

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Chief Executive

10 November 2005

6-MONTH PERFORMANCE REPORT – APRIL 2005 to SEPTEMBER 2005

MILESTONES FOR 2005/06

Purpose

1. The Council has agreed milestones in the Performance Plan for 2005/06 to ensure that it makes good progress on its priorities and other issues that must be addressed in the current year. The purpose of this report is to enable the Cabinet to review progress at the critical six month stage (ie the position at the end of September) and to initiate action where necessary to address slippage.

2.

Quality, Accessible, Value for Money Services	Achieving planned milestones on time will ensure the Council achieves its objectives and priorities.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

General

3. This report comes at a crucial time in the performance management year. It is the time when the overall picture of performance is clearer and there is still time to address any problems. The impact of capping clearly cannot be ignored in terms of its impact on morale, uncertainty and resources, but it is nevertheless important to maintain the focus on achieving priorities as much as possible.
4. The Council has set 105 milestones for 2005/06. Of these 72 (69%) have been achieved or are expected to be achieved. Some of the significant milestones already achieved are:-
 - **Contact Centre:** transfer of building control appointments; updating of CRM; installation of software to measure customer satisfaction; progress towards Phase 2
 - **Electronic Service Delivery:** Introduction of new website and generation of reports showing usage and satisfaction.
 - **Northstowe:** submission of draft LDF; improved project management arrangements to manage the Council's work in relation to the development; consultation of services on requirements for the Section 106 Agreement.
 - **Affordable Housing:** Agreement of project management and partnership arrangements and partners for Northstowe.
 - **Other major issues to be addressed in 2005/06:** Completed housing options appraisal; agreed capping savings; continuing to pursue Travellers action plan.
5. This report focuses on the 34 milestones (31%) where progress has been delayed, is unlikely to be achieved; or is otherwise a matter of concern. These are listed in **Appendix 1** and the rest of this report highlights the key issues for Cabinet to consider.

Progress by Priority

6. A summary of performance under each priority is given below.

Priority 1 – To Improve Customer Service

7. Excellent overall progress is being maintained in all areas (Contact Centre development; ESD; and development of customer service standards).
8. Some delays are possible in the Electronic Service Delivery milestones relating to:-

M13 (installation of the Content Management System);
M14 (installation of income management and e-billing); and
M16 (the ability to carry out land charge searches on line).

There may also be some delays in some milestones relating the introduction of customer service standards, but again these are not seen as matters of significant concern and our overall programmes will be achieved.

9. More significant delay is likely to occur in **M11** (Arrangements to maximise the services covered by the Contact Centre and to improve working between the Contact Centre and back office) due to delays in the County Council programme to introduce BizTalk and MultiVue.

Priority 2 – To achieve successful, sustainable new communities at Northstowe and other major new settlements

10. The Council is generally on course but some timescales have slipped slightly and others are challenging. The need to work with partners has meant that we are not fully in control of timescales.
11. The Planning Policy Team has been carrying a vacancy since 1st July and will be under pressure to meet the deadlines for reporting LDF representations to Council or for submission to the Secretary of State in January (**M37**). To meet these targets the team will have to focus exclusively on these matters without any distractions.

Priority 3 – To increase the supply of affordable housing

12. Progress in relation to the development of affordable housing planning policies in the LDF is going well. However there are significant challenges and delays in relation to partnership schemes, most particularly on Cambourne Phase II. There are a number of reasons for the delays – for example: the need to work through sub-regional partnership arrangements; planning delays; the involvement of the Housing Corporation; and funding decisions. Most of these factors are outside the control of the authority and have affected, for example, the following milestones:-

M55 (Agree and implement new commissioning arrangements for housing research)
M56 (Review of partnership arrangements for affordable housing)
M57 (Review of partnership working at Cambourne and Cambridge Northern Fringe)
M52 (Annual assessments of feedback from tenants/residents of new housing schemes)
M58 (Review of funding options for Cambourne)

13. There have also been delays on the following milestones as a result of the capping exercise undertaken by the Council:-

M53 (Appraisal of Council land and property to identify opportunities for affordable housing)
M54 (Agree a programme to develop the opportunities identified in M53)

