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Michael Laing   Chief Executive

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

4th March 2008

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY 12th MARCH 2008** at **6.00 P.M**.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations Of Interest

   Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.

   Members should use either of the following declarations:

   Personal Interest – **to be used where a Member will be remaining and participating on the debate and any vote:**

   I have a personal interest in agenda item (….) regarding the report on (….) because I am (….)

   Personal and Prejudicial Interest – **to be used where a Member will be withdrawing from the room for that item:**

   I have a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item (….) regarding the report on (….) because I am (….)

   Officers are also invited to declare any interest in any matters appearing on the agenda.

   NOTE: Members are requested to complete the enclosed declarations form and, after declaring interests verbally, to hand the form in to the Committee Administrator.

3. To consider the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on   Copies
                                                                          attached

23rd January 2008 and the Special Meetings of the Committee held on 30th January and 20th February 2008 as true records.

16.   To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

        *It is likely that items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 will be taken in the closed part of the meeting in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006.

Yours faithfully

Michael Laing

Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Mrs Burn, Ferguson, Gale, Grogan, Hayton, Henry, Kay, Kingston, Mews, Mowbray, Murphy*, Miss Ord, Perkins, Mrs Pinkney, Mrs Seabury*, Stonehouse and Zair.

*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Stonehouse

Deputy Chair: Councillor Kay

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
       Management Team

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM

NAME AND DATE OF COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	NATURE OF INTEREST AND REASONS	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2008

_____

Report of the Acting Chief Executive
DRAFT WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

purpose of the report
To seek Committee approval of the Waste Management Strategy subject to consultation with partners.

background

1	The Council is a waste collection authority. The County Council is the waste disposal authority. We both operate within the framework of the Government policies for environment sustainability and climate change. These policies promote and reward:-

- Waste minimisation at the point of collection i.e. the residents home
- Composting projects
- Maximised re-cycling
- Reductions in landfill
- Environmental education
- Efficiency in the waste collection service in line with Best Value principles

2	 The Government sees waste management as an important contributor to its overall priorities on climate change and global warming.

3	Since then District level Councillors have prioritised sustainable environmental improvements. This has led to:-

- Increases in composting
- Improved re-cycling rates
- Programmes of waste minimisation
- The introduction of wheelie bins
- Outreach work to schools and community groups to improve re-cycling and raise awareness
- A reverse TUPE situation where the Refuse Contract was taken back into the Council following a market failure in a tendering exercise.

4   The Waste Management Strategy (2002) was written to cover a 3 year period. The Council should have revised it in 2005. We did not because the County Council had not updated its Waste Strategy as expected in 2005. Until the County Council determines its method of disposal the District Councils will find it difficult to produce a comprehensive Waste Management Strategy covering collection. Your officers have been working with the County Council in revising their Waste Strategy. To date this is still in draft form and gives a number of options for disposal. This means that the Waste Management Strategy adopted by the Council needs to be flexible enough to respond to decisions taken in the future by the County Council and post May 2009 the unitary council. At the same time the Waste Management Strategy must promote sustainability and deliver this Council's environmental objectives in the short to medium term.

5   Committee may wish to note that the Audit Commission in previous annual assessments have advised the Council to update its Waste Management Strategy. Working with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) your officers have developed a Draft Strategy. This is attached at Annex A.

draft strategy

6   The Draft Strategy reviews the current position, notes decisions already taken, suggests a number of options, sets out high level aims, examines current performance and areas for improvement.

7   Committee is asked to:-

- Note the contents of the Draft Strategy
- Instruct officers specifically the Assistant director (Neighbourhood Services) to consult with stakeholders
- Give the Chair of Community Services and the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) delegated authority to adapt the Draft Strategy to incorporate comments from stakeholders
- Bring further reports to Committee on the implementation of the Draft Strategy.

8   Consultation on the Draft Strategy will include the County Council.

financial implications

9   There are no immediate financial implications to this report. However the detailed implementation of the Draft Strategy may have financial implications. These will be set out in future reports.

RECOMMENDED

1   Committee is asked to:-

    i)   Note the contents of the Draft Strategy;

    ii)   Instruct officers specifically the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services),
            to consult with stakeholders;

    iii)   Give the Chair of Community Services and the Assistant Director
            (Neighbourhood Services) delegated authority to adapt the Draft Strategy to
            incorporate comments from stakeholders;

    iv)   Bring further reports to Committee on the implementation of the draft
            Strategy.

Officer responsible for the report	**Author of the report**
Michael Laing	Michael Laing
Acting Chief Executive	
Ext 281	

Wear Valley District Council

Waste Management Service

Interim Report: Version 0.1

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is at a cross roads in terms of the future development of its waste management service. Particular pressures on the Council are as follows:-

- The need to demonstrate a commitment to obtaining value for money in its collection services in order to satisfy external inspectors. The Council will need to demonstrate its openness to new ways to delivering services. A particular challenge to the Council is the distance to processing facilities and the lack of appropriate transfer sites. This does significantly reduce the efficiency of use of the Council vehicles

- The ongoing issue of balance between services to rural and urban parts of the districts; and the perception of the same in the eyes of stakeholders. Ironically, the Council's good level of provision to rural properties has exacerbated the cost base issues

- The need to integrate future development of the service with the development programme of the County Council waste management service anticipating the imminent development of the Durham Unitary Council

- The need to carry out an options appraisal to determine the future service profile, particularly issues of:-

    - A potential move to alternate weekly collections

    - The potential reshaping of the dry recycling service to compliment this

    - The potential addition of a new collection for garden waste

- Despite financial pressures the Council will need to properly resource and project manage the process of introducing or changing services; particularly the aspects of the development and use of a communications plan and guidance to customers in terms of use of the new services and anti-contamination measures etc in the context of a fortnightly residual collection.

Geographical Deposition of Customers and Services

This is illustrated in Figure 1 below:-
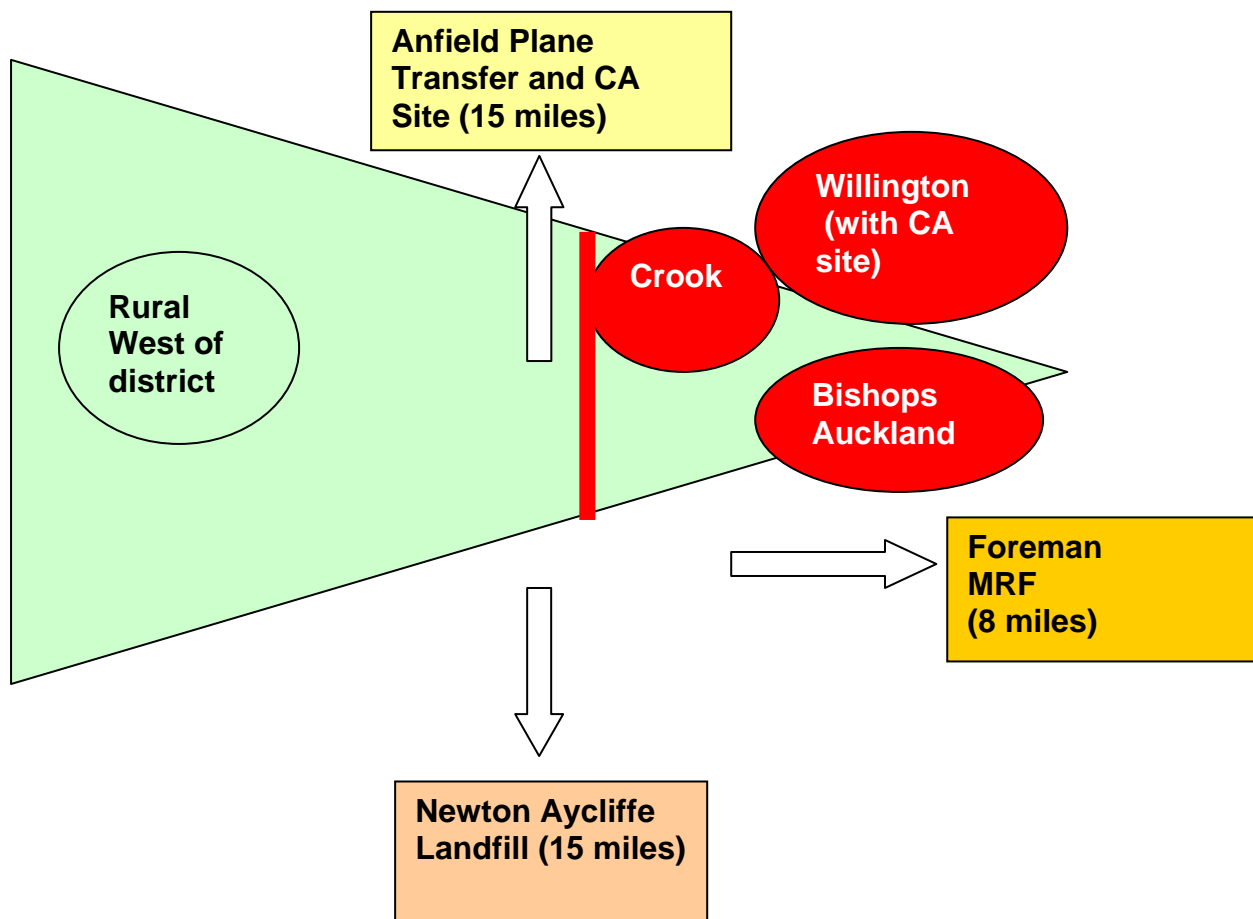
It can be seen that no landfill or processing facility exists within the Council

boundary and that the only transfer site is on the Eastern side. Although the

author has not inspected the facilities feedback from stakeholders is that most

of the facilities require updating. Thus Civic Amenity sites require a complete

overhaul and the Foreman MRF lacks an investment in up to date technology

(notwithstanding the efforts of the company to move location and upgrade)

Current Status of the Weir Valley Waste Services

The Council would appear to have a budget of £1.4 million for its refuse collection contract (currently delivered in-house) and £0.3 million for its recycling contract (also in-house). In addition there appears to be £0.14million for client costs and £0.52m for replacement vehicles. The Council is in a strong financial position and would appear to be in a position to fund reasonable requests for revenue and capital growth easily. Major capital investment in the service would require economies in capital expenditure elsewhere.

The Council achieved an out-turn figure of 23% diverted from landfill in 2006/07 comprising 13% dry recycling and 10% aerobically digested. The aerobic digestion facility is provided under county contract by Premier Waste, in which Durham County Council (DCC) has a shareholding of 75%.

Discussions with officers have revealed that 5% of the aerobic digestion performance may be at risk because the transfer site for this facility is becoming overloaded.

The Council services 30,000 households. Customers enjoy a weekly disposal collection in wheeled bins and a recycling box collection together with a survival bag. The recycling service is currently viewed as being at full capacity by officers, in terms of the vehicles being packed with recyclate and struggling to finish their rounds.

An initiative to implement alternate weekly collections is currently stalled with 15,000 new recycling bins purchased and in store, and 15,000 bins ordered but not delivered.

The Council has chosen a 180 litre container size for its disposal wheeled bin (100% deployed) and a 180 litre bin for a potential future recycling collection (in store). Whilst these container sizes suit small streets and gardens, they will exacerbate the pressure to fit the waste in over a fortnightly cycle as compared with 240 litre containers. The container size is, however, now fixed and the Council needs to optimise the best use of the containers through communications planning, anti-contamination work etc.

The Council is proposing to retain its current 55 litre recycling boxes in the new arrangements to take glass.

4,000 customers currently have access to green waste collections and there is no vehicle capacity to collect any more.

The Council is considering introducing green waste collections and in doing this has the blessing of DCC. The author would comment that this measure will increase the diversion percentage from landfill (**a benefit**) but increase the weight per household per year (**a disadvantage**). Thus one BVPI will be improved and one will be worsened.

The Council has acknowledged the need for the recycling service to be further developed and is currently at the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage in procurement for collection and processing capacity for dry recycling. This procurement is being managed by the internal procurement team. Local firms appear to be expressing strong interest.

One local provider has recently won a contract to provide collection and treatment services to four districts in the County and this provider appears to have processing capacity constructed and licensed.

The Council has issued 3000 home composters on a subsidised basis.

Although officers are able and dedicated, resources for promotion and customer influencing in recycling are too small; and certainly inadequate to deal with the major change management aspects of a move to fortnightly collections.

Current status of Durham County Council (DCC) Waste Services

County officers are supportive and engaging and keen to work together with Weir Valley. The author would comment that DCC appears to be running late in its treatment procurement and that officers appear to be under-resourced for the many tasks in hand. Thus, Landfill Allowance Trading has not taken place and a formal decision on the funding route for the new treatment plant(s) has not been made. The County is somewhat conflicted by having a
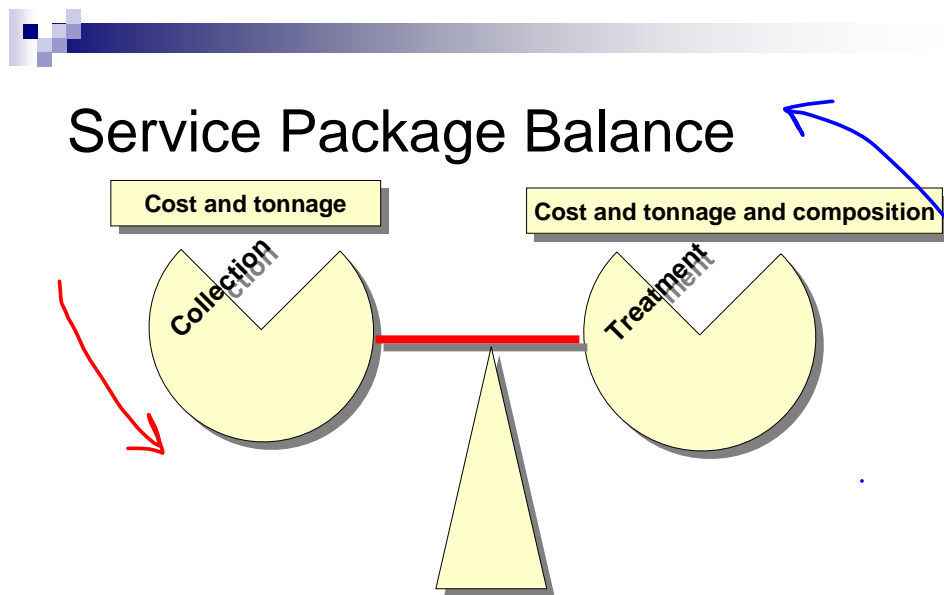
large shareholding in a local waste provider (the Premier Group) and needs to take a view on the future of its holding in the company before engaging the market on the subject of its treatment plant procurement. This is because national waste companies would not be prepared to bid against an incumbent who would be viewed as perhaps having an advantage.

