

PORTFOLIO:

**POLICY, PERFORMANCE
&, FINANCE**

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
FIRTH**

1. During the period 27 August to 17 October 2003, as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance and Finance, I have attended the following:

27.08.03	Officers' Briefing - Finance Officers' Briefing – Property Services
28.08.03	Overview 7 Scrutiny – Community Executive Meeting
01.09.03	Executive Meeting
02.09.03	Management Conference
03.09.03	Irthington Parish Council
04.09.03	Joint Management Team Overview & Scrutiny – Corporate Resources City Council
05.09.03	Heritage Day
08.09.03	Cumbria County Council
09.09.03	City Council
10.09.03	Cumbria Branch, Local Government Association
11.09.03	Strategic Financial Planning Group
15.09.03	Rural Regeneration Company, Hackthorpe
16.09.03	Strategic Financial Planning Group
17.09.03	Officers' Briefing – Finance
18.09.03	Joint Management Team Corporate Risk Management Group
19.09.03	Development Advisory Group
15.10.03	Post 14 Group Strategic Financial Planning Group
16.10.03	Joint Management Team Overview & Scrutiny – Corporate Resources
17.10.03	Officers' Briefing – Finance Development Advisory Group

1. **Finance**

Business Unit' individual budgets continue to be monitored closely by the Strategic Financial Planning Group.

Budget bids against both revenue and capital expenditure, together with potential savings, for the financial year 2004-2005 are being considered in the light of the Council's current financial position and will be put to Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive in accordance with the published timetable.

2. **Performance Management Improvement:**

It is a Council priority to improve the performance management system of the authority and, particularly, to increase the speed of information provision on performance in order that decisions can be made with the benefit of sound, timely, relevant, information. In addition, there was a need to make the collection and monitoring of performance information less onerous and time-consuming.

For those reasons, the authority has now purchased the Performance Indicator (PI) software package *Indicata+*, and established a Working Group to oversee its implementation. Following the system's configuration to our needs (adding local PIs, setting up standard reports and PIs according to Corporate Themes/Priorities/Business Units, and developing links to existing databases) it will be piloted before becoming fully operational for the 2004/05 annual returns in March 2005. It will be gradually rolled out to Business Units between now and then.

3. **Performance Management Training for Members**

In order to enable Members to engage more fully in monitoring the performance of the authority, a performance management workshop was held for Overview and Scrutiny Members on 14th October 2003. The workshop triggered useful debate around the responsibilities of Members in this area and there was positive feedback from Members. It is considered that all Members would benefit from this training and if a reasonable number of Members show interest in the event, it could be rolled out further.

4. **Result of 2002/03 BVPI Audit:**

The "Auditor's Report to the Audit Commission on the Best Value Performance Indicators" for Carlisle City Council has just been received. None of our Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) were qualified and there were no omissions in our return.

This is a big improvement on last year when there were qualifications plus many omissions and calculation errors. There were, however, 10 amendments to our BVPIs this year (the result of calculation errors and use of financial estimates), but I am sure our reporting will only continue to improve. There were some "reservations" noted, which were in relation to some of our crime PIs due to incorrect data supplied by the police.

With regard to the audited out-turn BVPIs for 2002/03, the Auditor's report states that:

- *"the authority has put in place adequate systems to produce all the 2002/03 BVPIs subject to any reservation(s) ...*
- *no matters have come to my attention that could lead me to believe that the indicators listed are other than fairly stated.... "*

A full copy of the report is available, on request.

5. **Property Services**

Development interest in the City Council's land remains strong, particularly at Parkhouse where officers are discussing the possibility of attracting a hotel, car showrooms and offices although the supply of electricity into the area is a particular issue. However, I am pleased to say that there could be development taking place after many years of marketing.

The Audit Commission have just made a report into Asset Management and say the Council is making significant progress.

The Lanes, Market Hall and Kingmoor Park are continuing to attract new businesses into Carlisle and accommodation for existing companies to grow.