

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE –19 SEPTEMBER 2006

### EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING 2005/06

#### Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises the Committee on the arrangements for the production and publication of East Ayrshire Council's 2006 Public Performance Report. The report also provides an update on the Scottish Executive's anticipated Regulations pertaining to Public Performance Reporting and the implications for the further development of the Council's Public Performance Reporting Strategy.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Public Performance Reporting has been a key feature of the National Best Value Regime for the last 6 years. With the introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003, a statutory duty to secure Best Value was placed on councils. Public Performance Reporting is an important element of the requirements of the Act.
- 2.2 The Council produces an annual Public Performance Report as an important element of its overall approach to Public Performance Reporting. This report advises Members of the steps being taken in relation to the production of the 2006 Public Performance Report.

#### 3. PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2006 PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 3.1 Committee is aware that the Council has produced an annual Public Performance Report over the last 4 years. It is proposed that a Public Performance Report be prepared in the current year, covering 2005/06. In previous years this report has been included within the Council's residents' magazine, Headlines. This year, however, it is proposed that the Public Performance Report 2006 should be produced as a stand alone document, providing more space, and thus allowing for the publication of additional information of interest and value to the public. It is intended that the report will be distributed with Headlines magazine to every household in East Ayrshire, thereby reducing distribution costs. The report will also provide us with the opportunity to seek the views of all residents on service quality and performance and also on future priorities. It is proposed that the Public Performance Report, 2006 be primarily structured in terms of the 6 key themes of the Community Plan and will include summary third year performance information as reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 30 May 2006, for:-

- Promoting Community Learning
- Improving Opportunities
- Improving Community Safety
- Improving Health
- Eliminating Poverty
- Improving the Environment.

- 3.2 To facilitate the production of the 2006 Public Performance Report, a Public Performance Reporting Officer Working Group, with representation from each department of the Council, has been established to input to the publication, thereby providing information from all Council departments.
- 3.3 The Public Performance Report will also provide summarised information on the financial performance of the Council. It is intended that this information will be produced in line with the agreed CIPFA/LASAAC model for abbreviated accounts and will provide an explanation of the main sources of Council funding and the application of these in providing Council services during the year.
- 3.4 As discussed previously, the Public Performance Report is a key element of the requirements relating to the reporting of performance and Audit Scotland has responsibilities in reviewing all councils' Public Performance Reporting arrangements. In the Council's recent Best Value and Community Planning Audit, the Controller of Audit commented favourably on the fact that we produce well-presented and readable performance reports. The following areas were highlighted by the Controller as requiring further development. It is the intention that these be incorporated into the 2006 Public Performance Report as part of our Self Assessment of Performance Continuous Improvement Arrangements:-
- more coverage of service standards and performance
  - more about areas of performance that need to improve, and more trends and comparative information
  - customer satisfaction information and performance against customer first commitments
  - the issues arising from EFQM assessments and best value review exercises.
- 3.5 The Public Performance Report 2006 and Headlines magazine are scheduled to be distributed to all households during November 2006. In addition to this, the Public Performance Report, 2006 will be made available on the Council's website.

#### **4. CURRENT SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE POSITION ON PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING REGULATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S REPORTING STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Committee has previously been advised of the Scottish Executive's anticipated Statutory Regulations pertaining to Public Performance Reporting and it was agreed that we would return to Committee on the further development of the Council's Public Performance Reporting Strategy once the Regulations had finally been approved.
- 4.2 In June 2006 the Scottish Executive advised that, in order to avoid the potential for additional bureaucracy and to ensure that their approach to Public Performance Reporting remained closely linked to other related policy agendas, a decision had been taken not to introduce further Regulations at this time. Instead, it was confirmed that Ministers had agreed to hold off any decision until the conclusion of the independent review of scrutiny arrangements and the joint work being undertaken in relation to the way in which local government performance is measured. It is estimated that this work will take approximately 12 months and it is

therefore unlikely that any further Regulations on Public Performance Reporting will be introduced before that time.

- 4.3 Local authorities are, however, encouraged to continue to consider how best to report their performance to their communities, and are in particular advised to consult with the still pertinent Best Value Guidance on 'Measures to Support Public Performance Reporting'.
- 4.4 In light of this recent announcement, further progress can now be made on the continuing development of the Council's Public Performance Reporting Strategy and it is the intention to bring a more detailed report to the next meeting of this Committee.

## **5. POLICY, LEGAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The various arrangements the Council has in place in relation to Public Performance Reporting will ensure that the Council continues to meet the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003 and supporting statutory guidance on Public Performance Reporting.
- 5.2 The 2006 Public Performance Report will be structured around the key themes of the Community Plan and will provide a summary of third year performance against the Plan.
- 5.3 The Council's Corporate Management Team has considered and approved the contents of this paper.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The cost of producing the individual Public Performance Report, 2006 can be met from within existing budgets.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to:-
- (i) remit officers, in consultation with the Committee Chair, to prepare an individual Public Performance Report, 2006, which can be distributed with the November 2006 Headlines Magazine;
  - (ii) note the recent announcement by the Scottish Executive that a decision has been taken not to introduce Statutory Regulations on Public Performance Reporting at this time;
  - (iii) agree to receive a more detailed report on the continuing development of the Council's Public Performance Reporting Strategy at the next meeting of this Committee; and
  - (iv) otherwise note the terms of this report.

**Elizabeth Morton**  
**Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support**  
**7 September 2006**

## **Background Papers**

Letter dated 20 June 2006 from Scottish Executive pertaining to Accountability of Local Authorities (Publication of Information about Finance and Performance ) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2005

Scottish Executive's Best Value Guidance on measures to Support Public Performance Reporting

CIPFA/LASAAC Model for Abbreviated Local Authority Accounts

Any person wishing to inspect the above background papers or seeking further information on this report should contact John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication (Tel: 01563 576165) or Martin O'Rourke, Best Value and Performance Manager (Tel: 01563 576223)

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER:** Head of Corporate Development and Communication