County officers are fully aware of all these points but remain under-resourced. In addition the successful unitary bid has provided these officers with another major challenge of service integration, and this is probably another under-resourced project. County officers seem to be assuming that they will be in charge of waste operations in the new unitary, and depending on the recruitment rules/ ring fencing etc this may or may not be the case.

Weir Valley can certainly help the integration project by providing a strategy which would form a building block for the new Council's waste work. County officers would like district officers to avoid letting contracts of more than two year's duration wherever possible. This, of course, does mean that any capital investment by a contractor in a Wear Valley contract is problematical since there is insufficient time for capital amortization.

The waste systems of county and district are inextricably linked since as the district recycles more, the county treats less and this is illustrated in Figure 2 below:-

Service Package Balance

Cost and tonnage

Cost and tonnage and composition

Collection

Treatment

Limitations on Weir Valley's options

The following are the factors that limit the strategic options for the Council in waste in the author's view:-

- Efficient vehicle utilisation remains problematical due to lack of immediate transfer and the limitations on gross vehicle tonnage due to rural roads
- Consideration of a wider range of new materials to be collected (particularly kitchen waste which has a powerful greenhouse gas and LATS benefit) are precluded by the County's inability to provide the processing capacity within a realistic time frame. Only garden waste appears to be possible using County treatment facilities.

- Affordability pressures may combine with existing expenditure commitments (particularly on bins) to limit the degrees of freedom

Areas of potential investigation as part of the strategy making process

Making the case for auditors

Despite manifest officer and member reservations it is in the Authority's interest to approach the collection cost issue with an open mind. Elements which might assist the Council to make a case might include:-

- Separate benchmarking for the rural and urban elements of the service
- Active market testing to inform the Council of the ideas for innovation and improvement which private providers might suggest
- A commitment to move to formal procurement of the refuse collection service if potential savings are apparent from this work

Auditors are bound to ask why the refuse collection service should not be included in the current recycling collection procurement.

Investment to cut vehicle costs

The Council should investigate whether investment in a transfer station could greatly increase vehicle efficiency. It should be possible to produce a business case contrasting the capital investment versus any revenue savings.

Initial feedback from County officers appeared to indicate that they might have the resources to invest in such a facility. The planning difficulties in the rural area are not under-estimated, but even a site on the western fringe of the urban area may offer significant advantages. Engineers and vehicle suppliers may be able to generate options which do not rely on large quantities of poured concrete to be effective. If a site is low key and manifestly temporary it is possible that planning difficulties might be overcome.

Work to produce a proper stage plan for the move towards alternate weekly collections

The author is of the firm view that the Council is at significant risk if resources are not increased to deal with the anticipated resistance and difficulties in implementing a radical change in service levels. These resources should be enshrined in a formal stage plan, which should specify dedicated internal officer time.

Work to model the current levels of capture being achieved

In order to inform the current planning it should be possible to easily identify the capture rate being achieved for individual materials. This would be done by applying the Parfitt analysis to the current levels of recycling tonnage generated.

This would be beneficial from several points of view:-

- It would allow the demand for processing services to be quantified

- It would enable the vehicle capacity to be validated

- It would allow the setting of reasonable targets for future recycling

- It would validate the business case

There may be severe risks in proceeding if vehicle capacity or processing capacity is insufficient.

Project Planning Work

The author would recommend that formal and realistic project controls are put in place for this work and these would include:-

- Formal project mandate, brief, approach and initiation documents

- Live risk controls

- Live Gantt charts

- Realistic resources plans to deliver the work at the right quality in the right time

Current systems are likely to be swamped by the significant challenges ahead.

The Council may be facing the following *worst case* timelines:-

- OJEU compliant collection/ treatment procurement-18 months

- OJEU compliant vehicle procurement-18 months

- Communications package to allow successful roll out-6months

These projects and the inter-dependencies between them need to be formally

mapped.

Affordability modelling for potential district wide green waste collection

As described above this will have benefits and disbenefits to the Council's

BVPI position and if offered as a free service will increase the Council's cost

base. The author would recommend that this is modelled before any public

commitment is made; and that this modelling use sensitivity analysis

techniques.

Change management work to deal with rural antipathy

Officers have described potential measures to demonstrate a commitment to

rural service and to win hearts and minds. As described above, rural citizens

are probably receiving a far better service than many other rural communities.

However, the service norm, once established is not noticed.

Measures which might be proposed by officers include:-

- More bring sites

- Further issuing of home composters

The other would recommend that the issue is the subject to formal change management planning. A different option would be to use focussed communications techniques to challenge misperceptions. This approach might prevent cost pressures being further increased by further rural expenditure.

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2008

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Report of the Acting Chief Executive
REVIEW OF THE STREET WARDEN SCHEME

purpose of the report
To seek Committee approval to review the Street Warden Scheme (SWS) following a Councillors Briefing on 13 February 2008.

background

1   The SWS was established in 2002. It covered 3 wards – St Helens, Woodhouse and Coundon and Leeholme. It had 6 wardens and a Warden Manager. It was funded externally. The hours were set at 12-8pm.

2   Since 2002 the Council has increased the number of Street Wardens to 18 and mainstream the funding into the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The SWS now covers the whole District.

3   The SWS main duties are about crime prevention, deterrence and diverting young people into positive activities. To date the SWS has been successful and has contributed to overall reductions in crime.

4   As the SWS has operated in its current form since 2002 and been expanded significantly it would seem to be an appropriate time to re-examine it. The SWS needs to develop to address the rising expectations of Councillors and customers, changing patterns of crime and new forms of service provision.

councillors briefing

5   A Councillors Briefing was held on 13 February 2008. Councillors expressed the view that any re-examination of the SWS should look at:-

- Working hours with an extension at night and over weekends
- Visibility in neighbourhoods
- Joint working and relationships with Councillors in their ward including scheduled meetings
- The remuneration of Street Wardens and their recruitment and retention.
- Closer working relationships with the police and information sharing
- The use of Fixed Penalty Notices by the SWS
- A media plan to make sure that the good work done by the SWS is publicised
- Attendance at residents meetings
- A revised job description to reflect changed circumstances

6   Councillors were clear that they did not see Street Wardens as being substitutes for the police. They did want the SWS to work closely with the police and other agencies to combat crime and anti-social behaviour. The review will include consultation with partners.

next steps

7   Following approval of this report your officers will begin a period of consultation and negotiation with Street Wardens on a revision of the SWS. This will be done in line with the views expressed in the Councillors Briefing. A report will be presented to a Committee in the second cycle of the new municipal year. A further Councillors Seminar will be held in early June 2008 to report on progress.

financial implications

8   There are no immediate financial implications to this report. Any upward re-negotiation of salaries will have financial implications and these will be considered in future reports.

human resource implications

9   Consultation and negotiation on the SWS will be done in line with the Council's policies and will involve trade union representatives.

equalities implications

10   The SWS has an important role in preventing and deterring hate crime. The SWS also works to divert young people to positive activities that foster community cohesion.

community safety implications

11   The SWS plays a major role in crime reduction. This review seeks to enhance that role and work with partners to reduce crime in the District.

RECOMMENDED

1   Committee instructs the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) to review the SWS in accordance with the contents of this report, to consult partners, to hold a Councillors Seminar in early June 2008 and report progress in the second Committee cycle of the Municipal Year 2008/09.

Officer responsible for the report	**Author of the report**
Michael Laing	Michael Laing
Acting Chief Executive	
Ext 281	

The Fourth Option:
Traditional Values in a modern setting?
A policy review for FOSIG

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The need to secure further efficiency savings as a result of the current comprehensive spending review. The challenge of securing more devolved and engaged local government. The continuing emphasis on partnership working and a new relationship between Whitehall and localities.

These are three key challenges and opportunities currently facing local councils. Councils in shire areas face a fourth issue: the consequences of the wide recognition that the status quo in terms of governance in so-called two tier areas is not an option. Some areas face reorganisation and some are pursuing pathfinder status to improve two-tier working. The rest are also being encouraged to improve the way they work.

These challenges raise particular issues for those councils with a population below 85,000 which took advantage of the fourth option in the Local Government Act 2000 and operate with a streamlined committee system. (In this report we will refer to these councils as Fourth Option Authorities – FOA)

Some of these councils look set to be abolished as a result of reorganisation. Some may be encouraged to merge with their neighbours. Others will have to develop ways of collaborating more closely with other councils with different political structures. The pressure for more engagement and devolution will put the claim that FOAs are 'closer to local communities' at centre stage.

All councils in shire areas face change, and in these uncertain times the FOAs face two key tests:

- Can the Fourth Option model help to secure more engaged and devolved local government?
- Does the fourth option model hinder collaboration between councils vertically and horizontally and with partners?

This briefing note, based on research carried out by the Tavistock Institute for the Fourth Option Special Interest Group (FOSIG) of the Local Government Association, explores the position of FOAs in this context. It:

- Reviews their current performance against a number of indicators;
- Comments in more detail on the implications for them of the current context;
- Suggests some next steps for these councils to pursue in the context of the current policy debate.

2. HOW ARE FOURTH OPTION AUTHORITIES PERFORMING?

By definition FOAs comprise many of the smallest councils in England. They have very limited corporate capacity and are widely perceived to suffer from diseconomies of scale. They have decided not to pursue other forms of political management, such as the mayoral or cabinet models. These were promoted by the Government to generate more public involvement and engagement in local government by making the political leadership more transparent and visible.

In this context the Institute compared the performance of FAOs with other district councils (operating mayor or cabinet models) on the public satisfaction BVPI, the Audit Commission's use of resources assessment and CPA scores. We also looked at electoral turn out. The comparisons are set out in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 1: Best Value Performance indicators (BVPI) satisfaction 2006/07
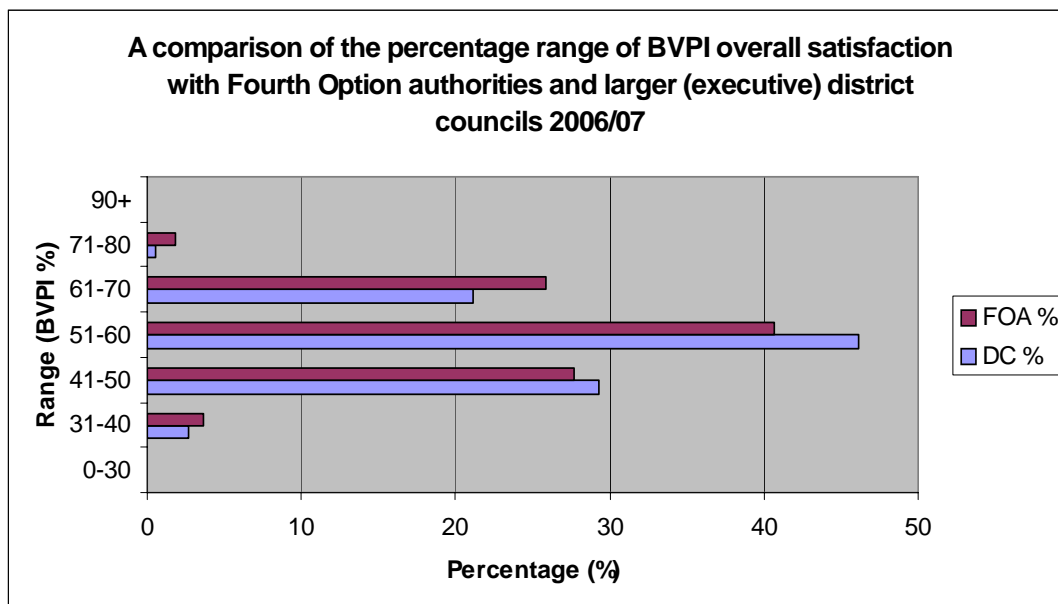
Source: DCLG performance indicators website (2007)

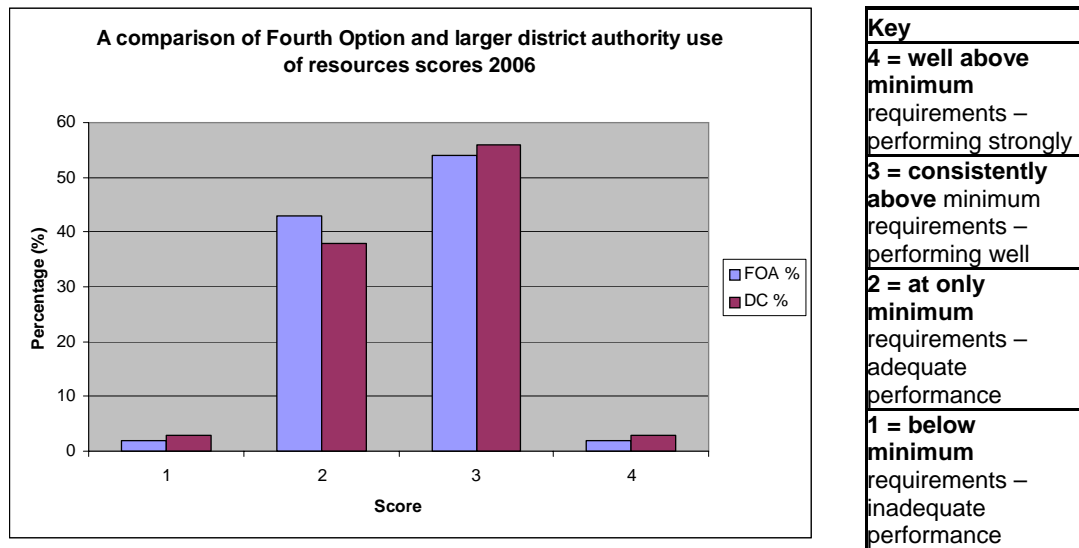Figure 2: Average voter turnout in Local elections 2003-04

Voter turnout in local elections 2003-04
Fourth Option Authorities - 39.3%
Larger District Councils (executive arrangements) - 38.3%

Source: Requested from the DCLG 2007

On public satisfaction and use of resources the performance of FAOs is broadly comparable with that of other district councils. This conclusion is more significant than it may at first appear. It suggests that the political structure these councils have chosen to adopt has not undermined their performance in two important areas. In addition, the electoral data for 2003-04 shows that these councils have had a slightly higher turnout than other district councils. This analysis may justify concluding "if it

aint broke don't fix it". But before doing so, it is important to consider the wider context.

