

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 30th August, 2012 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Albert Atkinson (Chair)

County Councillors

Mrs S Charles

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1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillors Geoff Driver, Tim Ashton and Mark Perks.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 July 2012

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2012 were agreed as correct.

4. Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement - Amendment to Membership

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the addition of County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles to the Membership.

5. Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring and Improvement - Corporate Scorecard Report

Michael Walder introduced the Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring Improvement – Corporate Scorecard report. Michael explained that the report shows targets for four indicators that have not met their first quarter targets but are forecast to hit their year-end targets. The four targets concern: Two targets for Help Direct, one for Major Investments and one for repairs to Carriageway and Footway Potholes,

Help Direct

Tony Pounder, Head of Commissioning for East Lancashire, Adult and Community Services presented the Help Direct Recovery Plan. Currently Help

Direct has a Year End Target to make 38,000 contacts. The target for quarter one was 9,500 and the current performance for quarter one is 8,017. The second year end target for Help Direct is to deal with 52,000 issues with a quarter one target of 13,000 and a current performance for quarter one figure of 10,541.

Tony explained that the transfer of Help Direct staff to the Customer Service Centre had some impact on the performance results and that the transfer arrangements were on track to complete in October 2012 which will bring stability in the teams and will see a more robust link between the Customer Service Centre and Help Direct and this will see an increased volume of calls coming through Help Direct.

The Help Direct leaflet is now in production and 1,000 copies per district will be distributed, which will enable Help Direct to step up their outreach promotion of the service again.

A communications and marketing approach has been agreed based on the learning from the pilot campaigns in Accrington and in St Anne's earlier this year, which will maximise the promotion and awareness-raising of the service amongst our partners, stakeholders and frontline staff;

Some unused contingency funds will be utilised for the Help Direct providers to "bid" for additional capacity to support the service following the transfer of the access arrangements and also assist with coping with the increased complexity of caseloads.

Help Direct is playing a bigger role in supporting those individuals who have lost services following Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) review, or have refused services following the increase in charges. An exercise is currently being undertaken to contact these individuals to ensure that their situations are stable and to proactively offer the Help Direct service to them. This will be repeated on a regular basis.

In responding to questions from the Committee Tony advised an exercise to obtain local information will be undertaken in the next quarter and that a further report will be presented to the Committee once the results of the second quarter are known.

Major Investments

Richard Bennett, Business Growth and Integration, Lancashire County Council presented the recovery plan for the Major Investments Performance Indicator. Richard explained that the year end target is to make 10 major investments in excess of £50,000 from the Rosebud Loan Fund to key business sectors. The current performance indicates that one qualifying loan was made in quarter one against a planned target of two. It was noted that another company had two investments totalling £50,000 over two quarters.

Richard explained the actions taken to increase the number of loans granted, including:

Marketing

- Marketing Plan – included in the Corporate Communications Marketing Strategy and will continue to deliver the following initiatives and actions:
- Direct Marketing to key companies identified using business databases.
- One to one meetings with targeted companies
- Advertising campaigns in – Lancashire Business View, North West Insider, Times Business Insider North
- Online articles Lancashire Business View and Times Business Insider mail-shots.
- Linking to businesses being turned down by banks (process in development).
- Links to other funding regimes to part finance propositions – North West Fund, Accelerating Business Growth (Regenerate Pennine Lancashire /Regional Growth Fund Programme).
- Links to intermediaries and trade organisations e.g. Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales, banks, individual accountants.

Events

- Planned events - Access to Finance Service working with LCDL to deliver four events commencing in October 2012, highlighting business finance offer from Rosebud, NW Fund and RPL.

Lancashire Business Growth Hub.

The establishment of the Hub later this year will also provide further opportunities to engage with target SME companies/sectors.

Other opportunities

Consideration is being given to changes to the Operation, Control and Branding of the Fund.

Richard concluded that, significant deals are in the pipeline and it is anticipated that the target will be back on track by the end of the second quarter.

Carriageway and Footway Potholes

Jo Turton, Executive Director for the Environment, presented the recovery plan and explained that a target of 90% has been set with regard to the percentage of carriageway and footway potholes, identified by regular highway inspections, be filled within 30 days. The current quarter one performance is 80%.

Jo explained that the reason for the current figure is that a computer server which supports the system used to record and monitor pothole information crashed on 23 May 2012 preventing the loading of defect reports, the creation of Works Programmes and the signing off of defect repairs. The system was offline until 29 May. The result of this was a mass loading of Highway Safety Inspection data on 29 May which resulted in a deluge of defects to repair. There were nearly 500 potholes loaded into the system on 29 May, compared with the normal day of less than 100. As a result, this impacted upon performance in May.

During the first quarter of the year, in a number of districts, pothole repairs have been combined with other works within the same area of highway. The consequence of this approach is that in some cases pothole repairs have been delayed beyond the target period.

The system of recording pothole repairs has not recorded temporary repairs as effecting a pothole repair completion. The implications of this are being addressed however in the mean time it presents a worse picture of performance than is actually the case.

Jo explained that action will be taken to improve the performance: Pothole repairs are managed through the operations teams in Lancashire Highway Services. Operations managers are responsible for managing repair performance through their teams. Managers have been instructed to prioritise work to achieve the required response time for all reported potholes.

A performance target of 95% has been set for July 2012 to March 2013. Performance will be monitored and resources deployed so that this will be achieved. This will ensure that performance at the end of Quarter 2 improves to 88% with final year end performance at 92%.

In responding to questions from the Committee Jo confirmed that at present there are two different systems that record information and it is intended to merge the system together to create one system to make data management easier.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted and commented on the recovery plans as set out and welcomed further performance updates being presented at future Committee meetings as part of the quarterly corporate performance reporting arrangements. In addition the following specific updates were also requested at forthcoming meetings:

- Help direct queries and issues information – update and profile of need.
- Highways maintenance – profile of claims and effect of weather on identified pothole numbers.

6. Customer Experience Project - Online Bus Information

Caroline Bradley, Management Graduate Trainee and Tony Moreton, Assistant Director for Sustainable Transport presented the findings of the Customer Experience Project for Online Bus Information usage.

The purpose of the project was to find out if bus service information via the Lancashire County Council (LCC) online bus information website is:

- Easily accessible
- Easily understandable
- Easily useable and
- Can be used to make a journey between two places in Lancashire

Thirteen mystery shoppers were asked to plan a specified journey and record their findings based on one of three scenarios:

- Scenario 1 required searching for a specified bus journey using the LCC website.
- Scenario 2 required searching for a specified bus journey via the internet without the method being specified.
- Scenario 3 required searching for a specified journey via the LCC website and then carrying out the journey.

Key Findings

Those who accessed online bus information through the Lancashire County Council (LCC) website found it accessible.

Some issues were identified with the presentation and navigating the online bus information website.

Although the Traveline journey planner was found to be useful a number of issues were identified.

Caroline reported that the feedback was positive in general but a number of actions have been undertaken to improve the service as a result of the project, including:

- Revising A-Z links on website so easier to access pages.
- Comments regarding Traveline journey planner have been looked into. They have gone back to the regional partnership to investigate how fares could be dealt with on the site.
- Project has fed into the Business Enquiry and development work that OCL are undertaking on behalf of Sustainable Transport for the Buses web pages. This has led to a 'campaign page' being developed on the LCC website front page that now links directly to Bus Services.

Resolved: The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement thanked Caroline and Tony for their presentation and noted the positive work undertaken to make improvements to the Online Bus Information provided by Lancashire County Council.

7. Urgent Business

None noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee will be held on 12 October 2012 at 2.00pm in Cabinet Room B, County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston