



Minutes of the meeting of the BEST VALUE/CCT SUB-COMMITTEE of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 17 JANUARY 2000 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Long (Chair)
Councillors Barton (substitute for Miles), Coventry (substitute for K Wilson), I Henderson, Swepston and I Wilson

Officers: J Best (Strategic Director Environment), P Coveney (Strategic Director Resources), D Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services), L McGillivray (Head of Policy and Communications), D Boobier (Head of Policy and Support Services), J Inman (Head of Transport), P Scrimshaw (Policy and Interagency Manager), M Hood (Assistant Treasurer (Audit and Customer Support)), J Boothroyde (Senior HR Projects Officer), I Prosser (Principal Planning Officer), S Willson (Service Review Officer), L Kendrick (Environment Project Officer), P Heaton (Marketing and Communications Manager), T Hunter (Policy Assistant), I Reed (Senior Committee Manager) and J Marshall (Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Miles, White and K Wilson

BV14/00 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 20 December 1999 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

BV15/00 PHASE TWO BEST VALUE PILOT REVIEWS

The Sub-Committee considered the mechanisms for ensuring that the results of the Best Value Pilot Reviews were taken forward and acted upon. It was reported that the next stage in the continuing work would be to draw up an action plan for each Review and to ensure that Members were aware of the ongoing programme of work to ensure that officers were clearly accountable. The Sub-Committee expressed its concern to ensure that the new political structures embraced the need for Members from all groups to receive and examine Best Value Reviews.

RESOLVED –

1. That all officers involved in the preparation of the review reports be thanked for their work.
2. That in future executive summaries of the reports be prepared.

(a) Support Services to Schools

The Sub-Committee considered an outline of the final report of this Best Value Pilot Review.

RESOLVED –

That the Best Value Pilot Review final report on Support Services to Schools be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

(b) Out of Hours Services

The Sub-Committee considered the final report of this Best Value Pilot Review

RESOLVED –

That the report and its recommendations be received.

(c) Transport

RESOLVED –

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

(d) Customer Contact

The Sub-Committee considered the final report of this Best Value Pilot Review. It was reported that significant improvements in customer service at the first point of contact could be achieved with low cost changes, for example, developing a customer contact code which could be the basis for staff training.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern at the public's reportedly poor perception, and low expectations, of the Council's services.

It was noted that the Housing Repairs Service would be introducing call centre technology which should provide a useful study of how providing this type of service would alter the public's perception of the Council. The Sub-Committee expressed the view that although this technology could greatly improve customer contact, other solutions such as e-mail should also be considered, as call centres would be inaccessible to some members of the community such as deaf and hard of hearing citizens.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report and its recommendations be received.

2. That the Sub-Committee notes that improvements to the service which customers receive at the first point of contact would be achieved through a culture change in the Council.

(e) Property Management

The Sub-Committee considered the final report of this Best Value Pilot Review. It was reported that the aims which had been set at the beginning of the process were very challenging which explained why the Council's performance appeared to be poor.

The Review was praised as a helpful collection of data on how the Council managed its property and how this data was held in different directorates. It was also noted that a clear strategy for the future was required in order to move forward from the findings of this review.

RESOLVED –

That the report and its recommendations be received.

BV16/00

BEST VALUE REVIEWS OF MESSENGER

The Sub-Committee was advised that before beginning the tendering process for the Messenger production contract a Best Value Review had been conducted to ascertain the public's view of the Messenger.

The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out the findings of the Messenger Best Value Review. It was reported that it was particularly necessary to broaden the readership of Messenger, as it was particularly low for the age group 18-24 year olds, which proportionally was a large group in Milton Keynes.

The Sub-Committee discussed the proposal to ensure that a greater percentage of the Council's advertising (excluding recruitment advertising) was placed in Messenger.

RESOLVED –

1. That this Sub-Committee:
 - (a) supports the findings of the Best Value Review;
 - (b) requests the Policy and Resources Committee to accept the tender which best meets the MEAT tender evaluation requirements in accordance with the specifications improvements;
 - (c) recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee that Council advertising should be placed in Messenger instead of other local publications to keep costs down;
 - (d) agrees that in order to allow Messenger to be regularly reviewed and improved where possible the reference group set up to oversee the Best Value Review be retained.
2. That the possibility of incorporating other partners in the production of Messenger be looked into again by officers.

3. That officers provide details of how the conclusion detailed on page 146 of the report (that people want to hear news about the Council direct from the Council) was obtained.

BV17/00

FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED -

1. That the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on Monday 21 February 2000.
2. That the meeting be scheduled to last one hour.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.32 PM