

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 September 2003
Agenda Item: 5
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: Health and Housing
Date: 4 September 2003
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION REPORT
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the committee of an Essex County Council Consultation Paper relating to services for older people and invites the committee to comment on the document.

Background

- 2 Appended to this report is a copy of a Consultation Paper, issued by Essex County Council, entitled 'Meeting the long term needs of older persons in Essex'. The consultation period ends on 10 September 2003 and views are sought on the proposal outlined in the recommendation of the document.

Summary of the consultation paper

- 3 The document refers to the Best Value Review of Older Person Services that was carried out in 2002 by the County Council. The review expressed concern about the projected shortfall in domiciliary care provision, the shortage of residential/nursing home beds and (in some areas) the lack of specialist beds within the county. The review recommended that each of the 12 remaining care homes, operated by the County, should be developed for special provision.
- 4 The document explains the County's difficulties to meet an improved standard in relation to the National Minimum Standard, originally scheduled for 2007 should it be reintroduced. Projections are also made for likely needs for residential beds up to 2011.
- 5 It would appear that of the 17 care homes transferred to the independent sector, following significant changes within the establishments, a further 230 extra beds have been added which has assisted the County Council who have contractual access to half of these beds at the agreed price.
- 6 Following a survey of the 12 homes owned by the County Council a further 210 beds could be generated from these sites. The funding, by the County Council, of such work is unlikely but should the establishment be outsourced to the independent sector it could be achieved. The document claims that service users would still receive the same quality of service. One of the care homes in question is Stanley Wilson Lodge in Saffron Walden.

The Way Forward

- 7 Unfortunately the Consultation Paper is not clear on the issues in question. This could be on, should the Residential homes in question be disposed of to the independent sector or simply how the process should be programmed (sale or lease). The Committee therefore may wish to address both these points.
- 8 Following the committee's consideration on this consultation document the views expressed will be forwarded to the County Council before the deadline on 10 September.

RECOMMENDED that the committee consider the Consultation Paper and make known its views to be forwarded to Essex County Council.

Background Papers: Attached Consultation Paper from Essex County Council

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 SEPTEMBER 2003
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a need to adopt the draft Homelessness Strategy as required in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002 and the need to appoint a specific Homelessness Officer to fulfil the Strategy's aims and objectives.

Background

- 2 It is a requirement, as part of the Homelessness Act 2002, that all Local Authorities prepare a Homelessness Strategy outlining how they will strive to reduce homelessness in their areas.
- 3 Appended to this report is the Council's draft Strategy which has been very carefully considered by the Housing Strategy Working Party and is recommended to this Committee for approval. It will need to be ratified by the full Council. In order to kept to the Government's timetable, a copy of this draft has been submitted to GO EAST.
- 4 A fundamental aspect of the legislation is that, as from March 2004, the use of Bed & Breakfast for families where there are children or where a baby is expected, can only be used for emergency situations and then only for a maximum of 6 weeks.
- 5 In addition, the whole emphasis for dealing with homeless applications is expected to be proactive rather than acting in a reactive manner. There is now a requirement to deal with welfare issues from homeless families and where Bed & Breakfast is used, the service has to be closely monitored to ensure good standards are maintained as part of this welfare duty. The Government expects partnership arrangements with other agencies to operate in dealing with homeless cases but Housing Departments are clearly the lead agency.

The Current Position

- 6 Homelessness in Uttlesford is currently dealt with by the small Housing Management section and this service is increasingly impinging on their day-to-day duties because of the significant increase in homeless activity. The Council endeavours to try and reduce homeless situations without families going into Bed & Breakfast but in a number of cases the use of this type of

accommodation is unavoidable. It is fair to say that in many cases, the Council operates in a reactive manner to homeless applications. A number of families now exceed the 6-week limitation as laid down by the new legislation. To achieve the Government's target, without extra resources, will be a severe challenge to the Council and is unlikely to be met. There will be penalties for councils who do not achieve the 6-week statutory period however the details are not yet known. There will be much more casework with families to try and avoid homeless situations.

