

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS
TO THE EXECUTIVE
2 March 2006

Corporate Governance Report: Third Quarter (October, November and December) 2006/07

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

1.1 To receive the Corporate Governance Report for the third quarter of 2006/07.

1.2 The Directors' "Corporate Governance Report" for the quarter looks at the key areas of:-

- Corporate Priorities
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Local Performance Indicators linked to priorities for improvement
- Financial Information
- Key staffing data

The detailed individual reports are included at the end of this summary report.

1.3 The Contact Officer for this report is Tim Sadler, Strategic Director (01235) 540360.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Directors' Group Corporate Governance Report for the third quarter 2006/07 be noted

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

This report

- (a) Relates to the entire Vision Statement.
- (b) Relates to the Best Value Performance Plan and Corporate Plan and
- (c) Complies with Corporate Planning Timetable.

4.0 Background and Supporting Information

4.1 Corporate Priorities

Of particular note in this quarter are:

- The Implementation of the new Vale website which is designed to facilitate more interactive services and be compliant with the highest standards of accessibility
- The declaration of the Abingdon Air Quality Management Area
- Progress with the review of enforcement policies which in turn will lead to an improved score for BVPI 166 (Environmental Health enforcement checklist)
- Review and introduction of new appraisal schemes which more explicitly link to the corporate priorities with a focus on improvement
- The commencement of the management development programme
- The commencement of the Ridgeway Shared Service Partnership
- Action planning commenced to address issues raised in the Staff Attitude Survey in June 2006
- Responding to a request from the Scrutiny Committee those issues where the Directors are concerned about progress have now been highlighted in Red

4.2 Best Value Performance Indicators

The BVPI quarter 3 table has been updated with the 2005/6 quartile data which was released by the Audit Commission just before Christmas. The column 'Quartile 05/06' details which quartile the BVPI is in (top, middle or bottom) for 2005/6. A detailed analysis of this data is included as a separate report on this same agenda.

BVPIs of particular note at the end of the third quarter are:

BVPI: 2a and b: Equalities

Limited progress has been made regarding equalities. BVPI 2a has been re-evaluated and the percentage score has been reduced from 47% to 31.6%. Development work, including an update of the Council's Race Equality Scheme, will take place by the end of March. The target for the end of March is 63.2%. The post of Equalities Officer has now been filled and the successful candidate will start in mid March. Filling this post is key to driving forward improvements for these performance indicators.

BVPI: 9 and 10 Collection Rates for Council Tax and Business Rates BVPI 79a – Benefits - % of cases where calculation was correct.

BVPI data is audited nationally within guidelines set by the Audit Commission. Within the guidelines there are variations in the calculation methodology. In bringing together the client teams we have modified our calculation method which has had an adverse effect on our performance indicators compared with those previously reported.

BVPI 166: Environmental Health checklist

Work programme set and on course to exceed 83.3% target score for 2006/07, based on exceeding 2004/05 bottom quartile of 79.1%. Following public consultation, draft enforcement policies were reported to full Council in December 2006 and approval was delegated to Strategic Directors to finalise, due in February 2007. This, together with development and reporting of education and information programmes will achieve 93% by the end of the year. This extra score was considered a necessary contingency against the bottom quartile for 2005/06 increasing over the previous year. This has occurred, and the bottom quartile has increased to 85%.

BVPI 109a, b, c – Planning – processing applications

The significant improvement in performance reported at the end of the second quarter has been maintained. All three parts of this indicator have made further significant improvements in performance during the third quarter.

4.3 Local Performance Indicators

No additional comments to those included in the detailed report. It is proposed to supplement these during 2007/08 to monitor progress against the refined objectives adopted by Council as part of the Service and Budget Planning process.

4.4 Financial Issues

No additional comments to those included in the detailed report.

4.5 Staffing Issues

Sickness levels at the end of the third quarter remain below target. Staff turnover levels have also been relatively low.

DIRECTORS GROUP

Background Papers: Corporate Governance Report of the Directors Group