

The Cabinet

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REPORT

Councillor Mrs. Warrander :
Resources Portfolio Holder

CORPORATE CAPACITY TO DELIVER ACTIONS WITHIN PORTFOLIO PLANS

1. Matters for Consideration:

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Approve amendments to the Portfolio Plans, which improve the Council's corporate capacity to focus on its priorities.
- (ii) Note the potential opportunities available to access the D.D.P.N. Capacity Building Fund.

2. Introduction and Background:

At its meeting on the 4th February, 2004, Management Team reported that it had some concerns that not all of the actions identified within the Portfolio Plan could be achieved within a timescale set out.

The Cabinet authorised Management Team to consult with Scrutiny Panels on the proposed Best Value Review Programme for 2004/5 and identify any other changes to be incorporated within the Corporate Plan for 2004/5.

3. Actions Proposed:

3.1. Best Value Review Programme

.. A paper setting out the issues relating to the proposed Best Value Review Programme for 2004/5 was circulated to Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs (Appendix I).

There was no dissent from the proposed recommendations that the programme be deferred pending a full review of the whole programme to be completed after the C.P.A. report is published in April.

3.2. Review of Service Continuous Improvement Plans and Service Strategies

It was estimated by Service Unit Heads that over 10% of the total time required to support specific actions and tasks for next year resulted from Service Continuous Improvement Plans and Strategy Action Plans. Many of these plans and strategies pre-date the establishment by the Council of its integrated change programme priority themes and our priority services categorisation.

It is considered appropriate that all outstanding actions are therefore reviewed in the light of existing political priorities, organisational themes and service priorities with those actions not meeting the priorities removed.

3.3. Flexible Use of Existing Resources

The Council's medium term financial strategy has recognised that we are entering a period of considerable change and has allocated resources to support those changes. It is considered that existing budgets are available to support specific areas within the Council that may find it difficult to support some of the corporate projects.

If and when it is found to be necessary to deploy additional resources, reports will be made to the Cabinet to authorise expenditure where this is justified.

The Council is further aware of a recent national initiative to provide funds to support capacity building. The Local Government Association and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have developed a national framework of capacity building programmes designed to provide support for all Councils seeking to improve the delivery and quality of services to their local community. The programmes have been developed around the following seven key themes:

- peer support
- support for improvement planning
- leadership and change management
- recruitment and retention
- middle management development
- making the best use of scarce skills
- support for District Councils

£27m has been made available in total. Officers will be considering options for applications to this fund (possibly jointly with other Councils) in the near future.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Predicting the resource capacity required to complete proposed tasks and actions is not an exact science and can only be refined in the light of previous learning and experience. Last year we successfully completed well over 80% of tasks identified. Those not completed were often due to external circumstances beyond our control.

Management Team have recently considered a Project Management Framework which seeks to continuously improve our ability to pro-actively match our capacity with our ambition and ensure we consistently deliver on our promises.

The actions as set in section 3 are sufficient to ensure a close match between our ambition and capacity at this stage.

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- (a) Note the contents of the report and the views expressed by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs in relation to the Best Value Review Programme; and
- (b) Approve the actions as set in section 3 of this report.

5. Background Papers:

Portfolio Plans – approved 4th February, 2004.
Cabinet Report – 4th February, 2004.

6. Implications:

- **Financial:** Contained within the report.
- **Legal:** None.
- **Personnel:** Contained within the report.
- **Human Rights:** None.
- **Community Safety:** None.
- **Environmental Implications:** None.
- **Council's Core Values:** None.
- **Ward(s) Affected:** None.
- **Consultation Undertaken:** Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs, Service Unit Heads