

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 8 JUNE 2006

REVIEW OF EFQM PATHWAY

Report by Depute Chief Executive/ Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To advise the Corporate Governance Committee of the outcome of the annual review of the Council's use of Quality Scotland's Pathway software for EFQM assessments.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Corporate Strategy Group, at its meeting on 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 available for use by departments in February 2004.
- 2.2** As agreed within the Council's revised Best Value arrangements as approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 19 February 2004, all Service Units were scheduled to carry out a first assessment using the 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, 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". Accordingly, an annual review of the use of the software was built into the process.
- 2.4** In this second annual review of the use of Pathway, departments have been fully involved through the EFQM Implementation Group and all have contributed to and agreed the conclusions coming from the review.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1** Executive Directors have confirmed that a programme is in place for all year 2 assessments to be undertaken in line with agreed timescales. Again, this is a significant achievement for the Council and means that all aspects of the services provided to our communities continue to be assessed and improvements continue to be introduced.

4. REVIEW – KEY ASPECTS

4.1 Pathway Software

It has been confirmed that Departments continue to find the EFQM Pathway software generally easy to use and that there are no issues of concern arising regarding its use. As such, it is agreed that the Pathway product continues to enable Service Units to produce a meaningful action plan for service improvement in a relatively short timescale, whilst enabling participation at all levels. The software also enables participants to record the evidence that exists to back up the grading given to any question; this feature is also useful from an audit perspective.

4.2 Action Plans

Following the review, it is proposed by the Working Group that for ease of distribution throughout service units and departments, all action plans arising from consensus meetings should no longer be stored within the EFQM Pathway software itself, but rather within a 'Word' document, a template for which will be issued to departments in due course. It is also proposed that in future, copies of these Word documents should be forwarded to the Corporate Development and Communication Section for Collation.

4.3 Consensus Assessments

Following the review, it is also proposed that each concluded 'consensus' assessment should be stored under its applicable service unit for the current year and that the consensus assessments for the previous years for all departmental assessments should be stored under a separate unit number.

4.4 Training

The EFQM Implementation Group did not see a need for any further training at this time. Again it was agreed to keep this matter under review. It was however noted that specific training continued to be available from Quality Scotland, if required, and that the Corporate Development and Communication Section has offered to provide any assistance required regarding the detailed management of the system to facilitate the movement and storage of assessments.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Departments, through their involvement in the EFQM Implementation Group, are satisfied that the EFQM Pathway software continues to meet the Council's need for a tool to deliver 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 and that a further review should be carried out at the end of the third year of use.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Governance 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 proposals for minor amendments to the current implementation of the Pathway Software as noted in Section 4 of the report
- (iv) agree to ongoing monitoring of the use of the Pathway product to ensure that it continues to meet the Council's needs; and
- (v) otherwise note the contents of this report.

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Depute Chief Executive/ Executive Director of Corporate Support
11 May 2006

List of Background Papers

None

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