

**BEST VALUE - IMPLEMENTATION**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To identify the key actions required of the Council over the next 3 months to implement Best Value in accordance with the Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999 and in particular to
- 1.2 Explore how a Performance Plan might be developed to meet those requirements.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999 required councils by 31 March 2000 to have:
  - (a) prepared Best Value Performance Plans;
  - (b) undertaken initial consultation with local residents, businesses, local agencies and other stakeholders;
  - (c) undertaken a corporate review to establish an overall framework for Best Value; and
  - (d) determined a programme of Best Value reviews.
- 2.2 Progress is being made in accordance with the timetable in the draft guidance.
- 2.3 A draft Performance Plan is attached at **Annex C** to the report, to act as a basis for discussion and a framework for developing the Plan.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
  - (a) progress towards implementing Best Value in relation to the DETR timetable is noted;
  - (b) consideration is given to the proposed draft performance plan outline (attached at **Annex C**) in relation to content and structure; and

- (c) proposals are brought back to Members on the format content and presentation of the Performance Plan.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999 required councils by 31 March 2000 to have:

- (a) prepared Best Value Performance Plans;
- (b) undertaken initial consultation with local residents, businesses, local agencies and other stakeholders;
- (c) undertaken a corporate review to establish an overall framework for Best Value; and
- (d) determined a programme of Best Value reviews.

4.2 The guidance received on 23 September 1999 sets out a timetable for achieving these objectives. The timetable is attached at **Annex A**.

4.3 The timetable suggests that Councils should currently be preparing:

- (a) Response to DETR consultation.
- (b) Strategy for the Performance Plan.
- (c) A Best Value consultation strategy.
- (d) Guidelines for reviews.

4.4 Progress against achieving these is as follows:

- (a) A paper elsewhere on the agenda invites responses to the consultation on performance indicators and copies of the paper "Implementing Best Value - A Consultation Paper on Draft Guidance" have been ordered for circulation to Members of this Sub-Committee and group Leaders. (The report is also available on the internet <http://www.detr.gov.uk>)
- (b) Although the draft Performance Plan is not suggested until December, the volume of information required suggests that an outline strategic framework for the Plan's production should be, at least initially, debated now.
- (c) The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 September approved a consultation strategy for advancing Best Value.
- (d) A paper on guidelines for reviews is part of this meeting's agenda.
- (e) A series of staff roadshows on Best Value have been completed with approximately 350 staff attending and series of training programmes are currently on offer.

## 5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The DETR paper “Implementing Best Value - A Consultation Paper on Draft Guidance” is very clear about its requirements. They are set out in paragraphs 43 to 50 and are attached at **Annex B**.
- 5.2 The companion document issued by the DETR “Performance Indicators for 2000/2001 - A joint consultation document produced by DETR and the Audit Commission on Best Value and local authority Performance Indicators for 2000/2001” identifies a total of 192 Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators.
- 5.3 Authorities will need to set targets against the vast majority of the Best Value Performance Indicators, and publish these, and their performance against them, in annual Best Value Performance Plans. Authorities will also be expected to consult local people and to strike the right balance between cost and quality improvements
- 5.4 The structure of the Performance Plan therefore needs to meet the legal requirements above but it will also need to be:
- (a) set in the context of Milton Keynes; and
  - (b) based on previous consultation and corporate planning frameworks.
- 5.5 The Performance Plan has the potential to be a highly indigestible document and much thought needs to be devoted to its layout and presentation or it will alienate rather than interest the public.
- 5.6 A first draft framework is attached at **Annex C** its purpose is to invite comment and discussion on the overall format of the plan, to provide a basis on which to brief officers and to shape the collection of data and information for the Plan.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

The draft guidance suggests that Best Value needs to reflect the principles of sustainable development.

### 6.2 Equalities

The draft guidance refers to the Commission for Racial Equalities Standard which this Council has adopted.

### 6.3 Financial

Best Value is designed to promote continuous service improvement and efficiency.

### 6.4 Legal

The Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999 places a duty on local authorities to comply with the legislation.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Best Value encourages efficient use of staff and accommodation resources. Some of the Best Value Performance Indicators relate to staffing considerations.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 Progress is being made towards implementing Best Value preparations. A draft Performance Plan is submitted to assist in moving those preparations forward.

Background Papers: The Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999

Implementing Best Value - A Consultation Paper on Draft Guidance

Performance Indicators for 2000/2001 - A joint consultation document produced by DETR and the Audit Commission on Best Value and local authority Performance Indicators for 2000/2001