

AT A MEETING  
of the  
**RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY  
AND PERFORMANCE PANEL:  
CPA USE OF RESOURCE (VALUE FOR  
MONEY) WORKING GROUP**  
held at The Council House, Walsall on  
**23 January 2006** at 6.00pm.

**PRESENT**

Councillor Griffiths  
Councillor Sarohi

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Rob Flinter – Head of Corporate Performance Management  
Helen Dudson – Service Development and Interim Scrutiny Manager

**1. APOLOGIES**

No apologies for non-attendance were received.

**2. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM) ACTION PLAN**

Rob Flinter recapped how vfm fits into the CPA regime and the Use of Resources annual inspection. He advised members that following the score of 2 for 2005 and the weighting of the elements in the vfm assessment it was vital to our overall Use of Resources and overall CPA category and Direction of Travel label that we achieved a minimum of a 3 for vfm at the next assessment. As our vfm self assessment must be submitted by the end of June 2006 we need to make some improvements quite quickly.

Rob Flinter informed the group that following the receipt of the Audit Commission inspection report the draft action plan for all elements of the Use of Resources had been presented at EMT and that it had been agreed that Dave Martin will be the Director Champion for the vfm element. He went on to explain the format of the action plan with each of the levels relating to the CPA Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for vfm and how some actions to improve our performance had been identified. In summary re reminded members that as a council our aim for this year as a minimum was to improve our score for KLOE 5.1 (scored 2) and sustain the score for KLOE 5.2. (scored 3) members were then asked where they felt they can add the most value.

Members felt that to assess vfm information was vital but that members didn't receive all the information that was needed. During discussion about this several elements were noted as being important when assessing vfm. Those elements noted included customer satisfaction, quality of service (service standard), the cost of the service, BVPI's and other performance data, council priorities and Gershon efficiencies. It was recognised that in addition to these elements services may gather other data, for example from benchmarking groups.

Members asked how we could be sure of the accuracy of the information being provided and officers explained that for performance data the Audit Commission produced profile packs that groups like authorities together and presented their comparative performance. This information is quite robust because of the verification work conducted by the Audit Commission. Officers also acknowledge that often it is necessary to examine the detail behind the strategic data to understand issues. As an example Rob Flinter referred to the recent Tracker survey result. Whilst the survey gave us very interesting and useful data about satisfaction to fully understand where satisfaction could be improved it was necessary to look at the results in more detail as satisfaction could be linked to geographical areas or particular ethnic groups. It was recognised by all that the role of members within the wards they represent was vital in receiving feedback from our customers and that collective analysis of this information could support improvement to customer satisfaction.

Members expressed the view that it was important that vfm be promoted as much as possible and that anything relating to the work of this group be addressed as vfm and felt that they could do more to further the work. Recognising the difficulty in securing meeting dates officers confirmed that members of the group who had the capacity could meet without officers before the next formal meeting of the group to progress the work and that they could contact officers if their independent research raised any queries.

**It was resolved:**

1. That Helen Dudson circulate to members the following information by 6 February to allow members to meet and discuss prior to the next formal meeting:
  - Audit Commission vfm profile information.
  - The review of best practice in relation to vfm conducted by the corporate performance management service.
  - The tracker action plan (it was agreed this may need to follow as is due to be finalised at end of January).
2. That the target of the group, based on all information received to date and recognising the importance of vfm for the council as a whole, is to develop a framework for vfm assessment that could be utilised by all scrutiny and performance panels to conduct vfm assessments as part of their work programmes on an ongoing basis.
3. That the work of the group be completed and finalised at the meeting on 5 April so recommendations can be reported back to full panel at the meeting on 13 April.
4. That members of the group draft a brief article for inclusion in the Members Digest promoting the importance of vfm and inviting feedback from members about how they feel it should be measured.
5. That the group consider further the potential for recommendations regarding promoting good performance and vfm in services through feature articles in Walsall Pride which compare our performance with other authorities.

Meeting closed at 7.00pm.