

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
CABINET - 19 NOVEMBER 2008
REVIEW OF EFQM PATHWAY

Report by Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the annual review of the Council's programme of EFQM Assessments, and the proposed development of Quality Scotland's EFQM Pathway software.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee on 19 February 2004 approved the use of the Pathway software to facilitate EFQM Assessments within the Council and agreed an annual programme of assessments for Service Units across the Council. Since then, the use of Pathway has been reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the effectiveness of our self-assessment arrangements.

- 2.2 The importance of self-assessment has been highlighted by the recent Crerar "Review of Regulation, Audit, Inspection and Complaints Handling in Scottish Public Services" which concluded that future arrangements should place a much greater reliance on the self-assessment of performance by service providers enabling a reduction in the volume of external scrutiny.

- 2.3 The conclusions of Crerar have subsequently been reflected in the Accounts Commission's emerging thinking on the principles that will underpin the design of the new audit framework for Best Value 2. The Commission has stated that a key feature of the new Framework will be a more proportionate and risk-based audit approach, founded on self-assessment.

- 2.4 It is clear that self-assessment will play a greater role in the future audit and inspection of Council services and this fourth annual review of the use of Pathway seeks to ensure that our existing arrangements are robust, effective, fit for purpose and continue to drive continuous improvement in the delivery of services across the Council. All departments have been fully involved in the review process through the Best Value and Performance Extended Team and have contributed to, and agreed, the conclusions arising from this review.

3. UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST ANNUAL PROGRAMME OF EFQM ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 Executive Directors agreed a programme for 2007/08 for all EFQM self-assessments. Service units have confirmed that all self-assessments have been completed and their action plans updated. A table showing

progress and the timetable for EFQM Service Unit Assessments for 2008/2009 is attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.2** This is a significant achievement for the Council, and all aspects of the services provided to our communities continue to be assessed against the rigours of the EFQM Model to ensure continuous improvement. The implementation of improvement action plans that are generated through this process, are monitored and reviewed by respective Service Managers.
- 3.3** It should be highlighted that within the Education Service an annual review is undertaken using the Evaluation Framework Quality Management in Education (QMIE2). This Framework is closely aligned to, and based upon the requirements of, the EFQM Model and demonstrates the Service's commitment to continuous improvement. The outcome of this annual review is reported separately to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

4. REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Size of Service Units

A key recommendation of last year's review was the move to larger service units that are coterminous with Heads of Service responsibilities and the new Service Planning and Best Value Service Review arrangements. With the exception of Leisure Services, all Services undertook EFQM assessments on this basis during 2007/08. Initial feedback from these assessments indicates that whilst some of the more detailed operational feedback, particularly from frontline staff, may have been lost, the move to larger service units has resulted in a more strategic and high level discussion at consensus meetings and this has been reflected in agreed improvement action plans.

In view of the more strategic approach, together with the added advantage of linking with the new Service Planning and Best Value Review arrangements, it is suggested that the larger service units be retained and that the Leisure Service should also move to a single assessment in 2008/09. It is also anticipated that the new management structures agreed within the Social Work Service will see this Service moving from a single assessment to two assessments which reflect the responsibilities of the new Heads of Service.

4.2 Pathway Software

The EFQM software is relatively simple to use and there is general acceptance that the question sets are appropriate. Although this is essentially a self-assessment tool, the software enables users to record evidence to support the grading given in respect of any question set. This is a useful feature from an audit perspective.

The move to larger service units has exposed some concerns regarding the simplicity of the Pathway scoring system. The current scoring arrangements do not allow for the deployment of different approaches across the larger service units to be reflected in overall scores. A new scoring package, which incorporates the RADAR approach (Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment and Review) advocated by the EFQM Model, allowing deployment to be reflected in the scoring of assessments, has recently been developed by Quality Scotland and this is now available in an alternative version of Pathway.

It is proposed that consideration be given to adopting the new scoring package for future assessments within the Council.

4.3 Training

It is considered that the proposed move to the more complex scoring system may require some training for those staff participating in future EFQM Assessments. A phased roll out of the new system will allow an assessment of whether this training can be provided internally by those staff with a detailed working knowledge of the EFQM Model or whether some additional external training from Quality Scotland may be required.

In addition, it has been sometime since formal Accredited Assessor Training on the EFQM Model has been undertaken by key staff involved in facilitating EFQM Assessments across the Council. Participation in such training provides participants with an in depth understanding of the EFQM Excellence Model and the ability to be an Accredited Assessor qualified to participate in assessing other organisations for one of Quality Scotland's recognition schemes. It is anticipated that this will benefit the Council in bringing back good practice from external organisations and in preparing for our own participation in Quality Scotland's recognition schemes. Consequently, it is proposed that the Performance, Development and Projects Manager identifies suitable nominations from across the Council to participate in Accredited Assessor Training.

4.4 External Validation of Assessments

In view of the potential greater emphasis on self-assessment in the future audit and inspection of Council services, it is suggested that our existing arrangements be externally evaluated to ensure that they are effective, fit for purpose and continue to drive continuous improvement in the delivery of services across the Council. Quality Scotland have indicated that they would be willing to assist in this validation exercise by carrying out an assessment of a service or services using the data derived from a consensus meeting which is stored within the Pathway software.

