

Scrutiny Committee

31 January 2012

Third Quarter's Performance Monitoring Report

April – December 2011



Lead Member: Councillor Margaret Smith, Leader of the Council

Lead Officer: Maureen Wood, Director of Corporate Governance

Introduction

The Council's corporate plan was agreed in September 2011 following extensive engagement with councillors after May's elections.

To ensure the Council's performance is managed effectively regular reports are provided to the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

The corporate plan is a two-year plan in-line with the local government finance settlement and as it has only recently been agreed many of the projects and actions are underway and therefore show a green on-track status. Performance will continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis.

Our Achievements

1. Our parks and open spaces continue to be improved with Worden Park and Gregson Lane playgrounds completed. Works at Farington Park playground are underway.
2. Worden Park, Longton Brickcroft and Hurst Grange Park have retained the prestigious Green Flag awards.
3. Netmums have awarded Worden Park gold status and Withy Grove Park silver status.
4. £100,000 has been secured with South Ribble Partnership and the Brothers of Charity to invest in the Worden Park's walled garden.
5. The weekly food waste collection has been widely publicised and implemented borough-wide and the new pilot bulky waste recycling scheme has been well-received.
6. We have already achieved efficiencies of £1.461M against the target of £1.819M. Looking for opportunities to make budget savings is a continuous process. A further programme of potential budget savings has been identified which includes items totalling £0.378m which have been identified and addresses the shortfall in the current year.
7. Our proactive approach to environmental enforcement has been reviewed and re-freshed which has led to 106 fixed penalty notices being issued compared to 61 for the same period last year.
8. Operations Bright Sparx and Shepherd have been successful in reducing anti-social behaviour around Halloween, bonfire night and Christmas.
9. The My Neighbourhood Forums have been launched and initial feedback from the meetings and new Community Works Team has been positive with action plans being drafted for consideration in February 2012.

10. £130,000 has been secured as part of the Children's Trust to provide early intervention and provide things to do and places to go.
11. Extensive consultation on the Local Development Framework and site allocations has been carried out in South Ribble and with Preston and Chorley councils.
12. South Ribble Partnership's community bids fund has funded 26-community based projects and secured over £51,000 of warm homes funding to help reduce winter deaths.
13. We have successfully retained the Investors in People standard, and received the health and wellbeing award for the first time.
14. There has been a 26% increase in attendance across South Ribble Leisure Centres. 625,999 January to September attendances in comparison with 494,333 during the same period in 2010.
15. The Sports Development team continues to run a successful programme. The primary school programme has delivered coaching to 6,313 children across the Borough on a number of sports. The service has recruited and trained 25 coach mentors to support community sports. 125 afterschool clubs have been established to provide diversionary activities for young people in the evenings.
16. Our shared revenues and benefits service with Chorley Council has realised £220,000 in efficiency savings.
17. Firmstep and e-citizen has been launched to make our services more accessible and is the most cost effective way of delivering services.

Exceptional achievement not in the corporate plan:

18. The bid for an enterprise zone based on BAe Systems site at Samlesbury was confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Autumn Statement.

Financial Picture

A summary of the Council's financial performance after the first nine months of the year can be found at Appendices 2 and 3 attached.

In summary, financial performance is on track and we are currently forecasting achievement of the savings/additional income necessary to balance the budget. In setting its budget the Council agreed a target of £1.8 million savings/additional income. Whilst this is largely on track there is a shortfall in the current year where service restructuring has taken a little longer than anticipated or, for various reasons, new income sources have not

come to fruition. That said, additional savings delivered in other areas are expected to offset the shortfall based on original plans and these savings will have a recurring benefit in future years.

Managing Risks

The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) is the most important component of the Council's Risk Management Framework and a key element of the overall Performance Framework. It is the vehicle by which the Council aims to identify and address any potential risks to the achievement of its strategic objectives and goals. It complements the corporate plan and assists in managing its ongoing delivery.

Appendix 4 summarises the actions taken by management as at the third quarter of the year to implement the Key Actions contained in the Corporate Plan that mitigate the key risks and opportunities in the CRR for 2011/12.

All of the actions have a green rating indicating that sufficient progress has been made to implement them to date. The number of green ratings has been influenced by the fact that the corporate plan has only very recently been adopted and the majority of planned key actions are in their infancy as mentioned in the introduction to this report.

There are no red or amber rated actions.

Our Challenges

1. Community Safety Partnership funding from the Government has reduced significantly which has put the future of the independent domestic violence service and CCTV at risk.
2. It is anticipated that a number of developments with partner organisations will come to fruition in the next couple of years. Examples of these include the creation of Health and Wellbeing Boards (leading to the eventual dissolution of Primary Care Trusts), and agreement to proceed with a pan Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership. The challenges of partner organisations with the current financial restraints and re-structuring will have an impact on the council's partnership agenda.
3. Reform of the welfare system may impact on how benefits are administered; the proposal to introduce a Universal Credit (incorporating Housing Benefit), delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions, could significantly reduce the Council's role and responsibility in handling benefit claims. It is currently anticipated that this will be introduced from April 2013; although further confirmation is awaited.
4. As part of the Governments Welfare Reform Agenda Council Tax Benefit is to be withdrawn in April 2013 and replaced with a new locally designed and implemented *Council Tax Support scheme*. The Government has

stated that the new scheme must be designed to protect pensioners, ensuring they are not financially worse off. The new local Council Tax Support scheme must also protect vulnerable people and incentivise work for working age people. The Government has also announced a 10% reduction to funding, therefore any local scheme must be designed to accommodate this financial loss – circa £600,000 for South Ribble Borough Council.

5. The continued reduced levels of residential development in the borough as a result of the continued economic climate, impacts on housing supply, the level of Section 106 monies received, the affordable housing provided through private development and the funding potentially available through the New Homes Bonus.
6. Government proposals to change planning policy nationally in encouraging increased development and growth is at odds with the principles of localism and local communities shaping their area. This will provide challenges as well as uncertainties with the future of planning policy.
7. Despite a sound track record of delivering savings in line with budget proposals, the Council remains under pressure to reduce its expenditure, whilst at the same time, delivering quality services. A reduction in capacity within the council will impact on delivery. Looking forward, there is much work to do in terms of reviewing services, refocusing our efforts and looking to work in partnership to meet expectations with ever decreasing resources.
8. There has been a need to react to the proposed closure and demolition of The Maltings in Penwortham which is single person accommodation. The priority will be to ensure that the interests of all residents are paramount and optimise their housing options.