
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 9 DECEMBER 2009
PORTFOLIO: OVERALL STRATEGY AND POLICY DIRECTION
REPORT FROM CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EXTERNAL SERVICES)
SUBJECT: STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To note the progress being made on the implementation of the Council's Strategic Improvement Plan (appended).

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The plan incorporates those high level issues that the Council and the Audit Commission have identified as being important to ensure that we continue to make progress and improve over time.
- 2.2 The Executive agreed at the meeting held on 18 February 2009 to monitor progress on a quarterly basis. The progress is also being considered at regular meetings with representatives from the Audit Commission, our external auditors, PKF, and the Government Office, the most recent meeting having taken place on 4 December 2009.

- 2.3 The Improvement Plan details work across four areas:-

- Ambition and Prioritisation, Vision and Corporate Linkages
- Capacity, Review Committee
- Performance management – internally
- Performance management in the partnership arena

The majority of actions are now completed or well on the way to being completed.

- 2.4. To ensure that the Council continues to focus on high level improvement, this plan will be reviewed and updated in the New Year, taking into consideration the key messages from the first round of Comprehensive Area Assessment, the Council's priorities for 2010/11, the rolling programme of Value for Money reviews and any other relevant sources.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Not to implement an Improvement Plan. This was rejected as the Council needs to continue to challenge itself and to reflect on best practice, so that it continues to improve.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is reputational risk associated with the Improvement plan and its delivery. Given that parts of its delivery rely on other agencies, there is a risk of slippage and perhaps not meeting some of the targets if the other agencies do not perform as anticipated.
- 4.2 Resource risks have been minimised by ensuring that the key actions within the improvement Plan are already within the agreed budget or require little in terms of funding, relying instead on officer or Member activity and support.
- 4.3 Delivery risks have been minimised by ensuring the key actions from the Improvement Plan are included in the Council's Divisional Plans.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. No additional funding over and above that within the agreed budget is anticipated.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Corporate Director (External Services)

Background Papers:-

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Rochford District Council Strategic Improvement Plan

Record of Review & Amendment

Version number	Review date	Issues/actions arising from review	Plan amended Y/N	Amendment approved by	Date of amendment
1	22/01/09	Original	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.2	05/02/09	Additional actions proposed by SDIMT	Y	SDIMT	05/02/09
2	26/05/09	Amendments to layout proposed to GW	Y	GW	26/05/09
3	03/06/09	Quarterly Update	Y	GW	03/06/09
4	26/08/09	Quarterly Update	Y	GW	26/08/09
5	30/09/09	Completed entries deleted	Y	GW	30/09/09
6	13/11/09	Updated	Y	GW	13/11/09

Legend:

CEX	Chief Executive	OSO	Overview & Scrutiny Officer
CD(ES)	Corporate Director (External Services)	PAB	Performance Assessment Board
CPPU	Corporate Policy & Partnership Unit	PIO	Performance Improvement Officer
HCS	Head of Community Services	RDC	Rochford District Council
HFAPM	Head of Finance Information and Performance Management	SDIMT	Service Development & Improvement Management Team
HICS	Head of Information and Customer Services	SMT	Senior Management Team
HoS	Heads of Service	SPMO	Senior Performance Management Officer
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership		

Scope of the Improvement plan

The plan outlines the strategic level improvements that the Council has identified following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Re-inspection undertaken in July 2008 and covers the following key areas:

1. Ambition and Prioritisation - The Council's Vision and Corporate Linkages
2. Capacity - Use of the Review Committee.
3. Performance Management – Development of the Council's Performance Management System.
4. Performance Management – Development of Performance Management in the Partnership Arena.

