

Report of Director of People and Improvement

**Deciding and Delivering Council Priorities
– Audit Commission report**

Summary

1. This report details the findings and recommendations arising from the Audit Commission's study of our arrangements for deciding and delivering the Council priorities. It includes the actions taken, or planned to be taken, in response to these recommendations.

Background

2. The Audit Commission carried out a review of the Council's prioritisation arrangements in mid 2006. One of the purposes of this review was specifically to help the Council to understand the improvements necessary to respond effectively to the prioritisation Key Line Of Enquiry in the CPA Corporate Assessment process.
3. The Commission issued the attached report (Annex A) in mid-August. They followed this up with an "update" letter attached as Annex B, which was issued by them to reflect the fact that there has been a significant amount of development work and progress on the priorities since the report was first completed.

Key Messages

4. The findings from the report present a reasonably positive picture of the way that the Council has developed its priorities as part of the corporate strategy but identified a significant amount of work required in order to embed and deliver them.
5. The Commission identified improvement focussing on five main themes (reflected in six headline recommendations):
 - Improving links between service planning and prioritisation (Recommendation 1 (R1))
 - How resources follow priorities (R2)
 - Integrating priorities into performance management systems (R3)
 - Learning from experience in delivering priorities (R4)
 - Communicating priorities and where they have come from (R5 and R6)

6. As reflected in the Council's response to these recommendations (Annex C), much of this work is already planned to be completed (or has been completed) as part of delivering the Council's Organisational Effectiveness Programme (OEP). Actions not already in the OEP have since been incorporated within it as part of developing the priority Delivery and Innovation Plans.
7. Delivery of the OEP (in particular key parts of it relating to areas such as prioritisation) has been identified as a key priority for the Chief Executive and new Director of People and Improvement. The Council is therefore well placed to improve its prioritisation arrangements in line with the direction recommended by the Commission. The Commission will also be briefly revisiting this area to assess progress, probably in June. The findings from this exercise will be reported to this committee.

Consultation

8. The report, update letter and recommendations have been considered and agreed by the Corporate Management Team. Improving the way that the Council prioritises and delivers its priorities forms a key part of the OEP approved by the Executive in July 2006.

Options

9. Prioritisation is one of the 4 key strands within the CPA Corporate Assessment process. The Executive have previously approved a range of actions to improve the way that the Council prioritises and delivers its priorities as part of the OEP. The actions in Annex C are at the heart of the OEP.

Corporate Priorities

10. The actions outlined in this paper directly support the delivery the Council's organisational effectiveness priorities – in particular "improving leadership at all levels".
11. Improving prioritisation will also support more effective delivery of the Council's nine service-related priorities which are set out in the Corporate Strategy.

Implications

12. **Financial:** Improving the way that the Council prioritises and delivers its priorities potentially impacts on the way that the Council allocates its financial (as well as human, legal, IT, property) resources. These financial implications are reflected in the body of the attached report and in the planned actions relating to its recommendations.
13. **Human Resources/Information Technology/Property/Legal:** See paragraph 12.
14. **Equalities:** There are no specific implications arising from this report – however equalities runs through each of the Council's 13 priorities and is a key cross-cutting theme within the CPA corporate assessment process.

15. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no specific implications arising directly from this report – however “reducing ...impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour.....” is one of the Council’s 13 priorities

Risk Management

16. Failure to implement the identified range of improvements is likely to affect the Council’s ability to deliver its priorities and affect the Council’s CPA corporate assessment rating.

Recommendation

17. Members are asked to note the findings of the Audit Commission study and the actions which have been taken or are planned to be taken to respond to the recommendations contained within the report and update letter.

Reason: To note the progress in improving the Council’s prioritisation arrangements

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Specialist Implications Officer

Wards Affected

CMT 6th December
ALL

Background papers: None

Annexes: Annex A: Audit Commission report: Deciding and Delivering Council Priorities
Annex B: Audit Commission letter 4th December 2006 York Prioritisation
Annex C: CYC actions in response to recommendations in Annex A