

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN (BVPP)**  
**WORKING GROUP**

**30 May 2006**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor B Hoare (Chair)  
Councillor M Hill  
Councillor A Roy

Dale Phillipson Corporate Manager  
Simone Wade Operations Manager (Policy, Recovery and Governance)

Tracy Tiff

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Thomas Hall, Corporate Manager.

**2 MINUTES**

The meeting held on 24 May 2006 were approved.

**3 REPORT BACK FROM WITNESS EVIDENCE**

Councillor Roy advised that she had met recently with D Labrum, GMB, and A Smith, Secretary of Unison.

The main point from the meeting with the Union representatives was that Union involvement in this year's BVPP process had not been ideal. There is a need for Unions to be consulted on the medium term financial strategy, corporate priorities and then the draft BVPP.

**ACTION: That the recommendations of the final report include that there is a need for Unions to be consulted on the medium term financial strategy, corporate priorities and then the draft BVPP.**

**4 BEST VALUE GUIDES**

Councillor Hill advised that he had produced some draft questions for inclusion in a question and answer sheet '*What is the Best Value Performance Plan*' for circulation to all Councillors prior to Full Council on 26 June 2006. Copies of Councillor Hill's questions were circulated.

D Phillipson, Corporate Manager, would provide answers for inclusion on the question and answer sheet and email to the Group by 2 June 2006. He

undertook to liaise with M McLean, Chief Executive, regarding the order of the agenda of Full Council of 26 June 2006

The Working Group decided that the best method to circulate the question and answer sheet was that it should be appended to the covering report to the BVPP 2006/07, to Full Council on 26 June 2006 and would be circulated to the three Political Groups on 19 June 2006.

- ACTIONS:**
- (1) That D Phillipson, Corporate Manager, liaise with M McLean, Chief Executive, regarding the order of the agenda of Full Council of 26 June 2006.**
  - (2) That the question and answer sheet will be appended to the covering report to the BVPP 2006/07, to Full Council on 26 June 2006 and will be circulated to the three Political Groups on 19 June 2006.**

## **6 BVPP PROCESS FOR FUTURE YEARS**

The Working Group discussed the BVPP process, commenting that: -

- The Council will be in a better position in respect of its BVPP process next year.
- This year it is constrained to a tight timetable mainly due to the corporate priority areas not as yet being set.
- The BVPP process should be added to the Corporate Plan timetable.
- There is a need to communicate the BVPP and Corporate Plan processes effectively with Councillors, stakeholders and citizens.
- There is a need for Political ownership of the data contained in the BVPP.
- There is a need for a prescribed format for the production of the BVPP.

S Wade, Operations Manager (Policy, Recovery & Governance) gave the Working Group a brief summary on the Corporate Plan process to date. The draft Corporate Plan 2006/2007 had been circulated to all Councillors.

The Working Group heard that: -

- The Corporate Plan process needs to start earlier each year.
- Corporate priorities inform the Council's service plans but the service plans put the best case forward why they should feature in the Council's corporate priorities.
- The performance management system ensures that all Council services deliver on their priorities which are monitored by monthly and quarterly performance reviews and employees appraisals.
- The budget and the Council's Service Plans would be looked at, at the start of the Corporate Plan process for next year, during November 2006. The budget and service planning was an integral part of the Corporate Plan process.

- The medium term financial planning translates corporate priorities for Council services to deliver.
- Labelling in the Council's strategies, plans and documents was inconsistent.

The Working Group suggested recommendations for inclusion in its final report, which would be categorised into four groups: -

### **Recommendations**

The following series of recommendations are grouped in specific categories:

#### **Current Best Value Performance Plan (2006/07)**

- That all Councillors should be sent a monthly email containing a link to the performance information.
- That the question and answer sheet "What is the BVPP", should be appended to the covering report to the BVPP 2006/07, to Full Council on 26 June 2006.
- That the question and answer sheet "What is the BVPP" will be circulated to the three Political Groups on 19 June 2006.

#### **Future Best Value Performance Plans**

- That the Corporate priorities should be set sooner in the process so that the BVPP process can commence earlier.
- That there is a need for a longer term Corporate Plan to inform the BVPP which needs to take into account views from the consultation process, audit and the Political manifestos.
- That Cabinet is requested to put a weighting on the Authority's corporate priorities.
- That the BVPP process should commence in January each year.
- That an internal BVPP, an easier to comprehend, user-friendly version for the general public and a general summary document should be produced.
- That a Northampton Borough Council Press Officer should produce the user-friendly version of the BVPP.
- That a précis page of headlines summarising the key objectives should be produced.
- That there should be Union involvement in next year's BVPP review activity.
- That future BVPPs and Corporate Plans should reference specific engagement of Councillors, defining Committees such as Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.
- That consistent labelling should be used in all Council strategies, plans and documents.
- That the communication of the medium term financial plan to the public should be reviewed.

- That the BVPP should be published on the Council's website within 21 days of it being approved by Full Council.

### **Review Activity**

- That the targets for the previous two years BVPPs should be considered to ascertain if they are the correct targets for the third year. Target setting for the third year should be carried out before the outturn.
- That it is proposed that the Working Group reviews progress in six months (December 2006/January 2007).
- That it is proposed that the Working Group reviews progress of the improvement and performance information on the Council's website within six months (December 2006/January 2007)

### **Future Work**

- That all Councillors should be educated on the value of the BVPP so that they can use the BVPP as part of their engagement as a Councillor. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be asked to determine whether the Councillor training on the BVPP be signposted to the Councillor Development Programme Project Board or to an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group.
- That two short training sessions on the BVPP should be held each year at the start of the BVPP cycle prior to a Full Council meeting: -
  - Understanding the BVPP Framework
  - Political dimension into the BVPP
- That BVPP training should be incorporated into the induction process for new Councillors.

**ACTION: That the recommendations as detailed above be incorporated into the draft report which would be finalised at the Working Group's meeting on 14 June 2006.**

### **7 Date of next meetings**

The final meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 June 2006 commencing at 12noon in the Holding Room at the Guildhall. A buffet lunch would be provided. The Working Group would finalise its report for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting later that evening.

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm