservative, 7 Independent/other and 2 Labour. Following the local government elections in May the composition of the Council is 31 Liberal Democrat, 10 Conservative, and 3 Independent and other Councillors.
- 3 The Council employs 330 staff across all services and spends around £25 million annually.
- 4 The Leisure and Cultural Services review covered Tourist Information, Sports and Arts Development, the Museum service, Grants and Bridge End Gardens. The net budget for the service in 2002/03 is estimated at £1.4 million which includes a capital contribution of around £750,000 towards a Private Finance Initiative project. This project will see an existing Leisure Centre at Saffron Walden refurbished together with the new build of two more leisure centres at Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. Leisure centres were not included in the Council's best value review, but in order to gain a better picture of leisure services overall, was included in our inspection.

## Scoring the Service

- 5 We have assessed the Council as providing a “fair” one -star service that has “uncertain” prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.
- 6 **Scoring chart<sup>1</sup>:** Error! Use the Home tab to apply Authority name - BV to the text that you want to appear here. – Error! Use the Home tab to apply Review title - BV to the text that

*'a fair service that has uncertain prospects for improvement'*



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- 7 We found that although the Council has clear corporate objectives, Leisure and Cultural Strategy as well as service plans and individual work plans, there are no links between these key documents. There is no clear vision or ambition for the service and a lack of focus on priorities. The Council does not know what it wants to achieve from its investment in leisure, even though it has entered into a significant long term commitment through a Private Finance Initiative project and continues to provide resources for a range of leisure and cultural activities.

<sup>1</sup> The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the Service or function is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent service (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the service, also on a four-point scale.

- 8 The overall quality of cultural activities is generally good but current sports provision is only fair. Leisure opportunities are limited and not targeted to areas of greatest need. The availability of external funding is driving planning and programming rather than strategic choices based on local need.
- 9 The Council has no pricing or programming policies to address exclusion and there is no marketing policy. The Council does not know who uses its services and who does not, or why. Despite having friendly, capable and professional staff, the Council lacks a focus on users.
- 10 The Council's performance compared with similar districts varies from service to service with good satisfaction rates for the museum and the TIC, but poor satisfaction rates for leisure facilities.
- 11 The prospects for overall service improvement are uncertain because although some local people will benefit from better leisure facilities through the PFI project, there are many barriers, outlined in the report, which are likely to prevent the service as a whole improving.
- 12 There is a lack of vision and ambition for the service and without a clear understanding of what the Council wants to achieve from leisure and culture, it is not possible to say whether it is improving what matters most to local people.
- 13 The Council has missed an opportunity to thoroughly review its leisure and cultural services, by setting a cost cutting agenda from the start, carrying out consultation with staff in an intimidatory manner, and overlooking other stakeholders' views. This has led to a lack of ownership of the improvement plan from staff and senior officers and members, and also by external partners.
- 14 Within the Council there is a poor understanding of how to improve services generally. Corporate capacity is limited and there is weak performance management. Prioritisation is poor and resources are not focused on priority areas.
- 15 There is evidence that some relationships between officers and Councillors are tense and strained and there is a lack of trust in the political process.
- 16 However, the Council has organised workshops for officers and Councillors and has taken some early steps to implement the recommendations of its external auditors and the IDeA review with regard to Officer – Member relationships, but it is too soon to assess what effect this is having within the Council.
- 17 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement councils need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. In this context, the inspection team feels that the Council should now take action to resolve a number of general, political, managerial and partnership issues.
- 18 **As an immediate priority the Council should:**
  - ◆ Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and Councillors with respect to published standards of conduct.
- 19 **To improve the way it determines its priorities for Leisure the Council should:**
  - ◆ Undertake a thorough analysis of local needs to drive future planning and develop clear objectives that meet the needs of all the community, including minority or under-represented groups of people.

- ◆ Develop, through consultation, a stronger long term vision for the Council and the district it serves.
- ◆ Develop a consultation strategy and improve consultation processes so that it becomes more inclusive and representative.

**20 To improve how to set about delivering its Leisure priorities the Council should:**

- ◆ Ensure that financial plans and service plans are clearly linked and form a medium term strategy for service improvement.
- ◆ Re-examine its approach to partnerships and ensure that it operates in a genuinely collaborative way rather than seeing partnerships as solely a means to securing external funding.
- ◆ Refine its performance management system to simplify and strengthen current arrangements and introduce robust mechanisms to ensure that it is consistently applied.

**21 To improve on what it achieves in Leisure Services the Council should:**

- ◆ Identify outcomes for local people in all its plans and link outcomes to inputs.
- ◆ Improve awareness of access and inclusion issues throughout the Council through training, best practice, developing strong partnerships with voluntary sector and user groups.
- ◆ Improve information and access through the use of ICT.
- ◆ Improve its use of evaluation so that it knows what works best and use the knowledge gained to make improvements to service planning and delivery.

**22** We would like to thank the staff of Uttlesford District Council, particularly the officers of the Community and Leisure team, who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

**Brian King**

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**Inspectors**

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**Dates of inspection: 10 to 14 March 2003**

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