

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Portfolio Holder 21 September 2010  
**AUTHOR/S:** Acting Chief Executive / Corporate Manager for Community and Customer Services

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### REVIEW AND REFRESH OF THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

#### Purpose

1. This report proposes a number of updates to the Performance Improvement Strategy, one year after adoption by the Council. This is not a key decision as it involves an update to an existing strategy; having initially been approved by the Cabinet, it is appropriate to seek Portfolio Holder approval for review and updating.

#### Recommendations and Reasons

2. That the revised and updated Performance Improvement Strategy, attached as **Appendix 1** to this report, be approved. This recommendation is necessary to enable the Council to have in place a Performance Improvement Strategy which reflects the performance management environment, in light of significant organisational and national developments since its initial adoption in 2009.

#### Background and considerations

3. The Council adopted a Performance Improvement Strategy in 2009 in order to recognise that everyone within the organisation has a role in improving performance. The strategy sets out the framework within which this can be achieved through officers and Members carrying out their roles effectively and specific actions set out an operational action plan. The plan was agreed with the initial strategy and is monitored by a Performance Improvement Group of officers in all the Council's services.
4. The strategy and action plan contain actions to modify systems and processes to encourage a performance improvement environment. For example, staff personal development reviews (appraisal) require specific attention to be given to performance improvement, whilst the Council has become proactive in recognising performance success through its regular communication channels. The strategy also sets out the local and national framework within which performance improvement can take place.
5. In order to be able to continue to fulfil these key roles, it is necessary to update the strategy to reflect the current local and national context, both of which have changed greatly. To this end, a number of changes have been brought forward, marked in the attached appendix. The key changes reflect the dismantling by the new Coalition Government of key elements of the national performance regime comprising Comprehensive Area Assessment, the Place Survey and a number of National Indicators which all authorities were required to report upon. The revised strategy removes reference to these structures or explains that they have been dismantled. It goes on to describe how these developments have provided a new opportunity and challenge for the Council to identify and measure the most important outcomes for the community without performance management becoming something with which local authorities no longer need to engage.

6. The strategy has been updated to reduce detailed references to the Council's Corporate Governance Inspections by the Audit Commissions between 2006-2008. Whilst these inspections provided a key driver for a number of key corporate governance improvements, of which the Performance Improvement Strategy is a key output, it is now considered appropriate to reflect that the Council has moved positively in many key areas; as such, key policy documents such as the performance improvement strategy contain forward-looking objectives to ensure that this improvement journey is maintained and enhanced.
7. There are a number of other minor amendments to reflect the Council's current organisational structure and service planning framework, focusing particularly on the desire to move to a fully integrated approach to managing finance and performance.

### Options

8. The Portfolio Holder is invited to approve the changes as set out in the appendix; however he may wish to alter or reject these changes, or request further work to the strategy.

### Implications

9. Financial	None arising directly from this report and recommendation.
Legal	None
Staffing	Work to update the strategy and implement the actions within it will continue to be carried out from within existing resources.
Risk Management	None arising directly from this report and recommendation.
Equal Opportunities	An updated Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared, the results of which will be reported at the meeting. It is not anticipated that the assessment will identify any adverse equality impacts.
Climate Change	None arising directly from this report and recommendation.

### Consultations

10. The proposed changes were submitted to, and endorsed by, the Performance Improvement Group. The Portfolio Holder is asked to note that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee has requested an update report on progress with the action plan at its November 2010 meeting.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

11. A comprehensive approach to performance improvement by everyone at the Council, as expressed by the strategy, will assist the organisation in meeting all its strategic aims for the community.

### Conclusions / Summary

12. The changes proposed are considered to be relatively minor in nature; they are brought forward to reflect developments since the initial adoption of a strategy which remains fit for purpose, and are recommended to the Portfolio Holder for approval.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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