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REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 23 SEPTEMBER 2009

PORTFOLIO: OVERALL STRATEGY AND POLICY DIRECTION

REPORT FROM CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EXTERNAL SERVICES)

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (FORMERLY CPA 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   REASONS 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 11 September.

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

Overall, good progress continues to be made and a significant number of actions have already been completed (those shaded grey).

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	22/1/09	Original	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.2	5/2/09	Additional actions proposed by SDIMT	Y	SDIMT	5/2/09
2	26.5.09	Amendments to layout proposed to GW	Y	GW	26/5/09
3	3.6.09	Quarterly Update	Y	GW	3.6.09
4	26.8.09	Quarterly Update	Y	GW	26.8.09

Legend:

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

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							
1.1	To produce a more 'Rochford' specific ambition with better golden thread connectivity.	Develop/Flesh out Rochford Council's Vision through: SMT sessions Joint SMT/Exec Sessions in context of budget process.	CEX/CPPU CEX/SMT CEX/SMT	Feb 09 Nov 08 Nov/Dec 08	Clearer, more Rochford Specific Vision	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	Not specific at this stage	Completed
1.2	See above	Tighter linkage re budget process/re-write of Corporate Plan. Vision to Reality becomes part of new Corporate Plan. Ensure explicit linkage to SCS and LAA.	SMT/ CPPU	Jan/Feb 09	Completed Budget Process Revised Corporate Plan New Summary Document based on Corporate Plans.	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	Not specific at this stage	Completed
1.3	See above	Draft Sustainable Communities Strategy taken to Rochford LSP	CPPU	Dec 08	Agreement from LSP to proceed Further feedback from LSP partners	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
1.4	See above	Cross-check back to finalise Sustainable Community Strategy – pick up any emerging issues e.g. Credit crunch and recession	SMT/ CPPU	Jan/Feb 09	Clear linkage and understanding between Council plans and actions and new Sustainable Community Strategy	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed
1.5	See above	Confirm stakeholder endorsement and commitment	CPPU/ LSP	Feb/ March 09	Clear linkage and understanding between partners plans and actions and new Sustainable Community Strategy	Existing Officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed
1.6	See above	Finalise Sustainable Community Strategy following cross-checking within Council and with partners confirmation of LAA funding sources and initiatives	CPPU/ SMT/LSP	Feb/Mar 09	New Sustainable Community Strategy finalised	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed
1.7	See above	Launch Sustainable Community Strategy at LSP Assembly	LSP	April 09	Strategy launched	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership Funded officer	No	New Corporate Plan and SCS in place April 2009. Completed

7.6

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
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 | Specific training programme for O&S Members being developed, including an initial briefing for the new Committee, visiting other authorities, and use of targeted training. |
2.2	See above	Examine involvement of non-executive members in overview and scrutiny process	OSO	April 2009	Mechanisms for involving non-Executive members where appropriate	Existing officer time/N/A	No	Review completed and reported to the Executive in April 2009
2.3	See above	Implement any changes resulting from examination of involvement of non-executive members	OSO	May 2009	Wider Member involvement in Review activity	Officer time/ N/A	No	Completed. Review Committee to Co-opt non executive members to specific project teams
2.4	See above	Review performance measurements applied to the Review Committee on an annual basis with the context of the preparation of the Annual Report	OSO	May 2009	Better clarity around achievements of the Review Committee	Officer time/ N/A	No	Completed, included in Review Committee Annual Report April 2009.

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
2.5	See above	Include within the Review Committee's Annual report a section containing the impact of the Review Committee's work on the community	OSO	May 2009	Better understanding of the work of the Review Committee in terms of its work relating to the communities which make up Rochford District	Officer time/ N/A	No	Completed. Annual report currently sets out performance measures, one of which covers changes associated with the Committee's work including impact on the community. This will be further developed for the 2009/10 annual report.
3	Performance Management: Performance Management Internally							
3.1	To Develop the Council's internal Performance Management Systems to further embed the performance management culture and secure effective and efficient delivery of objectives	Ensure a clear linkage between the performance measures and the corporate objectives to enable the achievement of corporate objectives to be assessed.	CEX	March 2009	Project and PIs are reported with reference to Corporate Objectives defined in measurable terms in the 2008-2013 Corporate Plan and the 2009/10 Business Planning cycle and take account of LAA2 targets and the new Sustainable Community Strategy.	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HoS) Base Budget	N	Completed

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
3.2	See above	Divisional/Service plans should include service objectives that are measurable and enable SMART targets to be set.	HFAPM	March 2009	Measures/SMART targets to be agreed for all service objectives in the 2009/10 Business Planning cycle	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HOS) Base Budget	N	Completed – picked up in the target challenge workshops held by Terry Harper. Will always be subject to interpretation about the SMARTness of a subjective target.
3.3.	See above	Ensure Members receive the performance information necessary to enable informed decisions to be made.	CD(ES)	December 2008 ~~March~~ May 2009	Review with Portfolio Holder to ensure that Members are receiving appropriate information Further review in light of new Corporate Plan	Existing officer time (SPMO/PIO/ HOS) Base Budget	N	Completed - Members' survey undertaken and results reviewed with Portfolio Holder Performance Report has been being reformatted in line with revised Corporate Plan
3.4	See above	Research, and procure if appropriate, a Performance Management software, to enhance delivery and analysis of PM Info.	SPMO	~~April~~ 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 completed. Implementation underway.

7.9

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
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.
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. |
| 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 | Enabled via interim system solution and 1:1 meetings |

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
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	Survey undertaken see 3.3 above Interim Excel based solution in place for QPR

7.11

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
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							
4.1	To Develop a partnership Performance Management System that is simple to operate, transparent and accessible to partners, cost effective and effective in outcome delivery	Formation of a partnership working group reporting to SPMT. (Hallmarks for partnership working already adopted by RDC)	CPPU	Jan 09	Produce work plan/timetable for review of partnerships/ introduction of new guidance to all partnerships	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed. Work will continue with Sub Regional groups to encourage them to adopt the Rochford Performance Management Model.

7.13

Ref	Objective	Key Actions	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Target/ outcomes	Resource implications/ Funding	ICT Requirement Yes/No	Progress
4.2	See above	Review current Rochford guidance with greater emphasis on partnerships adopting shared model of performance against the national hallmarks. Review number and type of partnerships requiring RDC involvement.	CPPU	Apr 09 July 09	Revised guidance produced Hallmarks clearly form the basis of partnership performance management model. Ascertain level of commitment required by RDC	Existing officer time Base Budget/ Partnership funded officers	No	Completed. We will continue to work with LSP partnerships to carry out self assessments over the next 8–12 months. The LSP and CDRP are programmed for scrutiny by the Council's Review Committee.
4.3	See above	Present the revised guidance and performance management process to partners of the LSP	CPPU	July 09		Existing officer time		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.