

## POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

26 JANUARY 2011

### REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY EFFICIENCY TASK GROUP

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Members upon the meeting of the Task Group with Chair of Community and Social Affairs Committee at the Task Groups' recent meeting on 14 January 2011.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

**It is recommended that:-**

- 2.1 **Officers to be tasked with working upon relevant efficiency costing techniques and improvements to report writing.**
- 2.2 **The report of the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group be noted.**

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Prior to the meeting of the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group (EETG) met to consider the efficiency aspects of certain Council key areas of activity as identified by Task Group Members. An Away Day was held by the Task Group and this was reported to the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group at its November meeting.
- 3.2 To consider this work further the Chair of the Task Group invited the Chair of Community and Social Affairs Committee to discuss the brief at the recent meeting of the Task Group. The purpose of the session was to form a link or "bridge" between the thoughts of the EETG and Policy Development and Evaluation as managed by the main Committee.
- 3.3 It was noted in a discussion that with respect to Neighbourhood Management and the work of the Family Intervention Project there was much support for current levels of investment, but the Task Group felt that "activity based measurements" for the work would be helpful as it could illustrate the Value for Money of the approach. Further, the Task Group felt this may also help influence Partners and assist in developing the area based concept to work in Melton. The Chair of the Committee understood this view and was able to give several examples where the work of Teams responsible to the Committee had looked at the efficiency of the approaches being adopted and had amended working practices to avoid overlap and reduce duplication as well as building further work upon the learning developed in previous projects and initiatives. It was further confirmed that case studies were used to develop the Melton approach.
- 3.4 As part of the discussion, which also included the suggestion that "opportunity based costing" would assist activities such as those related to Financial Wellbeing, the Chair agreed to discuss with Lead Officers methods of illustrating to the Committee the current efficiencies approach and ideas to develop this further.

- 3.5 It was noted that an approach to activity based costing currently took place within the FIP in its reporting mechanisms to Government associated with its funding. Also, certain of the Countywide initiatives were approached in Melton in a way that utilised efficiencies to further extend our work. Members were advised that the Chief Executive and the Head of Central Services had discussed a small project taking place in February/March 2011 to understand the current use of activity based costing and opportunity based costing developed within the Council and in response to funders, to develop a simplified Melton approach to this method of understanding costs and efficiencies. Both Officers were mindful that at the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group Members indicated that they did not wish to see an "Industry" develop around this approach.
- 3.6 The Task Group also requested that Officers work upon a methodology of including efficiencies within report writing and developing skills of those responsible for reports presented to Committee to ensure that the efficiency aspects of any proposals or reports on projects and initiatives were covered. The Chief Executive and the Head of Communications will consider moving this approach further which the Task Group considered would develop awareness of the efficiency approach and help develop a culture within the Council which could better improve reports and information to Members.
- 3.7 With respect to other matters considered with the Chair of the Policy Committee it was noted that work with the Community and the Voluntary Sector would also be a key area to examine and develop within this efficiency approach. With respect to Anti Social Behaviour there was consideration given to developing the "perceptions" of members of the Community as to what was Anti Social Behaviour through engagement and involvement to gain better understanding and awareness of the costs associated with delivering the service and the need to target towards main areas of concern. Furthermore, the Chair of Community and Social Affairs Committee advised of current activities involving key community organisations such as Rotary with the Council and Melton Active to become involved in Community events both as a supporter and a facilitator. The Task Group felt this linked well with consideration of the future of Cultural Services within Melton in that it felt the Council should be a "clearing house" to help the Community to improve "self service" in these areas. The Chair of the Policy Committee was able to confirm that the Melton Community Partnership was looking at this area of activity and would be able to take on board the views of the Task Group.
- 3.8 The Task Group agreed to pursue discussions with the Policy Chairs further with respect to other activities discussed at the Away Day.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Task Group wished to assist the Policy Committees in developing an efficiency strand to consideration of Policy, Initiatives and Projects both with respect to authorisation and monitoring/evaluation.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The work of the Task Group is focussed upon raising awareness and dealing with efficiency issues as they arise within the Council.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

**7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 The Councils approach to Anti Social Behaviour and related projects and initiatives was discussed both at the Away Day of the Task Group and with the Chair of the Community and Social Affairs Committee.

**8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 As individual projects arise equality issues are considered. On occasions an efficiency approach could prompt and require a more detailed Equality Impact Assessment as the efficiency proposed may impact on upon certain sections of the Community.

**9.0 RISKS**

9.1 Please see table below

**Probability**

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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1, 2		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→ **Impact**

Risk No.	Description
1	Considering the efficiencies of Policy, projects and initiatives does not take place.
2	Opportunity to improve understanding in the culture of efficiencies improvements

**10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no specific implications.

**11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 The Task Group is currently consulting with Policy Chairs to develop further awareness of the techniques required to build efficiency into the Councils Policy development and project based approach.

**12.0 WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All

Contact Officer Lynn Aisbett, Chief Executive  
Date: 18 January 2011

Appendices : None

Background Papers: Away Day Resume – Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group  
Notes of Task Group Meeting of 14 January 2011

Reference : X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\PFA\2010-11\260111\Item 13 - Report of the EETG.doc