

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by Chief Executive

Council Meeting: 27 May 2009

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### Subject: The SOLACE 'Golden Thread' study

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of corporate and departmental planning and the SOLACE 'Golden Thread' study.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Consultants from SOLACE Enterprises were engaged as part of the Best Value Improvement Plan to review the Council's Corporate and Departmental Plans with the aim of assessing their compatibility, consistency and quality. The 'Golden Thread' process checks for a 'clear line-of-sight' from top-level plans through intermediate plans to personal plans.
- 2.2 The main phase of the study has been completed. A report summarising their conclusions is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The progress of the review has been reported to Audit & Performance Review Committee. At the latest meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the report should be submitted to full Council and a presentation should be given by SOLACE to allow all Elected Members to hear from the consultants first-hand and to comment on the study.
- 2.4 Lesley Bloomer from SOLACE is planning to attend the meeting and give a presentation to Elected Members.

#### 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The study found that the Corporate Plan was easy to read, clear and concise and set out numerical targets. It linked well with the Community Plan, but future iterations would benefit from better prioritisation, better links to resources and improved articulation of major projects. Reporting of progress to Members and the public was overall very good but could be improved by reporting more on achievements.
- 3.2 The study concluded that Departmental Plans varied widely in quality and content. They need to be simplified and conform better to an updated standard template. The new 'scorecards' in Covalent provide the opportunity to ensure a consistent approach to the selection of indicators for departmental plans and to show complete linkages back to the Corporate Plan / Community Plan / SOA.

**3.3** The study also concludes that more remains to be done to improve approaches and indicators relating to efficiency, customer satisfaction, equalities and sustainability. Reports to Committees require some improvement to clarity and user friendliness. The study also reviewed the culture of performance management. Some differing approaches were noted with levels of embedded-ness varying across and within departments.

**3.4** Finally the consultants provided assistance in finalising our new performance management framework and in designing an improved service planning template. It is planned that a final phase of the project should comprise a brief 'critical-friend' review of the next suite of departmental plans prior to their final approval by Members.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

**4.1** There are no personnel issues.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** There are no financial implications.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

**6.1** Without good performance management and strategic planning arrangements there is a risk that the Council will not be able to assess performance, allocate resources effectively and that service performance will decline.

#### **7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations**

**7.1** The 'Golden Thread' study has complemented our corporate approach to planning and performance management but has suggested improvements at departmental and service level.

**7.2** Members of the Council are asked to note the contents of this report and provide any further feedback.

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**David McMillan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Date: 6 May 2009**

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**Appendix 1:** SOLACE Golden Thread Study

**Background Papers:** [Report on Performance Management Framework to Audit & PR Committee 11/25 March 2009.](#)

**Wards Affected:** All