

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 8 APRIL 2003

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING AUDIT 2002/03 (PMP)

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise on the outcome of the latest External Auditor's Performance Management and Planning Audit (PMP4) with respect to those services falling within the remit of this Sub-Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Sub-Committee will be aware that since 1999, the Council's arrangements for Best Value and continuous improvement have been audited on an annual basis both at individual service level and at a corporate level through the Accounts Commission's Performance Management and Planning Audit.
- 2.2** A decision was taken by the Accounts Commission that, in recognition of the impending introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act, no additional services would be selected for the 2002/03 audit under PMP4. The Audit has, therefore, only involved follow-up work by the Auditor to establish progress in relation to previous years' agreed Improvement Action Plans. Additionally, each service was required to submit a Best Value Achievement Report setting out the service's key areas of improvement over the course of the preceding year.
- 2.3** The External Auditor has only recently submitted his final reports on each of the services audited to the Chief Executive. Relevant reports have been forwarded to Directors for review and reporting to Service Committees, as appropriate. This report provides the Sub-Committee with a summary of the conclusion of the PMP Audit in respect of Information Technology Services and also the Audit of the Council's Corporate Development and Communication Section's corporate Best Value arrangements.

3. BROAD CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Information Technology Services

- 3.1.1** Information Technology Services was first audited under Audit Scotland's Performance Management and Planning Framework in 2000/2001. At that time an Improvement Action Plan was agreed between the External Auditor and the service. This Follow Up Audit reviews the progress made by the service in implementing the agreed Action Plan and, additionally, the service was required to submit a Best Value Achievement Report (BVAR) setting out the most significant Best Value achievements made by the service over the past year.

3.1.2 The Auditor's Follow Up report is very positive and notes that of the 8 improvement actions to be implemented, all had been completed as planned. The Auditor notes that the main areas of improvement which have occurred are as follows:

- the I.T. Service has introduced key performance indicators, which are reviewed on a regular basis; they are also working with other local authorities to develop benchmarking to introduce further monitoring of the provision of I.T. Services;
- the I.T. Service provides reports to committee level detailing the performance of the service; and
- the I.T. Service has redesigned the Intranet site, Internet site and the I.T. Service web site to meet the needs of stakeholders.

3.1.3 The Auditor's conclusions in relation to the I.T. Service Best Value Achievement Report (BVAR) are also very positive. The Auditor emphasises that all of the achievements stated by the service have resulted from an identified "need for change" by management, for example, as a consequence of areas of weakness identified in the Best Value Service Review. The Auditor concludes that, in summary, having reviewed the BVAR and agreed the achievements to supporting evidence, he is satisfied that the service has benefited from the Best Value achievements made. Examples of the achievements highlighted by the Auditor are as follows:

- I.T. Services have implemented measures relating to feedback from internal service departments as well as facilities to provide external customers (e.g. citizens) with improved access to electronic services;
- the I.T. Service carries out ongoing reviews of Best Value in relation to its use of resources; and
- the I.T. Service has implemented a number of internal management processes in order to meet the needs of the stakeholders, including a Service Review and ICT Strategy and Security Reviews.

3.2 Corporate Development and Communication Section

3.2.1 The audit of the Council's Corporate Development and Communication Section's Corporate Best Value arrangements provided a follow up progress report on the previously agreed Improvement Action Plan. The Auditor's conclusions are very positive. The two improvement actions previously agreed with the Auditor have been completed as planned. The areas of improvement noted by the Auditor which have occurred are as follows:

- a Best Value Manual has been developed and disseminated throughout the Council; and
- the introduction of the East Ayrshire General Employee Review Scheme (EAGER) to all council staff.

3.2.2 The Auditor concludes that, in summary, the Service has implemented all Improvement Actions.

3.2.3 The Corporate Development and Communication Section also submitted a Best Value Achievement Report (BVAR) providing examples of the Council's corporate achievements in the areas of policy impact, customer focus, external relationships,

improvements in the use of resources, and improvements in learning and development.

- 3.2.4** In relation to the BVAR, the Auditor has indicated that the stated achievements reflect the improvement actions previously achieved and that they can be supported by evidence indicating that benefits have resulted.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Both of these PMP Audit Reports are very positive and indicate that the I.T. Service and the Corporate Development and Communication Section are able to demonstrate that their arrangements for securing Best Value and promoting continuous improvement are robust and working effectively.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Nil.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Nil.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the positive outcome of the PMP Audits of the I.T. Service and the Corporate Development and Communication Section's Corporate Best Value arrangements; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report.

Fiona Lees

Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

26 March 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

PMP4 Audit Templates – Audit Scotland (September 2002)

Performance Management and Planning Follow Up Audit 2002/03 Information Technology Services (March 2003)

Performance Management and Planning Follow Up Audit 2002/03 Corporate Development and Communication (March 2003)

Members wishing further information on this report should contact Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources, tel: 01563 576019 or John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication, tel: 01563 576165.