

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 04 FEBRUARY 2004

POSITION STATEMENT ON BEST VALUE

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Members of the progress made by the Department towards the implementation of Best Value.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that a number of reports have been presented to committee on the subject of the implementation of Best Value. A much wider range of reports have included within them themes related to Best Value, or have resulted from a Best Value review.
- 2.2 In November 2003 all departments were requested by the Head of Corporate Planning and Communication to prepare an overall position statement on the implementation of Best Value. In this way it was anticipated that a baseline could be drawn across the Council summarising progress to date. This in turn will enable future developments to be planned based on existing progress.

3. THE POSITION STATEMENT

- 3.1 A small working group was convened representing the main areas of service activity within the Department:

- Community Learning and Development
- Education
- Onsite Services
- Social Services

As a result, the brief summary statement attached as Appendix 1 was produced using the template provided by the corporate best value unit.

- 3.2 The summary report reflects a considerable commitment to Best Value by the Department of Educational and Social Services. A number of wide ranging reviews have been implemented that have had an impact on almost all areas of activity. In many cases these reviews of service have been achieved without resort to bureaucratic exercises that would have resulted in diversion of resources from service delivery. Advantage has been taken of Council-wide reviews, government initiatives and changes to the operational environment to introduce Best Value concepts.

3.3 It is anticipated that this approach will continue and will be based on identifying where the major priority areas are for service improvement or securing more cost effective practice. The Department will continue its commitment to involve service users and staff in review exercises.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) ask the Director of Educational and Social Services to provide future reports on initiatives related to Best Value;
- (ii) note that this report has been presented to the Social Work Committee for consideration; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS

30 January 2004

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Service: Quality Improvement, (01563-576089)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Nil

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

Appendix 1: Best Value Position Statement
EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

POSITION STATEMENT ON BEST VALUE

07 November 2003

SECTION 1: Contextual Information

Departmental Submission	Key Documents, Policies and Evidence
<p>All aspects of service provision within the Department of Educational and Social Services are developed taking account of the legislative requirements contained in primary, associated and subsidiary legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 as amended • The Education (Scotland) Act, 1980 • The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 <p>The Department of Educational and Social Services is responsible for responding to the social and educational needs of children, young people and their families living in major urban areas and dispersed pockets of urban and rural disadvantage. Two thirds of East Ayrshire's population live in the smaller district of Kilmarnock and Loudoun to the north and one third in the larger area of Cumnock and Doon Valley. Educational services make provision for 18,410 school-aged pupils and 2,700 pre-school-aged children</p> <p>16.11% of the population is aged 65 or over compared to the national figure of 15.94 % . 15.33% of the 50,326 households are defined as "one person pensioner", while 8.78% are "multi-person – all pensioner".</p> <p>The unemployment rate is 7.84% compared to the Scottish average of 4.28%. 13,933 residents are in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, while in 2001/02 22.5% of primary school children and 17.5% of secondary school pupils were entitled to free school meals. In 2002 the proportion of the population entitled to Income Support was 11.5% above the Scottish average, while the equivalent figure for Incapacity Benefit was 11% and Attendance Allowance was 17%.</p> <p>Since its formation in 1996 the Council has only been able to build one new school. While there have been extensive refurbishments of buildings and a school rationalisation programme, the pattern of provision echoes a population distribution of some decades ago. The vast majority of the building stock is dated and in poor repair. The department therefore is faced with the challenge of responding to issues relating to the condition and siting of school accommodation and to prepare pupils for changing patterns of employment.</p> <p>The Department is a full contributor to the Community Plan and its associated process. Service improvement is phased within this overall sovereign planning framework. The Educational and Social Services Department fully reflects the values and vision of the Council in its Statement of Commitment. Its emphasis on developing excellence in education and improving opportunities includes the importance of raising attainment, inclusion, preparation for lifelong learning, community learning and employee development.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan 2000-2003 provides an overview of the direction of the department's work and this is further refined by the key documents 'Inspiring Children and Young People – a Joint Plan of Services for children and young people 2001-2004', 'Working Together to Strengthen Services 2001-2004', 'Priority to Improvement 2003', Departmental Service Plan 2003-2004, HM Inspectors of Education Authority Action Plan, Onsite Services Annual Business Plan, Community Learning Strategy 2000-2003, the Joint Community Care Plan 2001-2004 and the Criminal Justice Strategy. These inter related plans incorporate the National Priorities for education and are supported by a range of Standard Circulars and papers approved by the Education Committee and Social Services Committee which reflect the principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equal opportunities.</p>	<p>Population statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Profile • School roll data • Leaver Destinations • Community Plan <p>East Ayrshire by Numbers"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Plan • Statement of Commitment • Strategic Plan 2000-2003 • Inspiring Children and Young People – Children's Service Plan • Working Together to Strengthen Services 2001-2004 • Priority to Improvement 2003 • Departmental Service Plan 2003 • Making a Difference in East Ayrshire – Response to HMIE Inspection • Onsite Services Annual Business Plan • Community Learning Strategy 2000-2003

