

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

22 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm in the Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre, Kendal Road, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Ralph Harrison, Head of Public Protection
Wally Stagg, Organisational Development Manager
Vijaya Kotur, Diversity Officer
Rachel Clark, Human Resources Advisor
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

37. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/8 – 3rd Quarter Monitoring Report *(Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Personnel Officer)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/8 in the nine months to 31 December 2007.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report detailed the progress against the actions contained in the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08 and the third quarter outturns of key performance indicators.

The Portfolio Holder sought clarification on the Corporate Strategy Objective regarding the review of Standard Letters. It was explained that the review was to make sure that they could be easily understood by recipients. This was not on target to be completed and would be re-scheduled for 2008/09. A number of Human Resources Division actions not being completed on target were due to Single Status conditions of service not yet being agreed.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder agreed the proposed revision to the completion dates as detailed in Tables 2 and 4 of the report and noted the achievement of key actions and third quarter outturns of performance indicators.

38. Corporate Access Strategy and Publicity for Translation and Interpretation Services *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the Council's draft Access Strategy and proposed arrangements regarding the way translation and interpretation services provided by the Council are publicised and to receive endorsement in implementing the Strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Hartlepool is an increasingly diverse community with 26 languages being spoken by Hartlepool residents as their first language, although the numbers of people speaking each language is relatively small. Feedback from the bi-monthly, 'Talking with Communities' consultation events with people from ethnic backgrounds indicates that there is not widespread knowledge of what services are provided by the Council and therefore are not generally accessed by people from these communities. People with a wide range of disabilities represent 22.14% of the Hartlepool population. The number of people who for instance are deaf or hard of hearing, or with sight impairment or literacy difficulties and have made themselves known to appropriate charities and support groups is small. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee previously considered a report on the Translation and Interpretation Services strategy as part of a wider Access Strategy to ensure that the Council continues to assess, anticipate and address any barriers that might prevent Hartlepool residents and visitors using Council services. Scrutiny Coordinating Committee agreed it would consider the Draft Access Strategy when it had been developed further so that the Performance Portfolio Holder could consider any comments. Accordingly, a report was recently made to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. A wide range of translation and interpretation services are available and the only restriction to usage of these services is the reasonableness of the request, each considered on its own merits.

Guidelines recently published by the Department for Communities and Local Government suggest that fine tuning to the draft Access to Information Strategy will be necessary although it generally complies with the guidance. It

will however need amendment to include a responsibility by the Chief Personnel Officer to provide guidance in order to determine whether the translation is necessary, for which documents it is appropriate, whether it should be available on demand and whether it should be done in a way that helps people learn English. The guidance suggests that Councils should attempt to line up the withdrawal of translation services with the provision of English language classes.

A key element of the Access to Council Information is the provision of translation and interpretation services provided by the Council and how these are publicised. Anecdotal evidence is that knowledge and understanding of what services are available and in what circumstances is patchy amongst stakeholders and employees. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee had previously suggested that a logo be developed specifically so that stakeholders who needed translation or interpretation services would be aware that they are available. There is no national logo available for this. Developing a specific logo would require that it be widely publicised, therefore rather than having a separate logo, it was proposed to the recent Scrutiny Coordinating Committee meeting that the Council's logo be used for this purpose. This would be publicised so that stakeholders and employees would be aware that the translation and interpretation services are available wherever the Council's logo has been used (e.g. on buildings, correspondence, leaflets etc). The Portfolio Holder commented that she had noted the concerns of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee but had weighed these up in light of discussions with the Talking with Communities Forum and concerns expressed by the Chief Personnel Officer in relation to the practicalities around the use of the Council logo and therefore it would make sense to use the existing Council logo.

It would be necessary to make it clear in the publicity that the provision of translation and interpretation services would be assessed in accordance with the guidance provided by the Chief Personnel Officer and to signpost individuals to English Language classes.

It was envisaged that posters and supplies of the publicity leaflets would be displayed/available in all main Council premises with public access including admin buildings, information centres, libraries, community centres, etc and possibly in partner organisations premises e.g. hospitals, doctor's surgeries, voluntary organisations, etc. The Portfolio Holder queried whether the provision of 100 posters would be sufficient and was informed that it appeared so, but an extra 100 posters would only add £30 to the proposed costs. The Council's website would be updated to reflect the new arrangements and training would be provided to all front line staff.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the proposals made to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and approved the using of the Council logo with regards to translation and interpretation services. The Portfolio Holder also approved the draft suite of strategies and delegated authority to the Chief Personnel Officer

to make any necessary changes needed to reflect the Government guidance prior to consultation with stakeholders.

39. Review of Strategic Risk Register *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the current position with regard to the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report described amendments to existing strategic risks and any additional strategic risks following a review by Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) and the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The review primarily involved examining risk ratings in terms of impact and likelihood and effectiveness of control measures in place to mitigate the risk.

The Risk Register Ratings were detailed at Appendix 1 and detailed Risk Reports were attached as Appendix 2. The Strategic Risk Register is reviewed by the CRMG on a quarterly basis. The findings would then be reported again to CMT and then on to Portfolio.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the review and amendments to the Council's strategic risk register and actions being taken.

40. Corporate Complaints *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To report to the Portfolio Holder on corporate complaints' performance for the third quarter of 2007/8.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report covers performance information on numbers of complaints, timescales for investigation and outcomes of investigations for formal complaints dealt with in the third quarter of 2007/08.

Appendix 1 gave detailed figures of the number of complaints received. It was noted that the Children's Services Department are currently reviewing their response procedures and a new appointee will be in post in May which should alleviate any difficulties in responding to deadlines.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

41. Review of Modern Apprenticeships *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the recently published document 'World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All' published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which focuses on the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Last November the Government announced substantial increases in funding to expand the Apprenticeship programme over the next three years for both young people and adults. The Apprenticeships Review outlines the measures Government would take to ensure apprenticeships became a mainstream option for young people as well as plans to boost apprenticeships for older learners.

Appendix 1 was the executive summary from the report and provided information on the objectives and targets, plans to strengthen the apprenticeships scheme, plans for a new delivery system plans to boost employer supply, challenging the current culture on the value of apprenticeships and addressing inequality.

A further report would be presented to the Portfolio Holder setting out the Council's response to the more detailed Scheme and how it might affect programmes and Workforce Development Strategy.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

42. Employee Attendance 2007/8 – 3rd Quarter *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on performance up to the third quarter of 2007/8 and actions taken in relation to employee sickness absence.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The extent to which employees are absent from work due to illness has a direct impact on the quality, level and cost of the provision of services. As such the Government has included BVPI12 – The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence in its group of Corporate Health Performance Indicators.

The target figure for 2007/8 for the Council is 11.05 days absence per wte employee (whole time equivalent). The end of year prediction at the end of the 3rd quarter shows a below target figure of 10.82 days per wte per employee per annum. This shows a steady improvement from the last quarter.

The Council continues to focus on sickness absence management to enable the Council to achieve, and improve on, its target of 11.05 wte average sickness per employee for the 2007/8 year. The actual performance for each Department and School as at 31 December 2007 was outlined and this identified an overall downward trend as compared with the last two years.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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