

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

THE CORPORATE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 25 SEPTEMBER 2001

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING AUDIT 2000/2001 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Sub-Committee of the outcome of the 2000/2001 Performance Management and Planning (PMP) Audit of the Council's IT Services Section which was carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report setting out the requirements for the 2000/2001 PMP Audit was considered by the Best Value Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on the 7 June 2000
- 2.2 The three services selected for audit in 2000/2001 were Information Technology (Corporate Resources Department), Community Care Home Care (Educational and Social Services) and Roads Contracts and Operations (Development Services).
- 2.3 Audit Scotland have forwarded separate reports to each of the directors whose services were the subject of the service level audits for 2000/2001. This report sets out the detailed conclusions from the PMP audit of the Information Technology Service for the Sub-Committee's consideration.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PMP AUDIT OF IT SERVICES

- 3.1 The aims of the PMP Audit were to:
- provide independent, external assurance that the council is making progress on implementing a performance management and planning framework
 - help identify good practice and areas of concern
 - ensure that the council and its services are planning for improvement
- 3.2 The audit involved the completion by the council of a self assessment against the following 10 criteria;
- Clear leadership for a best value approach is provided by elected members, the service head and the senior management team
 - We understand the needs, expectations and priorities of all our stakeholders
 - We carry out effective Best Value reviews
 - We have detailed and realistic plans for achieving our goals
 - We make best use of our people

- We make best use of our assets
- We have sound financial control and reporting
- We actively support continuous improvement
- We monitor and control our overall performance
- We have an effective approach to public performance reporting

3.3 As part of its submission IT Services also had to identify improvement actions, where appropriate, against each of the audit criteria. The task for the auditor was then to verify the self assessment, review the service's proposed improvement actions and thereafter agree any revisions, where appropriate, in finalising the audit report.

3.4 The audit report highlights a number of areas where the Auditor considers the service to have well developed approaches and also highlights some areas which are contained in the service's self assessment as being in need of improvement.

3.5 On each of the 10 specific audit criteria, the auditors general assessment of the service's progress is as follows:

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| 1. Clear leadership for a Best Value approach is provided by elected members, the Service Head and the senior management team. | B |
| 2. We understand the needs, expectations and priorities of all our stakeholders. | B |
| 3. We carry out effective Best Value reviews. | C |
| 4. We have detailed and realistic plans for achieving our goals. | C |
| 5. We make best use of our people. | C |
| 6. We make best use of our assets. | B |
| 7. We have sound financial control and reporting | A |
| 8. We actively support continuous improvement | B |
| 9. We monitor and control our overall performance. | C |
| 10. We have an effective approach to public performance reporting. | C |

Key:

- A: In general, sound approaches are largely in place in line with Best Value expectations.
- B: In general, many elements of a sound approach in place, but with scope for some improvements.
- C: In general, a significant level of improvement is required and this is adequately recognised in the improvement actions.
- D: In general, a significant level of improvement is required, and this is not adequately recognised in the improvement actions.

3.6 Summary of main strengths and areas for improvement

The auditor identified a number of areas where the service has well developed approaches and performance. Examples include:

- stakeholders are involved in determining priorities, service standards and targets, and the service strives to design services around customer needs
- the service has built consultation into its regular service planning cycle and has a systematic approach to identifying who to consult and how to reach them
- consultation is used to obtain relevant information on user satisfaction with services, to gather relevant information on future needs and to obtain information on how services can be improved
- the service ensures that all its plans are consistent with each other and has a systematic approach for ensuring stakeholders views are taken into account in formulating its plan(s)
- a systematic approach is used for communicating objectives and performance expectations to staff; a clear agreed systematic process is used for providing feedback to staff on performance and agreeing personal action plans for further improvement
- there is a systematic approach to managing key assets such as ICT and supplies, and to procurement generally
- there is a systematic approach to monitoring and controlling the service's overall financial position
- there is a systematic approach to making links with other organisations in order to identify and share best practice; this includes links with similar services within public sector bodies and from current private sector providers
- the service systematically uses feedback from customers to improve services and has identified and reviewed its key processes to enable it to deliver customer-centred services
- the service has systematically identified key stakeholders for Public Performance Reporting (PPRg) and has a systematic approach to providing service users with information.