Figure 3: Use of Resources 2006

Key
4 = well above minimum requirements – performing strongly
3 = consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
2 = at only minimum requirements – adequate performance
1 = below minimum requirements – inadequate performance

Source: The Audit commission (2007)

Figure 4: Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores 2003/04
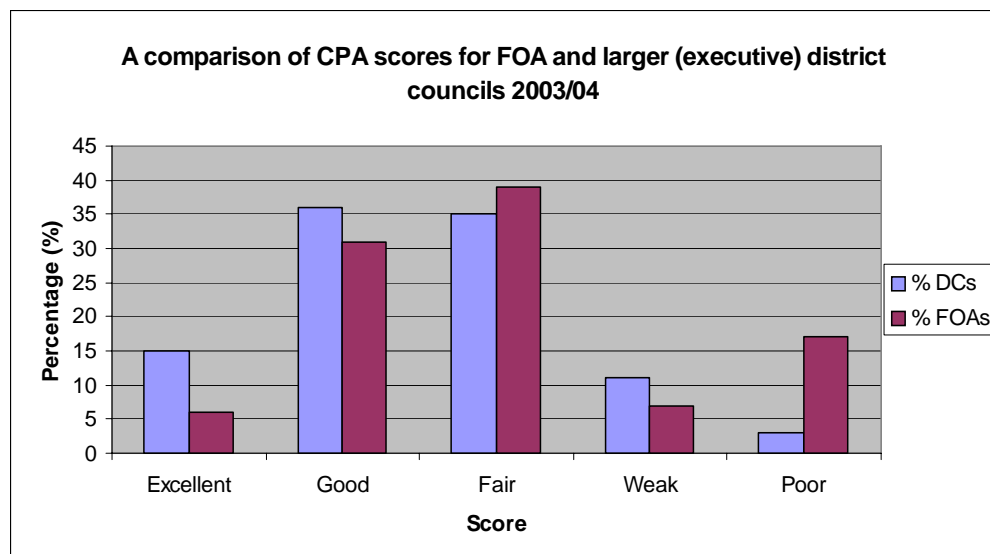
Source: The Audit Commision website for the CPA (2007)

First the CPA results. There are concerns among FOSIG members that the CPA process does not reflect the particular nature of these councils, but the results do need to be taken seriously. They show that while the proportions of FOAs in the good, fair and weak categories are broadly similar to other district councils, there is a smaller proportion of excellent FOAs and a larger proportion of weak ones.

This is a warning note which FOSIG and its members should take seriously. One hypothesis is that FOAs lack the capacity and/or capability to improve from a very low base or to shift beyond competence into excellence.

Second, while the evidence undoubtedly suggests that these councils' performance on two key indicators has not been undermined by their political structure, the evidence does not shed any light on whether the structure they have chosen positively supports their performance.

In considering this issue it is important to acknowledge that a number of factors can influence the performance of a council. It is about more than structures; and it may well be that FOAs have characteristics other than their political structure which are influencing their performance.

As part of its research the Institute interviewed Chief executives and officers from a number of FOAs. As a result some factors which could be relevant to this issue were identified. They include:

- The **importance of effective managerial leadership**: some senior officers are skilled at working with and getting the best out of the streamlined committee system.
- The **importance of political leadership**. Three dimensions to this were highlighted in the Institute's interviews:
    - The effectiveness of any committee hinges of the quality of the chairing; this is particular significant for the effective political management of FOAs;
    - The focus of councillors is critical: maintaining an outward focus, to local communities is crucial. How this is achieved without a clearly defined executive responsible for the political management of the council is a key issue;
    - The relationship between the political and managerial leadership is crucial in all councils, and different dynamics will be involved in FOAs compared with other councils.
- It is significant that a number of councils whose officers were interviewed by the Institute are **reducing the number of committees** they operate: they are becoming more streamlined.
- The absence in FOAs of a clear distinction between those members who are in the cabinet and those who are not means that the application of scrutiny to these councils must be different to those which have adopted the mayoral or executive model. But the **imaginative application of scrutiny** and overview to FOAs could well have an impact on their performance.

It is also important to acknowledge the arguments made in favour of the fourth option by its proponents. These are:
- That given the geography of many FOAs (sparse populations with many small communities) the direct link between each locality – each ward – and the decision-making process is important and is most easily met through the involvement of all councillors in the decision-making process;
- That the streamlined committee system is more transparent than the executive model. This view is challenged by the proponents of the executive model, but it is worth noting that:
    - A number of FOAs have no overall control administrations and a significant number of independent councillors: the fourth option model may be better suited to the dynamics of this situation;
    - A hard core of councillors – between 25 and 30% - are dissatisfied with whatever political structure their council has adopted.

3. SO WHY CHANGE?

There is a widespread perspective that those councils which adopted the fourth model did so because they are resistant to any form of change. This makes the answer to the question "if it aint broke, why fix it?" an important one.

In reviewing this question it is important to begin with the challenges and opportunities currently facing local government. They include:

- The forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. It will require further efficiencies from councils on a scale that cannot be delivered through "more of the same".
- The emphasis on devolution beyond the town hall and on more engaged local government will continue. Putting the interface between frontline staff, local councillors and citizens-consumers at the heart of organisational design requires fundamental change.
- The notion of place-shaping as the primary task of local councils. This concept looks set to survive the government's response to the Lyons report and, taken seriously, would involve the re-design of the local public service.
- The continued development of local area agreements, placing increasing weight on local strategic partnerships and public service boards, many of which are still fragile structures with difficult dynamics.

In addition councils in shire areas face the additional challenge of improving two-tier working. In some areas this will involve the creation of unitary authorities or improved working pathfinders. But the government has made it clear that the status quo is not an option – a view which is broadly supported by local councils and their partners - and councils in all two tier areas are tasked with the challenge of working together more effectively.

This set of factors have significant and particular implications for FOAs,

First, **the creation of unitary councils** will mean the abolition of some FOAs, The issue which these councils should be exploring is how their experience of working with communities at a local level can inform the design of the new councils and in particular the arrangements put in place for more devolved and engaged local government.

Second, **the pressures which look set to emerge from both the spending review and the need to improve two tier working** will lead to proposals for the merger of district councils in some areas. Where merger involves a FOA the new authority will have a population above the 85,000 threshold for the fourth option. This raises a number of questions:
- Should FOSIG be raising with the government the question of the applicability of the threshold in these circumstances, particularly where the FOA is performing well in comparison with the council with which it is merging?
- If this is pursued do FOAs have the evidence to support a case for the retention of the fourth option model by the new council?
- Or, if a new council pursues – or is forced to pursue – an executive or mayoral model, could the experience of the FOA council(s) inform the design of devolutionary structures within the new council?

Third, **FOAs will inevitably have to collaborate more with neighbouring councils** and with partner organisations. Sharing services is likely to become increasingly common and joint officer structures may be developed. The challenge for FOAs is to consider what implications the fourth option model has for these collaborations – how, for example, can councils with a streamlined committee system best link up with those with an executive model. Or – and this is probably a better question – how will the fourth option model need to be adapted to facilitate greater collaboration? Are there relevant lessons from those FOAs which have further streamlined their committee systems?

4. TWO KEY QUESTIONS

This analysis highlights the importance of the two key questions posed at the start of this paper:

1. Can the fourth option model help to secure more engaged and devolved local government?

2. Does the fourth option model hinder collaboration between councils vertically and horizontally and with partners?

The fact is that there is currently insufficient evidence to enable the Tavistock Institute or FOSIG to answer these questions. Yet the FOAs themselves are potentially in a stronger position. They have the potential to access evidence and to test new ways of working. Unfortunately, the limited use that many FOAs are using of the scrutiny process means that these opportunities, which could be crucial to the continuation of the fourth option, are not being exploited.

The overriding conclusions which can be drawn from the Tavistock Institute's research and policy analysis are that FOAs should:

- Do more to share good practice in the use of the fourth option and test further refinements and adaptations of the model;
- Use the scrutiny process to examine the impact of these enhancements and to gather data to answer the key questions.

This creative use of the scrutiny process would have a further advantage. It would demonstrate that FOAs are prepared to adapt to changing circumstances. It would help to show that while they may be operating a traditional system, they are doing so in a modern setting.

5. APPENDICES

5.1.   Appendix 1: Presentation to the FOSIG AGM June 6th 2007

Slide 1

The Tavistock Institute

Fourth Option Authorities: Traditional values in a modern setting

Perceptions and performance of the
streamlined committee system

Phil Swann, Camilla Child & Julie Das

Introduction

- Our brief
- The empirical evidence
- Pressures for change
- Implications
- Discussion

Our Brief

- A better understanding of the perceptions and performance of Fourth Option Authorities (FOAs)
- To inform the development and the implementation of a strategy responding to the white paper
- Empirical evidence and telephone interviews with FOAs

The Empirical Evidence

- BVPI Satisfaction scores 2006/2007
- Electoral turnout 2003/2004
- Use of resources 2006
- The CPA 2003/2004
- Perceptions from the survey of councillors 2006

BVPI satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the council 2006/07

A comparison of the percentage range of BVPI overall satisfaction with Fourth Option authorities and larger (executive) district councils 2006/07

Slide 6
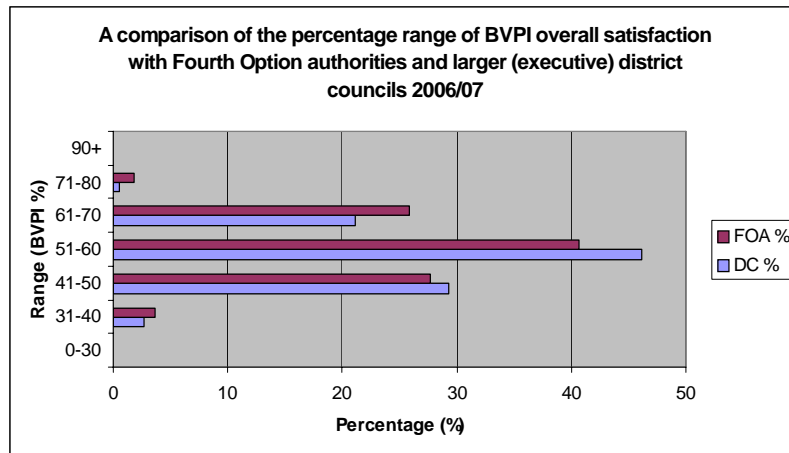
BVPI Satisfaction

Similarities in other areas of satisfaction 2006/2007

2006/07 Average	Overall satisfaction with the council	Satisfaction with complaints handling	Satisfaction with cleanliness	Satisfaction with waste collection	Satisfaction with waste recycling (local facilities)	Sports/leisure facilities	Libraries	Museums /galleries	Theatres/ concert halls	Parks and open spaces
	BV 3	BV 4	BV 89	BV 90A	BV 90B	BV 119A	BV 119B	BV 119C	BV 119D	BV 119E
FOA Average	55.3	34.8	70.5	79.4	73.6	59.1	74.0	36.4	35.9	72.2
DC Average	54.4	34.8	68.9	78.6	71.3	59.9	74.8	40.4	40.4	73.6

Electoral turnout

- Voter turnout in local elections 2003-04 shows slightly higher/ similar averages (DCLG)

  FOA = 39.3%

  DC = 38.3%

- The highest ranking Fourth Option Authorities 2003/04.

