

971. POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GROUPS

ii) Progress on Reviews

PPMG1 – Member Service Review Panels

The Chair of PPMG1 presented the report which had considered Member Service Review Panels. This had been the first measure of their effectiveness since their introduction in 2001. Surveys had been completed by Members and officers and the issues highlighted were reproduced in the report. Members commented that it was encouraging that Officers felt able to be honest and open with their responses and added that Chairs of the individual groups should take on board the comments.

A number of factors were discussed including the number of officers in attendance at the meeting from each service area and the provision for Members to submit questions prior to the meeting to enable officers to prepare an appropriate response.

Moved by Councillor R.J. Bowler, seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith.

RECOMMENDED that (1) the feedback form is issued to all attendees at the MRSP held this year and forwarded to the Executive to approve,

(2) the proposed changes to the officer attendance at the MSRP is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve,

(3) the proposed changes to the MSRP reports is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve,

(4) the MSRP Terms of Reference be forwarded to the Standards Committee for approval

RESOLVED that the changes to the MSRP are reviewed in December 2008.

(Scrutiny and Policy Officer/Democratic Services/Executive)

Committee:	Scrutiny	Agenda Item	8 ii)
Date:	29 th April 2008	No.:	
		Category	
Subject:	Review of Member Service Review Panels	Status	Open
Report by:	PPMG1		
Other Officers involved:	Scrutiny and Policy Officer		
Director			
Relevant Portfolio Holder			

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation.

The review assessed the Member Service Review panels and has suggested improvements to improve them.

TARGETS

The review supports the target of ‘continue to monitor, review and improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services’ although it is not specified as a target.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Although the officer attendance at the meetings will reduce this will not provided any savings for the authority.

THE REPORT

Report attached.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The recommendations outlined in the report.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial : None
Legal : None
Human Resources : None

RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 1. the proposed Member Service Review Panel Terms of Reference are agreed and forwarded to the Standards Committee to approve**
- 2. the feedback form is issued to all attendees at the MSRP held this year and forwarded to the Executive to approve**
- 3. the proposed changes to the officer attendance at the MSRP is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve**
- 4. That the proposed changes to the MSRP reports is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve**
- 5. That the changes to the MSRP are reviewed in December 2008**

ATTACHMENT: Y
FILE REFERENCE: Report on MSRP for Scrutiny 29 April 08 final.doc
SOURCE DOCUMENT:

Review of
Member Service Review Panels
April 2008

by
PPMG 1

Cllr Bowler
Cllr Bowmer
Cllr Connerton
Cllr Mills
Cllr Smith
Cllr Turner
Cllr Waring

It gives me pleasure to present to you this report of the review Member Service Review Panels.

The aim of the review was to identify the effectiveness of these panels. Feedback was gathered from both members and officers.

The group assessed the amount of time spent by officers preparing for the meetings, are all the reports relevant and the attendance at the panels. Various issues were raised and are outlined in the report.

The group agreed to that an evaluation sheet will be given to members and officers at the end of the next two panels, then the group will be able to assess if the recommendations put in place are having any effect before closing the review.

My thanks go to the members of PPMG1 for their contribution, to our Scrutiny and Policy Officer for her continued support and the officers and members for the feedback given.

Rose Bowler
Chair PPMG1

Key Issues and Reasons for Review

All the members of the group highlighted different issues that they had with the panels. The effectiveness and efficiency of the panels has not been measured since they were introduced in 2001.

Aim of Review

The aim of the review is:

- To identify the effectiveness of the panels for members and improve the satisfaction with them
- To identify any efficiency improvements for officers.

This supported the Council's Corporate Plan within the Strategic Organisational Development element to continually improving our organisation

The review will ensure that we continue to monitor, review and improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Member Service Review Panels.

Scope

The review covered the panels from the view of the members and officers.

Elements covered by the review

The group covered the following areas as part of the review :

- Gathered feedback on the panels from members – October 2007
- Gathered feedback on the panels from officers – November 2007
- Assessed the amount of officer time spent in preparation and attendance of the panels
- Review the terms of reference for the panels from the constitution
- Gathered feedback from members and officers on the proposals

The Issues

Feedback from members

The survey was issued to all the members only 15 responded which equated to 40% which was disappointing. 80% of those that responded were satisfied with the panels (either very or fairly) and 20% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

A summary of the responses to the questions were :

What do you get out of the Member Service Review Panels ?

