

**Recommended Item from Scrutiny Committee held on 17th March 2009.**

**816. POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GROUPS**

(1) Progress on Reviews

PPMG1

(i) Update of the Review of Member Service Review Panels

The Chair of PPMG1 reported that Members had been resurveyed regarding the new guidelines for Member Service Review Panels and although a few suggestions had been made, there were no significant changes to be made.

Moved by Councillor H. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith.

**RESOLVED** that (1) all officers who may be involved in Member Service Review Panels be reminded of the requirements agreed including:

- a. The officer attending the meeting should be well briefed to enable them to represent their department.
- b. Attendance is mandatory.
- c. Members can submit issues/questions prior to the meeting.
- d. Officers who are unable to answer Members questions raised at the meeting, should target their response within 5 days and supply the response to all the Members of the panel.
- e. Information in the report should indicate whether it is at ward or district level.
- f. Charts and graphs in the report should conform to the corporate standard of 12 point Arial.

(2) the Members satisfaction with Member Service Review Panels be reviewed in February 2010,

(3) the review be formally closed,

**RECOMMENDED** that (4) the above recommendations be forwarded to the Executive for approval.

(Head of Democratic Services)

Committee:	Scrutiny	Agenda Item No.:	10 (1) (i)
Date:	17th March 2009	Category	
Subject:	Update of the Review of Member Service Review Panels	Status	Open
Report by:	PPMG1		
Other Officers involved:	Scrutiny and Policy Officer		
Director	Solicitor to the Council		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Corporate Efficiency		

### **RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS**

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation.

The report has assessed the deployment of the Member Service Review panels review recommendations.

### **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 provide any direct savings for the authority but has released them to fulfil other duties.

### **THE REPORT**

Report attached

### **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial : None  
Legal : None  
Human Resources : None

## **RECOMMENDATIONS that;**

- 1. all officers who may be involved in the MSRP be reminded of the requirements agreed including :**
  - a. The officer attends the meeting should be well briefed to enable them to represent their department.
  - b. Attendance is mandatory.
  - c. Members can submit issues/questions prior to the meeting.
  - d. Officers who are unable to answer members questions raised at the meeting, should target their response within 5 days and supply the response to all the members of the panel.
  - e. Information in the report should indicate whether it is at ward or district level.
  - f. Charts and graphs in the report should conform to the corporate standard of 12 point Arial.
- 2. the members satisfaction with MSRP is reviewed in February 2010**
- 3. the review is formally closed**
- 4. the recommendations are forwarded to the Executive for approval**

ATTACHMENT:                    **Y**  
FILE REFERENCE:                Report on MSRP for Scrutiny 19 March 09.doc  
SOURCE DOCUMENT:

Update on the Review of  
Member Service Review Panels  
March 2009

by  
PPMG 1

Cllr Bowmer  
Cllr Connerton  
Cllr Gilmour  
Cllr Mills  
Cllr Smith  
Cllr Turner  
Cllr Waring

*May I take this opportunity to thank the members of PPMG1 and the Chair of Scrutiny for their time and commitment to this review, and to all the members who have taken the time to provide feedback to the group which has shaped the changes to Member Service Review Panels.*

*The review created many lively debates within the group and eventually I am pleased to say an agreed conclusion was achieved. The result of which is documented in this report.*

*Hilary Gilmour*

*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.

## **Update**

The report from the review was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 29 April 2008 and the recommendations were agreed and endorsed by the Executive on 16 June 2008.

## **That the changes to the MSRP are reviewed in December 2008 (recommendation 5)**

This report details the review of the changes that has been made from the original recommendations made by the group.

## **Status of the recommendations**

### **1. That the proposed MSRP terms of reference are agreed and forwarded to the Standards Committee to approve (recommendation 1)**

The updated terms of reference were agreed by Standards Committee on 9 September 2008 and will be approved by each MSRP in February/April 2009.

