

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 21 SEPTEMBER 2004

PROGRAMME FOR BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

Report by Head of Corporate Development and Communication

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To provide a strategic, Council-wide programme for the implementation of Best Value Service Review covering all Council services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The meeting of this Committee on 1 June 2004 agreed that a further report be brought to the Committee providing proposals for a Best Value Service Review Programme covering all Council services for the years 2004/05 to 2006/07.
- 2.2** The Committee also agreed proposals for the configuration of Service Units for the purpose of Best Value Service Review, and agreed further that this be subject to consultation with the relevant trade unions via the Central Joint Consultative Committee. These proposals were presented to the next available meeting of the Central Joint Consultative Committee on 16 September 2004 and the views of the trade unions have been sought and will be taken into account in the implementation of the Scottish Executive requirements for Best Value Review.
- 2.3** In the meantime, it is essential that the Council continues to move forward in meeting the statutory duties placed upon it by the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003. This report provides the final link that will then enable departments, through their Service Committees, to make immediate progress in reviewing all services over the three year period to 2006/07 (see detailed reports to Policy and Resources Committee, 19 February 2004; and to Corporate Governance Committee, 1 June 2004).

3. THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

- 3.1** The statutory guidance supporting the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003 sets out what the Scottish Executive expects to be in place within councils to demonstrate commitment to and compliance with the requirements of Best Value. In relation to Best Value Service Review, the statutory guidance has a separate chapter on the 'Use of Review and Option Appraisal' in which the Executive specifies the areas that service review activity should consider.
- 3.2** Compliance with the various requirements set out within the Scottish Executive's Statutory Guidance on Best Value, including Best Value Service Review, will be reviewed by the Accounts Commission through its New Best Value Audit arrangements. All councils will be audited under these arrangements by their External Auditors and we will be required to demonstrate continuing progress in fulfilling the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003.

- 3.3** The Committee will note from a report under a separate agenda item that this Council's External Auditor has commented favourably on the progress the Council has made thus far in reviewing its arrangements in line with the expectations of the new Act. Moving forward, it is now essential that we are able to demonstrate further planned progress in implementing our agreed revised arrangements.
- 3.4** Committee will recall that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19th February 2004 agreed to strengthen the link between Service Committees and their role in determining the priorities and strategic direction for their services in relation to their involvement in the process of Best Value Service Review. The Committee agreed, therefore, that Service Committees would be central to the process of initiating and overseeing the implementation of the outcome of Best Value Service Reviews for their own services.
- 3.5** This shift to closer involvement of Elected Members at a Service Committee level in determining the processes and outcomes from Best Value Service Review is also consistent with the requirement in the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003, that Elected Members be directly involved in challenging and agreeing priorities for improvement for their services.
- 3.6** Equally, Elected Members at a Service Committee level should have the opportunity to determine the priorities and detailed programme for the review of their services. Whilst the wider, strategic commitment to reviewing all Council services within a three year period as required by the Scottish Executive's statutory guidance has been committed to at a corporate level, scope and flexibility has to be given to Service Committees to prioritise and plan for the review of their own services.
- 3.7** It is proposed, therefore, that this Committee agree to this wider strategic commitment to review all of the services highlighted in the table below over the three year period covering 2004/05 to 2006/07. Thereafter, Executive Directors would be required to bring a detailed programme for Best Value Service Review to their respective Service Committees for consideration. The implementation and monitoring of this programme would also be undertaken through Service Committees, providing scope for flexibility and adjustment in the context of any future prevailing circumstances faced during the three year period.

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW 2004 - 2007
Department of Corporate Support
Finance
Information Technology
Corporate Development and Communication
Personnel Services
Administration Services
Legal Services
Department of Educational and Social Services
Education Services
Social Services
Community Learning and Development
Onsite Services

Department of Neighbourhood Services
Homes
Leisure Services
Protective Services
Building and Works
Department of Development and Property Services
Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Support • Special Projects • Property and Redevelopment
Planning and Building Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and Promotion • Building Control • Policy and Projects
Roads and Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads Operations • Roads Design • Road Traffic and Transportation • Roads General Services • Road Safety • Street Lighting • Roads Contracts • Transport Services

3.8 In monitoring progress generally in relation to Best Value activity within the Council and specifically in relation to Best Value Service Review, the Policy and Resources Committee of 19 February 2004 agreed to the preparation of Service Improvement Reports for consideration by Service Committees which will highlight the Best Value activity their services have been engaged in over the preceding 12 months and identify their programme of Best Value activity over the next 12 months. This process will ensure that progress in relation to Best Value is being monitored and reported on in a regular and systematic way.

3.9 The Statutory Regulations governing the requirements in relation to the format and timing of the Service Improvement Reports has not yet been finalised by the Executive and will not, therefore, come into force until 2005. It is, however, proposed that in the meantime, departments update their Best Value Position Statements (2004) for consideration by their respective Service Committees by January 2005. This will ensure that Members continue to be kept abreast of Best Value activity within their services.

4. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals put forward in this report should ensure that the Council continues to move forward in implementing the outcome of its review of the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003 in relation to the implementation of Best Value Service Review within the Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The proposals for Best Value Service Review are consistent with the requirements for councils to demonstrate economy, efficiency and effectiveness in delivering council services.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** Committee is asked to:-

- (i) note the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003 in relation to Best Value Service Review;
- (ii) confirm the Council's commitment to review all Council services over the period 2004/05 to 2006/07;
- (iii) request that Executive Directors, in early course, bring detailed proposals for Best Value Service Review within their own services to their respective Service Committees for consideration;
- (iv) agree that departments prepare an update on their Best Value Position Statements for consideration by their respective Service Committees by January 2005;
- (v) agree to receive update reports, as required, on the Council's wider progress in the implementation of Best Value Service Review; and
- (vi) otherwise note the content of this report.

John Clayton
Head of Corporate Development and Communication
6 September 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003 and supporting Statutory Guidance and Regulation

Anyone wishing further information should contact John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development & Communication (Telephone 01563 576165)

Implementation Officer: John Clayton