FOA	% of voter turnout 03/04
Craven	54.1%
Wear Valley	51.8%
Mole Valley	50.7%
West Lindsey	48%
Penwith	47.3%
Daventry	47%
South Shropshire	46.5%
Tandridge	46.3%
Purbeck	45.3%
Corby	44.7%

Slide 8

Use of resources

Similarities in the 'use of financial resources' (DCLG) 2006

**A comparison of Fourth Option and larger district authority use of resources scores 2006**
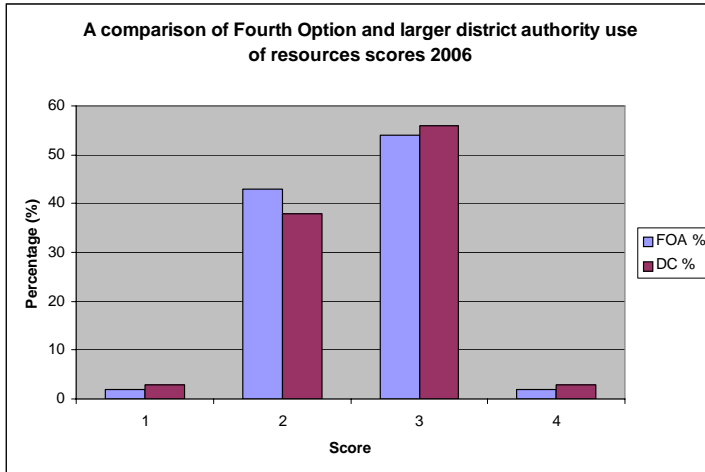
Key
4 = well above minimum requirements – performing strongly
3 = consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
2 = at only minimum requirements – adequate performance
1 = below minimum requirements – inadequate performance

41

Slide 9

The CPA

CPA 2003/04, FOAs have less 'excellent' and more 'poor' but are similar in the other scores

A comparison of CPA scores for FOA and larger (executive) district councils 2003/04
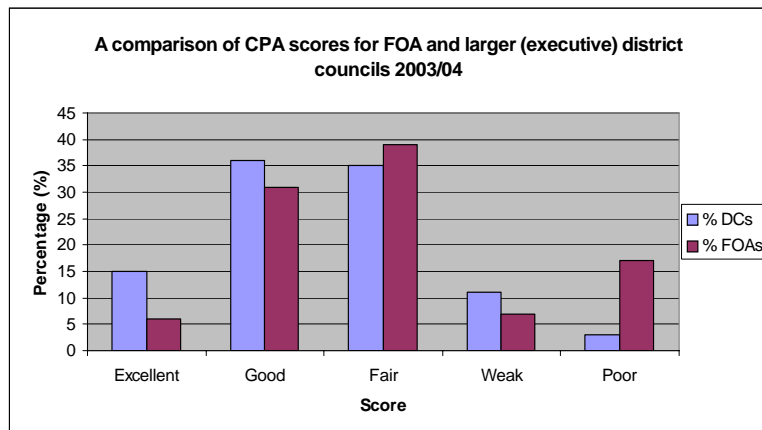
'Perceptions' from the survey of councillors

Mixed results – 25-30% of councillors were dissatisfied with all types of executive changes

Table 2.13: Councillors' views on the working of the new arrangements, by type of constitution						
	Mayoral authorities %		Leader-cabinet authorities %		Alternative arrangements %	
	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005
Significant improvement	6	11	15	16	4	6
The new system is a significant improvement	18	20	8	8	2	7
The new system is to some extent an improvement	17	19	18	17	26	25
The new system has made little difference	3	3	3	5	3	7
The new system has some disadvantages	18	9	25	22	24	24
Introducing the new system was a retrograde step	30	26	35	27	24	15
No experience	11	24	11	22	19	23
(base)	(66)	(70)	(776)	(679)	(58)	(75)

Slide 11

BVPI Satisfaction Top 20 2006/07

Top 20 FOAs	Overall satisfaction with the council %	Top 20 larger DC authorities	Overall satisfaction with the council %
Christchurch Borough Council	72	Rushcliffe	73
North Cornwall District Council	67	Blaby	69
Alnwick District Council	65	Elmbridge	68
Purbeck District Council	65	Guildford	68
Runnymede Borough Council	65	Derbyshire Dales	67
Brentwood Borough Council	64	New Forest	67
Adur District Council	63	Salisbury	67
Broxbourne Borough Council	63	Canterbury	66
East Dorset District Council	63	West Dorset	66
Mole Valley District Council	63	West Oxfordshire	66
Ribble Valley Borough Council	63	Gedling	65
Rochford District Council	62	Nuneaton and Bedworth	65
Tandridge District Council	62	South Norfolk	65
Tewkesbury Borough Council	62	Tonbridge and Malling	65
Tynedale District Council	61	Wychavon	65
Craven District Council	60	Basingstoke and Deane	64
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	60	Broadland	64
Forest of Dean District Council	60	Cambridge	64
North Warwickshire Borough Council	60	Exeter	64
Ryedale District Council	60	Teignbridge	63

The full list of FOAs and comparisons with 2003/4 scores has been sent to Lawrence Serewicz (FOSIG).

In the main the alternative
arrangements do not hinder
performance but there is no
evidence to suggest
they improve it

But the hard data hides the fact that….

Many factors affect performance generally:
- Effective management
- Quality of leadership
- Socio-economic context makes a difference
- Political context makes a difference
- Fewer committees frees members to undertake community based initiatives (with training)
- The CPA results might be a warning bell
- Scrutiny can be under used or not taken seriously

On the other hand..

The Fourth Option Authorities

- may provide transparency – fewer closed doors
- works in large sparsely populated areas as it provides equal representation for different wards localities and communities
- recognises the locality and its uniqueness
- all members have a stake in policy development and decision making – avoiding the executive versus the backbench issue

So if it ain't broke, don't fix it ?

However

"The status quo is not an option"

Ruth Kelly et al.

Pressures for change

Reorganisation:

- The shift to unitary authorities in some areas means that some Fourth Option Authorities will disappear

- Good experiences from FOAs could help develop new arrangements in two tier reorganisation

Pressures for change

- There are expectations for improved two tier working
- CSRO7 may require efficiencies that can't be made by 'more of the same'
- Expectations for more engagement and devolution
- Place shaping agenda

Implications

This is likely to lead to:

- Mergers – 85,000 threshold
- Partnerships
- Shared services
- Streamlining committees further

Implications for Fourth Option Authorities

Two key tests:

- Can the Fourth Option Authority model help deliver more engagement and devolution?

- Will the FOA model hinder collaboration between councils (vertically and horizontally) and with partners?

Recommendations for FOSIG

- More research evidence needed to increase understanding of the two key tests
- Share best practices
- Be prepared to make some changes now (use of pilots)
- Demonstrate a willingness to use scrutiny creatively, proactively and as a policy development tool

Discussion of the
key tests
& recommendations

Discussion points

- Can the Fourth Option Authority model help deliver more engagement and devolution? (How can FOAs exploit the notion of equal representation to deliver more engagement and devolution?)
- Will the FOA model hinder collaboration between councils (vertically and horizontally) and with partners?
- Do FOAs encourage leadership by having a number of committee chairs in a way that the executive/cabinet model does not?
- Are there already examples of using scrutiny creatively, proactively and as a policy development tool?

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POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITEEE

12 MARCH 2008

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Report of the Strategic Director, Resource Management
ASSESSING THE FUTURE OF FOURTH OPTION AUTHORITIES A FOSIG REPORT- FOR INFORMATION

purpose of the report

1.   To inform Members of the research on Fourth Option Authorities (FOAs) conducted by the Tavistock Institute, which was commissioned by the Fourth Option Special Interest Group (FOSIG)

background

2.   On May 25 May 2005, Wear Valley District Council led 23 other Fourth Option Authorities to found a special interest group (SIG) for Fourth Option Authorities within the Local Government Association (LGA) to promote the interests of FOAs.

3.   At the last Annual General Meeting, June 2007, Cllr. Mrs. June Lee was elected to the Chair.

4.   As part of its terms of reference, FOSIG will investigate legislative developments that affect the future of Fourth Option Authorities. In light of the October 2006 White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, FOSIG decided to commission research on how it affected fourth option authorities.

5.   Although the White Paper did not prescribe changes to fourth option authorities, it did raise particular challenges. FOSIG was concerned that the strong emphasis on unitary structures and executive-cabinet decision-making systems challenged the unique structure of Fourth Option Authorities.

6.   The threat to Fourth Option Authorities (FOAs) is particularly great in two tier areas because the move to a unitary structure would remove them.

introduction

7.   FOSIG commissioned the Tavistock Institute to research how fourth options are placed to respond to the White Paper. With this information, individual fourth options would be better equipped to respond to the developments in the local government landscape.

8.   In particular, FOSIG wanted research to see how the fourth option authorities performed against other fourth option authorities. Do Fourth Option Authorities perform better or worse against other similar sized district and unitary authorities? The underlying question was whether the streamlined committee system improved decision-making through greater transparency, which improved citizen satisfaction and community engagement.

9.   The FOSIG research is the first research done regarding the performance of fourth option authorities.

policy context

10.   Local government is being reorganised according to the vision set out in the 2006 White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities. The White Paper's vision has become legislation through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) (LGPIH). The White Paper and the Act set out a vision for local government that relied upon a unitary structure for local authorities.

11.   The White Paper set out an invitation for Councils to propose unitary structures in two tier areas. The move to unitary structures is a direct threat to fourth option authorities because they are only located in two tier areas.

12.   Even though the unitary bids do not affect all fourth option authorities, the current Government's preference for unitary structures presents a long term and continuing threat to fourth option authorities.

proposal

13.   The Committee note the research and direct the senior management team to investigate how the advantages of the streamlined committee system can be developed within the new unitary structure for County Durham.

considerations

14.   Although the Council will cease to exist on April 1, 2009, the Council can still apply some the research's findings.

analysis

15.   The FOSIG research is the first research done regarding the performance of fourth option authorities.

16.   The project had two phases of research. The first phase was desk research on the perceptions and performance information on FOAs. This involved the initial analysis of the reports from the Evaluation of Local Government team. This was then followed by the comparison of Corporate Performance Assessments (CPA) 2003/04, the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) on satisfaction 2006/07, use of resources indicator 2006 and local election turnout 2003/04 of the 54 FOAs and this was compared to 184 district councils that operate the mayor/cabinet systems.

17.   The second phase, based on the first phase, was to interview the Chief Executives of the top 20 FOAs in BVPI satisfaction 2006/07 to see why they were achieving good levels of public approval. The length of the project was four weeks in June 2007.

18.   The report examined how FOAs fared against two key tests:
    - Can the Fourth Option model help to secure more engaged and devolved local government?

    - Does the fourth option model hinder collaboration between councils vertically and horizontally and with partners?

19.   Tavistock compared FOAs with other District Councils against four indicators to compare FOAs with other district councils.
    - the public satisfaction BVPI
    - the Audit Commission's use of resources assessment
    - CPA scores
    - electoral turn out.

20.   The detailed results from these comparisons can be found in the full report, which is in Annex B.

findings

21.   The performance data revealed that of the 238 district councils in England, the 54 FOAs were performing as well as councils that operated mayor/cabinet executive political arrangements.

22.   The FOAs compared best in the averages for BVPI satisfaction and Use of Resources data. The findings also suggested good levels of public satisfaction and engagement with local issues in quite sparsely populated communities.

23. These findings led to interviews with the Chief Executives of FOAs to gauge their perceptions. The results showed that apart from political structure effective managerial and political leadership, the increased reduction of committees and the imaginative application of scrutiny greatly impact FOA performance.

24. The findings show FOAs can justifiably argue for the continued use of streamlined committees but the creation of unitary councils, pressures from the spending review and need to improve two tier working mean – the status quo is not an option. FOAs will have to collaborate with neighbouring councils and there needs to be more evidence of such practice along with some thought as to whether the Fourth Option model hinders this.

25. Key recommendations to FOSIG from the research were firstly, to share good practice and test refinements to the structure and secondly creatively use the scrutiny process to demonstrate the use of a traditional (committee) system in a modern setting.

consultations

26. There are no consultations with the report.

summary

27. By creating FOSIG, fourth option authorities took a major step in developing a separate and clear voice within the wider local government arena. Wear Valley District Council has been instrumental in developing this group and sustaining its progress.

28. Tavistock's research show that fourth option authorities perform better, on average, than their similar sized unitary authorities with higher satisfaction rates and higher voter turnout.

29. The report also pointed out that the scrutiny function offers a comparative advantage for Fourth Option Authorities. The report concludes by recommending that Councils should investigate how they can increase the creative use of scrutiny.

conclusion

30. Fourth Option authorities have certain advantages in delivering local services to develop local communities, which are not found in larger unitary structures. FOSIG's research highlights these advantages and they need to be sharpened in continuing fourth option authorities and encouraged in those structures that replace the fourth option authorities.

RECOMMENDED

1. Wear Valley continue to support FOSIG and continue to share good practice.

2. That the Committee direct the Scrutiny Manager to investigate how scrutiny can be developed creatively to demonstrate the use of a traditional (committee) system in a modern setting.

Officer responsible for the report
Gary Ridley
Strategic Director of Resource Management
Ext 227

Author of the report
Dr. Lawrence W. Serewicz
Policy and Partnership Manager
Ext 311

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2008

Report of the Strategic Director, Resource Management
COMPLAINTS HANDLING SATISFACTION GAP SURVEY

purpose of the report
1. To report the satisfaction levels with the complaints handling procedures and identify areas for improvement.

background

2. The recent annual satisfaction survey showed that the satisfaction level with the formal complaints handling process had improved. However, the results also showed a high level of dissatisfaction with complaints handling.

3. To investigate the persistent levels of dissatisfaction, a satisfaction gap survey was prepared to measure the key drivers for customer satisfaction in the complaints handling procedures.

4. The survey was based on the customer satisfaction model developed by the Cabinet Office *Promoting Customer Satisfaction: Guidance on improving the customer experience in Public Services* based upon the 5 key drivers that explain 70% of customer satisfaction with a service

survey

5. The survey asked **thirteen** questions based upon the 5 key drivers. The first part asked the respondent to rate the importance of the issue. The second part asked them to rate their satisfaction with the issue. (See Annex E)

6. The response rate was satisfactory for the survey as **19 of the 85** surveys were returned. The response rate was 22%. One person wrote a letter instead of using the survey. The survey results are presented in a bar graph. (See Annex C).

7. The survey asks respondents to score an issue on how important it is to them and how satisfied they are with it. Although large or small numbers are interesting, the focus is on the **gap** between importance and satisfaction.

8. The gap between importance and satisfaction can indicate if the issue needs attention. A small gap can indicate that the respondents, as a group, believe that the issue has received the necessary level of attention. A large gap can indicate that an issue considered important, by the group, is not being addressed to their satisfaction. Large gaps need to be investigated.

9. The survey presents information in other ways. For example, the survey reveals the weight the group places on certain issues and the overall satisfaction with the subject of the survey. (See Annex D)

10. The responses showed that each of the drivers had similar levels of weight with the range between 7.81 and 8.70. Across the 19 responses, no one issue dominated any of the others.

11. The survey also measures overall satisfaction with the process based on the individual scores from each response. The scores indicate overall satisfaction with the complaints handling procedures. The score is measured according to the following scale.

   - very poor
   - poor
   - cause for concern
   - borderline
   - good
   - very good
   - excellent

12. The overall satisfaction result, based upon the weighted score for each category was in the **cause for concern** category. (See Annex D) The score indicates overall satisfaction with the complaints handling procedure. The score needs to be understood within the context that the topic is emotive, satisfaction with the process will be influenced by the outcome, and this is the first time the questionnaire has been conducted.

13. Although the overall score is important, to understand the satisfaction with the service, the questionnaire is designed around the gaps that identify areas for improvement.

14. By identifying the satisfaction gaps, the questionnaire helps the Council to learn how to improve its complaints handling procedures. Moreover, the score also suggests that there are areas for improvement and these are identified by the largest gap between importance and satisfaction.