Status: Delivered

**2. That the feedback form is issued to all attendees at the MRSP held this year and forwarded to the Executive to approve (recommendation 2)**

This was to 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 agreed feedback form was issued to all the attendees (members and officers) from June 2008 until November 2008 that provided the following results and comments:

Member Service Review Panels

Feedback from Members and officers – June to November 2008

**Total responses = 13** (from 8 panels held)

**Responses from :**

Members	12
Officers	1

**How satisfied are you with the Member Service Review Panels?**

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
4 30.76%	7 53.84%		1 (officer) 7.69%	1 7.69%

**What went well at the Member Service Review Panels?**

- Review of officers reports, along with question and answer items for local area
- Very well informed and questions answered ok
- Information from officers, discussions with officers and an opportunity to clarify issues
- Information officers were able to supply is helpful
- Questions and answers
- Questions answered. If unable to will get back to you.
- Members did not raise any specific issues. It looks as though the message of reporting problems via the CRM system is finally starting to get through

- Everyone had an opportunity to speak and there was no rudeness
- Good reports from the officers. Although some not up-to date due to the timing of the month i.e. at beginning so not time to get up-to-date reports
- Meeting conducted satisfactory

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

- The reduction of officer representation does not work. Officers present cannot answer all questions (no questions submitted beforehand)
- Officer/member relationship
- Not any major ones
- None at present
- Some graphs and figures in larger print
- Probably having all the information to hand could be improved and we should ensure that there are written reports rather than verbal
- Better officer attendance
- Officer supply information when asked for not give excuses several weeks later
- As the officers are the ones to report I feel their comments are most valuable
- Heads of Departments attending

**Any other comments/issues with the Member Service Review Panels?**

- Need more clarity on the purpose of MSRP
- The MSRP should be about developing a relationship where officers/members should work together to resolve problems
- Bar and pie graphs easier to read. Would be better if key to graphs was larger
- Seemed to run alright with only one officer from each department
- Still finding these meetings useful
- Enquiries have been dealt with well and officers feedback
- We must ensure that officers who attend are properly briefed
- As some officers were not there not all questions could be answered

The group were disappointed that only one officer provided feedback.

Status: Delivered.

However, the group felt that they needed further detail from the members to clarify some of the areas. See section 5



**3. That the proposed changes to the officer attendance at the MSRP is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve (recommendation 3)**

The group proposed 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

Summary of officer attendance:

<b>2006</b>	Housing	Street Services	Customer services	Democratic services	Community services
Clowne	4	3	1	1	1
Bolsover	6	1	2	1	
South Normanton					
Shirebrook	6	2	2	1	

<b>2007</b>	Housing	Street Services	Customer services	Democratic services	Community services
Clowne	3	2	2	1	1
Clowne	4	3	2	1	1
Clowne	1	4	1	1	2
Bolsover	1			1	1
Bolsover	4	4	1	1	
Bolsover	4		1		
Bolsover	4	2	1	1	1
South Normanton	4	3	1	1	1
South Normanton	5	2	2	1	1
South Normanton	5	2	1	1	2
South Normanton	5	2	1	1	2
Shirebrook	3	1	1	1	
Shirebrook	3	3	1	1	1
Shirebrook	6	1	2	1	1

<b>2008</b>	Housing	Street Services	Customer services	Democratic services	Community services
Clowne	5	1	2	1	1
Bolsover	6	1	1	1	1

<b>2008</b>	Housing	Street Services	Customer services	Democratic services	Community services
South Normanton	5	2	1	1	
Shirebrook	4	1	2	1	1
Clowne	5	1	2	1	2
Bolsover	3	1	2	1	
Shirebrook	5	1	2	1	1

