

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2007

REVIEW OF EFQM PATHWAY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Governance and Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the annual review of the Council's programme of EFQM Assessments, and the use of Quality Scotland's EFQM Pathway software.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Corporate Strategy Group, at its meeting of 2 September 2003, approved the use of the Pathway software to facilitate EFQM Assessments within the Council. The software was installed on the Council's intranet server and was made available for use by departments in February 2004.
- 2.2 As approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 19 February 2004, all Service Units were scheduled to carry out a first assessment using Pathway software by 31 March 2005. It was the intention that our use of Pathway would be reviewed at the end of its first full year in operation and subsequently on an annual basis.
- 2.3 The Best Value Transitional Audit undertaken by the Council's external auditors (PricewaterhouseCoopers at the time), also identified that,

“Once the Pathway tool is fully implemented, the Council will need to undertake a post-implementation review of this Best Value mechanism to ensure that it is continuing to meet the Council's needs and expectations”.
- 2.4 In this, third annual review of the use of Pathway, departments have been fully involved through the EFQM Implementation Group and have contributed to, and agreed, the conclusions coming from the review.

3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

3.1 Completion of Assessments

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 2007/2008 is attached at Appendix 1. This is a significant achievement for the Council, and all aspects of the services provided to our communities continue to be assessed, and improvements continue to be introduced, monitored and reviewed.

3.2 Pathway Software

The EFQM software is relatively simple to use and there is general acceptance that the question sets are adequate. 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.

3.3 Consensus Assessments

Consensus meetings allow robust scrutiny of the self assessment to ensure that gradings are fairly stated and to develop appropriate and challenging action plans to ensure that continued improvement and development opportunities are established for each service unit.

3.4 Action Plans

Improvement Action Plans are developed at consensus meetings, which follow on from the self assessment process. Once these are implemented, they contribute to the process of continuous improvement of the service units. The following are some examples of actions that have been identified at a consensus meeting which have contributed to the continuous improvement of services in East Ayrshire:

- Installation of a telephone recording system to assist with customer care and training within Benefits and Revenues – the system was installed 20/2/2006.
- Leisure Services have introduced 'Have your Say' a customer feedback, ideas and suggestion initiative to complement the corporate 'Its Better to Listen' programme.
- In the Housing Service there has been improved communication with tenants through the creation of the customer liaison team and Tenant's conference and the introduction of an informal feedback system for tenants.
- The Community Recreation Service are about to introduce the Quest Quality Management System, a national quality system and standard which will facilitate service improvement and benchmarking.
- To investigate the reasons behind the decline in library usage – a national issue – Library, Registration and Information Services carried out a survey of 'non-users', which was presented to the Community Planning Joint Officers Group with recommendations in November 2007.

For ease of reference, all action plans are now stored as word documents within each service/department to allow regular updates to be done. Action Plans for 2006/2007 have also been collated and are held centrally within the Best Value and Performance Section.

3.5 Training

Although Quality Scotland continues to offer specific training for EFQM Pathway, it is considered to be unnecessary at this time. This will be kept under review. As always, the Best Value and Performance Section will provide any assistance that may be required in terms the detailed management of the system to facilitate both assessment process itself, and the movement and storage of assessments.

4. SCOPE OF INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS

4.1 As a result of Council restructuring, and a perceived view that the current units being reviewed are at too detailed a level, Executive Directors were asked to review the number of units that will be subject to EFQM assessment in the future.

4.2 Executive Directors also considered 'cross-cutting' themes that may be subject to assessment, and which would provide added value to the whole process.

4.3 Returns were received from all departments, and the scope of units for future assessments is contained in Appendix 1.

4.4 The main changes from previous years are:

- The Department of Corporate Support is moving to assessments co-terminous with the responsibilities of Heads of Service. The Community Planning and Partnership Unit remains a separate assessment.
- Within the Department of Neighbourhood Services, a single assessment will be carried out for Housing, Community Safety and Waste Management, and for Emergency Planning and Central Services. Roads and Transportation remains a separate assessment. The Head of Leisure Services has indicated a preference to stay with the lower level assessments for this year and reassess for 2008/09.
- As agreed at the Corporate Management Team Meeting of 29 August, and following a mapping exercise between the EFQM model and the Quality Management in Education (QMIE) framework, which confirmed that the nine elements of EFQM are contained in the QMIE process, Education will not be required to carry out annual EFQM assessments. Instead an annual update of the action plan flowing from the QMIE framework will be submitted. While a similar mapping exercise will be carried out for Social Services, in the meantime there will be an EFQM assessment for the whole service. Onsite Services remains a separate assessment.