Arising from CPA – Prioritisation, Performance Management and Future Plans

14. These milestones relate to actions in the CPA Improvement Plan to improve the ability of the Council to set priorities and clear targets; to manage performance to achieve those targets; and to be clearer about the future direction of the Council. These are key areas of responsibility for the Cabinet. Capping has made it even more important to make the best use of remaining resources by focusing on the things that will make the biggest difference to local people and managing staff and resources to ensure that those benefits are delivered. The capping process has focused on resource inputs; it is now time to focus more on service outcomes.
15. The capping exercise has disrupted the achievement of a number of milestones in this area. For example, by this time last year the Council had set priorities for the year ahead and was making good progress in setting clear programmes of actions to deliver those priorities. Another important factor has been the reduction of the Policy and Performance Team from three to two staff as a result of capping. Delay has also been caused by the fact that we are awaiting the final report from an audit commission inspection of our prioritisation and performance management arrangements carried out earlier in the year (It is now expected in the week beginning 7th November.) The need to address other emerging requirements such as the LAA has also caused delay.
16. It is important for the Council to recover from the capping exercise and focus on the process of planning and improving services as quickly as possible. The position on most of the milestones can be recovered by the end of the year, provided that there is sufficient focus and leadership.
17. The milestones most affected are:-
 - M66** (Draw up implementation plans for priorities for 2006/07 onwards in areas such as Northstowe, customer service, affordable housing and travellers, which will form a basis for service plans, appraisals, milestones, PI targets, the 2006 Performance Plan etc)
 - M67** (Identify low priority service areas from which to redirect resources to meet savings requirements set out in the MTFS - ie £257,000 (2007/08) and £757,000 (2008/09))
 - M71** (Review all PIs with services to ensure that they are being collected in accordance with definitions; that appropriate collection processes are in place; and that they measure service and Council priorities)
 - M75** (Review and re-launch the Performance Management Framework and provide performance management training for Members and managers)
 - M82** (Develop a timetable for the review of the Council's Corporate Objectives and review of the Community Strategy with a view to convergence by April 2007)
18. It is planned to bring reports to the December meeting of the Cabinet to address some of these issues by which time it is expected that we will also have the audit commission inspection report on Prioritisation and Performance Management.

Waste and Recycling Scheme

19. Both milestones (i.e. Development of Cleaner Streets Strategy (**M87**) and Evaluation of new waste and recycling scheme (**M88**)) have slipped. This is largely due to staff resources not being available to carry out the work as they have been unavoidably diverted during the capping process.

Milestones on major issues facing the council in 2005/06

20. Reasonable progress is being made in most areas. There is some concern in some areas. In particular, the identification and achievement of Gershon efficiency statements will depend on being able to demonstrate the relevant service standards have not slipped in the current year

and the identification of savings for 2006/07 and 2007/08 will be made more difficult in the light of the major savings required for capping purposes (some of which will and some of which will not qualify as Gershon savings).

Summary and Conclusions

21. The milestones were approved by the Council last May before the confirmation of capping and the clarification of its impact. We will not achieve all the milestones, but the important thing is to be clear as to which milestones continue to be a priority, following the cuts brought about by capping, and to focus on them.
22. It is suggested that attention should be directed to the following areas, which are most critical to the Council's progress on its priorities: -
 - a) Completing Contact Centre Phase 2; maximising the use of the contact centre; and identifying scope for efficiency gains through the use of the contact centre.
 - b) Ensuring that progress is maintained in the programme to achieve electronic service delivery
 - c) Ensuring that progress is maintained on the LDF and in the planning for Northstowe.
 - d) Ensuring that the Council sets clear, realistic priorities and outcomes for 2006/07 onwards to give direction to the work of officers.
 - e) The achievement of efficiency savings for 2005/06 and 2006/7 to 2007/8.
 - f) Continuing to give priority to the achievement of performance indicator targets.
23. It is important to maintain momentum in achieving the milestones as much as possible. Otherwise we may be reporting a far larger proportion of unachieved milestones in the nine-month report.

Recommendations

24. Cabinet is recommended to
 - a) Confirm the importance of achieving milestones and PIs in relation to the areas identified in paragraph 22.
 - b) Request the Chief Executive to provide each portfolio holder with a list of their milestones which may not be achieved in 2005/06 and arrange for consideration of these milestones at each portfolio holder meeting.

Background Papers:

The 2005 Performance Plan.

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