

Report of the Performance Management Task Group

Foreword

Throughout this review, Members have been struck by the amount of data there is now available for Performance Management in the Council. It is accepted there has been an enormous change in timeliness and accuracy of data collection during the last year and the few areas of weakness are being addressed.

This has allowed trends to be reported and the success or otherwise of action plans to be more closely monitored.

The work of the Task Group was greatly assisted by the Audit Commission's Report on Performance Management in Sept. 06 and having the third quarter data for the period ending Dec.06 reported to the O&S committee on the 1st. March allowed the report to be updated before consideration by the Committee on 29th. March.

I would like to thank the members involved and the officers who have produced the evidence.

It is the Task group's hope that the recommendations of the review will assist the Executive to deliver better services in line with the new Corporate Plan and improve the Council's CPA rating.

Executive Summary

This review was requested by Council on 27th. June 2006 with an indicative timetable ending in March 2007 to allow the work to be reported back during the lifetime of this Council. The terms of reference required some work on the new Corporate Plan, some of this was completed during the preparation of the draft Corporate Plan and the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been involved. It has not been possible to complete all of this part of the work within the timescale, as the new Corporate Plan had not been approved, however some of this work was done by the Budget Working Group where Scrutiny were represented.

From consideration of the budget 06/07 and the draft budget 07/08 the Task Group were unable to identify clear evidence of links to service delivery standards and therefore to establish the accuracy of the targets set in the Performance Plan. There were some areas where actions to address deteriorating performance could be followed through the budget process, however in the majority of cases it was difficult to establish whether the Executive considered the improvement of a particular PI as a priority or not.

The review concludes there has been an improvement in data collection but a stronger link to financial management and service standards needs to be developed to improve the service delivery in priority areas.

Introduction

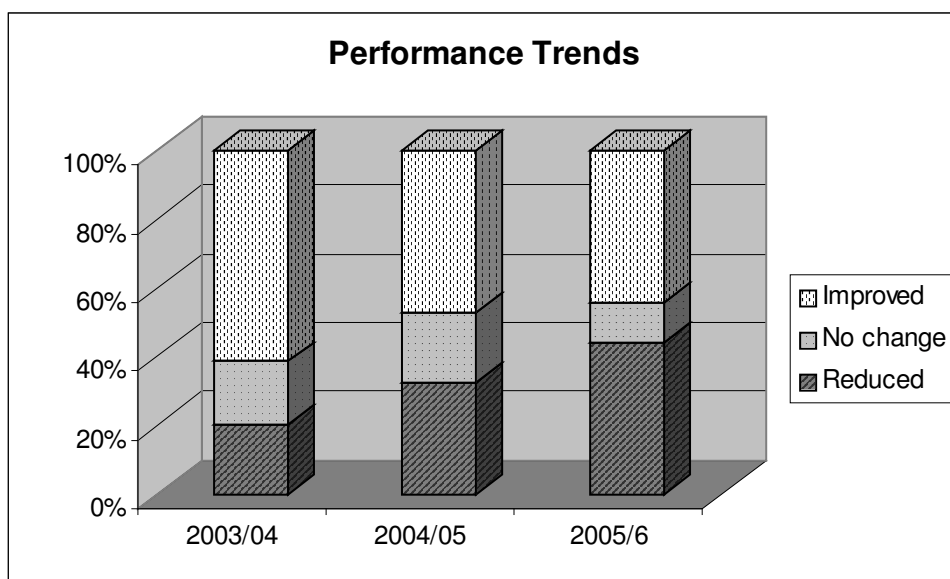
The Task Group considered the evidence presented at the meetings held on:-

4th September 2006
9th October 2006
30th October 2006
4th December 2006.

The data has subsequently been updated with information presented to Overview and Scrutiny in March 2007.

Having considered the Daventry Group figures and the delay in these being available for benchmarking. The group feels any forward projections/targets should aim to have a built-in improvement, as all councils are expected to be showing improved services and efficiency gains, or the Council's performance indicator may slip into a lower quartile.

With part of the CPA score being on performance indicators this Council will need to have an improving trend and an improvement in the number of indicators in the top median.



	2003/04	2004/05	2005/6
No comparison	32	10	34
Reduced	9	16	19
No change	8	10	5
Improved	27	23	19
	76	59	77

The above chart and table illustrate the number and proportion of North Wiltshire District Council BVPIs that improved, got worse or stayed the same over the last 3 years.

As there are a number of new or amended indicators for 2005/06, there is a relatively large number of BVPIs that have no comparison with the previous year.

It can be seen that the number of indicators that have shown a reduction in performance has increased over the last 3 years. 44% of indicators showed a reduction in performance from the previous year, this compares to 33% for 2004/05 and 20% for 2003/04.

Having considered the deteriorating trend over the past 3 years as shown in the above table, and in the Audit Commission Report.

Trends in performance indicators (PIs) confirm that performance management arrangements are not consistently supporting improvement. The proportion of best value performance indicators (BVPIs) that met targets reduced from 64 per cent in 2004/5 to 47 per cent in 2005/6. A growing proportion of indicators are not improving; 44 per cent per cent of PIs did not improve in 2005/6 compared with 33 per cent in 2003/4 and 20 per cent in 2002/3. This raises doubts over the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for sustaining improvement and managing performance.

The Task Group recommends:-

- 1. The Council identifies the PIs that align to the Corporate Plan and CPA scorecard.**
- 2. The Council produce revised action plans, for PIs identified above, with clear quarterly targets to achieve realistic improvements during the year 07/08, for those in the lower median.**
- 3. The Council produce an action plan for PIs aligned to the Corporate Plan which at present are in the upper median to ensure these do not deteriorate.**
- 4. The Council agree which mandatory PIs are not included above and set appropriate targets.**
- 5. The monitoring of these plans should be reported to Overview & Scrutiny within one month of each quarter's end.**

Reporting of Performance Indicators

The Task Group identified the following indicators for consideration at the Members Policy day:-

- 78 (a&b) Processing Time for Housing and Council Tax Benefits.
- 82 (a&b) Amount of Household Waste recycled and composted.
- 199 Incidents of fly-tipping.(LPSA target)

and in addition requested Members to consider whether Car Parking, Equalities and Diversity, and Buoyant Economy were priorities and the robustness of the outcome indicators.

The Task Group has been unable to consider in the time the reasonableness of the current targets and the continuance of this work should be a priority for the new Council once the new Corporate Plan has been adopted.

The Task Group recommends:-

A report is taken to Overview & Scrutiny following the introduction of the new software to reconsider the reporting systems to ensure all officers and members have accurate and up to date information on the indicators identified as priorities in the new Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan

The Budget Consultation results were presented late in the process and the Group recommends the work commences earlier and more data is available to allow financial and service standards to be part of the consultation.

The draft Corporate Plan reflects the consultation but does not set out the non-priorities.

The Task Group recommends:-

The new Corporate Plan includes a list of non-priorities to ensure no resources are wasted in developing targets or action plans.

In considering the development of draft service / business plans for budget savings and growth bids the Group had concerns about the following, though they appreciated the new Corporate Plan was still being developed.

1. That the identification of efficiency savings could be more robust.
2. The weighting of scores relating to performance improvement should be greater.
3. That service improvement should be explicitly linked to the Corporate Plan.
4. It is critical that service plans are delivered promptly in the September period.
5. The deadlines throughout the process must be adhered to.

The development of a new Corporate Plan late in the process has made it difficult to follow the framework this year and the group hopes the Council accepts the timeliness of actions in the framework is critical to its success in future years.

Audit Commission Report on Performance Management.

The group considered this Report and noted progress was already underway on some of the action plan though at the time of receiving the Report the detail and dates for completion had not been agreed. A number of the issues raised in this Report have been addressed in the recommendations above and since the report the Chief Executive's restructuring has set in place suitable organisational structures to deliver the priorities.

The importance of implementing recommendation No.3 of the Action Plan after the elections in May as set out below is also highlighted.

Improve councillor leadership in delivering council aims and priorities through targeted training and/or mentoring by peer councillors from other authorities, in particular to:

- *improve awareness of councillors roles and responsibilities in managing performance;*
- *develop a collaborative partnership approach between political parties whilst holding officers to account; and*
- *maintain focus on agreed priorities.*

The Task Group recommends:-

The completed action plan attached to the Audit Commission Report on performance Management is presented to O&S, who then decide how the monitoring should be reported.

The changes in the Corporate Plan made during the budget process this year have made it impossible for this group to make recommendations for improvement to the framework except to state again the importance of timeliness and accurate data are paramount in carrying out budget consultation.

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