15. Once a large gap has been identified, the next step is to explore how satisfaction can be improved in those key drivers.

16. The three largest gaps were registered on the following questions:

8. It is important that the response to my complaint is complete.		9. It is important that I am kept informed about the progress of my complaint.		7. It is important that the response to my complaint is accurate.	
Importance	9.11	Importance	9.22	Importance	9.17
Satisfaction	3.88	Satisfaction	4.05	Satisfaction	4.05
Gap	**5.23**	Gap	**5.17**	Gap	**5.11**

17. The three largest gaps were on issues that registered the three lowest levels of satisfaction. Moreover, the three questions are in the top four in terms of importance. Only question 12, which asked about being treated politely, ranked higher in terms of importance (**9.32**). Question 12 was also the question with the highest level of satisfaction at **5.74**, which suggests that the Customer Care

Officer has had an immediate and positive effect. One response even mentioned the Customer Care Officer as the reason for their high response to question 12.

18. From the three largest gaps, we can see that the people making complaints want to be kept informed of the process, know that the response is complete and accurate.

capturing the learning

19. As a learning organisation, the Council can use the complaints as an improvement tool. However, to improve the Council needs to capture the learning so that it can avoid the issue in the future. While the satisfaction gaps show us what procedures need to be revised to improve satisfaction, we need to develop our ability to capture the learning from complaints.

20. One way to capture the learning is to revise the complaints procedure to include the following matrix.

Complaint summary	Justified/unjustified	Time to respond	Outcome Satisfied/dissatisfied	How we have learned from it.

21. The matrix gives us a way to capture the learning and avoid the issue in the future while putting it into a framework for analysis.

conclusion

22. The survey of the key drivers for customer satisfaction has helped us to identify possible areas for improvement.

23. To reduce the gap on question 9, (being kept informed), the process may be amended to require correspondence, either a letter or an e-mail, to let the applicant know about the status of their complaint.

24. To reduce the gap on question 8, (response being seen as complete), the process may be amended to include a checklist of documents so that the customer understand what has been included in the response. What may be occurring is that the customer receives a short response at the end of a long process, which tells them outcome but does not give any additional information.

25. To reduce the gap on question 7, (response being seen as accurate), the process needs to be amended to include a copy of the complaint so that the applicant can see the extent to which the Council has addressed their complaint. If the applicant believes that information has not been included or if an issue has not been addressed, then they are less likely to accept that the response is accurate.

26. In addition to learning from the satisfaction gaps, the Council complaints procedure needs to be revised to capture the learning from complaints.

RECOMMENDED

1. The complaints procedures are revised within departments so that people making complaints are given updates at regular intervals such as every 10 working days.

2. The complaints procedure are revised to include a checklist (response being complete) and include a copy of the complaint so that the applicant can assess whether the Council has addressed their complaint (response being seen as accurate).

3. The complaints procedures need to be updated to have a complaints matrix as outlined in paragraph 20.to capture the time to respond, whether the complaint was justified, the outcome and what we have learned from the complaint.

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Importance v Satisfaction
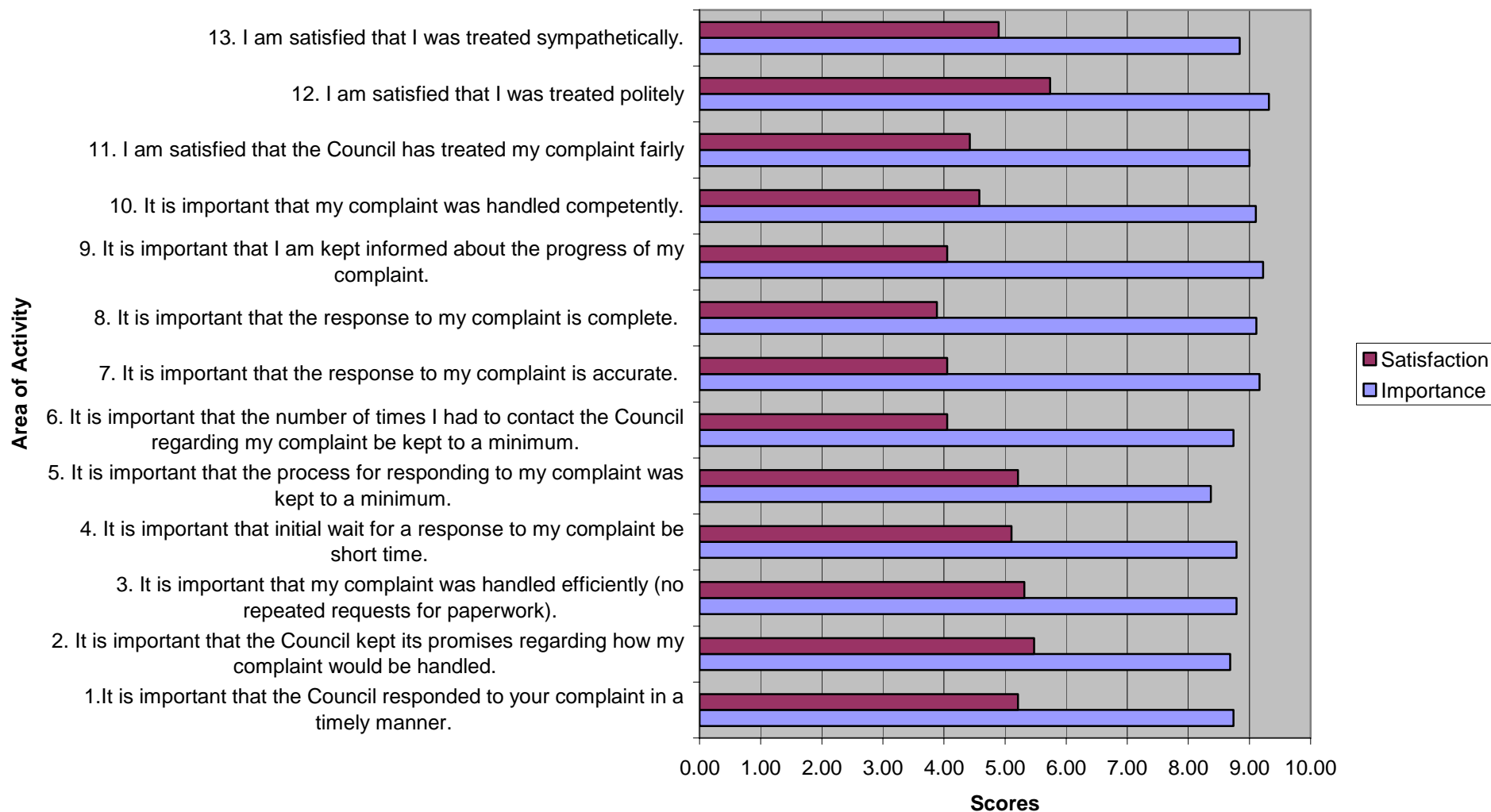
	Importance	Weighting Factor	Satisfaction	Weighted Score
Question 1	8.74	8.16	5.21	42.49
Question 2	8.68	8.11	5.47	44.37
Question 3	8.79	8.20	5.32	43.61
Question 4	8.89	8.30	5.11	42.39
Question 5	8.37	7.81	5.21	40.70
Question 6	8.74	8.16	4.05	33.05
Question 7	9.17	8.56	4.05	34.68
Question 8	9.11	8.50	3.88	33.02
Question 9	9.22	8.61	4.05	34.89
Question 10	9.11	8.50	4.58	38.92
Question 11	9.00	8.40	4.42	37.14
Question 12	9.32	8.70	5.74	49.89
Question 13	8.84	8.25	4.89	40.40
	107.13	**100.00**	**57.09**	**47.51**

Weighted Average

Weighted Scoring Categories for customer satisfaction

Very Poor	<24%
Poor	25-45%
Cause for concern	46-56%
Borderline	56-60%
Good	60-68%
Very Good	68-85%
Excellent	>85%

Section A: Importance

How important do you believe the following are for handling your complaint? How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 10 where '1' means 'strongly disagree' and '10' means 'strongly agree'?

How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. It is important that the Council responded to your complaint in a timely manner.										
2. It is important that the Council kept its promises regarding how my complaint would be handled.										
3. It is important that my complaint was handled efficiently (no repeated requests for paperwork).										
4. It is important that initial wait for a response to my complaint be short time.										
5. It is important that the process for responding to my complaint was kept to a minimum.										
6. It is important that the number of times I had to contact the Council regarding my complaint be kept to a minimum.										
7. It is important that the response to my complaint is accurate.										
8. It is important that the response to my complaint is complete.										
9. It is important that I am kept informed about the progress of my complaint.										
10. It is important that my complaint was handled competently.										
11. It is important that the Council has treated my complaint fairly										
12. It is important that I was treated politely										
13. It is important that I was treated sympathetically.										

SECTION B: SATISFACTION

Thinking now about 'satisfaction' - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 10 where '1' equals 'strongly disagree' and '10' equals 'strongly agree'?

How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly disagree — *Strongly agree*										
1. I am satisfied that the Council responded to my complaint in a timely manner.										
2. I am satisfied that the Council kept its promises regarding how my complaint would be handled.										
3. I am satisfied that my complaint was handled efficiently (no repeated requests for paperwork).										
4. I am satisfied that initial wait for a response to my complaint was a short time.										
5. I am satisfied that that the process for responding to my complaint was kept to a minimum.										
6. I am satisfied that the number of times I had to contact the Council regarding my complaint was kept to a minimum.										
7. I am satisfied that the response to my complaint was accurate.										
8. I am satisfied that the response to my complaint is complete.										
9. I am satisfied that I was kept informed about the progress of my complaint.										
10. I am satisfied that my complaint was handled competently.										
11. I am satisfied that the Council has treated my complaint fairly										
12. I am satisfied that I was treated politely										
13. I am satisfied that I was treated sympathetically.										

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12th MARCH 2008

WEAR VALLEY
DISTRICT COUNCIL

_____

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit
RISK REGISTER UPDATE

purpose of the report

1.   To inform Members of the progress in managing the focal risks of the Corporate Development Unit.

background

2.   The Service Plan for the Corporate Development Unit includes an analysis of the main risks facing the department. This report provides an update on the actions taken to manage and mitigate those risks.

3.   District Councils undergo an annual Use of Resources assessment by the Audit Commission and part of this includes an assessment of how the Council manages its risks. Risk management will be reported to Management and Committee biannually.

4.   A table of the Corporate Development Unit risks and the mitigating action to date is attached in Annex F.

financial implications

5.   There are no financial implications to consider.

risk assessment

6.   The table in Annex F shows that the Corporate Development Unit has identified its major risks and is taking action to manage those risks.

RECOMMENDED   1.   that Members note the content of the report.

Officer responsible for the report	Author of the report
Gary Ridley	Cheryl Duggan
Strategic Director of Resource	Organisation Improvement Manager
Management	Ext 313

CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT UNIT 2007/08 SERVICE PLAN RISKS

Risk Scores:	Probability -	L = Unlikely	M = Possible	H = Likely
	Impact -	L = Negligible	M = Moderate	H = Significant

Council Plan Action	Risks to the Department	Risk Score			Responsible Officer	Actions to Minimise	Progress to Date
		Prob.	Impact	Total (d x e)			
Desktop Publishing	Risk of losing DTP Skills	M	M	M M	Marketing and Communication Manager	Train other staff	2 additional staff already trained and 1 further member of staff to attend external training course.
Performance Management Framework (PMF**)**	Failure to develop an adequate PMF leading to a failure to identify and deal with poor performance, a poor CPA score and direct Government intervention	M	H	M H	Organisation Improvement Manager	Set in place annual review of PMF	PMF briefing to the EMT with a workshop on how the PMF operates. Quarterly performance clinics reinforce the PMF. Public consultation on BVPI's to be returned as local PI's. Performance Management Framework handbook produced Overview & Scrutiny Committee monitor performance
Performance Management System	Failure to implement PMS correctly	M	M	M M	Organisation Improvement Manager	Investigate systems fully	Training provided for main users
Best Value Performance Indicators	Risk of low performing PIs in Performance Plan	L	M	L M	Organisation Improvement Manager	Identification and Improvement plans for low scoring PI's	PIs have been reviewed and the performance clinics give added attention to low performing PIs.
Accidents	Failure to report accidents	M	M	M M	Health and Safety Officer	Reporting policy in place	Policy and procedure in place and working effectively. Local performance indicators developed and targets set and monitored.

Council Plan Action	Risks to the Department	Risk Score			Responsible Officer	Actions to Minimise	Progress to Date
		Prob.	Impact	Total (d x e)			
Accidents	Failure to investigate accidents	M	M	M M	Health and Safety Officer	Investigation policy in place	Policy and procedure in place and working effectively. Local performance indicators developed and targets set and monitored
CPA non-recategorisation	Council's improvement not recognised adverse publicity on Council's reputation	M	H	M H	Strategic Director of Resources	Effective management of CPA recategorisation process	CPA Peer Review Completed. CPA preparation work part of the EMT and COMT agenda
Local Government Reorganisation	Council fails to engage with the transformation process to unitary Chief Executive	M	H	M H	Chief Executive	Effective management of transformation process through Durham District Forum	Senior Officers involved in the LGR process and engaged with the various workstreams. Transition plan produced.
Corporate Reputation	Adverse publicity creating a negative effect on Council reputation.	M	H	M H	Strategic Director Resource Management	Effective management of corporate communication and relationship with print and broadcast media.	Press analysis ongoing and press releases increasing for positive news coverage. Local indicator for positive press releases 70%. Target 74% achieved.

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12th MARCH 2008

Report of the Strategic Director of Resources
LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Members for agreement a set of local performance indicators derived from consultation with the public and employees.

background

2. The Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and prosperous communities' established a new performance framework with citizens at the heart. The new performance framework brings together a range of factors to improve performance. These include the empowerment of citizens, the capacity and vision of local leadership, peer challenge and support as well as national targets, regulation support and intervention in underperformance.

3. It described the intention to relieve Local Government of the burden of managing numerous nationally required local indicators with little or no local context. From April 2008 the Council will no longer be required to monitor and manage the best value performance indicators but have been replaced by National indicators, which come into effect at the same period.

