

H: REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

1 HUMAN RESOURCES

Service and Business Planning

- 1 Over the last year, the County Council has been enhancing its performance management process to improve its ability to deliver service outcomes linked to County Council objectives whether in a single or multi agency setting.
- 2 Appraisers at all levels within the organization were trained in setting outcome-based targets. The future emphasis will be on supporting the organization to implement and embed performance management within service areas.

Recruitment and Retention

- 3 There are still recruitment and retention problems in particular job groups across the County Council and, as outlined in my last report, a range of initiatives to tackle them has been put in place.
- 4 Since then other initiatives have been taken forward. A formal programme to link with colleges for the recruitment of Social Workers and Social Care staff is due to commence this month. It will include a sponsorship scheme to encourage students to work with Buckinghamshire County Council once they have qualified. A campaign for the recruitment of Homecarers is being planned for implementation in January 2002, with some new approaches to advertising.
- 5 The HR Division has commenced a co-ordinated recruitment campaign for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) on behalf of schools, which will continue until March 2002. This scheme, last year, proved to be a cost effective and successful way to recruit NQTs. Over the summer, 72 teachers from overseas were recruited, of which 21 were placed from the campaign with an external provider, Timeplan.

- 6 Following the implementation of modernized senior management structures, recruitment to the vacant Heads of Services posts is complete with 7 new appointments.

Management Development Programme

- 7 The Management Development programme has been running for just over a year, and a third tranche of managers has just started.
- 8 Three groups of managers participate in each tranche; managers in a predominantly strategic management role, those in predominantly operational management role and those in a first line/supervisory role.
- 9 The programme recognizes that many managers within the organization are in managerial roles because they are excellent professionals, although some have no formal training or development in management. It consists of a number of different activities including taught modules covering theory and practice, developing competence at work and working with colleagues from across the whole organisation.

2 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Capital Receipts

- 10 Capital receipts so far this financial year are £2.5m plus a further £2.3m legally committed. Bruton Knowles held an auction in Winslow on 30 October 2001 offering mainly agricultural property on behalf of the County Council. It is clear that the crisis in the agricultural industry and the economic uncertainties are causing a weakening of demand for agricultural land. Despite this a sum of £1.2m was raised.

Customer Satisfaction

- 11 Feedback from our Education customers through an independent customer questionnaire on the recently market tested Building Surveying and Maintenance Service, showed continued improvement for the third successive year. There is still more work to be done, but news of this nature provides added motivation for staff to continue with their efforts to provide a responsive and effective service.

Award

- 12 The landscape project at Sir William Borlase's School, Marlow, has been awarded a Highly Commended certificate for this year's Malcolm Dean Landscape Award. Babbie, project leader Pat Green, undertook the landscape design. A presentation ceremony by the Chairman of Wycombe District Council will be held within the next few weeks.

3 LEGAL AND ADMIN

Security Arrangements

- 13 Following the recent terrorist attacks, emergency planning and the facilities management staff swiftly carried out a review of security arrangements in County Council office buildings. The view has been taken that, whilst there is no need for additional security measures, it is very important that existing arrangements are implemented fully and properly.
- 14 To this end officers and members have been reminded of the need for vigilance and the importance of scrupulously following procedures, to ensure that we always have our ID cards with us, actively inhibit tailgating when accessing buildings and ensure visitors to County Hall are met at reception and escorted to their destination.
- 15 Staff who have an important part to play in security matters, including reception, porters, mail room staff, as well as security officers themselves, have been fully briefed by their managers on specific issues and arrangements. These staff have also had the opportunity to discuss with their managers any particular concerns or issues they themselves have, particularly in relation to personal safety.
- 16 Predictably staff have responded positively and supportively to the request for strict adherence to all existing security arrangements. The adequacy of these arrangements and their observance will be kept under review.

ICT SERVICES

Implementing Electronic Government (IEG)

- 17 Our IEG Statement was assessed as satisfactory by the DTLR. Consequently we become eligible to receive a share of the Local Government Online resources allocated to local authorities. Current information suggests that the extent of these resources will become known in December.

Joint Working

- 18 Joint meetings with District Councils have continued and six key projects of mutual interest have been identified to take forward. The projects identified include improving customer contact, joint public consultation, geographic information, e-business, developing a Bucks portal and the potential for smart cards. Work to achieve a joint IEG statement by the end of the year is continuing.

New Schemes

- 19 Good progress has been made in implementing the People's Library Network that will provide free Internet access from all our libraries. Haddenham and Wendover libraries are piloting the scheme and initial feedback is very encouraging.
- 20 Implementation of the Council's Wide Area Network to provide high performance telecommunications links is nearing completion. Some delays have been encountered due to negotiations on equipment installation but these should be resolved within the next week or so.
- 21 Implementation of a number of key projects has commenced including SWIFT (Social Services), replacement of the Home Care management system, improving network security, replacement of the automated Library system and investigating options for replacing the financial management and human resources systems.

22 The Sims-EMS (Education) system has been updated to Windows 2000 and a new server installed to provide access through the Internet.

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