Improvement Plan - Objectives and supporting action plans and milestones

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
1	Ambition & Prioritisation: Vision & Corporate Linkages							
	Section 1 Completed							
2	Capacity, Review Committee							
2.1	Develop more effective scrutiny process	Further targeted member training and development around overview and scrutiny process. RC Members to receive and consider QPRs as part of their work programme	HICS/OSO	2009/10 member Training & Dev programme.	Review Committee members more attuned to Overview & Scrutiny process	Within existing budgets Review Committee budget	No	Training has been arranged with the Centre of Public Scrutiny. An Associate Member has been booked for 8 Dec. 2009 to deliver training on the subject of influencing public service improvement through powerful scrutiny. An assessment of the Members' needs will be made following this training to see if a follow up session is required.
	Sections 2.2 to 2.5 completed							

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
3	Performance Management: Performance Management Internally							
	Sections 3.1 to 3.3 completed.							
3.4	To Develop the Council's internal Performance Management Systems to further embed the performance management culture and secure effective and efficient delivery of objectives	Research, and procure if appropriate, a Performance Management software, to enhance delivery and analysis of PM Info.	SPMO	May 2009	Research 2008 Procure and Implement from Jan 2009 - for use 2009/10 onwards	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) plus IT spend Base Budget plus £30K in the IT Reserve	Y	Procurement and installation completed. Implementation underway.
3.5	See above	Ensure linkage of Risk Management with Div plans	SPMO	March 2010	Introduce via the PM software from 2009/10	See above	See above	Interim Excel based solution in place
3.6	See above	Ensure linkage of budgets to Div plan	HFAPM	March 2010	Introduce via the PM software from 2009/10	See above	See above	Improved resource allocation being developed for 2010/11 Business Planning process.

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
3.7	See above	Ensure VFM proposals reflected in Div Plans	HFAPM	March 2010	Introduce via the PM software from 2009/10	See above	See above	Finance is changing the layout of the Budget Book to incorporate VFM measures
3.8	See above	Ensure Data Quality inherent in PM system.	SPMO	March 2010	Introduce via the PM software from 2009/10	See above	See above	PI audit in place Data Quality in "My Performance Review" process. "Performing well" Data Quality rating in 2008/9 Use of Resources Assessment
3.9	See above	Ensure data reporting is monthly, wherever possible and appropriate, and links with relevant regular management review of performance	SPMO	March 2010	Timetabled data submissions and management reviews	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	N	Completed Timetable issued. Review enabled via interim system solution, 1:1 meetings, and Performance Assessment Board (PAB)

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
3.10	See above	Ensure that reporting includes linkage between performance achievement and budget spend wherever possible and appropriate.	SPMO	March 2010	Reports include appropriate budget spend or cost measures.	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	N	Finance is developing the budget monitoring to include links to performance.
3.11	See above	Ensure that Performance Management systems give visibility to performance exceptions, the corrective action taken, the resultant outcomes and that the organisation learns from these examples.	SPMO	March 2010	Exceptions reports, PAB minutes, and reports to SDIMT, show exceptions, actions and outcomes. Summaries are provided to the RDC Online Learning Academy	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	N	Interim Excel based solution in place for PAB reports

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
3.12	See above	Ensure reporting meets Members' needs and engages them appropriately	SPMO	March 2010	Periodic surveys to establish Members' requirements An appropriate range of reports to meet Members' expressed needs.	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	N	Completed Survey of Members undertaken. Interim Excel based solution in place for QPR
3.13	See above	Improve on the presentation of performance information provided to residents to engage them in an awareness of our service standards and the performance achieved.	SPMO	March 2010	Appropriate presentation of Performance information in media and Council publications. Performance data easily available and embedded in the publicly accessed services pages of the RDC website.	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	Y	RDM to include PI data

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
4	Performance Management: Performance Management in the Partnership Arena							
	Section 4 completed.							

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTIONS

Equality and Diversity – Having now achieved Level 4 of the Equality Standard and being classified as “Moving toward Excellence” an Action Plan will be put in place to reach “Excellence” in the new framework (formerly Level 5) by December 2010

Undertake new Diversity Impact Assessments and Service Diversity Action Plans across all service areas and complete all other objectives as detailed in the corporate action plan for achieving Level 4 by April 2009. Completed.