

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

7 September 2007

Item 7

Appendix "A"

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM – PROGRESS REPORT **SEPTEMBER 2007**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work carried out by the Process Improvement Team (PIT) over the six month period from March 2007 to date. The report describes:

- the structure of the team and how this has changed
- the work carried out by the PIT
- The planned programme of work to April 2008 and beyond (if further funding is approved).

The Process Improvement Team has been in place since November 2005, within the Policy and Performance Department. The original aims of the PIT were to assist the Council to:

- Focus on the customer, and as a result deliver a better overall service
- Release resource to areas of priority
- Build capacity within the services
- Learn from and apply best practice
- Meet its Gershon targets

These aims are still relevant in facilitating the Councils objectives with respect to the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper (published by the Department for Local Government and Communities in October 2006). They are also in line with DCLG guidance as to how this is to be achieved, as set down in the Business Improvement Package (published by DCLG in March 2007).

The team has funding of £78,000 until 31st March 2008 to support 3 full time equivalent (FTE) members, comprising the team leader and three process improvement officers (2 FTE). The team reports to the head of Policy and Performance via the Performance Improvement Manager. A new bid for funding will be needed for the work of the PIT to be continued next year.

One of the part-time (10 hours per week) process improvement officers resigned and left the Council in early-April 2007. Following the recruitment embargo, the post (15.5 hours) was advertised and the replacement is due to start with the PIT at the start of September. The increase in the part-time hours for this replacement post compensates for a similar reduction in hours for the existing part-time team member.

The Performance Improvement Manager also resigned and left the Council in late-April 2007. This position has not yet been filled.

Whilst the remaining members of the PIT have attempted to take on the work that was being done by these two members of staff, there has inevitably been an adverse impact on what the PIT could achieve. As a result a number of projects have been either delayed or put on hold.

The team continues to use a team-based workshop approach to undertaking improvement projects. This has proved to be successful in that:

- The projects are 'owned' by the process stakeholders
- The team approach promotes innovation

- The improvement process is quicker than the SPRINT methodology that was previously used
- The improvement process has developed to include elements of best practice from other approaches, eg Vanguard consulting

PIT PROJECTS

The team has been working with a number of service areas within Copeland Borough Council on a range of improvement projects. These are suggested by Corporate Team, Service Heads or result from issues arising from previous projects.

A summary of the projects completed during the reporting period is provided in ANNEX 1.

A summary of the current projects is provided in ANNEX 2. The work programme for the current projects is provided in ANNEX 4. It should be noted that this programme will be updated on a regular (3 monthly) basis to reflect work completed and new projects underway.

ANNEX 3 provides a list of potential projects identified in conjunction with service heads or department managers. In addition to these projects, we expect that the service review process currently being undertaken across the Council will identify a number of new projects. These projects have to be fully scoped, prioritised and programmed into the PIT work plan. The aim in doing this will be to optimise the use of the PIT resource by striking a balance of projects, ie those with quick wins and others that are longer-term but bring greater potential benefits.

SKILLS TRANSFER

In addition to undertaking improvement projects, the PIT has a role, identified in its service plan, in transferring improvement tools and techniques to service unit staff. To date this has been done informally as part of the projects we have undertaken. However, some work has now been undertaken looking at how this skills transfer could be formalised through specific training. Plans to implement these proposals are currently being discussed with the Head of Policy and Performance.

ANNEX 1. COMPLETED PROJECTS – March to July 2007 inclusive

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT	IMPROVEMENTS MADE	BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Customer services	Cash office opening hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening hours of cash offices revised to reflect usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct savings in cashiers staff salaries 	Cash
	Benefits front desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments system for new benefits claimants and those with complex queries to be seen by a benefits assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in time to process new claims from 58 to 35 days. Claimants able to discuss applications in private Reduction in rework due to provision of correct supporting information. 	Non-cash
	One stop shop (Data sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process developed to share customer information across council departments. Note: implementation will be undertaken as part of web site project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers only contact Council once regarding change of circumstances and information shared across relevant departments. More accurate and up to date customer information 	Non-cash
	Copeland Direct transaction analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of non-value added activities undertaken by Copeland Direct and their root causes. Some improvement actions being undertaken by Customer Services. Additional projects to agreed with Service Head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective use of Copeland Direct time 	Non-cash

