

CABINET MEMBER – PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE

Report to Cabinet – 27 January 2011

New Policy Context

A number of key documents have now been issued by the Government which set out in explicit terms the dynamically changing policy context in which Council's are expected to operate. The first is the Call for Evidence on Public Service Reform, the second is the Modernising Commissioning Green Paper and the third is the Localism Bill. These key documents underpin the intent expressed in the Structural Reform Plans issued in previous months to reform public service and the drive to implement the Big Society. In terms of the first, the consultation on public service reform, this will form the basis for the White Paper on Public Service Reform that is expected in the New Year. The second, the Green Paper further sets into perspective the need for Council's to develop their approaches to becoming commissioning organisations. The Localism Bill provides the more detailed plans for decentralisation and public service reform. Work will get underway in the New Year on defining some of the principles that will be needed to take forward the new direction that Government expects of local government in the future.

Business Intelligence

Work is underway in developing the Council's approach to Business Intelligence to adapt to the dynamically changing policy context as detailed above. Workshops have been held through my portfolio, the Officer's Senior Leadership Team, and Sefton Understood members. A transformed approach to business intelligence and performance improvement will be developed over coming months.

Openness and Transparency

Compliance is required by January 2011 and the following will be implemented to meet this requirement:

- Publication of salaries: The only names attached to posts to be published will be members of Strategic Leadership Team at present.
- An organisational structure chart which identifies posts and salaries (in bands - Hay 5 and above) will also be published.
- Spend over £500 goes live by deadline.

A full report will be submitted to my next meeting.

Communications

There continues to be a strong priority on informing both staff and residents with regard to the current budget position of the authority. A large number of the media enquiries received relate to the future of council services. Media briefings with the Chief Executive continue to be held.

Alongside this work a project is being carried out, in conjunction with the Public Engagement and Consultation Officer, to establish prominent pages on the Sefton website to inform residents about the impact of budget savings. It also includes an e-form for residents to put forward their own suggestions and views.

During the severe weather, liaison between the Communications Team and the service departments was effective and resulted in a good level of internal activity. However, feedback has emphasised that consideration should be given to alternative/improved methods of communication for residents and businesses in future, recognising recent developments in immediate communication channels, such as social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. A more pro-active approach to informing residents of issues, which could be faced in severe weather or other emergency situations, will be adopted through the media and on the website.

Public Engagement and Consultation

The Public Engagement and Consultation Team have devised a National Open College Network (Level 2) Engagement and Consultation with Communities Training Course and delivered the first course to staff in November. Sefton has recently hosted a Seminar on Cost Effective Engagement which was attended by over 40 representatives from North West Local Authorities. All costs were met by North West Together We Can - an organisation that encourages shared learning and practice. On-going support is given to officers to ensure that their plans for engagement and consultation meet the standards.

Quarter Three 2010/11 Performance Reporting

Quarter Three monitoring is underway and reports will be published on the Intranet and sent to departments for presentation to Cabinet Members. Given the removal of the national indicator set the Places Community website has been rationalised and the Data Interchange Hub, the Floor Targets Interactive and the Places Analysis Tool have been removed.

Constitution Review

A Constitution review is underway, with a Member Steering Group meeting on regular basis to discuss proposed changes which will consolidate a number of minor changes. The Steering Group consists of myself and Councillors Friel and Papworth. It is anticipated that the review will complete in Spring 2011 to enable the Council to consider the proposed changes in good time for implementation in the new Municipal Year. A further fuller review of the Constitution will be required to implement the requirements of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill.

COUNCILLOR BRODIE-BROWNE