

**Attendance:**

Councillor M C M Lager (Chairman)  
Councillor J Abbott  
Councillor M Banthorpe  
Councillor G Butland  
Councillor Dr R Evans  
Councillor J McKee  
Councillor Mrs C Sandbrook

**Officers:**  
C Fleetham, Corporate Director  
Ms J Lycett, Alexander Consulting  
M Letch,  
Ms S Moutard, Head of Policy  
A Reid, Chief Executive  
T Wilson, Head of Finance

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Hume.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Efficiency Programme Board held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 be approved as a correct record.

3. **DRAFT END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE PLAN**

The Board received a copy of the Draft Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2007/2008. In presenting the draft report Mr Letch explained that completion of the report including all of the performance indicators was a legal requirement. It contained the minimum number of indicators required to meet the requirements of external auditors and the Audit Commission.

Members noted that prior to publication the BVPP would have a robust introduction/commentary and a statement on contracting out arrangements with SERCO and DC Leisure. Specific commentary against each red/amber indicator would be published in the quarterly monitor.

Mr Letch highlighted the improvements in performance for 2007/08 compared to 2006/07. Members noted that for some indicators there was a skewed outcome due to the fact that the housing stock was transferred to Greenfields Community Housing (GCH) mid-way through November 2007. In particular this affected the staff absence figures (BV12). The Council's auditors acknowledged this anomaly and had agreed to treat the 2007/08 figures as exceptional.

During a discussion around data quality Mr Letch explained that the Council was required to adhere strictly to the definition and all "workings out" and raw data would be placed on the software system to enable auditors to investigate any queries thoroughly.

Members expressed concern at the position in respect of a number of performance figures and in particular the projections for the next three years. It was noted that the targets for the indicators had been inserted by officers and remained draft.

The Chief Executive asked the Board to consider where the Council wanted to position itself during the next three years, how these indicators fitted into the Council's Corporate

Priorities and if this led to indicators being raised then what resources would be required to meet these aspirations. He expressed concern that, for example, the sickness absence figures (BV12) would place the Council in the bottom quartile for 2007/08 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile for 2008/09. He asked the question - was this where the Council wanted to be?

The Chairman invited the Board note the position as in the draft BVPP for 2007/08 and move onto the next paper, which looked at future projections.

#### **4. PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND QUARTILES**

The Board received a report setting out quartile performance estimates for 2007/08 and 2008/09 – a comparison of Braintree's performance with all District Councils.

The Board was informed that from 2008 Managers have had access to detailed trend analysis that show where the top quartile performance is expected to be for the current financial year. Previously managers have had to wait until the December/January following the end of the financial year when the Audit Commission publishes the actual data.

Members raised concern that some of the projected figures e.g. the Waste Target (BV84a) was shown as increasing and leaving the Council in the bottom quartile.

#### **DECISION:**

- (1) That the Cabinet Member be requested to meet with their Deputy Cabinet Member and the Senior Manager with responsibility for the Best Value Performance Indicator to review the targets for each Best Value Performance Indicator over the next three years that fall within their portfolio. The aim being to ensure the targets are consistent with the Council's Direction and Ambition and any associated projects forming part of the Business Efficiency Programme and that where possible the Council is positioned within the top quartile
- (2) That following this review an action plan be established to identify the costs/resources required to achieve the target performance and this be reported to Cabinet.
- (3) The Board noted that there would be an opportunity for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the proposed targets.

#### **5. BUSINESS EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**

Chris Fleetham, Corporate Director, presented details of the latest programme of delivery 2008/09 for workstream 2 of the Business Efficiency Programme. It was noted that all of the reports were scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in 2008 or early 2009. During discussion it was recognised that due to the level of consultation required, the Community Halls report currently scheduled to report in October 2008 might be deferred.

#### **6. PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTS (PID) FOR BUSINESS EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**

Members received the draft Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) for the various reviews. Mr Fleetham explained that these were still draft with a few areas that still required completion.

During consideration of the Community Halls PID it was emphasised that this review was concerned with looking into the role and purpose of the service and considering fundamental questions such as: why does the Council continue to own and maintain community halls as a service? It was noted that a separate task and finish group had been

established to review the Council's fees and charges and this would include a review of the charges set for community halls.

Councillor Butland responded to a question from Councillor Dr Evans about whether this review would affect the programme of investment started in 2004. Councillor Butland explained that the programme agreed in 2003/04 was about bringing the Council's halls up to decent standards and meeting the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 and managing this project at nil cost by rationalising some of the Council's existing assets. There were one or two projects that remained to be completed and Cabinet would be considering recommendations made at the last Witham Local Committee regarding Rickstones Pavilion and the needs of the Little Elms Pre-School at its next meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008. The business efficiency review was concerned with deciding whether the needs of the Community and the Council would be better served by devolving ownership/management to local organisations. Finally, Councillor Butland explained that work was still ongoing concerning the review of Bramston Sports Centre and as soon as any further information was available a communication would be issued to all Councillors.

**DECISION:** That the report and project initiation documents be noted.

## 7. **WORKING TOGETHER**

### (a) **BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**

The Board received the minutes of the Programme Board Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008.

**DECISION:** That the minutes be received and noted.

### (b) **ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Board received a verbal update on discussions with Essex County Council.

**DECISION:** That the verbal update be received and noted.

## 8. **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Board received details of the following proposed meetings for the remainder of the 20078/09 Civic Year:

\*4.30pm      Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (*Additional meeting*)  
4.30 pm      Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2008  
4.30 pm      Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008  
Week commencing – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**DECISION:** That the above programme of meetings be approved.

The meeting commenced at 5pm and closed at 6.30pm.

M C M Lager

(Chairman)

\* This meeting has been arranged to enable the Board to review the business efficiency reports scheduled to be presented to the July Cabinet.