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT	IMPROVEMENTS MADE	BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Policy and Performance	Mileage calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a web-based system for submission and approval of mileage claims for staff and members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common system in use across organisation Quicker claims processing with status reporting Reduced errors through electronic data transfer to SAGE salaries software. 	Non-cash
Finance & Business Development	Concessionary travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a revised process and IT system for processing applications for statutory and discretionary travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the cost of issuing concessions Improved control over process resulting in reduced errors, eg duplicate issues 	Cash / Non-cash

ANNEX 2. CURRENT PROJECTS

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Customer Services	<p>Alternative Payment Arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of payment cards and bar-coding as alternative to cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased payment points and opening hours Reduced costs for cash handling Reduction in cash office staffing 	Cash / Non-cash
Development Control	<p>Major Planning Applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In March 2007 Copeland was designated a Best Value planning authority as a result of failing to achieve the BV109 target of 60% of major applications determined within 13 weeks. This project examines the process for dealing with major applications and how it might be improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More formalised pre-application process leading to improved decision making about major application processing. CBC achieves BV109 target and is removed from best value planning authority list. Potential for positive impact on inward investment into the borough. 	Non-cash
	<p>Minor & other applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of planning officer activities to examine how resource can be released to provide a more proactive pre-application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct routing and handling of planning enquiries Simplified planning application forms Simplified householder application forms Appointment system for applicants to see planning officers 	Non-cash
	<p>1-app implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implementation of new process to support introduction of new national 1-app system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of PC to enable customer self-service (supported by Copeland Direct / Planning Dept as necessary) in obtaining correct planning application forms. 	Non-cash
Leisure & Environmental Services	<p>Chipside implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition of the existing complaints system into Chipside including links to the CBC website. Transition of the pest control service into Chipside including links to the CBC website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to service - reporting of complaints via website and Copeland Direct Improved response times and follow-up Improved access to service – On-line (and via Copeland Direct) booking and payment of pest control service Improved COSHH Reduced process administration 	Non-cash

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
	CNEA Sect 46 – Domestic Waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of waste management and enforcement activities to meet the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in contamination of green waste • Improved enforcement of the CNEA 	Non-cash
	Trade waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of simple spreadsheet and mail merge facilities to capture and manage commercial waste management • Simplified procedures to capture information (and bill for) additional collections • Development of a comprehensive cost model for commercial waste collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simpler set-up and improved maintenance of waste management contracts and waste transfer notes • Improved control over waste collection rounds • Reduction in outstanding debt • Improved service costing data and decision support 	Cash / Non-cash
	Orange sacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of electronic data extraction from BTCC • Telephone payments via Copeland Direct • Semi-automated production of delivery notes / receipts • Development of customer data base to monitor orange sack usage rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in level of invoicing • increased income through improved control over process 	Non-cash / cash
	Time management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation and reduction in the number of timesheets used by waste management and cleansing staff • Review of certification / authorisation levels for timesheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of supervisor time - 80% reduction in number of timesheets • Reduction in potential timesheet transcription errors 	Non-cash

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
	Street cleansing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of system for recording and potentially rationalising waste bin collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in complaints about un-emptied bins • Improved response in replacing missing / damaged bins 	Non-cash
Finance & Business Development	Concessionary travel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of changes resulting from the review of the new process introduced in April 2007 and changes to the NowCard bus pass system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified registration process for CBC residents • Elimination of duplicate issues • Simpler and quicker eligibility checking by Copeland Direct • Reduced rework by Finance Dept in resolving errors 	Non-cash
Legal	Land charges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation and rationalisation of data holdings • Identification of opportunities to utilise GIS • Clarification of Con29 requirements with responding departments • Adoption of standardised baseline date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in unnecessary work by Con29 respondents • Correct responses to Con29 	Non-cash
Corporate	Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the accessibility, clarity and flexibility of the website to allow people to access information and transact with the Council electronically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased transactions using the website • Reduced demand on Copeland Direct (queries and mediated transactions) • CBC communications and image improved 	Non-cash

