MINUTES OF END TO END SERVICE REVIEW TASK GROUP

22 SEPTEMBER 2010

PRESENT:

Members of the Group: Councillors Mrs Avis, Butlin, Cranham (co-optee), Mahoney and Mrs O’Rourke

Officers: Sean Kennedy, Change Officer
Paul Ansell, Scrutiny Officer
Elizabeth Routledge, Democratic Services Officer

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

16. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Spiers.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. FINALISING OF THE REVIEW REPORT

The Group considered the Draft Review Report. Members were reminded that the purpose of the meeting was to review the report and:

- Consider how common themes could be adopted across the council
- Consider ways in which members' understanding of systems thinking could be improved
- Draw up recommendations to Cabinet
- Draft an action plan for implementation of the recommendations

Section 2: Objectives The Scrutiny Officer drew the Group’s attention to the objectives of the review, in particular, ‘What are the measures of success of the review?’ and ‘What will be the outcome?’

The Change Manager commented that one recommendation of the Review might be to apply the principles of end to end service reviews, but in smaller ‘bites’. This would enable a service review to be carried out gradually without the necessity to involve the whole team for a lengthy period. A core team could be guided through the theory and practice of systems thinking and then introduce it to the rest of the team. It was suggested that each service could use the
principles identified to develop its own measures of purpose to replace performance indicators.

Section 3: Methodology  The Group then considered the Methodology behind the review and revisited the process which was divided into four parts:

(i) Lecture-style presentation
(ii) Account of reviews by the managers of services that are doing end-to-end reviews
(iii) Direct experience of carrying out of the ‘check’ stage of a review
(iv) Identifying common themes between the principles arrived at through the group’s check stage with those adopted by the three reviews currently in progress.

Following these four stages, the group had drawn up a set of principles for good systems thinking that would help eliminate the system conditions that created waste. Copies of these principles, along with the principles adopted by the three reviews currently in progress, had been attached to the review in order to identify common themes that might be adopted across the council.

The themes had been grouped into eight sections:

- Primacy of the customer
- Alignment with purpose (in customer terms)
- System review and correction
- Ownership
- Information Technology
- System design – other
- Learning from mistakes (and colleagues)
- Miscellaneous

The group considered each section in turn and made the following comments:

- **Primacy of the customer:** It was agreed that the common theme here was: An adaptable and flexible system focussed on the customer’s needs.
- **Alignment with purpose (in customer terms):** The group felt that its statement ‘We understand the law and apply it reasonably to reflect the customer’s circumstances’ best reflected the common theme.
- **System review and correction:** The group considered the statement made by the Housing Benefits Team to fit the purpose (as detailed on page 3 of Appendix 4) and decided to move the ‘Learning from Mistakes’ (and colleagues) theme to this section.
- **Ownership:** The two statements favoured in this section were:
  - Make decisions when you can and pull support when required; and
  - Use minimal handoffs to maintain ownership
- **Information technology:** The most appropriate statement was agreed as:
  - IT should be adapted to fit the task and not the task adapted to fit IT
- **System design – other:** The Group did not comment on this section.
- **Learning from mistakes:** it was decided to move this section under ‘System Review and Correction’.
- **Miscellaneous:** ‘Do not assume it works – check that it works’
Section 4 – Findings: It would be necessary to draw up a meaningful action plan based on the common themes identified.

Section 5 – Conclusions: The Group considered this section and made the following comments / changes:

- The second paragraph to read: ‘End-to-end service reviews must be carried out by the officers who do the work. However, members have a legitimate role in articulating public demand for improvement and thereby identifying areas where the greatest improvement may be achieved’.
- It was suggested that members of CORP be trained in the general principles of systems thinking to enhance their understanding of the subject when considering future occasional reports of end to end service reviews in progress.
- Although the Council had adopted systems thinking to improve performance, most members and many officers were still using traditional performance indicators to measure performance. Those officers that had experienced systems thinking had embraced the methodology and were continuing with its practice. New means of measures needed to be adopted to quantify performance in terms of the satisfaction of customer purpose.
- It was agreed that the benefits of end to end service reviews should be highlighted in the Conclusion.

RESOLVED THAT –

(i) The Change Officer and the Scrutiny Officer draw up draft recommendations for the Review, based on the points raised at the meeting, together with a high level action plan, to be presented at the next meeting of the Group;

(ii) the revised Draft Review be circulated to the Leadership and Operations Team for their consideration;

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED THAT- the next meeting be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 12th October 2010.

CHAIRMAN