- Information
- Contact with officers
- Talking about how we can support and progress policies
- Opportunity to discuss and resolve problems together
- Listening to views and comments
- Being able to focus on issues specifically relevant to my area

What aspect of the panel needs to be improved ?

- Officer attendance
- Information (delivered on time and in a readable format)
- More flexible time and venue (in the area and on an evening)
- Should not be used as a way of raising issues that have not gone through the CRM system
- Some areas are not providing feedback

How could they be improved to make them more effective for members and efficient for the Council?

- Providing answers to queries to all members by email when it cannot be provided at the meeting
- More meaningful statistics and what outcome measures have been achieved
- Expenditure figures for HRA spend for the year on repairs/maintenance at each meeting
- Update on progress re decent homes standard
- Less graphs because I sometime have difficulty in focusing
- More in depth investigation of service levels
- More contact with outside agencies who effect out residents with other services and levels of service
- One person from the departments instead of 2/3
- To put a time of the meetings – 1.5hours max
- I am aware strategy is already in place and it's beginning to happen – greater tie-in with parish councils via LSP network and links to LAAs
- All information reports etc to be in receipt by members 7 days before any meeting dates
- Review and list which appropriate officers would be best required to attend meetings with a deputy officer list available to substitute when necessary
- Meeting to be on regular intervals

Feedback from officers

The survey was issued to 33 officers who had attended a MSRP over the previous 12 months. Only 8 responded which equated to 24% which was disappointing.

A summary of the responses to the questions were :

What works well with the panels?

- Updating members on what is happening, any difficulties as well as future events
- Officer interaction with members allows us to get to know each other and should mean that we are better equipped to work together
- Provides an opportunity for members to question officers on front line services
- Forum to present positive information to members such as performance
- Not a lot now, they have accomplished and exceeded their original remit.

What does not work so well with the panels ?

- Attendance (too many officers from some departments and not represented by others)
- Information :
 - ⇒ No clear remit, not clear what information they need or want.
 - ⇒ The information presented is complex and not understood by the readers
 - ⇒ The same information is presented in different ways
 - ⇒ Deadlines for submitting reports prevents up-to-date information being presented at the meeting
 - ⇒ Information presented is varied and inconsistent
 - ⇒ Some officers fail to provide information on time
 - ⇒ Duplication of performance monitoring
- Tone of the meeting (some officers feel that there is a blame culture/ officer bashing session)
- Due to the changes to the service under the last restructure it would benefit both officers and officers and members to have one big meeting
- Some panels are chaired better than others
- Members regularly discuss personal issues that should be taken up in the normal channels
- Officers don't view the meetings as important and don't prepare for them
- No power to make decisions.
- No clear process

How could they be improved to make them more effective for members and efficient for the Council?

- Information
 - ⇒ More indepth reports would remove the need for so many officers. At present, many of the reports are just lists of statistics which are meaningless unless explained

- ⇒ Find an alternative way of presenting information to elected members
- ⇒ Identify what specific information members would like to see presented at the meeting and identify if any information currently provided is not of benefit or use to them
- ⇒ Set out a consistent reporting format
- One panel per quarter held in the council chamber for all elected members
- Terms of reference to be reviewed to establish what the purpose of the panels are and the benefits to both the officers and elected members
- Designated actions to both members and staff
- Provide an avenue for them to refer items – either to PPMG's, Scrutiny, Executive or Council
- Change the officers attending to Heads of Service – specifically Env. Health & Street Services, Housing, Community Safety, CSPD and make it mandatory for them to attend

Other comments

- Non-cashable Gershon savings (officer time) could be saved by reducing or removing the panels
- The meetings cannot be supported by area information (as it is held centrally now) therefore they have outlived their use and are duplicating performance management that is covered by the PPMGs
- Consider making them area committees with their own budgets specifically to spend in their areas on the things that are important locally.

Hours and cost by department

The table below shows the officer time and cost of preparing for the MSRP and attendance at the meetings over a 12-month period

Department	Total time	Total cost
Community services *	19.45	369.51
CSPD	44.50	994.22
Democratic	60.45	871.08
Housing	128.75	3086.72
Operations	21.03	954.28
IT	0.83	18.37
Street services	118.75	2915.56
Total	393.77	9209.74

Please note: that the Community services time excludes their preparation time and cost.

