

## **DIRECTION OF TRAVEL 2007/8 IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**LEAD OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**REPORT AUTHOR** Hilary Mitchell

Summary: To provide information about the improvements made since the last Direction of Travel assessment.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The statutory Performance Management framework for local authorities and other public sector bodies now includes:

- 1) Periodic Comprehensive Performance Assessment (from 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment) corporate assessment
- 2) Annual Use of Resources judgement
- 3) Annual Direction of Travel statement
- 4) Annual Service performance (National Indicators, including Place Survey results)
- 5) Periodic Service Inspection results
- 6) Annual Financial audit
- 7) Annual Data Quality audit

1.2 Copeland Borough Council's last Direction of Travel Statement was presented to the Audit Committee on 23 April 2008. The period covered in the last report included performance data from 2006/7 and activities and developments from that year.

1.3 It was agreed to monitor progress in making improvements identified as necessary in the Direction of Travel statement at Audit Committee regularly. Accordingly an improvement plan has been created and updated with the latest information on issues raised by the Auditor in the last Direction of Travel Statement.

### **2. Conclusion and Recommendation**

2.1 It is recommended that the Audit Committee notes the progress made in the areas of concern raised by the External Auditor in the Direction of Travel Statement 2007/8.

#### **List of appendices:**

Appendix A –Direction of Travel 2007/8 Improvement Plan

**Consultees:** Corporate Team, Housing Manager

CPA DIRECTION OF TRAVEL 2007/08 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN						
Ref No	KLOE Question	Area for Improvement	Lead Officers	Actions for Improvement	Target Dates	Progress and comments
1.1	Are services improving in areas the council has identified as priorities and areas the council say are important to their communities?	Performance Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerbside recycling</li> <li>• Satisfaction with waste and recycling</li> <li>• Planning- major &amp; minor applications</li> <li>• Planning – quality checklist</li> <li>• Milestones in the LDS</li> <li>• Processing speed for housing benefit claims</li> <li>• New homes built on previously developed land</li> <li>• Average length of stay in B&amp;B accommodation</li> </ul>	Keith Parker Steve Smith Jane Salt	Improve services highlighted as causing concern.	31/3/09	In 2007/8 all the recycling BVPIs showed improvement and most in or near top quartile. Satisfaction rate based on 2006/7 survey – no change as survey not repeated. Major and minor planning applications above target and in top quartile with improvement in quality checklist. LDS milestones not met, but improvement in houses built on brownfield land. Housing Benefit processing speed in top quartile and better than target. Stay in B&B Total of 41 households spending total 595 nights, average 14.5 nights.
		Copeland has a higher unemployment rate than the average for Cumbria. Also 38% of local businesses experienced difficulty with recruiting people with the right skills.	Steve Smith	Regeneration Plan for Copeland in development	31/3/09	Objectives in Corporate Plan for example 2.3.3
1.2	What contribution is the council making to wider community objectives?	Prospect for reducing national crime reduction target is poor	Steve Smith	Continuing work through CDRP and Cumbria Safer and Stronger Communities theme Group	31/3/09	All the crime PIs in 2007/8 were much better than target and all but violent crime are in the top quartile. Violent Crime in West Cumbria is currently reflecting an overall 11% reduction as at the end of August 2008

Ref No	KLOE Question	Area for Improvement	Lead Officers	Actions for Improvement	Target Dates	Progress and Comments
		Nottingham Declaration	David Davies	Need to sign up to the Nottingham Declaration	31/12/08	Corporate Plan 2008/9 objective 3.4.3
		Develop a full range of clear objectives, baseline information on CO2 emissions and improvement targets	David Davies/Chris Lloyd	Develop strategy to reduce carbon emissions	31/12/08	Corporate Plan 2008/9 objective 3.4.1
		No affordable dwellings have been reported as completed/acquired during 03/04 – to date.	Laurie Priebe	Housing Strategy due 30 October 2008	31/3/08	We don't build or acquire new council houses. We are an enabling council that supports housing associations to develop new affordable homes. Housing Inspection Action Plan in place. See Corporate Plan 3.5.3
1.3	To what degree is the council improving both access and the quality of service for all its citizens focusing on those who have been hard to reach or previously excluded?	Develop an approach to ensure all policies and activities promote equality of opportunity for minority and other groups that may be disadvantaged.	Martin Jepson	Complete Equality Impact Assessments	31/3/09	Good progress in Equality Impact Assessments made. (12 complete, 8 more in progress) Action plans included in service plans as they are agreed. Social Inclusion Strategy agreed by Council.
		Further progress in its duty to promote race equality and achieve L2 of the equality standard	Martin Jepson		31/3/09	Level 2 achieved 31 March 2008. Target to meet Level 3 in 2009.
1.3		Performance review and service information is not supplemented with analysis by neighbourhood or by vulnerable groups to inform policy or service planning	Hilary Mitchell	Develop more detailed profile of Copeland neighbourhoods	31/03/09	Ward profile information available on Intranet. To be included in service plan guidance 2008/9

Ref No	KLOE Question	Area for Improvement	Lead Officers	Actions for Improvement	Target Dates	Progress and Comments
		Target to make all buildings accessible to people with disabilities by 2006-7 not achieved.	Chris Lloyd	Continue programme to achieve accessibility where feasible.	31/3/09	Target for 2006/7 not achievable. Work continued at Moresby and 2007/8 target of 87% achieved.
1.4	Is value for money improving as well as quality of services?	Information on costs and comparative information is not yet used in a comprehensive manner to review VFM within services and corporately	Hilary Mitchell	Provide information from Audit Commission toolkit to services to support service planning and review	31/12/08	To be included in service plan guidance 2008/9
1.4		Information on quality of services and experience of users and communities is not integrated into reviews of service effectiveness	Heads of Service	Systematic surveys of customers needed. Feedback forms for services to be developed as a matter of course. Template of form to be developed. further learning feedback from comments, compliments, complaints.	31/12/08	To be included in service plan guidance 2008/9
2.3	Does the Council have the capacity to deliver its plans?	High levels sickness absence	Hilary Mitchell	Implement updated action plan on sickness	31/03/08	Continuing actions. Corporate target set for 2008/9. Continuing slight fall since 2006/7.
		Recent Housing Inspection has highlighted a lack of capacity within the Housing Service.	Steve Smith	Strategic Housing Panel formed. Housing Action Plan agreed and being delivered	31/12/08	Housing structure reviewed and new posts filled.
		Develop planning for future staff resource	Hilary Mitchell	Pay and grading review to be complete by 2009. Then work to commence on Workforce Development Plan.	31/03/09	Resources needed to carry out task, available later in year.

Ref No	KLOE Question	Area for Improvement	Lead Officers	Actions for Improvement	Target Dates	Progress and Comments
		Incorporate capacity of partners and contractors to support improvement plans over the medium term	Corporate Team	Discussions on development of various partnerships ongoing in Cumbria, supported by CIEP.	31/03/09	Council has made use of contractors in areas of shortage (eg Regeneration). Partnerships in Revenues and Benefits being further developed.
2.4	Are there are any significant weaknesses in arrangements for securing continuous improvement or failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained?	Pay and Grading Review will not meet national deadline	Chief Executive	Project plan shows completion by April 2009.	31/12/08	Monitoring shows 45% complete at 30 June 2008.
		Sufficient capacity to effectively monitor and control current grant funding	Steve Smith, Marilyn Robinson	Fill vacant posts	31/12/08	Head of Finance post appointed. Accountancy Services Manager and Financial Accountant posts being recruited as at 15/9/08. Workload and staffing capacity can then be reviewed. Regeneration posts currently being filled.
		Housing Benefit claim has been qualified	Jane Salt	To follow	31/03/09	To follow
		Robust tested Business Continuity Plan	Liam Murphy	Further development under way to plan for key resources.	31/03/09	Business Continuity Plan tested. IT Business Continuity arrangements reviewed by external computer auditor and action plan produced.