4. The Council is committed to providing the opportunity for our citizens hold the Council to account for the quality of service delivery. Introducing a set of local indicators encompassing local priorities and local targets, derived from consultation with the public would assist the Council in achieving this.

5. This consultation process also enabled the Council to engage with our citizens and gather views on the Corporate Performance Health Check, thus ensuring the Councils priorities and ambitions are SMART.

methodology

6. A series of focus groups were held with the customer panel to ascertain public perception of should be included as local performance indicators in the Councils performance management arrangements for 2008/09. Participants were provided with a list of potential key indicators based on the existing BVPI, Corporate Plan and Service Plans. The participants were asked to:

- Review the list of indicators to determine if they were fit for purpose, relevant to the public and should the Council continue to monitor and manage these from April 2008;
- Consider if there was anything additional the Council should be monitoring at a local level;
- Provide general perceptions and opinions on the type of information to be provided to residents in Wear Valley Matters.

7. To avoid duplication and enable citizens to make an informed decision, the information provided excluded any previous Best Value performance indicators replaced by a comparable National indicator.

8. The same information was provided to officers and they were asked to comment.

high-level results

9. A potential list of local indicators derived from the consultation exercise with employees and our citizens is provided at Annex G of this report. The indicators have been categorised according to the Council objective.

conflicting perceptions

10. For the public there was generally a consensus about which indicators should be included in the potential local indicators for 2008/09, however in a minority of instances the different focus groups had conflicting opinions as to whether specific Best Value performance indicators should continued to be monitored. These areas are represented in the below table.

Table 1:

Council Priority	Indicator Description	Comments
Health	BV202 - The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority.	One group thought this was extremely important the other quite insignificant given the low numbers for the area.
Organisational Excellence	BV002b – The quality of the Councils Race Equality Scheme and the improvements resulting from its application.	One group thought this should continued to be monitored.
Organisational Excellence	BV211a - The proportion of planned repairs and maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings compared to responsive repairs	One group thought this should continued to be monitored

11. There are several instances where officers and the public disagree. This is represented clearly at Annex G.

areas for further investigation and improvement

12. The focus groups established several areas for improvement. These are represented in the table below.

Table 2:

Council Prioirity	BVPI Number and Description	Improvement
Crime	C1 - Reduced number of offenders issued with ASBOs	Number of offenders issued with an ASBO who go on to reoffend.
Economy	EC2 – Increased number of VAT registrations	Requirement to look at smaller businesses.
Environment	No indicator at present	New requirement for participation rates (recycling and composting)
Environment	BV218 – Percentage of vehicles removed from within 24hrs from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove it maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings	Would prefer something to average number of days from notification

general conclusions

13. The focus groups were successful in determining a set of local indicators attached at Annex G. There was a general interest and a solid knowledge base in the area of performance management amongst the participants. The residents stipulated that they would like more involvement with the Councils performance management arrangements

14. There was a consensus that the indictors, which make up the performance health check are relevant and accurately reflect local priorities but some improvements could be made to provide additional or more relevant information. This is included in the table above.

15. Comments regarding the performance pages of Wear Valley matters were positive and suggestions were proposed for improvement. These were;

- Should provide a general holistical view of improvement in the district in terms of quality of life, and this could be attained by including performance information relevant to our priorities from our partners;
- Publicise more customer satisfaction;
- Include more comparison to other districts
- Need to use plain language and no abbreviations.

RECOMMENDED   1.   that Members agree the report and Annex G.

Officer responsible for the report	Author of the report
Gary Ridley	Cheryl Duggan
Strategic Director of Resource	Organisation Improvement Manager
Management	Ext 313

Service Area	BVPI Number	Description	Purpose	Public Opinion	Internal Opinion	New Local Indicator Number
Crime	BV76a	The number of housing benefit claimants in the local authority area visited, per 1,000 caseload.	To monitor fraud reduction services.	Delete	Delete	
Crime	BV76b	The number of fraud investigators employed by the Local Authority, per 1,000 caseload.	To monitor fraud reduction services.	Delete	Delete	
Crime	BV76c	The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) fraud investigations carried out by the Local Authority per year, per 1,000 caseload.	To monitor fraud reduction services.	Continue	Continue	LC1
Crime	BV76d	The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) prosecutions and sanctions, per year, per 1,000 caseload, in the Local Authority area.	To monitor fraud reduction services.	Delete	Continue	LC2
Crime	BV126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	To measure crime reduction.	Continue	Continue	LC3

Crime	BV128	The number of vehicle crimes per 1,000 population.	To measure crime reduction	Continue	Continue	LC4
Crime	BV174	The number of racial incidents reported to the local authority, and subsequently recorded, per 100,000 population.	To monitor the reporting of racial incidents where the authority has some measure of direct involvement in remedying the situation.	Continue	Delete	
Crime	BV175	The percentage of racial incidents reported to the local authority that resulted in further action.	To monitor the reporting of racial incidents where the authority has some measure of direct involvement in remedying the situation.	Delete	Delete	
Crime	BV225	The percentage of questions from a checklist to which a local authority can answer 'yes'.	to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.	Delete	Delete	
Crime	BV226a	Total amount spent by the local authority on advice and guidance services provided by external organisations.	Measures increases in the number of people receiving assistance in social welfare aspects of law.	Delete	Delete	
Crime	C1	Reduced number of offenders issued with ASBOs		Continue but want to change to "who then go on to re-offend"	Continue	C1
Crime	C2	Reduced percentage fear		Continue	Continue	C2

		of crime in identified SOAs with highest level of fear of crime.				
Economy	BV008	Percentage of invoices for commercial goods & services paid by the Authority within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms.	To encourage prompt payment of invoices received.	Delete	Delete	
Economy	EC1	Increase in employment		Continue	Continue	EC1
Economy	EC2	Increase number of VAT registrations	To measure the increase in the number of VAT registered companies.	Continue – but want something that also reflects smaller businesses	Continue	EC2
Economy	EC3 (i)	To halt the increase of VAT deregistrations	To measure how many VAT registered companies are deregistering.	Continue – again something to reflect smaller businesses (SMEs)	Continue	EC3(I)
Economy	EC3 (ii)	Percentage increase in the number of people on IB moving into employment		Continue	Continue	EC3(II)
Economy	EC4	A more diverse profile of employment by industrial category.		Continue	Continue	EC4
Environment	BV063	The average SAP rating of local authority-owned dwellings.	To encourage improvement on the SAP rating of local authority - owned dwellings. The higher the SAP rating the better.	Continue		LEN1

Environment	BV84a	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population.	In line with the position of waste reduction at the top of hierarchy of priorities, the Government wishes to see the quantity of household waste collected per head reduced.	Continue	Continue	EN2
Environment	BV84b	Percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population.	In line with the position of waste reduction at the top of hierarchy of priorities, the Government wishes to see the quantity of household waste collected per head reduced.	Delete	Delete	
Environment	BV86	Cost of household waste collection per household.	To monitor the cost of household waste collection.	Continue	Continue	LEN3
Environment	BV91a	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of recyclables	To measure the ease with which householders are able to recycle.	Delete	Delete	
Environment	BV91b	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of at least two recyclables.	To measure the ease with which householders are able to recycle. Under the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003, every waste collection authority, subject to certain exemptions, is required to provide kerbside collection of at least two recyclables by 2010.	Delete	Delete	

Environment	Bv199d	The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with 'fly-tipping'	To monitor the problem of 'fly-tipping'.	Delete	Continue	
Environment	BV166a	Score against a checklist of best practice for: Environmental Health	To ensure that local authorities have the procedures in place to carry out their enforcement duties effectively.	Delete	Delete	
Environment	BV216a	Number of 'sites of potential concern' in the local authority area with respect to land contamination.	measure progress in gathering and considering information to identify sites of potential concern with respect to land contamination,	Delete		
Environment	BV216b	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of 'sites of potential concern'.	measure progress in gathering and considering information to identify sites of potential concern with respect to land contamination, and progress in making decisions about those sites.	Delete		
Environment	BV217	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.	To record performance in delivering the improvements envisaged in statutory guidance issued on pollution control standards.	Delete	Delete	

Environment	BV218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24hrs of notification.	To encourage quick investigation of reports of abandoned vehicles. Abandoned vehicles add to fear of crime as well as being a hazard.	Delete	Continue	
Environment	BV218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.	To encourage quick removal of abandoned vehicles from the public realm. Abandoned vehicles add to fear of crime as well as being a hazard.	Continue – but would like amended to average number of days to remove vehicle from point of notification	Delete	LEN4
Environment	BV200a	Did the local planning authority submit the Local Development Scheme (LDS) by 28th March 2005 and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme?	To ensure that local planning authorities plan effectively for their areas	Delete		
Environment	BV200b	Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out?	To ensure that local planning authorities plan effectively for their areas	Delete		
Environment	BV205	The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist.	The score will reflect the quality of planning services as they stand at the end of the current financial year	Delete		

Environment	EN2	Targets met for the implementation programme at former coalfield settlements		Continue	Continue	EN2
Health & Well being	BV202	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority.	To measure of authorities' performance in achieving and sustaining reductions in levels of rough sleeping.	No consensus met	Delete	
Health & Well being	BV213	Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service(s), and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.	To measure the effectiveness of housing advice in preventing homelessness or the threat of homelessness.	Delete	Continue	LH1
Health & Well being	BV214	Proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same Authority within the last two years.	A number of Local Authorities have indicated to ODPM that a significant proportion of homeless households are repeat homelessness cases. This may be indicative of problems that are not being resolved with re-housing alone. As well as the damage to individuals which can be caused by repeat episodes of homelessness, the cost of a tenancy failure to local authorities should be an incentive to address the problem.	Delete	Delete	

Health & Well being	BV226b	Percentage of monies spent on advice and guidance services provision that was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality Mark at 'General Help' level and above.	Measures increases in the number of people receiving assistance in social welfare aspects of law.	Delete	Delete	
Health & Well being	BV226c	Total amount spent on Advice and Guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public.	Measures increases in the number of people receiving assistance in social welfare aspects of law.	Delete	Delete	
Health & Well being	H1(i)	Reduced incidences of chronic disease, e.g. cardiovascular disease.		Continue	Continue	H1(i)
Health & Well being	H1(ii)	Reduction in people smoking.		Continue	Continue	H1(ii)
Health & Well being	H1(iii)	Reduction in proportion of adults who are obese.		Continue	Continue	H1(iii)
Health & Well being	H1(iiii)	A reduction in teenage pregnancy.		Continue	Continue	H1(iiii)
Health & Well being	H2	Increased income of those reliant on state benefits.		Continue	Continue	H2
Lifelong Learning	L1(i)	Increased number of people engaging with the basic skills programme.		Continue	Continue	L1(i)
Lifelong Learning	L1(ii)	Number of people successfully completing basic skills programmes.		Continue	Continue	L1(ii)

Lifelong Learning	L2	Reduce number of working age people without qualifications.		Continue	Continue	L2
Lifelong Learning	L3	Number of employees with accredited qualifications		Continue	Continue	L3
Lifelong Learning	L4	Increased number of modern apprentices		Continue	Continue	L4
Organisational Excellence	BV002a	The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability.	The Standard provides a framework for delivering continuous improvement in relation to fair employment outcomes and equal access to services to which all Authorities should aspire.	Continue	Continue	LOD1
Organisational Excellence	BV002b	The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application.	To ensure that all local authorities have made a high quality response to the Race Equality Duty, with clear race equality priorities and targets for services and employment.	Delete	Delete	
Organisational Excellence	BV009	The percentage of council tax collected by the Authority in the year.	To monitor the rate of collection of council tax.	Continue	Continue	LOD2
Organisational Excellence	BV010	Percentage of non domestic rates collected	To monitor the collection rate of national non-domestic rates.	Continue	Continue	LOD3
Organisational Excellence	BV011a	Percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women.	To monitor progress towards equal opportunities.	Delete	Continue	

Organisational Excellence	BV012	The number of working days/shifts lost to the Local Authority due to sickness absence.	To monitor the level of sickness absence in local authorities.	Continue	Continue	LOD4
Organisational Excellence	BV014	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total work force.	To monitor early retirement.	Delete	Delete	
Organisational Excellence	BV015	The percentage of local authority employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce.	To monitor the number of ill-health retirements.	Delete	Delete	
Organisational Excellence	BV156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people.	To monitor the improvement of access to local authority buildings for disabled people.	Continue		LOD5
Organisational Excellence	BV066a	Rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings.	This indicator, along with BV66b, 66c & 66d is a key measure of the effectiveness and efficiency of a local authority's rent collection and arrears recovery service. These indicators are four discrete parts but should be looked at holistically. An efficient rent collection service is important to	Continue	Continue	LOD6

			ensuring that as much of the rent due, and thus potential income is collected and received.			
Organisational Excellence	BV066b	The number of local authority tenants with more than seven weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of council tenants.	An efficient rent collection service is important to ensuring that as much of the rent due, and thus potential income is collected and received. The lower the percentage in part b the better.	Delete	Continue	LOD7
Organisational Excellence	BV066c	Percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served.	This part of the indicator is designed to minimise the possibility of offering incentives for perverse working practices in rent arrears recovery leading to possession action and eviction. ODPM believes that possession should be a last resort and wants to ensure that this tool for recovery is not used inappropriately.	Delete	Continue	
Organisational Excellence	BV066d	Percentage of local authority tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears.	Part d) is designed to minimise the possibility of offering incentives for perverse working practices in rent arrears recovery leading to possession action and eviction. ODPM believes that possession should be a last resort and wants to ensure that this tool for recovery is not used inappropriately.	Delete	Continue	

