

EXECUTIVE – 8 NOVEMBER 2007**TOWARDS & BEYOND EXCELLENCE PLAN- INTERNAL CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN****Report of the Head of Improvement Unit****Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1999**

Financial Implications: None at the present time. But this Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan does consider key financial considerations such as the budget, Value for Money and 'Gershon' savings in the context of the Council's improvement agenda.

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to consider a Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan which sets out the Council's approach to improvement and incorporates all current initiatives with respect to the Value for Money and transformation agenda in Local Government. This plan will link to all corporate priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive adopt the Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan summarised in this covering report and set out in full in appendix one.

Background / The Issues

1. The Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan will be the Council's key internal corporate improvement plan which will provide essential information for the Shared Services agenda as well as providing key information for internal service performance management.
2. **Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan**
 - 2.1 There is now a plethora of initiatives and inspections which focus upon cost effectiveness and transformation/improvement within Local Government and these have generated significant additional corporate workloads for the Council. Initiatives include:
 - 'Gershon' efficiency savings
 - Value for Money
 - E-government
 - Transformational Government
 - Access to Services
 - Shared Services
 - Enhanced Two Tier working
 - Service reviews
 - 2.2 The initiatives listed above are all broadly aimed at providing better access to better quality but more cost effective local services. The aim of the Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan is to consolidate workloads arising from these initiatives in a joined up, co-ordinated manner. Central to the plan is a commitment to ensure all services challenge the relationship between cost of service on one hand and the quality and level of service on the other hand.

2.3 The key features of the document are as follows:

- The Plan sets out the Council's commitment to meet its Gershon targets as well as an aim to continuously improve results from CPA inspections (Use of Resources and Direction of Travel)
- It sets out a commitment for all services to undertake Value for Money reviews which incorporate 'lean systems thinking' and a commitment towards shared service arrangements with neighbouring authorities where appropriate
- It demonstrates a commitment to deliver genuinely more cost effective services by ensuring that both inefficiencies and duplication in process are designed out and that any additional increase in budget is matched by at least a commensurate addition in quality of service.
- The Plan has been developed in partnership with West Devon Borough Council which has been considered at their Strategies and Resources Committee and will be reported to their Council. The Plan will be delivered in partnership with West Devon as part of the Joint Improvement Unit.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 The following are the significant risks and opportunities identified:

Opportunity	Issues/obstacles	Benefits
As an Excellent authority we should continue to look at ways of improving service provision for customers and residents. Looking at cost savings that will not hinder service provision, but aiming to be efficient and effective.	<p>Absence of a clear corporate planning framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council could be seen to lack clear direction ➤ Reputation could be affected ➤ Performance Management could suffer 	<p>Approved improvement plan framework in place to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ areas of poor performance ➤ costly service provision ➤ improvements to service provision <p>The Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan work will be targeted at those priority areas.</p>

Conclusion

3. The Towards & Beyond Excellence Plan will be essential in securing value for money for service users and the taxpayer as any dip in performance or increase in service cost can be identified quickly and action taken to investigate the likely cause and put things back on track. Service processes will also be looked at to see where efficiencies can be made and look at how to improve service effectiveness.

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 8 November 2007

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