

Report to: **Resources Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **9 October 2007**
Report of: **Assistant Chief Executive**
Subject: **Corporate Development Unit quarterly performance report**
Ward: **All**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide information on the performance of the Corporate Development Unit for the period April to September 2007.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Consultation has taken place with colleagues in the team and with the Executive Member for Improvement.

3.0 Background

3.1 This report shows progress against the team's indicators (Appendix A) and work programme (Appendix B).

4.0 Summary

4.1 The last performance report of the team was in March 2007. During the last six months the Unit has undertaken and delivered a number of key projects as part of the planned workload. Key achievements in the period April to September include:

4.2 Performance and Improvement

- The final report and Improvement Plan for the Best Value Review of Support Services was taken through the decision making process; Service Heads are in the process of implementing the agreed actions.
- Work on the new Corporate Plan has been completed, and the document has received approval from Council to be published. This document confirms the main focus of the Council over the next three years.
- Production of the Performance "Washup" report, with information on the Council's overall Corporate performance for last year. This report was used as the basis for the publication of the annual Best value Performance Plan. This document gives details of our performance in delivering against our targets and high-level actions, the results for the 2006/7 Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Indicators and the work of the Performance Improvement Teams. The results from the satisfaction surveys
- Identification of the new Performance Improvement Teams for 2007/8 which have now been set up and are working towards delivering performance improvements. The work within the areas of Planning, Public Buildings and DDA compliance and Recycling will continue. New areas identified for specific focus to improve performance are Benefits satisfaction, rents and housing relet times.
- Completion of the Audit Commission's inspection of the Regeneration Service. The "light touch" inspection involved completion of a Self Assessment, Submitting relevant documentation and a 2 day site visit by an Audit Commission Inspector to conduct a series of interviews with Officers and Members. The Commission used this inspection to pilot a "countywide" approach, resulting in a less detailed report, focussing on outcomes across the county Durham area.
- The agreed programme of review activity for value for money (vfm) was approved and work has commenced on the review of Horticultural Services. Work has initially focussed on costing analysis, soft market testing with East Durham Homes and customer satisfaction. Planned work for the coming weeks includes external benchmarking and workshops with residents. The progress of the VFM team will be reported through to the Scrutiny Committees.
- The Annual Use of Resources Assessment commenced in July, with the areas of Data Quality and Value for Money being assessed first. The Self Assessment and supporting evidence was provided for Value for Money, and interviews carried out and evidence provided for Data Quality. Further work on audits of BVPI's was carried out by the audit Commission Inspectors in August. Additional work on the

Council's Financial Systems will complete the Inspection process, with the final score expected later in the year.

4.3 Work at the subregional and regional level

- Support for the regional Districts Improvement Partnership. The District Vision Coordinator continues to support the programme for delivery of a range of training events. Sessions so far delivered cover the areas of community engagement, value for money and equality and diversity for District Councils across the region. The first North East Excellent Manager programme, aimed at developing Middle Managers is almost complete and a number of Officers from this Authority have signed up to the next programme.
- A continued lead role in the Countywide Local Area Agreement project team. The project team is currently drawing together the next Local Area Agreement, which begins in April 2008, and is working on outcomes based on the priorities in Community Strategies. The work to integrate the Local Area Agreement and former County Durham Strategic Partnership continues, with consensus emerging around the shape of the partnership in terms of thematic working. A further strand of work being led by the Assistant Chief executive is about the role of the Voluntary and community sectors in the Local area agreement and specifically the role of infrastructure groups like Community Empowerment Networks and Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS's). In the case of Easington, this means the new Community Trust.

4.4 Community engagement

- The review of our approach to Community Engagement has been completed and approved, with reports to Management Team and Members being presented in May. As far as implementation is concerned, we have made progress in relation to:
 - Establishment of the Citizen's Panel. The Communications Manager and the Head of Customer Services are leading this work, with an article going into Infopoint in September and a leaflet currently under production to encourage participation in the Panel.
 - Involvement in Service design has been further rolled out, with workshops on "talking rubbish" (policies to handle waste and improve recycling) and the complaints process
 - Terms of reference are being drafted for Neighbourhood Forums. The Heads of Democratic Services and Neighbourhood Initiatives are leading this workstream which will be subject to further discussion with management team and Members.
 - Work with the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder on piloting "performance through residents' eyes" has progressed, with much of the focus in the last couple of months being on strengthening the consultation arrangements within the Pathfinder areas, and the coordination of action teams to address local issues.

4.5 Equality and Diversity

- Delivery of the programme of Equality Impact Needs Assessments training has now been completed.
- Work with the North East Centre of Excellence on the harmonisation of tendering documents, with specific reference to the Council's Equality and Diversity Duties.
- Support continues to be provided to East Durham Homes, work has recently focused on a review of their training requirements.
- Support provided to the Polish Residents Group and the introduction of a 'Welcome to the District of Easington' pack to any person who is new to the District.
- Developed a revised Equality and Diversity Monitoring form, which is to be rolled out for use throughout County Durham as part of the Customer Relationship Management system.

4.6 Organisational Development

- Support for managers in carrying out their appraisals during September and October (including delivering training) after which the corporate training priorities will be revisited, including discussions with the Scrutiny Manager on

Member development.

- Managers will also be completing their own 360degree feedback appraisal, which will feed into the development of a suitable programme addressing any needs highlighted by the process.

4.7 Risk Assessments

- The team continues to provide support to the Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service to carry out Risk Assessments on their key objectives. Further work is now being carried out with the Police Authority and the Police Service on key areas of Policy development and service objectives. This work continues to provide additional income into the Unit.

4.8 Policy work

- The team provided support to the work on Local Government Review during the last six months, including consideration of the government's proposals and district's response. It is envisaged that the team will be expected to further contribute in this area in the coming months.
- Work on the Community Strategy has continued to progress well; with an initial draft document being completed.

4.9 Unplanned work and slippage

- Additional support continues to be provided to East Durham Homes

5. Implications

Financial

5.1 There are no financial implications to this report

Legal

5.2 There are no legal implications to this report

Policy

5.3 Progress on several key areas of corporate policy is included in this report

Risk

5.4 A risk assessment has been carried out and action put in place to manage these risks.

Communication

5.5 There are no direct communication issues in relation to this report

Corporate implications

5.6 Corporate Plan and Priorities

The work of the Corporate Development Unit is directly related to the ability of the Council to fulfil its corporate priorities.

5.7 Equality and Diversity

The work programme of the Equalities and Diversity Officer within the Unit is aimed at enabling the Authority to achieve level 3 of the equality standard by 2009

5.8 E Government

There are no specific e government implications.

5.9 Procurement

There are no specific procurement issues.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Members note the content of the report, the progress made by the Unit and the work plans for the coming months

Background papers/documents referred to

Performance Washup Report June 2007

Corporate Plan report June 2007

Best Value Performance Plan 2007

Value for Money Report August 2007