Organisational Excellence	BV164	Does the Authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in Rented Housing and the Good Practice Standards for Social Landlords on Tackling Harassment included in 'Tackling Racial Harassment: Code of Practice for Social Landlords'?	To monitor fair access to social housing.	Delete	Delete	
Organisational Excellence	BV211a	The proportion of planned repairs and maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings compared to responsive maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings.	This indicator, together with BV211b, is a key measure of the effectiveness and efficiency of the repairs and maintenance service. The higher the proportion of expenditure on planned repairs and maintenance (research evidence has suggested a 60/40 split) and the higher the proportion of expenditure on non-urgent repairs the better.	Continue	Continue	LOD8
Organisational Excellence	BV211b	Proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs to HRA dwellings compared to non-urgent repairs expenditure to HRA dwellings.	This indicator is a key measure of the effectiveness and efficiency of the repairs and maintenance service. The higher the proportion of expenditure on non-urgent repairs the better.	Continue	Continue	LOD9
Organisational Excellence	BV79a	The percentage of cases within a random sample for which the Authority's	To monitor the administration of HB/CTB. The higher the number of calculations correct, the better.	Delete	Continue	LOD10

		calculation of Housing and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) is found to be correct.				
Organisational Excellence	BV79b(i)	The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments (HB) recovered during the period being reported on as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayments during that period.	To report recovery on all overpayments deemed recoverable, non-recoverable and those subsequently written off.	Delete	Delete	
Organisational Excellence	BV79b(ii)	HB overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	To report recovery on all overpayments deemed recoverable, non-recoverable and those subsequently written off.	Delete	Continue	
Organisational Excellence	BV79b(iii)	Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments	To report recovery on all overpayments deemed recoverable, non-recoverable and those subsequently written off.	Delete	Continue	

		identified during the period.				
Organisational Excellence	BV204	The number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications, as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications.	To measure the percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse.	Delete		
Organisational Excellence	OD1	Improved organisational capacity to engage with communities and develop priorities and programmes that meet identified community needs.		Continue	Continue	OD1
Organisational Excellence	OD2	Year of year improvement on CPA score at self assessment.		Continue	Continue	OD2
Organisational Excellence	OD3	Improved satisfaction scores from surveys conducted with all Council stakeholders.		Continue	Continue	OD3
Population	BV011b	The percentage of the top 5% of Local Authority staff who are female.	To monitor the outcome of equal opportunities policies.	Delete	Continue	
Population	BV011c	The percentage of the top 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority.	To monitor the outcome of equal opportunities policies.	Delete	Continue	

Population	BV016a	The percentage of local authority employees with a disability.	To measure progress towards achieving equal opportunities in employment.	Delete	Continue	
Population	BV016b	The percentage of the economically active population in the local authority area who have a disability.	To measure progress towards achieving equal opportunities in employment. This indicator sets into context BV 16a.	Delete	Delete	
Population	BV017a	The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities.	To monitor equal opportunities.	Delete	Continue	
Population	BV017b	The percentage of the economically active (persons aged 18-65) population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area.	To monitor equal opportunities.	Delete	Delete	
Population	BV064	Number of non-local authority-owned vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished during the financial year as a direct result of action by the local authority.	To encourage the occupation or demolition of empty homes.	Delete	Continue	
Population	BV212	Average time taken to re-let local authority housing.	To monitor housing management performance. With the present pressure on authority-provided housing it is important that re-let times are kept to a minimum.	Continue	Continue	LP1

Population	BV106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	To encourage the provision of additional housing on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings in order to minimise development on green fields.	Continue	Continue	LP2
Population	P1	Balanced and increasing total population		Continue	Continue	P1
Population	P2 (i)	Number of community groups established and engaging with the Council or participating in the Community Empowerment network		Continue	Continue	P2 (i)
Population	P2 (ii)	Increasing percentage of people who feel they can engage and influence decisions.		Continue	Continue	P2 (ii)
Population	P3	Increasing percentage of people satisfied with Wear Valley as a place to live.		Continue	Continue	P3
Population	P4(i)	Reduce percentage of population living in SOA identified as being in the top 10% for deprivation.		Continue	Continue	P4(i)
Population	P4(ii)	Reduction in the gap between best and worst SOAs in terms of floor targets.		Continue	Continue	P4(ii)

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12th MARCH 2008

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

purpose of the report
To seek the approval of the Committee to appoint a contractor to undertake a Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey.

background

1. On the 13th February 2008, Housing Committee requested that a method statement from Property Tectonic be supplied to demonstrate how they will carry out the private sector housing stock condition survey.

Proposal

2. The Method Statement has been supplied by Property Tectonics. This method statement shows in detail how the stock condition survey will be completed. The method statement is attached as Annex H.

3. The method statement and progress of the works will be project managed by the responsible officer to ensure the project is managed effectively.

4. Members will be pleased to note the method statement indicates each survey will take approximately 35 to 40 minutes to complete. Thus demonstrating the level of information collected on individual properties.

financial implications

5. The cost of a full stock condition survey to be undertaken on private sector properties within the district has been estimated by Property Tectonics as being in the region of £120,000 depending on the response rates and co-operation of our customers to allow an independent inspection of their home.

6. This amount will be funded through Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) monies.

human resource implications

7. The scheme will be overseen by the Housing Strategy Manager.

legal implications

8.   The decision to waiver standing orders has been discussed and agreed by the Assistant Director of Admin and Legal and Strategic Director of Resource Management.

timescale

9.   It is important to ensure the scheme is progressed, therefore a robust timetable will be obtained from the contractor.

summary

10.   An updated stock condition survey for the private sector is essential in addressing and targeting properties and areas of poor housing condition and vulnerability. This project will allow better forward planning and can become the basis for future government bids to address private sector stock condition.

RECOMMENDED

1   Committee notes the attached method statement provided by Property Tectonics for the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey.

2   Committee approve the appointment of Property Tectonics to undertake a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey for Wear Valley.

Officer responsible for the report	**Author of the report**
Michael Laing	Richard Roddam
Strategic Director for the Community	Housing Strategy Manager
Ext 281	**Ext 294**

Method Statement for Private Housing Stock Condition Surveys
For
Wear Valley District Council

Contents

Method Statement for Private Housing Stock Condition Survey
For
Wear Valley District Council

1.0   Organisation and Management

1.1   Property Tectonics is led by a Board of Directors which consists of the following people:

> **Professor Trevor Mole BSc(Hons) FRICS**
> **Dr Philip Leach PhD MSc DIC MIStructE MICE CEng**
> **Mr David Bracegirdle**
> **Mr Ian Haywood BSc (Hons) MRICS**

1.2   Property Tectonics management structure is based on the concept of empowering all staff to reach their full potential, taking responsibility for their role in delivering the *pt* brand. The objective is for the team or teams to be well organised and managed through an understanding of business process and commitment to brand behaviours, rather than through bureaucracy and control. To achieve this *pt* operates a flat management structure within a de-centralised structure of strategic business units (SBU) providing focus teams and a high degree of specialisation.

1.3   The Operational Management Diagram below illustrates the management relationships within the company. Each business unit operates as a strong team fully supported by the central team dealing with Human Resource Management, Health & Safety, Quality Management, Financial Management, Marketing and Customer Care and Information Technology.
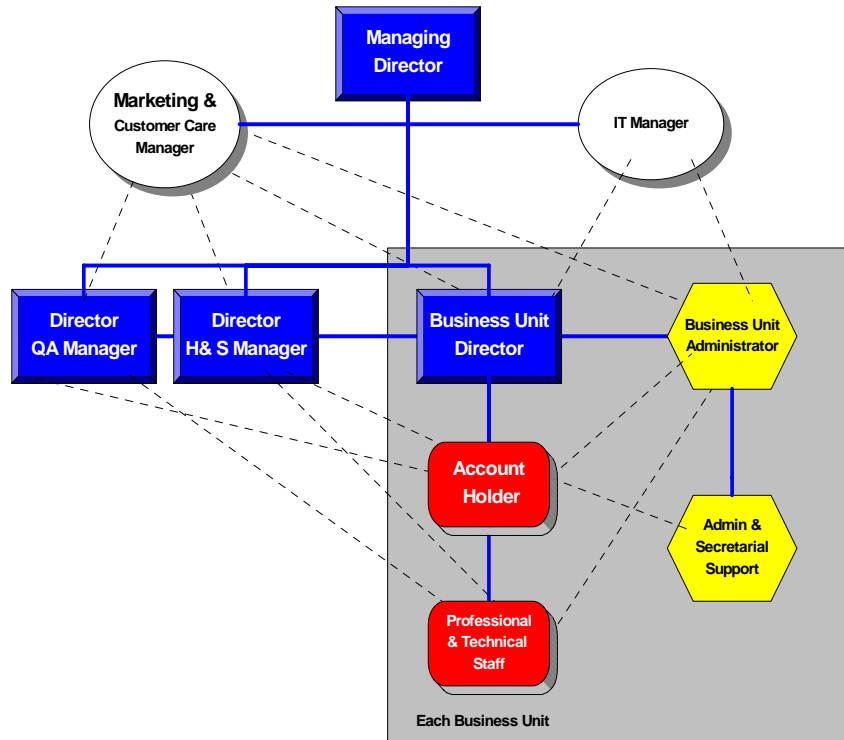
Operational Management Diagram

1.4   Each Business Unit is managed by the SBU Director, Associate Directors and senior staff who act as Account Holders supported by a Business Unit Administrator. The management team meet twice a month armed with job monitoring information to ensure that every area activity is a target and delivering total customer satisfaction. Each business unit provides twice monthly reports on performance which is monitored centrally. The centre also monitors demand and ensures that each business unit is adequately resourced. For example there is flexibility to move staff between business units to provide cover for absences due to illness and leave to accommodate 'peaks and troughs' in demand.

Project Delivery

1.5   The team assembled by Property Tectonics will provide a full service to satisfy the particular needs of the commission. This core team, which will be lead by the Account Manager, will be supported as required, to suit workload and expertise considerations, by other Property Tectonics' staff.

1.6   The team assembled for Wear Valley District Council will be as follows:

Director in Charge   :   Dr Philip Leach PhD MSc DIC MIStructE MICE
                           CEng BSc (Hons)

Account Holder   :   Malcolm Thomas BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
                           FRICS

Core team   :   David Watts ACIOB
(selected from)   Gareth Tingle BSc(Hons)
                           Vaughan Thomas ACIOB
                           John Whitton BSc(Hons)
                           Chris Stewart BSc (Hons)
                           Philip Nelson BSc (Hons) HND
                           Lewis Bolton AVEC HND
                           Martin Scarborough HNC
                           Gary Riches BSc (Hons)

1.7   Full curriculum vitas can be provided for the above upon request.
        Property Tectonics reserves the right to change or amend the above
        team but in doing so will seek the customer's prior agreement.

2.0   Survey Methodology

 Introduction

2.1   Condition Surveys should not be seen as an end in themselves but as part
        of the philosophy and process of managing property. They provide
        information to allow owners and users to identify the correct property
        strategy and operational plan. Property Tectonics has been a leading
        practice in identifying and developing systems that address the need to
        assess and analyse the physical condition of buildings. Under the
        guidance of the Managing Director, Professor Trevor Mole, (a leading
        Building Surveyor Practitioner and Academic who has specialised in
        Building Maintenance and its relationships with Property Strategy)   the
        practice has become one of the premier practices in the field.

2.2   Whilst this section outlines in some detail the approach and the
        mechanisms that will help the council to meet its requirements, what

should be stressed at the outset is the philosophy. The objective is to ensure that the information collected is accurate. That it reflects the surveyor's best judgement on life expectancies and costs to produce a programme of works which facilitates best value. For example an old softwood window may be getting to the end of its industry life standard but if it is in good condition the life to replacement should be adjusted to record the surveyor's true measure of its life. This in effect could be double the industry standard.

2.3   The information collected and the IT facility should allow proper analysis, manipulation, translation and reporting wholly in keeping with the higher order Asset Management analysis. It is important not to see the site data as an end of Property Tectonics' work but as a basis for further analysis. The move from 'observed' data to strategic and operational plans is complex and Property Tectonics has considerable experience of working in teams with the customer's in house staff, tenant representatives, valuers and housing management specialists to help produce the best solution. Property Tectonics have a significant IT capability in-house, which is important when links have to be formed with other Property Management software and information. For example *pt* has worked with "Context", "IBS" and other Housing Management software on interfacing for analysis and sharing of information.

Preparation and Survey Procedures

2.4   Property addresses and reference numbers will be input into Property Tectonics' Survey Monitoring database under the supervision of the IT Manager. This process will create a progress monitoring sheet for each property. The relevant parts of the database will then be electronically distributed to the field base.

2.5   The link will be such that any amendments or updates to the database in the field will be reflected in the overall database held in Manchester. The database will provide progress sheets for each surveyor to complete. The database can be interrogated in any way, to provide data on success rates for any surveyor or group of surveyors, and progress against programme for any surveyor (or group of surveyors).

2.6   Once the addresses have been despatched to the field base, the Survey Monitor will agree weekly programmes for the allocated properties.

Inputting this information into the *Survey Monitoring* database will then update the progress sheets with appointment times and automatically generate appointment letters to tenants. Tenants will be invited to confirm or re-arrange a time by using a freephone number. Weekly lists of properties to be visited by each surveyor will also be generated by the database.

2.7   Each surveyor will be allocated properties for inspection between the hours of 09.00 and 16.00 (with 1 hour lunch). The remainder of the day will be available for re-arranged appointments. Surveyors contact the co-ordinating office on a daily basis to check cancellations or confirmation of appointments.

2.8   Each time a property is visited, a record shall be kept by the surveyor and the survey progress sheet shall be updated. These sheets will be updated on the Survey Monitoring database daily. Overall progress can then be assessed across the whole area on a daily basis.

2.9   The data will then be sent to the IT office in Manchester for checking under supervision of the IT manager. Data packs will remain intact until the integrity of the data has been checked in Manchester.

2.10   On a weekly basis, all successful surveys shall be virus checked in Manchester by the IT manager before despatch to the Council.

2.11   With large numbers of surveys a week being completed, such a structured approach to the control of data is essential.

2.12   A quality control plan will be used to establish the key stages, establish tasks and review responsibilities, applicable documentation and confirm reviews have been carried out as required.

Access Arrangements

2.13   Using information provided by the Council, on names and addresses, Property Tectonics would write to occupants and arrange appointments. Occupants would be invited to call a freephone number to confirm or re-arrange the appointment.