Attendance after changes agreed to officer attendance by PPMG1

<b>2008</b>		Housing	Street Services	Customer services	Democratic services	Community services
13 June	Clowne	3	1	2	1	1
4 July	Bolsover	1	1	2	1	1
14 Aug	South Normanton	1	1	1	1	1
8 Aug	Shirebrook	1	1	1	1	1
12 Sept	Clowne	1	1	1	1	2
3 Oct	Bolsover	1	1	1	1	1
14 Nov	South Normanton	1	1	1	1	1
21 Nov	Shirebrook	1	1	1	1	1

This clearly demonstrates that the limit of one officer has been deployed. The staff cost and time identified during the original review was £9k and 394 hours per annum . This reduction supports the Council's efficiency aims as it has resulted in officer time being made available to fulfil other duties.

Status: *Delivered*

There is no evidence of questions being submitted prior to the meetings

Status: *Delivered?*

There is no evidence of officers not supplying responses within 5 days to questions raised during the meeting that they cannot answer.

Status: *Delivered*

However since the November 2008 meetings there have been occasions when there has been no officer representing a department at the MSRPs. There have also been some occasions when officers were not fully briefed and answers to the questions have not been supplied to the group within the 5 working days.

Actions :

Officers to be reminded that:

- Attendance is mandatory
- The officer representing the department should be well briefed
- Where answers cannot be supplied at the meeting they should be provided to the group within 5 working days

**4. That the proposed changes to the MSRP reports is agreed and forwarded to the Executive to approve (recommendation 4)**

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

- a. 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

Update

<b>MSRP</b>	<b>Missing reports</b>
13/06 Clowne	Street services – IT back office reporting problem
04/07 Bolsover	Street services (verbal) – IT back office reporting problem
14/08 South Normanton	None
08/08 Shirebrook	Street services (verbal) – IT back office reporting problem
12/09 Clowne	Street services – verbal update
03/10 Bolsover	Street services – presented on the day as they were still having IT problems
14/11 South Normanton	None
21/11 Shirebrook	None

Status: Delivered

- b. 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 :

Using Clowne MSRP meeting papers for 12 September as an example:

- **Number of face to face callers at the contact centres**

This information is included. However information is also supplied on the district performance, graphs and CRM requests which PPMG2 scrutinise quarterly.

- **Number of CAN ranger jobs by area**

This information is included. However information is also supplied on the CAN rangers job volumes for the district PPMG4 scrutinise quarterly.

- **Rent arrears by area**

This information is included including the % by area.

- **Housing interviews by area**

This information is included.

- **Voids by area**

This information is included at property level in the ward

Other housing information provided:

At ward level:

- Officer visits – Housing needs and tenancy management
- Partnership working – housing needs
- Enforcement actions
- Homelessness and properties allocated

At District level:

- Services for vulnerable people
  - Central control out of hours calls
  - Nights in B&B
  - People on the waiting list
  - Repairs and maintenance
  - Decent homes work
- (these are scrutinised by PPMG4 quarterly)

- **Street services - number of service requests by area and local information e.g. change in schedules, any service failures (not individual ones)** No information but this will be due to the IT issues that they had during this period.

*Status:* The group agreed that they wanted to continue seeing the district wide information that is scrutinised by the PPMG groups as they did not get access to it elsewhere. Officers who contribute the information for the report were reminded on 3 February that they needed to continue providing the data.

- Any of this information that cannot be supplied by area should indicate in the report that it is at district level.

Update:

Using Clowne MSRP meeting papers for 12 September as an example:  
The information is at a combination of ward and district level but does not specifically state it in each of the headings.

*Status:* Officers who contribute to information for the report were reminded on 3 February to indicate, where they have not, in the heading if possible whether the information is at district or ward level.

- Ensure that charts and graphs are large enough to read and the reader can distinguish and interpret

Update:

Feedback received (see feedback from member and officers) stated:  
*Improve* – Some graphs and figures in larger print.  
*Other comments* – Bar and pie graphs easier to read.  
Would be better if key to graphs was larger.

