



BURNLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO THE FULL COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO: DEPUTY LEADER and RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR MARGARET LISHMAN

DATE OF REPORT: 3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

1. Progress on Strategic Objectives

B1 Achieving value for Money	
	Comments
B1a: Continue to develop processes for effective debt recovery	Bankruptcy action is being used for debtors who consistently ignore the Council's repeated requests for payments and who have the means to pay their bills; in other words those who won't pay as opposed to those who can't pay their debts. It is a last resort once all other approaches have been exhausted. The action that is being taken against non-payers has already recovered £86k in revenue from some of the town's worst debtors, with a further £22k due to come in shortly. Those people who can't pay their Council Tax are encouraged to contact the Council at an early stage to discuss repayment options.

<p>B1b: Develop measures to ensure the Council achieves value for money & efficiency targets are met</p>	<p>All Heads of Service have been briefed on the need to focus on delivering improved Value for Money (VFM). 2009/10 savings targets will incorporate a VFM element in addition to an efficiency savings target. A VFM toolkit has been developed to support service units in testing how well they provide value for money. A pilot study will begin shortly. Our iterative approach to developing the Value for Money self-assessment continues. Additional evidence has been provided through discussions with the Senior Management Group to further strengthen our evidence base in our bid to achieve a higher judgement score this year. The self-assessment is also being shared with Scrutiny Members for feedback and comment, prior to its formal submission to the Audit Commission in the Autumn. The Council surpassed its efficiency saving target, as part of the 3-year Gershon efficiency review, by achieving £2.187m in savings over the 2004-07 period, against a target of £1.944m.</p>
<p>B1c: Develop further measures to ensure that spending is managed within available resources</p>	<p>We are examining those areas where last year's cost benchmarking exercise revealed the Council's spending is significantly higher than the average for Lancashire. The relevant Heads of Service will carry out a more detailed value for money study for their service that will assist the Council to decide where further savings can be made.</p>
<p>B2 Improving Performance</p>	
	<p>Comments</p>
<p>B2a: Further develop Performance Plus management system and other best practice measures</p>	<p>Member training sessions have been delivered demonstrating the P+ system and developing reporting to suit Member needs. Work is in progress with Better Services Scrutiny Committee in developing how P+ can support the Committee and its workplan. This approach will be shared with other Committees for consideration.</p>
<p>B2b: Implement actions plans to ensure continuous improvement in key national and local indicators</p>	<p>Improvement targets have been set for the new National Performance Indicators and these will form the basis for all future performance reports to members, including the new Local Area Agreement targets.</p>
<p>B2c: Develop a policy to ensure high standards of data quality</p>	<p>Preparatory work is underway for the 2008 data quality review by the Audit Commission. This will include an update on progress against the previous years audit to ensure all recommendations have been actioned.</p>

B2d: Implement the Pay & Workforce Strategy	The deadline for production of individual Service Unit plans was the end of August. A report will be produced for Management Team to enable a view to be taken on the priorities for the corporate strategy and action plan for the next 3 years. This is expected to be completed in the Autumn.
B2e: Implement the new staff appraisal process	The new process is in place. Further evaluation of the training undertaken by the People & Development Team is about to commence. A further internal review will be carried out in the autumn and a report produced on compliance.
B2f: Implement consistent approach to sickness absence management (training, monitoring & reporting)	New guidance for managers on the policy with regard to sickness absence reviews has now been issued. Quarterly compliance reports continue to be submitted to Management Team and to Better Services Scrutiny Committee. Appropriate targets for improving the rate of compliance have been set.
B2g: Promote sound ethical standards among the Council's elected members and workforce	Two sessions of Ethical Standards Training have now taken place with reasonable attendance. A further session is planned for September and it is extremely important that members do their best to attend if they have not already done so. The Standards Committee has met and agreed a work programme for the year. The Committee will be preparing an interim report on the current state of compliance with ethical standards throughout the authority for consideration by full Council in the autumn.
B2h: Implement the Team Burnley Change Programme	Latest developments from the Team Burnley Culture Change programme include: - Project Team established to develop new Council Intranet; - introduction of a new wider management forum to develop middle managers and increase their ownership of corporate policy development and implementation.
B3 Improved Services	
	Comments
B3b: Investigate alternative methods of service delivery via joint working & partnerships	The new sub-regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and Strategy for Lancashire was launched on 10 July 2008. Management Team and Senior Management Group will be considering how they can best utilise the partnership and access funding to support joint working.

L6 Improved health standards and performance against floor targets	
	Comments
L6a: Work with PCT to deliver major improvements in primary care services & tackle wider ill health	The PCT attended the Council's Leadership and Community Scrutiny Committee as part of their plans to engage stakeholders on the issue of water fluoridation. Both the Committee and myself feel it is essential that if the PCT move to a formal consultation on this issue, an all member briefing needs to take place which will cover the case for and against fluoridation.
L6b: Ensure local health services meet needs of Burnley residents (PCT review & Acute Service Review)	The Executive approved the Council's "Tackling Health Inequalities Programme" on 19 August 2008. This externally funded programme includes: extending the Healthy Lifestyles Programme to work more in the workplace and the community; expanding the successful BUFFALO programme to tackle childhood obesity in under 11's; initiatives to ensure vulnerable households can afford to keep warm such as warm front top up grants; and developing joint initiatives with the PCT to tackle the increasing problem of alcohol abuse.
Burnley Markets Update	
	Comments
CH/MK: Burnley Markets Update	Having experienced two stable quarters until June 2008, a slight declining trend in footfall has been observed recently. A focussed promotion campaign involving radio sponsorship and prize draws implemented from July to December will be carried out to attract customer interest. Two further Market Hall units have given notice of their intention to leave early next year. The Open Market and Bric a Brac remain stable. There is no indication yet of increasing spend back in the market at food stalls in view of recent price increases. Aggressive price discounting by supermarkets and ease of supermarket parking may still outweigh benefits of cheaper food from the market. Non-food traders continuing to face difficult trading conditions.