- Within the Chief Executive's Office, Finance and Asset Management will become a single assessment, while Internal Audit remains a separate assessment.

5. MANAGING ASSESSMENTS

- 5.1 The recently completed Best Value Service Review of the Best Value and Performance Unit included a consultation exercise with relevant staff from all departments. Analysis of the feedback received concerning EFQM highlighted issues that required to be addressed. The EFQM Working Group was used as a forum for addressing these issues.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Departments are satisfied that the EFQM Pathway software continues to meet the Council's need for a mechanism to contribute to the delivery of continuous improvement as part of the Council's approach to Best Value. It is recommended therefore that the Council continues to use the Pathway software for annual EFQM assessments, with the alternative arrangements for Educational Services as indicated above, and that a further review should be carried out at the end of the fourth year.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2 None.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Scrutiny Committee:-
- (i) note the progress that continues to be made with EFQM assessments;
 - (ii) agree the continued use of the Pathway software on an annual basis for each of the Council's service units;
 - (iii) agree the scope of future assessments;
 - (iv) agree to ongoing monitoring of the use of the Pathway product to ensure that it continues to meet the Council's needs for the reconfiguration of units;
 - (v) to otherwise note the content of this report.

Alex McPhee
Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management

26 October 2007

List of Background Papers

None

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

Appendix 1

Timetable for, and Scope of, EFQM Service Unit Assessments 2007/08

Department / Service	Date last EFQM self assessment completed	Comments	Proposed Timetable for 2007/08 Service Consensus Meetings
Corporate Support			
Personnel services	November 2006		December 2007
Information Technology	March 2006		March 2008
Democratic Services		A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering the expanded service (Democratic Services).	February 2008
Admin	March 2006		
PR & Graphics	August 2006		
Customer First/Complaints	N/A		
Legal, Procurement & Regulatory Services		A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering the expanded service (Legal, Procurement & Regulatory Services).	February 2008
Legal	March 2006		
Environmental Health	August 2006		
Trading Standards	September 2006		
Licensing	August 2006		
Procurement	N/A		
Planning & Economic Development		A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering the expanded service (Planning & Economic Development).	December 2007
Planning/Building Standards	April 2005		
Economic Development	April 2005		
External Funding	N/A		
Community Planning and Partnership Unit	August 2007		Complete
Neighbourhood Services			
Building & Works			
Building & Works	May 2007		Complete
Housing		A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering the expanded service (Housing, Community Safety and Waste Management).	January 2008
Housing (& Community Safety)	August 2007		
Cleansing	January 2007		
Leisure		Assessments for each individual unit will continue to be undertaken in 2007/08 but this will be reviewed for 2008/09.	
Outdoor Amenities	September 2007		Complete
Arts & Museums	October 2006		October 2007
Dean Castle Country Park	September 2006		October 2007

Library, Registration & Information Services	October 2006		October 2007
Leisure Development	November 2006		November 2007
Community Recreation	December 2006		December 2007
Roads & Transportation			
Roads & Transportation	November 2006		November 2007
Emergency Planning & Central Services			
Emergency Planning	October 2006	A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering Emergency Planning & Central Services	January 2008
Central Services	January 2007		
Educational & Social Services			
Social Work			
SW Older People	December 2006	A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken for Social Work; the requirement to undertake EFQM self assessments will be reviewed following the evaluation of a mapping exercise, where the criteria used in the external inspection process will be evaluated and compared with the EFQM model.	December 2007
SW Adult Services	December 2006		
SW Fieldwork & Commissioning	December 2006		
SW Children & Families	January 2007		
SW Criminal Justice	January 2007		
Education			
School Based Education	June 2006	An evaluation of the external inspection criteria has been undertaken comparing 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; however, a report will be required on an annual basis to demonstrate continuous improvement to satisfy the requirements of the legislation. A full self assessment will still be undertaken for Onsite Services.	
Community Learning & Development	July 2007		
Early Years Service	June 2006		
Onsite Services	October 2006		November 2007
Chief Executives Office			
Finance & Asset Management			
Revenues & Benefits	March 2006	A single EFQM assessment will be undertaken covering the expanded service (Revenues & Benefits, Corporate Accounting, Exchequer Services, Technical Services, Property Services, Best Value & Performance).	December 2007
Corporate Accounting	January 2007		
Exchequer Services	June 2006		
Technical Services	June 2007		
Property & Redevelopment	December 2006		
Best Value & Performance	August 2006		
Internal Audit			
Internal Audit	November 2006		December 2007