This exercise will be of assistance to both the individual services in providing external expertise and input into the development of its

Improvement Action Plans, and in gaining wider feedback on the Council's overall approach and use of Pathway.

The Leisure Service has volunteered to trial this approach to external validation and the intention, if successful, would be to extend this approach to at least one service unit from each Department.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** Departments are satisfied that the annual programme of self-assessment using EFQM Pathway software continues to meet the Council's need for a mechanism to contribute to continuous improvement as part of the Council's approach to Best Value. It is recommended that the Council continues to use the Pathway software for annual EFQM assessments. The proposals for a new scoring package, additional training and external validation of our existing arrangements will ensure that the Council's approach to self-assessment will be well placed to respond to future audit and inspections requirements.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** None.

7. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The costs of involving Quality Scotland in the external validation of our current self-assessment arrangements are included within our annual membership fee and it is anticipated that the costs of any additional training required will be met from existing training budgets.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that Cabinet:-
- (i) note the excellent progress made in completing the 2007/08 programme of EFQM Assessments across the Council;
 - (ii) agree the continued use of the Pathway software on an annual basis for the self-assessment of each of the Council's service units as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report;
 - (iii) agree to explore the possibility of upgrading the scoring package within the Pathway Software to allow deployment to be reflected in the scoring of Assessments;
 - (iv) agree that the Performance, Development and Projects Manager seeks nominations for key staff to undertake Accredited Assessor Training on the EFQM Model;
 - (v) agree to involve Quality Scotland, initially in the Leisure Service's 2008/09 EFQM Assessment, to externally validate and assess the Council's overall approach to self-assessment; and
 - (vi) otherwise note the content of this report.

Alex McPhee
Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management
5 November 2008

List of Background Papers

None

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: Jim Farrell, Performance, Development & Projects Manager

Appendix 1

Update on 2007/08 EFQM Assessments and Timetable for 2008/09 Assessments

| Department / Service | Scheduled date for completion of 2007/08 EFQM self-assessment | Actual date of last EFQM self-assessment completed | Proposed Timetable for 2008/09 Service Consensus Meeting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Corporate Support | | | |
| Personnel services | December 2007 | December 2007 | December 2008 |
| Information Technology | March 2008 | Assessment delayed as a result of the Best Value Service Review – Completed November 2008 | October 2009 |
| Democratic Services | February 2008 | March 2008 | March 2009 |
| Legal, Procurement & Regulatory Services | February 2008 | Assessment delayed due to Office move - Completed December 2008 | October 2009 |
| Planning & Economic Development | December 2007 | December 2007 | February 2009 (will be completed as part of BVSR) |
| Community Planning and Partnership Unit | August 2008 | September 2008 | September 2009 |
| Neighbourhood Services | | | |
| Building & Works | May 2008 | August 2008 | August 2009 |
| Housing, Community Safety and Waste Management | January 2008 | January 2008 | January 2009 |
| Leisure | | | |
| Assessments for each individual unit continued to be undertaken in 2007/08 but this approach has been reviewed and agreement has been secured to undertake a single EFQM Assessment for the Leisure Service in 2008/09, this to ensure linkages with new Service Planning arrangements and the Best Value Service Review Programme. | | | |
| Outdoor Amenities | September 2007 | September 2007 | A single Leisure Services assessment will be carried out in January 2009. |
| Arts & Museums | October 2007 | October 2007 | |
| Dean Castle Country Park | September 2007 | October 2007 | |
| Library, Registration & Information Services | October 2007 | November 2007 | |
| Leisure Development | November 2007 | November 2007 | |
| Community Recreation | December 2007 | December 2007 | |
| Roads & Transportation | November 2007 | May 2008 | May 2009 |

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Emergency Planning & Central Services | January 2008 | Discontinued | Discontinued due to the movement to EFQM to match BVSR service units. Emergency Planning will become a shared service with North and South Ayrshire Councils by the end of 2008. Central Services now forms part of each service unit assessment. |
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| Educational & Social Services | | | |
| Social Work | December 2007 | March 2008 | March 2009 A single EFQM assessment was undertaken for Social Work in 2007/08. Following the review of management structures within Social Work, consideration will be given to undertaking two assessments which reflect the responsibilities of the new Heads of Service. |
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| Education | | | |
| An evaluation of the external inspection criteria within the Education Service has been undertaken to compare it with the EFQM model. Due to the similarities it has been decided that there is no requirement for a separate EFQM self-assessment to be undertaken. The Education Service report to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis to advise of the outcome of the annual review of Education Services using the Evaluation Framework Quality Management in Education (QMIE2). This demonstrates the Services commitment to continuous improvement and satisfies best value legislative requirements. A full self-assessment will still be undertaken for Onsite Services. | | | |
| Onsite Services | November 2007 | November 2007 | September 2008 |
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| Chief Executive's Office | | | |
| Finance & Asset Management | December 2007 | January 2008 | January 2009 |
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| Internal Audit | December 2007 | November 2007 | November 2008 |
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