Areas where the performance or approach were identified by the service as being in need of improvement are set out below. Whilst in most of the areas identified there is evidence of an approach, this is generally more ad-hoc than systematic and some action is required to make the approach more structured and consistent. Also, more evidence is needed to show that the approach is kept under review and is working. There is a need for:

- staff and relevant members require to be more fully involved in formulating the service's approach to Best Value. The approach should be communicated systematically throughout the service in terms that are relevant to staff, clearly setting out expectations about a Best Value way of working

- ensuring that staff are familiar with service plan contents and what it means for them; translating commitments in the plan into clear responsibilities for implementation requires further development
- training needs require to be clearly informed by an assessment of where skills/knowledge/performance gaps exist; training should be more systematically evaluated to ensure that it is achieving the desired impact
- appropriate indicators to manage performance require further development, such as making more use of benchmarking
- the service recognises that it needs to provide more information to its internal customers, showing how well it is meeting its key objectives, meeting user and stakeholder needs, achieving efficiency savings and continuous improvement
- the service is aware that it requires to set targets for performance and improvement, to report on actual performance as measured against targets
- the service will continue to review and develop its processes and outputs to ensure that they are working and contribute to continuous improvement
- the service needs to agree more clearly with its customers the level of service it is to provide, as current departmental expectations may be too high

3.7 In light of the concluding recommendation for improvement actions, the service has agreed the improvement action plan with Audit Scotland. The action plan is attached as Appendix 1.

4.0 Progress against the Action Plan

4.1 Since agreeing the Improvement Action Plan with the Auditors, the service has worked to tackle the issues identified. Progress to date is highlighted in the final column of the Improvement Action Plan in the Appendix to this report. All of these issues are being progressed within the context of the Best Value Service Review of the Information Technology Service which is currently being conducted.

4.2 Progress in the achievement of the action plan points will be reviewed by Audit Scotland through its follow-up audit of the PMP Improvement Action Plan which will be conducted during the course of the current financial year.

5.0 FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the generally positive outcome of the 2000/2001 PMP Audit of the IT Service and the implementation of an improvement action plan to address issues identified through the audit;
- (ii) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit Scotland-Service Level Audit PMP (2) Audit (2000/2001) for Information Technology

Fiona Lees

Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

3 September 2001

APPENDIX 1: IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

1. Best Value requires services to be planning for continuous improvement. The PMP audit addresses this expectation by asking the service to identify the improvement actions that it intends to implement to improve its approach to Best Value and its performance. The audited improvement actions proposed by the service are set out in Appendix 1.
2. The proposed actions:
 - meet the requirements of being auditable (ie are framed in SMART terms)
 - are clearly related to the priority areas for improvement identified through the templates
 - would appear to be realistic
3. As part of the ongoing audit responsibilities monitoring and progress in implementing the agreed actions will be carried out as part of the 2001/2002 audit process.

1. Planned Improvement, why it has been chosen and the PMP Criteria to which it relates.	2. What is this improvement intended to achieve? This should be both specific and measurable.	3. What are the key project milestones for this improvement? These should detail both relevant actions and timescales.	4. How will you know whether the improvement has achieved what it was meant to?	5. In which of your plans (e.g. service plan) is this improvement detailed?	6. Progress to Date
<p>1. Complete best value review of service.</p> <p>The review under the Council's Best Value strategy ensures that services are competitive, accountable, transparent and show continuous improvement. (Criterion 1, 3, 5, 8)</p>	<p>Corporate guidelines ensure that reviews are rigorous and challenging. The review will systematically examine each area of the service to ensure that it fulfils the Best Value criteria.</p>	<p>Agree scope and timescale. (Dec 2000) Evaluate alternative methods. Cost proposals (Jan-March) Implement any changes (April 2001 onwards)</p>	<p>The results of the review will be evaluated and reported to Committee.</p>	<p>Consolidated Service Plan</p>	<p>The draft Service Review was finalised in June 2001 and has been issued for Council wide consultation. The final version is targeted for October 2001.</p>
<p>2. Prepare action plan from review of SLAs</p> <p>The service identified a need for periodic review of service</p>	<p>The improvement will tailor the service provided to departmental needs.</p>	<p>Complete review (Nov '00) Complete action plan (Jan '00)</p>	<p>Results from the client questionnaire will improve.</p>	<p>Consolidated Service Plan</p>	<p>Consultation has been completed with participating departments and the actions consolidated into the</p>