2.14   We will agree a detailed programme for the survey of properties with the Council's contact officer. Once agreed we will, at least one week prior to the survey, notify occupants of the proposed date and time of the survey of a particular property and request the occupant to respond by freephone.

2.15   Using the freephone facility, occupiers may respond in order to arrange a survey inspection time. The freephone facility will be connected to operational and reception facilities provided during normal working hours, from the start of the survey until all fieldwork is complete.

2.16   Where a prior agreed appointment has been broken by the occupants on two occasions or the surveyor refused access then we will report the matter to the contact officer. Calling cards will be left by surveyor's at all abortive visits.

2.17   The normal working hours for this contract will be Monday to Friday 09.00 – 17.00 hours. No fieldwork will be carried out at any location outside these hours without the prior consent of the contract officer or occupiers in question.

Measures Employed to Ensure a Consistent Approach by our Surveyors

2.18   The extent to which the judgement of any individual surveyor varies from the standards established for the survey must be minimised in order to achieve consistency of results. To achieve this, it is our policy to devote a 2 day training course for surveyors for each survey project. This intensive course covers the survey template, data collection methodology, health and safety, access and customer care (see below).

2.19   An experienced Survey Monitor will manage the survey fieldwork and will carry out a programme of regular monitoring of surveyor returns.

2.20   Upon successful completion of the survey, the Survey Monitor shall select a random number of the properties to re-survey. If the completed survey is not one of this sample, the survey is marked as finished. If the completed survey is one of this sample, the appointments process shall be reinstated and the survey shall also be printed out for the monitor for reference in his re-survey. The number of re-surveys will be weighted to the initial weeks.

2.21   This data from the re-surveys shall be held separately from the original survey data (for record purposes). Data packs will remain intact until the integrity of the data has been checked in Manchester. The Survey Monitoring database will clearly show which surveys have been subject to this re-survey process.

2.22   The results of the re-survey shall be compared to the original survey by the Monitor. If any survey is found to be unacceptable the survey will be redone.

Pilot Survey

2.23   A pilot survey will be carried out on a sample of 50 dwellings within the housing stock. The pilot survey will be used as a means of validating the survey format, content, consistency between surveyors and methodology. A feedback session will be held after the pilot to collate surveyors' views on condition, access issues, problem areas etc. and to review training needs.

2.24   The method of analysing the survey data will also be checked at the pilot survey stage to ensure reports contain the required information. It is important that the main survey is not commenced until the pilot survey has been evaluated and any problems encountered resolved.

Training of Surveying Staff

2.25   We propose organising a two day training session. The programme would be as follows:-

Day 1

am   Office based tutorial.
pm   Site based competency training and assessment.

Day 2

     am   Site based competency training and assessment.

     pm   Plenary session for problems and queries.

2.26   This document describes our outline proposals for the training module. The detailed programme will utilise typical photographic details of properties, details and defects. These photographs will be prepared before commencing the training, upon appointment for the project. In this way, we can ensure that the training is specific to this contract.

2.27   The following topics are usually covered:-

Tutorial Office Based:

Understanding Client's Brief

2.28   We will convey the objectives of the project, particularly the output required by the Council.

Customer Relations

2.29   The training course will, in addition to establishing technical competence, stress the flexibility and sensitivity required when carrying out survey work in the tenants' property.

Understanding IT and Data Collection

2.30   This part of the session would be devoted to acquiring skills in the use of hand held computers and survey equipment, including calibration.

2.31   The data would be down loaded from the hand-held computer to a PC and Surveyors would gain an understanding of this data transfer process.

Quality Assurance Procedures

2.32   The briefing will include an explanation of Property Tectonics' quality assurance procedures and systems. The attached flow diagram 'Quality Control of Surveyors' Work' in Appendix 1 forms the procedural basis for monitoring.

Survey Methodology:

2.33   A complete survey would normally take around 35 – 40 minutes. The internal inspection would take approximately 15 -20 minutes, with the remaining time being taken up by the external inspection. This will allow for a robust and comprehensive survey to be completed.

Approach and Survey Protocol

2.34   Surveyors would receive training in ensuring that they report to the required property on time, properly equipped and appropriately dressed, with their ID. Doorstep manner and appreciation of concerns of tenants to be included, particularly more vulnerable tenants such as the elderly, infirm, the young and shift workers.
Access

2.35   Training to include process of gaining access with ladders, and access to dwellings. Surveyors to be mindful of possible damage to tenant's belongings. Procedures in the event of non-access and problems of damage and personal security.

Inspection Procedure

2.36   Systematic inspection of all external and internal building elements and components. Surveyors to gain full understanding of condition code definitions.

Recording Information

2.37   Surveyors will be trained in the use of hand-held computers with the specific data collection software loaded. Each possible option and alternative will be described in full as each surveyor progresses through the menu items.

Security Arrangements

2.38   Training will cover security of tenants, personal security and in the use and storage of equipment. Notification procedures of police, housing offices, caretakers etc.

Health & Safety

2.39   Property Tectonics' Health and Safety Policy and Procedures are issued to all surveyors prior to commencing work.

Tutorial On-Site:

2.40   We propose to organise a days training on-site. A representative sample of the stock will be selected and all Surveyors will undertake inspections using access equipment and Psion's on all principal types of properties. To include familiarisation with housing areas at the survey location and all round hands-on practice, photographs will be used in subsequent office based review session.

Competency Based Training and Assessment

2.41   Upon return to the office on the afternoon of the second day, the surveyors should be competent to carry out the surveys. The competency of the surveyors will be tested.

2.42   The competency objectives are:-

(a)   approach and survey protocol
(b)   access (in keeping with H&S)
(c)   inspection routine
(d)   defect recognition - all types / all elements
(e)   defect diagnosis and classification
(f)   understanding of 'fitness' and 'decent homes' standards
(g)   energy data
(h)   information recording and use of IT
(i)   customer / tenant care, courtesy and relations

Project and Survey Management

2.43   Property Tectonics has a wide range of experience in carrying out this type of work using hand held on-site computers. Good management of the surveys is a key item. This management MUST include two key functions:

(1)　The quality of the surveys must be maintained throughout the project, across the range of surveyors that would be used on the project.

(2)　In order to achieve the proposed deadlines, the progress of the surveys must be carefully managed.

2.44　Full time management of the project will be essential in order to meet the programme timetable without compromising the technical requirements. In order to provide adequate management over the survey period, a full time survey monitor/coordinator will be required with a further IT co-ordinator at out Manchester headquarters. Full administrative and secretarial support will be provided throughout the duration of the contract.

2.45　A progress monitoring database has been developed throughout our years of carrying out this type of work and this database will be adapted to meet the requirements of this project.

2.46　Surveying resources need to be applied efficiently and various techniques are used to maximise the success rate on the first cycle of appointments. Surveyors are normally organised into teams and deployed into neighbourhoods on each estate.　Flexibility to exchange appointments where appropriate for the mutual benefit of surveyors and occupants ensures that collectively opportunities are maximised to gain access to dwellings to carry out the surveys.

2.47　**Information needed from the Council;**

- Microsoft Access (or Excel) Database with all UPRN's, address and field codes of properties to be sampled. If UPRN is not available this will need to be agreed with the Council.

- Access arrangements onto flat roofs and health and safety procedures.

- Details of Council's Health & Safety officer and Local Police Authority.

- Confirm geographical areas to be used for reporting format.

- Agree basic attributes, schedule of rates and life expectancies of elements and components.

3.0   Data Collection and Reports

3.1   We propose using our own palm top based data collection software known as Lifesurvey and analysis software called Lifespan. This housing package is driven by a comprehensive cost database with life expectancies for all building elements and components. Surveyors assess and record all repairs and replacements to benchmark standards agreed with yourselves.

3.2   Survey data is collected using a condition and priority coding system adopted by the Housing Corporation or can be altered to suit. The survey template can be modified to incorporate any legislative non-compliance gradings required. The software prompts surveyors to assess and enter the remaining life expectancy of elements and components. The costs are automatically generated based on quantities entered on-site.

3.3   The schedule of rates included in our software has been built up over a number of years on the basis of planned maintenance rates. These are re-assessed on an annual basis. We would agree the schedule of rates prior to commencement.

3.4   The following codes are used within Lifespan:

Condition Codes.

A -   Very Good Condition   As new, requires no work.

B -   Good Condition   Some signs of ageing, but mainly visual decoration, etc. possibly required

C -   Average Condition   Definite signs of wear and tear, not serviceable, with acceptable levels of on going maintenance.

D -   Poor Condition   Serviceable but only short life, expected deterioration into category E within 5 years. Extensive maintenance may be required for component to remain serviceable. Likelihood of visual impairment.

| E - | Very Poor Condition | Imminent total failure, component at end of economic life. |

Priority Codes

To be applied to all components with a condition rating of D or E.

| 1 - | Loss of Amenity | Failure of component resulting in loss of use of the amenity in which the component occurs. |

| 2 - | High Cost | Failure of component either resulting in high cost for component replacement / renewal and / or costly consequential component damage. Significant rent loss due to void property. |

| 3 - | Health & Safety, Security | Serious risk to tenants and third parties (as appropriate) health and safety, and security (both personal and property). |

| 4 - | Danger to Life | Danger to life or serious risk of injury. |

3.5 The standard procedure adopted by the Surveyor in the field is to visually inspect all elements and assess their condition, state of repair and life to first replacement. A condition code 'A' for example is very good whilst code 'E4' represents a danger to life or serious risk to injury.

3.6 Information is then systematically collected from each property in the sample. From this and other information collected, houses can be identified where action is necessary on grounds of health and safety, security and amenity etc.

The Decent Homes Standard

3.7 We are fully conversant with the 'Decent Homes' initiative proposed by the Government and the information that has to be collected in the four

areas in connection with these proposals. A decent home has been defined as one which meets all of the following criteria:-

- Is above the current statutory minimum standard (the fitness standard) for housing.

- Is in a reasonable state of repair, with particular reference to the age and condition of the building components.

- Has modern facilities and services, such as a modern kitchen, bathroom, appropriately located WC, adequate noise insulation and adequately sized common areas (for blocks of flats).

- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort in terms of whether the dwelling has efficient heating and effective insulation.

3.8 Since the introduction is 2001, The Decent Homes Standard has become an integral part of condition surveys. Whilst the information required to assess decency is inherently linked to maintenance data, there is good reasons for collecting and storing this information is a discrete fashion.

3.9 The Government requires all Local Authorities and RSL's to be able to report in a prescribed manner which homes are decent and which are not, to produce a plan by which non decency is reduced to zero by 2010. From the Decent Homes information, a one line budgetary requirement is therefore identified which can be spread over the next few years (within certain guidelines) to best suit the needs and means of the property owners. Identifying Decent Homes Criteria separately from the other maintenance needs facilitates this. It also enables a comparison to be made between the minimum cost of rectifying a non decent home and the 'total' cost of rectifying all non compliant attributes in a property (i.e. a property with poor insulation (minimum cost), whilst the total cost would include for a new heating system in addition to insulation).

3.10 In addition, whilst decency is assessed across a small number of relatively large components, maintenance information needs to be collected on a rather larger collection of smaller components. Our experience is that linking these smaller components together to make a larger component and then assessing whether this larger component is decent or not (by computer algorithm or otherwise) is generally unsuccessful.

3.11   For this reason, we collect Decent Homes information in addition to the maintenance information when undertaking condition surveys in England. Our in house Lifespan software is then used to carry out a thorough Decent Homes Analysis. This software has a specially written reporting function that allows reporting across the stock at any level, form the simple statistic of how many decent or non decent homes have been surveyed down to a detailed breakdown of which properties have failed which attribute of each of the four (DH1, DH2, DH3, DH4) decent homes criteria. Examples are shown at the end of this section.

3.12   This information can then be used in conjunction with the other information in the condition survey to produce meaningful maintenance plans.

Visual Data

3.13   Photographs can be taken during the course of the fieldwork using digital cameras and are recorded on a photographic schedule. Photographs will be annotated with the property reference number so that they can be linked to the survey reports.

Analysis & Reporting

3.14   Site data collected in Lifesurvey is downloaded into Lifespan where data checks are undertaken to ensure that there are no errors or spurious information and that values fit pre-determined parameters. Lifespan is Windows based and written in Microsoft Access. Standard reports and user defined reports can be printed.

4.0   Limitations

4.1   Our surveys and assessments are made on the basis of a visual inspection of the exposed elements of the building only. Our surveys, therefore do not extend to the main structure, including foundations, or other elements which are unexposed, inaccessible, incapable of inspection or hidden behind fittings and dry linings.

4.2   Our external surveys of high rise blocks will be undertaken from ground level or other accessible points utilising binoculars. For more detailed

inspections of the external element we recommend abseil surveys (prices available on request).

4.3   The survey does not include for moving tenant's furniture or emptying the contents of fitted cupboards. Our surveyors will only lift carpet corners or edges where there is sufficient visual evidence of underlying defects. Floorboards and other sheet flooring materials will not be lifted.

4.4   Our survey of roof spaces will be limited to a 'head and shoulders' inspection through the loft access.

4.5   It is assumed that the properties are not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.

4.6   Generally, the survey of the mechanical and electrical installations is limited to a visual inspection by building surveyors and does not include testing or inspection by mechanical and electrical engineers.

4.7   It is assumed that all bye-laws, Building Regulations and other consents required have been obtained. In the cases of new buildings, and alterations and extensions which require statutory consents or approvals, we will not verify whether such consents have been obtained.

4.8   Our survey will assume that the properties are unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search (or equivalent in Scotland and Northern Ireland) and replies to the usual inquiries, or by a Statutory Notice, and that neither the properties, nor their condition, their use, or their intended use, is or will be unlawful.

4.9   Our surveys and reports are confidential to the party to whom they are addressed and for their sole use. Accordingly, no responsibility will be accepted to any third party in respect of the whole or part of their contents.

4.10   Surveyors employed for the condition survey fieldwork will have a minimum qualification of HND or a degree in a relevant building discipline, together with one year's experience in relevant surveying work. All surveyors have to satisfy the requirement of Property Tectonics' Training Programme and pass the training competency assessment.