

**CABINET MEMBER – PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**  
**Report to Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011**

**Transparency**

The Government have published departmental business plans (containing input and impact indicators) and the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) have published the first draft of the single data list (local authority data returns). Both of these were out to consultation ending on 4<sup>th</sup> February. The definitive list of what will be required of Local Authorities will not be known until early March and the Government has indicated that the requirements will go live from April 2011.

I have written to the Government to express concerns about the additional burden being placed on local government as a result of its data requirements, particularly given that there was meant to be a lightning of the load associated with the national indicator set, which has to be collected until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, and regimes such as the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

The Government is also consulting on a Code of recommended practice for local authorities on data transparency and I will be approving a response to the consultation paper at my next meeting.

**Governance Review**

The Constitution Working Party has met 3 times and is due to meet again shortly. It is acknowledged by the Group that the Decentralisation and Localism Bill will require substantial changes to the Constitution and a further review will be required. I will be considering a report at my next meeting as to the scope of a Governance Review, and the timescales involved, as a result of both national and local policy changes. One of the important issues linked to this review is the need to refresh portfolios. In particular, I would want to see the Transparency agenda aligned with my Portfolio as the significant transparency requirements and impacts of the Government's intentions need to be co-ordinated and have strategic oversight. The transparency agenda, is the new means of holding the council to account, and fits with the current Performance and Governance brief within my portfolio.

**Localism Bill**

Some of the detail of the Localism Bill is starting to be published – see above regarding the Code of Practice. In addition to this, two significant consultation papers have been published recently – the Community Right to Challenge and the Community Right to Buy. Officers are co-coordinating responses to these important consultation papers, and will be liaising with appropriate Cabinet Members. I would suggest that the consultation responses are signed off through my portfolio.

**Transformation – Communication and Consultation Strategy**

I have approved a Strategy and Action Plan regarding Communication and Consultation in respect of the Transformation Programme. Extracts from this were approved as part of the decommissioning guidance which Cabinet approved in January.

Cabinet received at its last meeting, a copy of the full submissions/ideas received from the public submitted through the transformation webpages. A further update will be provided to members prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> March Cabinet. Summary generic responses to the ideas/suggestions have been posted on the transformation webpages and will continue to be updated as feedback/suggestions are received. All responses are assessed by officers as part of the process of evaluating feedback received regarding the transformation programme and reported to Cabinet, so that Members can take account of the valuable input of our communities regarding the transformation decisions which have and are being made.

Officers are also looking at the feasibility of using a free engagement tool called YouChoose, which simulates the types of issues that would need to be taken into account when setting a budget. It is a good means of informing the public of the types of services that the council provides, and the impacts of increasing or decreasing spend on any given service.

I have recently approved an annual report on Public Engagement and Consultation which has been considered by the Standards Panel. Whilst there has been an increase in consultation activity signed off by the Panel as meeting the Councils standards during the past 12 months, there are still a proportion of consultations which do not meet or indeed come before the Panel. At the last Panel meeting we agreed to vary the approach, and the process, given the need to consult, inform and engage in relation to the transformation programme. The Panel approved the proposal within the aforementioned Consultation Strategy relative to the Transformation Programme. As part of the changes to the Democratic Processes, officers are introducing a process aimed at ensuring all consultation and engagement activity meets the standards and goes to the Panel.

### **Communication – New Media**

Officers are exploring the corporate use of new media such as twitter and facebook. A pilot is currently under development. Some departments such as Tourism have used such media before, for example for the promotion of events. Promotion of events and marketing is a very different use, to a corporate approach which is likely to require us to have processes in place to deal with feedback which can range from complaints, compliments, requests for a service, or just comments which need to answered. This work is underway and we are using the expertise of officers in Tourism who have used such tools quite successfully in the past.