ANNEX 3. POTENTIAL PROJECTS

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Leisure & Environmental Services	<p>CNEA Sect 46 – Trade Waste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of waste management and enforcement activities to meet the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved enforcement of trade waste, eg fly tipping, conformance with waste transfer notes 	Non-cash
Customer Services	<p>Benefits - scanning review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful trial to assess direct scanning was undertaken in July 2006. This project will examine direct scanning in relation to the totality of the scanning team's work, including indexing and post. It will also address whether and by what means direct scanning might be done in the area offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct scanning offers considerable advantages in terms of the direct labour and material cost savings arising from removing the photocopying activity. It also leads to less rework as the quality of the scanned images is greatly improved 	Non-cash
	<p>Benefits - 'Front desk' in the area offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This scheme is currently operating at Catherine Street in Whitehaven and this project will look at how the same or a similar scheme might be operated at the area offices in Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'front desk' system at the area offices will lead to similar levels of improvement to that realised at Whitehaven, ie average processing time reduced from 58 to 35 days.. 	Non-cash
	<p>Benefits - Document receipt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of a simpler form to make it clearer to benefits claimants exactly what additional information will be required to be able to process their application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copeland Direct staff find revised form easier to use Benefits claimants find form easier to use Reduced effort by Benefits staff in chasing up missing documentation 	Non-cash

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Corporate	<p>Transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology provides an opportunity to offer an increasingly better service to our communities, transforming the way we engage with them and re-shaping how we deliver our services. • This project will create a blueprint, benefits and project portfolio for a programme that will manage and co-ordinate 'transformation enabling' projects that bridge the gap between the transformation strategy and the projects carrying out the work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A common set of objectives for all transformation enabling projects • More efficient use of scarce CBC resource 	Non-cash

ANNEX 4. Current projects – work programme

ID	Task Name	Aug '07				Sep '07				Oct '07				Nov '07				Dec '07				Jan '08				Feb '08				Mar	
		30	06	13	20	27	03	10	17	24	01	08	15	22	29	05	12	19	26	03	10	17	24	31	07	14	21	28	04	11	18
1	CUSTOMER SERVICES	[Gantt bar]																													
2	Alternative payment arrangements	[Gantt bar]																													
3	Definition phase	[Gantt bar]																													
4	Implementation phase	[Gantt bar]																													
5	LEISURE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	[Gantt bar]																													
6	Chipside implementation	[Gantt bar]																													
7	Fixed penalty notices	[Gantt bar]																													
8	Pest control	[Gantt bar]																													
9	CNEA Sect 46 - Domestic waste	[Gantt bar]																													
10	Trade waste	[Gantt bar]																													
11	Orange sacks	[Gantt bar]																													
12	Time management	[Gantt bar]																													
13	Street cleansing - part 1	[Gantt bar]																													
14	DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	[Gantt bar]																													
15	Major planning applications	[Gantt bar]																													
16	1-app implementation	[Gantt bar]																													
17	Minor - Other applications	[Gantt bar]																													
18	FINANCE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	[Gantt bar]																													
19	Concessionary travel	[Gantt bar]																													
20	LEGAL	[Gantt bar]																													
21	Land charges	[Gantt bar]																													
22	CORPORATE	[Gantt bar]																													
23	Website	[Gantt bar]																													
24	Definition phase	[Gantt bar]																													
25	Implementation phase	[Gantt bar]																													
26	Transformation	[Gantt bar]																													
27	Definition phase	[Gantt bar]																													
28	Implementation phase	[Gantt bar]																													