

**PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 25 JANUARY 2006**

Present:- Councillor A Dean – Chairman.
Councillors B M Hughes, A J Ketteridge, M J Savage and
E Tealby-Watson.

Officers in attendance: - T Fennell, S Martin, C Roberts and T Turner.

PS 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V J T Lelliott, F E Silver and P A Wilcock.

PS 2 “WHY IS PERFORMANCE IMPORTANT” – PRESENTATION

The Committee received an introductory presentation by the Executive Manager Strategy and Performance on the importance of performance management. The overheads of the presentation are attached as an annex to these minutes.

A Member asked which officer would agree the local indicators, and suggested that where officers set their own performance targets the public might well dispute whether or not local indicators were “meaningful”. The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance replied that all targets for best value performance indicators were set where possible to stretch services and achieve upper quartile performance.

A Member commented that many targets had been identified as requiring review. The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance replied that it was a part of the Committee’s role to challenge targets, audit outcomes and best value reviews.

A Member remarked that internal and external audit reports used to be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee, and the Executive Manager Strategy and Performance replied that a national impetus had been given to a dedicated audit role sitting outside the other committees.

She invited Members to identify the amount and level of training they would like and reminded them that the Committee was an overview committee, not a scrutiny committee, the current focus being performance or audit.

Members suggested audit and training being offered by the Audit Commission.

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance distributed copies of the IDeA member performance management guide for information.

INTERNAL AUDIT WORK PLAN 2006/07

The Committee considered the report of the Audit Manager who briefly outlined the purpose of audit operations and advised Members about the internal audit work plan 2006/07.

Members had previously received feedback on the work of internal audit. Previously a scrutiny committee had been the vehicle for such matters but the terms of reference for the Performance Select Committee allowed Members to continue this best practice. It could therefore receive any or all of:

- a) An annual internal audit report and audit opinion.
- b) An interim report during the autumn highlighting progress with the current audit work plan and progress with addressing matters raised during previous internal audits.
- c) A selection of full internal audit reports and management's response to them.
- d) All full internal audit reports and management's response to them.

Members of the Committee were asked to highlight their preferred option for receiving feedback on internal audits completed during 2006/07. Other local authorities had typically adopted combinations of all of the report types referred to above, as recognised good practice.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Members note the Internal Audit work plan for 2006/07;
- 2 the Committee would receive an annual internal audit report and audit opinion;
- 3 the Committee would wish to see a selection of full internal audit reports and the management response to them, with the Personnel audit being presented to a future meeting of the Committee;
- 4 other internal audit reports to be put on the intranet for Members information.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REPORT 3rd QUARTER 2005/06

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Improvement Manager summarising the 3rd Quarter Performance Management results for Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators. This report presented to Members the performance data for the 3rd Quarter April 2005 – December 2005 and recommended that the performance should be reviewed.

Based on a total of 72 performance indicators:

- 28 performance indicators were on target (39%).
- 9 performance indicators were within 5% of target (13%)
- 11 performance indicators were 5% or more below target (15%).

- 24 performance indicators were in abeyance (33%) (results were awaited for 18 performance indicators, 5 performance indicators awaited target setting and 1 performance indicator had been temporarily suspended.)

All targets for Best Value Performance Indicators aimed to bring performance within the upper quartile for district councils.

The Performance Improvement Manager informed the meeting that new performance indicator figures had been handed to him before the meeting relating to Human Resources.

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance said that the performance shown was predominantly good and on target. She stressed the importance of celebrating on target performance as well as calling in managers with respect to under target performance.

Outstanding performance was noted in BV109a-c, and BV157. BV79a and b (i) were flagged up due to a lack of data. BV170b and c also caused concern.

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance said that the Committee's observations would be relayed to the next performance related Executive Management Team meeting and failings would assuredly be dealt with.

Members were disappointed by the failure of some services to provide their performance indicator data on time, but noted that the software Covalent should improve collection, collation and reporting of performance indicators.

They felt there was a need to have a robust plan to change performance with respect to particular areas, and that the Museum Service and Human Resources functions should be examined in depth.

The Performance Improvement Manager agreed to send a link for Committee members for the Best Value Performance Indicators which would allow them to track deletions and new additions.

RESOLVED that the report of the Performance Improvement Manager be noted

PS 5

BVPP AUDIT REPORT 2005/06

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Improvement Manager on the Best Value Performance Plan Statutory Report 2005/06. This report presented the Audit Commission's audit of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) 2005/06.

The Performance Improvement Manager explained that future BVPPs would benefit from quality control in the form of a compliance assessment by Internal Audit before submission to external audit. This action would identify possible errors, particularly in performance indicator data and allow correction prior to external audit.

Members noted that the unqualified audit placed Uttlesford in the top 6% of all authorities nationally and they offered their congratulations to the Performance Improvement Manager and the Executive Manager Strategy and Performance on this success.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Members note the audit report and request that Internal Audit conduct a compliance assessment of future BVPPs, and in particular the performance indicator data prior to submission to external audit.
- 2 A press release be issued recording in brief clear terms the audit success.

PS 6

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

At the suggestion of the Chairman it was agreed that an extraordinary meeting be held at an early date to consider internal audit reports and other issues on the Committee's ongoing work programme.

The meeting ended 9.30pm