Actions to resolve the issues

Update the Terms of Reference for the panels

The group reviewed the existing terms of reference in the constitution and felt that they could be updated to clarify the purpose of the meetings for officers and members.

Member Service Review Panels Proposed Terms of Reference

- i. The purpose of the panels is to inform members of the council services in their ward where the detail is available at that level.
- ii. To oversee and review progress associated with the operational services delivered and managed at Contact Centre level and their interface with other departments including – Housing, Street services, CAN Rangers and Contact Centres
- iii. To review progress of operations against agreed targets and outputs including both financial and operational objectives.
- iv. To receive detailed progress reports from the departments on all matters associated with the Contact Centre area based operations and to receive information (minutes, reports and recommendations) associated with these Contact Centre based Community Action Network operations
- v. To receive reports from and of meetings with tenants and resident groups operating in the Contact Centre operational area
- vi. To feed back information to Best Value Review Groups, in the interest of the provision of value for money and cost effective service delivery and to receive recommendations from them relating to the way the service is provided
- vii. To monitor the members area in relation to :
- viii. The standard of service being delivered against specification and contractual obligations and any statutory standards
- ix. The ongoing requirement of health and safety and employment law in the provision of the operations undertaken
- x. Complaints and compliments received against performance of the services delivered provided informally
- xi. Operations to meet the requirement of the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Codes of Practice, Community Plan, Equalities Policy and other related policies
- xii. The Chair of the meeting will be selected from the Members of the Member Service Review Panel representing the Contact Centre area, in line with responsibility and accountability

Procedure to review the MSRP

The chairs of all the panels have been briefed that some officers have felt 'bashed' during the panel meetings so that they can monitor the situation to ensure that any feedback to officers is appropriate and in a non-confrontational way. This may be appropriate outside the meeting.

To ensure that the group continue to monitor the situation they propose that an evaluation form is issued at all the MSRPs for the following two quarters to obtain feedback from the officers and members. This will ensure that the group monitor that the changes made to the attendance and reports are effective and provide the opportunity for any concerns to be raised.

The proposed evaluation form :

Member Service Review Panel
Feedback

Are you ?

A member	<input type="checkbox"/>
An officer	<input type="checkbox"/>

How satisfied are you with the Member Service Review Panel ?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What went well at the Member Service Review Panel?

Are there any aspects of the Member Service Review Panel that could be improved?

Any other comments/issues with the Member Service Review Panel

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback

Please return no later than 14 days after the meeting to :

Bernadette O'Donnell,
Scrutiny and Policy Officer

Meeting attendance changes

The group propose that the following changes are made to the officers attendance at the meeting :

- Limit the number of officers (1 per department) who attend and those that attend should be well briefed and be able to represent their department. Attendance will be mandatory.
- Members could submit issues/questions prior to the meeting to officers who would ensure that they had responses for the panels
- When officers are unable to answer members questions raised at the meeting, they should target their response within 5 days and supply the response to all the members of the panel

The proposed changes have been issued to officers and members who in the main agree with the changes.

Report changes

The group propose that the following changes are made to the report for the meetings:

- Ensure that the information is complete and all reports are submitted on time and issued with the agenda i.e. never issued at the panel
- The report needs to cover information that provides the members with the details that ensures they are aware of what is happening in their patch. The information at a local level needs to include :
 - Number of face to face callers at the contact centres
 - Number of CAN ranger jobs by area
 - Rent arrears by area
 - Housing interviews by area
 - Voids by area
 - Street services - number of service requests by area and local information e.g. change in schedules, any service failures (not individual ones)
- Any of this information that cannot be supplied by area should indicate in the report that it is at district level.
- Ensure that charts and graphs are large enough to read and the reader can distinguish and interpret

The proposed changes have been issued to officers and members who in the main agree with the changes.

Recommendations that

- 1. the proposed MSRP terms of reference are agreed and forwarded to the Standards Committee to approve**
- 2. the feedback form is issued to all attendees at the MRSP held this year and forwarded to the Executive to approve**

- 3. the proposed changes to the officer attendance at the MSRP is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve**
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