The Way Forward

- 7 To comply with the statutory requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, it is felt that an extra member of staff is now essential and will need to be recruited as soon as possible to lead on the processing of homeless applications and to implement the initiatives outlined in the aims and objectives of the new Homelessness Strategy. This issue was addressed as part of the Homeless Best Value Review 2002/03 where the need for extra resources to deal with homelessness was recognised by Members at that time.
- 8 Research has been carried out with all other Essex District Councils and it has been established that Uttlesford is the only Council in Essex that does not have dedicated staff resources specifically to fulfil the homeless duty.
- 9 It is expected that with a dedicated Homelessness Officer in post a much improved service would be offered to this client group and that financial savings to the Council could be made with regard to bed and breakfast costs. Obviously, Housing Officers would still assist with this service but with this appointment they will have some more capacity to carry out their core duties such as rent arrears recovery and estate management.
- 10 The appointment of a Homelessness Officer would be a General Fund activity. A specific grant has been made to the Council, by the Government, for 2003/04 of £20K to help implement the Homelessness strategy as required by the new Act. There is a promise of further grants for 2004/05 and 2005/06 (the level is currently unknown). Should a Homelessness Officer be appointed in the current financial year, this year's grant will cover the costs. In future years, the Council will need to fund the shortfall between the full cost and the grant available. Ultimately the full cost will have to be funded by the Council. This grant cannot be used on any other Council activity and will be lost if an appropriate area of Homelessness activity is not identified. Officers are of the view this would be the best possible use of the grant to improve service delivery.
- 11 The full costs for employing a Homelessness Officer is expected to be in the region of about £30-£32,000 (this covers all related costs). In future years there will be extra costs relating to salary increases. By the time of the meeting a Job Evaluation is expected to have been completed.
- 12 Should the Committee agree this proposal, it will need to be forwarded to the Resources Committee.

- 1 the Homelessness Strategy be recommended to full Council for adoption;
- 2 the appointment of a homelessness officer be recommended to the Resources Committee as outlined in this report.

Background Papers: Homeless Act 2002
Government correspondence regarding Homeless
Grant 2002/03

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 SEPTEMBER 2003
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: REVISED TENANT COMPACT
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a need to revise the Tenant Compact and invites the Committee to consider the granting of an allowance to the Chairman of the Panel.

Background

- 2 In March 2000 the Council and the then Tenant Panel representatives entered into a Tenant Compact which was a Government requirement. The Compact is an agreement between the two parties outlining how Tenant Participation is administered within Uttlesford.
- 3 It is felt that the Compact is now in need of revision due to a number of changes that have occurred since the original document was adopted. These changes include:
 - a) There is now only one strategic panel.
 - b) The agreement to hold formal Tenant Panel elections later in 2003.
 - c) Other administrative changes highlighted in the 2002/03 Best Value Review of the service.
 - d) Tenants feel the strategic body should be called the Tenant's Forum and not panel.

The Way Forward

- 4 Appended to this report is a draft revised Tenant Compact which has been considered and supported by a small group of Tenant representatives from the Panel. Formal adoption of a revised Compact does have to be made by this Committee.
- 5 Following the expected publicity of the Tenant Panel elections, it is highly likely that the Chair of the Tenant Panel will receive many more queries from tenants and may therefore have to attend more meetings on behalf of the Panel. Accordingly, the Committee may wish to acknowledge the extra workload with the payment of an allowance. In this context Members may wish to consider an allowance of £250 every three months commencing 1 January 2004. The cost would fall upon the Housing Revenue Account. A payment of this nature can be made in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (Section 2).

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approve the revised Tenant Compact and agree that the Chair of the Tenant Panel be awarded an allowance, as detailed in the report, to acknowledge the extra workload of the Post.

Background Papers: Tenant Compact 2000
Housing Tenant Panel Best Value
Review 2002/03

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 September 2003
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: ERECTION OF RADIO ANTENNA ON FLATS AT WAGON MEAD
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a request for landlord permission to be granted on the Council owned block of flats at Wagon Mead in Hatfield Heath.

Background

- 2 The Council has received a request from Hatfield Heath Parish Council to grant landlord permission to erect a radio antenna on the Council flats at Wagon Mead, which would enable the village to receive access to Broadband Internet Services. Wagon Mead has been proposed as a suitable location due to the height of the buildings. However, if the request is approved in principle by this Council more research will need to be done to assess whether the site is 'technically' suitable. The erection of the antenna may also be subject to planning approval. Having access to the broadband service would be a benefit to the village and it's residents particularly local businesses.
- 3 The equipment will look similar to a normal TV aerial, and would be mounted on the gable end of the roof. With regards to any potential health implications relating to power levels as compared to mobile phones, the Parish Council have been given the following advice by 'Invisible Networks' (broadband supplier):

'Mobile phone masts' transmit 300 watts or more. A 'W-LAN' (broadband) aerial transmits no more than 0.1 watts which is 3,000 times less. Because the signal decreases with distance the power received from a mobile phone mast at 10 m is about 8,000 times less than from a mobile phone handset. For a 'W-LAN' (broadband) aerial the power received at a distance of 10 m is about 20,000,000 times less than a mobile phone handset.
- 4 All residents of the flats were written to and asked for their views on this issue. Only 7 responses were received from the 23 letters sent. Of these 3 were against the proposal, 2 were for the proposal and 2 were undecided.
- 5 If permission was granted it would be on the understanding that there would be no cost to the Council and should any damage be incurred it would have to be rectified by the installer.

RECOMMENDATION that the Committee decide whether to grant landlord consent to this request.

Background Papers: Correspondence from Hatfield Heath Parish Council.