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provision to departments. (Criterion 2)					service action plan and Service Review.
3. Consolidate EFQM, PMP and Service Review to single Performance Plan Improvement initiatives need to be integrated into a service plan. (Criterion 4, 5)	Staff and client departments will be better informed about the service targets. The plan will allocate responsibility for actions to designated staff in SMART terms.	EFQM submission (Feb '00) PMP Audit (Oct '00) Review of SLA (Jan '01) Service Review (Mar '01) Performance Plan (May '01)	Results from the staff and client questionnaires will improve.	Consolidated Service Plan	The various plans have been consolidated into a single plan and issued.
4. Introduce performance indicators to monitor client and other SLAs, as well as comparisons between Councils based on Scottish SOCITM working party guidelines. The service has identified a lack of performance indicators to monitor client and other SLAs and allow comparisons between authorities. (Criterion 1,8,9)	This will allow objective measurement and quantifiable improvement in service provision.	Review of SLA (Jan '01) Service PIs (Aug '01) Performance Plan (May '01) National PIs (Aug '01)	The service will be able to compare the service provided with other authorities using objective measures.	Consolidated Service Plan	On-going.
5. As part of the service review of training needs, the service will extend the corporate EAGER staff development review procedure to all service staff. The review process is an effective method of assessing training needs and the effec-	The review will assess the training required as well as considering the effectiveness of existing and subsequent training provision as well as identifying any additional staffing resources required.	Target F/Y 2001/2002	Subsequent annual EAGER assessments.	Consolidated Service Plan	All staff have received awareness training on the aims of the EAGER process and have now participated in reviews. Further reviews are targeted for March/April 2002.

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tiveness and impact of training. (Criterion 5)					
6. Review Staff Questionnaire for relevance. Experience has shown that more useful information can be collected. (Criteria 5)	More useful information will be collected from the survey.	Revised questions in line with corporate strategy.	Improvements will be identified in subsequent Best Value assessments.	Consolidated Service Plan	This issue has been highlighted for action at a departmental level.
7. Redraft and reissue 'Employee Guide to Best Value' Staff questionnaires have shown a lack of awareness of the core features of Best Value. (Criterion 1 and 5)	This aims to improve the employee awareness of Best Value as measured by a staff questionnaire.	October '01	Employee response to rise above 75%.	Consolidated Service Plan	This issue has been highlighted for action at a departmental level.
8. Set targets for improvement actions and performance The EFQM assessment identified a lack of SMART targets in improvement actions. A need to quantify improvement actions was identified. (Criterion 1,9,10)	The service plan will assign clear targets for all improvement actions, as well as clearly assigning responsibility to staff members for achieving those targets.	October '01 as part of the departmental planning process.	Improvements will be identified in subsequent Best Value assessments.	Consolidated Service Plan	This action has been consolidated as part of the Service Review.
9. Improve the use of benchmarking information by establishing more benchmarking partners. A need for a wider selection	This will improve the sharing of information with other services/bodies providing better opportunities for continuous improvement. It will also provide information	October '01	Improvements will be identified in subsequent Best Value assessments.	Consolidated Service Plan	Regular benchmarking meetings are taking place in collaboration with the Heads of Information Technology in the three Ayrshire, Renfrewshire

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of benchmarking partners has been identified. (Criterion 2,8)	which will identify best practice and encourage staff to improve their own performance.				and Argyll & Bute authorities.
<p>10. Improve information of service performance by investigating the production of reports showing IT Service's performance for stakeholders including elected members, as well as addressing accessibility and equality issues.</p> <p>PPR requires the service to improve public accountability through effective and open reporting to stakeholders. Currently, there is no corporate mechanism for the service to achieve this. Elected members will need to consider how the service participates in the performance reporting process as well as being clearly informed of progress. (Criterion 1,2,4,9,10)</p>	The service will report to stakeholders, including clients and members on progress if considered appropriate by elected members. The report will also keep members informed of progress against the annual service plan and of the need for revision.	October '01	Improvements will be identified in subsequent Best Value assessments.	Consolidated Service Plan	On-going.
<p>11. Develop an IT Mission Statement</p> <p>The EFQM assessment identified a need for a statement. (Criterion 1)</p>	This will help to promote awareness of the Service's core values and vision among staff and other stakeholders.	The target date for this is set for December 2001.	Mission statement will be agreed and distributed.	Consolidated Service Plan	Draft subject to staff consultation.

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<p>12. Develop an e-Government strategy to meet targets for electronic service delivery.</p> <p>An “E-Government Strategy” will be developed to address the challenges contained within Central Government’s Modernising Government initiative. (Criterion 1,8)</p>	<p>This Strategy will identify how IT Services, working in partnership with Service Departments, intends to ensure that all of the Council’s services can be delivered electronically. This will require service departments to produce a departmental ICT strategy.</p>	<p>The target date for publication of the strategy is 31 March 2001.</p> <p>25 % of the Council’s services are capable of being accessed electronically by 2002.</p> <p>All of the Council’s services can be delivered electronically by 2005</p>	<p>The strategy will be published.</p> <p>All of the Council’s services can be delivered electronically.</p> <p>Client departments will develop their own ICT strategy.</p>	<p>Consolidated Service Plan</p>	<p>The draft strategy was completed by 31 March and approved by committee on 14 June.</p>
<p>13. Complete the asset management project</p> <p>An independent audit identified that the monitoring and management of assets was an area for improvement within the service. (Criterion 6)</p>	<p>The project is intended to implement remote software delivery, anti-virus control, asset management and remote control of user desktops across the Council’s network.</p>	<p>The initial project was completed across the Council’s main sites during August 2000. The delivery of a full service to remote locations is ongoing and is contingent on investment in upgraded communications links.</p>	<p>Asset management and control, anti-virus, as well as remote control facilities will be available for all desktop PCs.</p>	<p>Consolidated Service Plan</p>	<p>Complete.</p>
<p>14. Redesign Council Intranet and IT Service web site.</p> <p>The Corporate and Departmental Intranets will be developed to improve access to, and to support and improve the dissemination of information within the Council. The Intranet will be enhanced to support Web based access to corporate and departmental systems. (Criterion 1, 6 and 5)</p>	<p>This will turn information on IT strategy into a set of clear objectives that relate to day to day tasks of staff</p>	<p>June 2001</p>		<p>Consolidated Service Plan</p>	<p>The IT Services intranet has been redesigned and will be launched in October. The redesign of the corporate Internet/intranet site is underway with a target completion date of December 2001.</p>

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<p>15. We will continue to review and develop our processes and outputs to ensure that they are working and contributing to continuous improvement. We will do this in particular for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting the best cost/quality balance • using consultation to gather information on how the service can be improved • communicating objectives and performance to staff • keeping staff up to date in terms of knowledge about good practice in their fields <p>Area not fully developed at present. Criteria 1, 2, 5, 8</p>	<p>Will provide improved focus and delivery of continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Before December 2001.</p>	<p>Produce a list of process/output changes.</p>	<p>Will be incorporated into Consolidated Service plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing as part of the Service Review.</p>

AGENDA