SECTION 2: - Performance

Departmental Submission	Key Documents, Policies and Evidence
<p>Across the Department, services are assessed against nationally defined statutory performance indicators and performance is subject to annual publication under the terms of the Council's Public Performance Reporting obligations.</p> <p>In addition to the statutory performance indicators, some services are also subject to National Standards, e.g. social care services and early years services, which are subject to inspection and regulation by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission).</p> <p>Benchmarking across local authority "family" cohorts is undertaken to measure performance against comparable authorities as opposed to the national average. Onsite Services are members of the APSE performance network, which is a UK-wide reference.</p> <p>Each service also has defined performance objectives and standards defined internally, which complement and refine the external measures supplied by statutory performance indicators and National Standards. The Community Learning and Development Improvement Plan with its associated action plans sets clear performance objectives and targets.</p> <p>Performance information is gathered on service-wide electronic information management systems, supplemented by stand-alone databases. Increasingly, interfaces between systems are being developed in support of information-sharing in the interests of improved joint working and an integrated approach to public service delivery across local authority departments and between local authorities and other key local agencies, e.g. NHS systems. Onsite Service has a contract information management system. Each year there is a detailed analysis of each school's performance in SQA examinations. Performance monitoring takes place in a systematic and programmed fashion for all educational establishments. There is an obligation to report annually on the educational national priorities and the progress made to achieving these.</p> <p>Elected members receive regular reports on service performance.</p> <p>In broad terms, the conclusions of external assessments of performance by central government inspectorates, Audit Scotland and independent evaluations of services have recognised the favourable level of performance within resources available. All parts of the Department work in close partnership with Internal Audit in planning audit and review schedules.</p> <p>A rigorous approach is taken to drawing up and executing improvement action plans in response to the findings of all assessments of performance.</p> <p>There are 17 Partner Providers delivering Pre-school Education and Care. The associated service level agreements are reviewed annually. In the last 2 years the commissioning of Pre-school places was subject to external audit by PwC.</p>	<p>HMIE reports SWSI reports Audit Scotland reports</p> <p>Care Commission reports</p> <p>CoSLA Best Value Network minutes</p> <p>Social Work Performance Objectives 2003-2004 Education Service Improvement Plan Annual Onsite Services Business Plan</p> <p>SEEMIS database SWIFT IMS SIMS QIT programme of visits. Standard Circular 80</p> <p>Committee reports Budget Scrutiny Group minutes</p> <p>HMIE reports SWSI reports Audit Scotland reports</p> <p>PMP Follow Up Action Plans</p> <p>Service Level Agreements</p>

Section 3: Best Value Criteria

Departmental Submission	Key Documents, Policies and Evidence
<p>The Department of Educational and Social Services is committed to continuous improvement. This is principally evidenced in the Education Sector through an annual target setting and reporting cycle. The national systems of performance indicators are applied to each area of the service which is in turn required to produce an improvement plan. An overall Service Improvement Plan exists for the Authority, which is in turn based on National Priorities for Education and our own statement of local improvement objectives.</p>	<p>Standard Circular 80 How Good Is Our School 2 Quality Management in Education Child at the Centre How Good is Our Community Learning and Development? Service Improvement Plan Priority to Improvement</p>
<p>Each year as a result of audit involving schools, and in consultation with school boards, parents and young people establishments produce a Standards and Quality Reports. An overall report for the Authority is prepared on an annual basis and is published widely.</p>	<p>Establishment Standards and Quality Reports Authority Standards and Quality Reports</p>
<p>These general processes are moderated by a formal inspection procedure covering individual establishments. Community Learning and Development are subject to inspection by HMIE (with an inspection completed in 2002), while the Care Commission is involved with pre-school and certain social services. In 2003 HMIE published a report on the work of the Council as an education authority. Onsite Services through its Annual Business Plan set and review the unit's objectives towards continuous improvement.</p>	<p>HMIE Reports; Joint HMIE and Care Commission Reports Inspection of Community Learning and Development HMIE Report on East Ayrshire Onsite Services Annual Business Plan</p>
<p>Reports are regularly made to Education and Social Work Committees on standards of performance and financial matters. Annual reports on the Council's provision on social work have been published by SSWI since 2001.</p>	<p>Performance committee papers; Financial committee papers SSWI Annual Reports</p>
<p>Over the years the Department has conducted a number of reviews of its internal structure. This is best evidenced by the merging of the Education and Social Work Departments in 2000. This produced a streamlined structure with reporting to a single Director from a reduced Heads of Service team. Areas of finance, transport, property and APT&C personnel were unified for social work and education under a single head of service. A review concluded in 2003 further refined that structure. . In 2001 two services were merged to form Support to Communities, and a further re-focusing took place in 2003 to form Community Learning and Development.</p>	<p>Working Together to Strengthen Services Committee Papers Directorate remits 2002 Directorate remits 2003</p>
<p>The 2000 departmental review was followed by a redefined approach to quality improvement within the service that was signalled by a strengthening of the Quality Improvement Team to 9 officers and approval for the appointment of a research and intelligence officer. This latter's main tasks are to devise approaches to collect customer opinion of the service, collate data on performance and service inputs and present summary reports to senior management</p>	<p>Committee papers</p>
<p>The education authority has continued to review its accommodation. An initial school rationalisation programme in 1996 has been followed by other initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of West Park School 	<p>Consultation documents on these proposals Reports to Committee summarising results</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of primary and pre-school accommodation onto the campus of Doon Academy • Consolidation of primary and pre-school accommodation onto the campus of James Hamilton Academy • Integration of educational services and pre-school onto the West park campus • Provision of universal pre-school service including partnership with private sector for pre-school provision. • Opening of special educational needs bases at Crosshouse, Patna, Dalmellington and approval for an autistic spectrum facility at Loudoun Academy. <p>Other reviews and rationalisations of accommodation have taken place within Community Learning and Development.</p> <p>In 2002 the Council agreed to embark on a public private partnership to revitalise school accommodation. This exercise was perhaps the Council's biggest single Best Value initiative. It involved outside consultants conducting a survey of the school estate culminating in an option appraisal of the alternative solutions. The eventual radical proposals involve the merging or moving of schools, consolidation of campuses and new-builds.</p> <p>In 2000 a substantial and comprehensive review of provision for children with special educational needs was undertaken. This resulted in significant reorganisation of both resources and staffing. Similarly, significant reviews have taken place on the organisation of teaching and ancillary staff in schools in the wake of a teaching profession for the 21st Century. This has resulted in a significant streamlining of school management structures. A review of janitorial staff has been undertaken by On-Site Services which will be completed in the near future. Other reviews have examined the role and deployment of ancillary staff. Community Learning and Development services reviewed their administrative structure and processes resulting in a revised organisation to more appropriately meet the needs of service delivery. The Department has a clear strategy for ICT which is currently itself under review, and an exercise was mounted to ensure that best use was being made of ICT resources and options in schools.</p> <p>In 2002-2003 a Best Value Review of residential services for older people was carried out and service improvements are currently being implemented as a result. There has also been a review of homecare services</p> <p>The management of community centres is devolved to local community associations to ensure they are responsive to local needs. Support is given to voluntary sector providers, particularly by Social Services and Community Learning and Development. This system of grants and advice also allows the Department to support service development that better meets local needs and aspirations. Community Learning Plans have been developed across the Council area to better co-ordinate and facilitate partnership working with best value access to resources. In Pre-School services a Childcare Partnership has been formed and a number of services are delivered to meet local need through formalised arrangements with private and voluntary sector providers.</p> <p>In all areas of performance the Department of Educational and Social</p>	<p>Outline Business case for PPP together with associated papers.</p> <p>Local agreements reached in Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers Janitorial Review ICT strategy Time for Teaching Draft Revised ICT Strategy Ayrshire Electronic Community Onsite Service Committee reports on use of ICT</p> <p>Best Value Review of Older People's Residential Services. Homecare Services Review Committee reports</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Grants documentation</p> <p>Service Level Agreements</p> <p>Minutes of Childcare Partnership Meetings</p> <p>National Priorities Action Fund</p>
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<p>Services utilises the information that is available on national standards and measures. For both educational and social services purposes families of similar authorities have been identified which allow benchmarking.</p> <p>The Department has current and up-to-date policies related to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and these have been widely disseminated. Employment practices operate under a proven, tested and continually monitored system of equal opportunities.</p> <p>All sections of the Department are involved in the Council's EAGER process. There is also a commitment through Joint Consultative Committees, employee surveys, the Director's listening lunches, the employee suggestion and recognition schemes and employee working groups to involve all staff in the continuous improvement process</p>	<p>Documents Statistical Bulletins. HMIE benchmarking data</p> <p>Standard Circulars Personnel Circulars Absence management Reports Committee Reports.</p> <p>EAGER Scheme JCC minutes Minutes of working groups.</p>
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