

# **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE 23rd JUNE 2004**

## **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGER**

**(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor John Williams, Leader of the Council)**

### **APPROVAL OF DRAFT PERFORMANCE PLAN**

#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 To recommend approval to Council of the Performance Plan 2003/04.

#### **2. Background**

2.1 It has been a requirement for councils to produce an annual Performance Plan since April 2000, in accordance with Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999: Best Value and Performance Improvement.

2.2 The legislation provides guidelines on the content of Plans, which is revised annually by Government. The current guidance is contained within ODPM Circular 03/2003, with further guidance issued as an addendum in February 2004.

2.3 The latest guidance reaffirms that Performance Plans should become the focus of authorities improvement planning, by articulating priorities for improvement, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. It should set targets for improved future performance.

2.4 In line with the Governments approach to delivering freedoms and flexibilities for better performing authorities, the Government has implemented a differentiated approach that reflects CPA categorisation. Unfortunately, as we will not receive our categorisation until September, the Council must produce the more comprehensive Plan, similar to those councils rated as Fair, Weak or Poor.

2.5 The main audience of the Plan is officers, members, groups and organisations with an interest in the authority, the regulatory bodies and central government. The publication deadline is 30th June each year.

2.6 In accordance with the Governments approach to deregulation it is no longer necessary to include information, which can be obtained from other sources. This has better focussed the Plan and enabled the Council to shape this year's Plan around the Corporate Priorities. This also meets the External Auditor's recommendation to reduce the Plan.

#### **3. Timetable**

- 3.1 In preparing this final draft we have endeavoured to ensure that all significant matters have been included within our understanding and interpretation of the statutory guidance. In this regard the External Auditor has undertaken a cursory review of the document prior to publication and is satisfied that it meets the main compliance criteria. A full audit will commence after publication.
- 3.2 Much of the information and data required to produce the Plan is not available until after the year-end, 31<sup>st</sup> March. It then has to be both analysed and summarised. Additionally, the recent CPA inspection had a considerable impact on the resources available to produce the Plan. Therefore, the Plan has been prepared in an even shorter time period.
- 3.3 As a consequence the Review Board, at their meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> June, refused to recommend approval of the Plan, as the version they had was not complete.
- 3.4 As in previous years, Full Council will be asked to give retrospective approval after 30<sup>th</sup> June publication deadline.

#### **4. Matters of Interest**

- 4.1 Approximately 250 paper copies of the BVPP will be distributed to Members, neighbouring councils, key partners and Council Managers. It will also be available to view at all Council information points, local libraries and via the Internet. To reduce production costs, parish councils will not receive Plans automatically, but will be given the opportunity to request a copy. In addition, electronic copies will be produced on CD Rom, as required. Last year, approximately 250 were produced in this way, mainly in application packs for the Council's senior posts. The Plan is usually held in high esteem by external assessors and provides a good overview of the Council to interested parties.
- 4.2 The public are given a performance summary in the Booklet that was distributed with Council Tax and NNDR bills throughout March 2004. Performance Plans are provided to the public where they are requested, but this normally accounts for just a small number.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Production costs of the Plan are minimised, through desktop publishing and internal photocopying, outsourcing only the printing of the cover and binding. The CD Rom is also published internally. The cost is anticipated to be approximately £4 for a paper copy and £1 for a CD Rom.

#### **6. Effect on Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The Performance Plan is the main document in delivering the Council's Corporate Priorities. It affects them all as it addresses the Council's key priorities for improvement and sets targets for improved future performance.

#### **7. Recommendation**

7.1 Members are asked to recommend approval of the Performance Plan to Full Council.

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