*Status:* Officers in Housing who contribute charts and graphs for the report were reminded on 3 February to increase the font size to the corporate standard of 12 Arial

## 5. Feedback from Members on the changes (Jan 09)

The group agreed that they would gain feedback from the members to enable further clarification to be sought from the comments included in the reviews issued at the end of the MSRP (see recommendation 2). The review forms were issued on 22 January and they provided the following outputs:

Responses received

17
= 46%

**In your opinion, do you feel satisfied with one officer representing a service area?**

<b>Satisfied</b>	12	70%
<b>Not satisfied</b>	4	24%
<b>No answer</b>	1	6%

**Comments:**

- As there are 4 reports I feel an officer should present each report. The head of department may not know of communication between the head of service and member
- I feel that one officer is sufficient and should come to MSRP updated on information
- One officer, well briefed, including areas which are not his/her speciality, can fully represent the area
- In most cases but Housing is so large that it would help to have repairs separately represented if possible
- Yes the 1 officer should be able to satisfy the group
- So long as the person attending has been well briefed by non-attending officers and quickly answer queries to be able to do this members need info prior to the meeting
- The officer should have good overall knowledge of the department and service area's operation with up-to-date facts
- Satisfied if a replacement officer will be in attendance if the representing officer is unavailable
- On occasions some queries cannot always be answered by one officer
- Housing needs 1 from repairs and maintenance and 1 from allocations
- One officer may not be sufficiently aware of details in response to questions or specific issues e.g. housing, untidy gardens and tenancy concerns
- In principle, but some dept/services are split i.e. housing and repairs and maintenance. Is it expected or fair to assume one officer can answer all queries, when repairs and maintenance is controlled from the depot away from Sherwood Lodge Housing section

**Do you consider that the one officer who attends should be the Head of Service?**

<b>Yes</b>	5	29%
<b>No</b>	12	71%

**Comment:**

- Not necessarily
- We do not mind who it is as long as they can answer the questions asked
- The officer who will have the information required
- There will be numerous occasions when the head of department does not have knowledge of the specifics i.e. the work of the CAN rangers/tenancy enforcement/ road cleaning

- Attendance on a rotation basis would be of benefit to each of the services, so there is always someone to cover for absence
- In most cases – but a fully briefed deputy would be acceptable and might have a better view of operational issues
- Either/or – whether Head of Service or not the person must be able to represent the area fully – it could be a staff development opportunity to train future Heads of Service??
- Not necessarily. It may be possible that other officers from the same department may have more information i.e. repairs and maintenance
- The officer should be fully up-to-date and able to answer all questions. Head of Service would be best but not essential
- No, as long as the officer in attendance has the relevant information asked for from the previous meeting, plus any other supporting documentation
- Yes were ever possible
- Saves waiting for information if needed at that present meeting

**Can you envisage a scenario when other officers would or could be invited to the MSRP?**

- Questions occasionally asked regarding enforcement issues i.e. untidy gardens (environmental or planning) maybe an officer could be invited but any questions would have to be submitted (if possible) beforehand
- Obviously that may prove necessary if the finer details re eg service or similar were required
- When it is relevant that they attend
- Yes – if specific issues arise requiring specialist knowledge or more detailed information
- Only if and when more than one officer has been involved
- Yes – to deal with specific concerns or questions raised (based on matters raised previously in writing e.g. eyes and ears or formal documented and dated complaints or concerns which have not been addressed) or emergency issues as agreed with the chair of MSRP
- Yes – if a matter has been un resolved for sometime or if an urgent matter has come up and the Head of Service has been notified prior to the meeting. In that case the Head of Service could invite a specialist officer
- No- provided the person is fully briefed it only needs one. Saying that housing is 2 departments because of size or geographical distance is not helpful and could lead to all departments saying it
- Maybe a specific issue needs to be addressed (that should have been indicated prior to the meeting) therefore would need another officer to be involved
- If there is a major problem with a particular service
- On complex technical or operational issues when a much more in-

depth information and detail is required

- From a department or operation that does not normally attend e.g. regeneration, if a specific issue arises only for that particular MSRP area
- In many cases the authority's services overlap and may therefore involve more than one dept, so there may be occasions to have representation from several service providers. I am sure that when such circumstances occur the Scrutiny and Policy Officer would invite relevant officers to be present at the meeting

### **Can you think of anything else that might improve the performance of the MSRPs?**

- The agenda contains reports from each service area therefore an officer must attend to answer questions raised from the report
- Currently some depts. are not represented and when this happens more than once or twice, it's very difficult for members to discover what is happening or to contribute views. So the first practical step is for everyone to attend.
- Following up the mandatory representation – MSRPs won't work if departments are not represented or not fully briefed ( no CAN ranger represented or figures twice so far?)
- That a representative always attends the meeting
- Make it compulsory for at least one officer from each service to attend
- Information before the meeting
- Officers should always come to the MSRP with the closest update possible. This is important to members so that they know what is going on in their patch
- To enable the right officers to be present. Maybe a brief questionnaire to go out with the agenda to be returned before the meeting
- Formal process for members to submit questions for areas of concern prior to the meeting so that officers can provide an update at the meeting
- As long as the information is up-to-date
- More of a 'we are all playing for the same team' culture and less of a blame culture. We are all seeking to improve quality of services aren't we?
- Members reporting items via formal processes and NOT raising specific concerns which have not previously been recorded or reported via the appropriate route
- At times members ask specific questions relevant to their own words which may require an answer in the short term
- It may be of some advantage for the committee clerk to be able to log such questions/requests in a separate section of the recorded minutes. This will assist the committee clerk in minuting the request made, it



also provides an audit trail for future reference.

### Any other comments

- Officers do not always get back with enquiries. Have to chase up or wait for the next meeting
- It is important that members and officers work together not just for Clowne area but for Bolsover. We can do this very easily by giving up-to-date information on items like housing, repairs and maintenance, re-lets etc.
- On the whole I think that they work well but need a few tweaks to improve understanding by both members and officers
- A CAN ranger from own patch would be helpful
- Reduction of representation in the Clowne MSRP has not reduced the service except when departments have not been represented or where a representative suggested that they did not have the details
- Elected members look to these meetings to keep them aware of developments/problems on their patch. They can also give info using their local knowledge which could help officers improve the service. The stress should be on the liaison between officers and members working together for the good of the communities
- Heads of appropriate departments need to be reminded of the MSRP dates
- Still think MSRP are important part of ongoing process for continuous improvement
- Works reasonably well
- Working together will ensure the MSRPs will be a success
- I feel that the MSRP meetings have improved with regard to the information being presented by officers. I am aware that comments made in section 4, issues can be resolved between other officer and member but at times this is not always recorded

### Which MSRP do you attend?

Bolsover	4
Clowne	5
Shirebrook	5
South Normanton	5

Some members attend more than one panel

The group were disappointed at the low number of responses received despite it being promoted verbally on several occasions.

## **Conclusion**

On the whole the group felt that the changes made to the MSRP have worked and the recommendations have been delivered and provided the Council with an efficiency saving in resources.

## **Recommendations that;**

### **1) all officers who may be involved in the MSRP be reminded of the requirements agreed including :**

- a. The officer attends the meeting should be well briefed to enable them to represent their department.
- b. Attendance is mandatory.
- c. Members can submit issues/questions prior to the meeting.
- d. Officers who are unable to answer members questions raised at the meeting, should target their response within 5 days and supply the response to all the members of the panel.
- e. Information in the report should indicate whether it is at ward or district level.
- f. Charts and graphs in the report should conform to the corporate standard of 12 point Arial.

**2) the members satisfaction with MSRP is reviewed in February 2010**

**3) the review is formally closed**

**4) the recommendations are forwarded to the Executive for approval**