

This report may be of interest to: All Members

BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE - RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To identify resource requirements for the 1999/2000 programme of service reviews prior to the start of statutory best value requirements in 2000/2001.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Council's approach to Best Value is based on its Quality Management Framework. Lessons learnt from the review pilots suggest that significant resources will be required to support the review process. An ambitious further programme of reviews has been identified for the forthcoming year and functions identified that will be needed to strengthen the Council's approach to performance measurement and monitoring in general and the service review process specifically.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree that:
- (a) £86,230 is approved as a supplementary estimate for the 1999/2000 year with £102,430 in a full year;
 - (b) these sums are recouped from savings identified as a result of Best Value reviews.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Council's approach to Best Value is built upon the Quality Management Framework which identifies minimum standards for all services in terms of service planning and review, performance measurement and monitoring.

4.2 The Best Value/CCT Sub-Committee previously identified four service areas for 1998/99 to pilot an approach to fundamental performance review consistent with likely Best Value legislative requirements and District Audit advice.

4.3 The last meeting of the Best Value/CCT Sub-Committee resolved (minute BV20/99 refers) the following:

(a) That the following services are regarded as priorities for service review in 1999/2000 in the light of the criteria identified:

(i) *School support services* - including personnel, finance, repairs and maintenance, transport, governor support, grounds maintenance, school meals, cleaning, IT and legal

(ii) *Transport* - on a corporate basis

(iii) *Property management* - on a corporate basis (including education asset management planning)

(iv) *Out of hours services* (including emergency social work team, homelessness, housing standby, home care, alarm centre, mobile warden service, repairs standby)

(b) That additional services be incorporated into the list when appropriate.

4.4 Subsequent to the last Sub-Committee meeting a further review has been added to the list: *Reception facilities, including the notion of Call Centres.*

4.5 The Sub-Committee on 31 March also resolved:

That the officers be requested to:

(a) examine in detail the review requirements of the service review programme;

(b) identify resources that can be redirected towards a Best Value approach; and

(c) draw up resource recommendations for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee at its July meeting.

5. **Quality, Performance and Service Review**

5.1 The experience of the pilots is that service reviews require substantially more effort where the service does not already have a comprehensive performance management regime in place.

- 5.2 The Council's Quality Management Framework requires each service to have a plan with performance measures and that performance is monitored on a regular basis. The framework places responsibility for quality and performance with service managers.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made in developing and implementing service planning. However, it is evident that further work is necessary to meet the exacting requirements of Best Value and to ensure all services are adequately prepared for review.
- 5.4 In the first years of Best Value it is therefore suggested that substantial effort goes into establishing performance measurement and monitoring systems for all services as well as supporting the service review programmes.

6. **Service Review and Performance Resource Requirements**

- 6.1 The five reviews for 1999/2000 constitute an ambitious programme containing major core reviews and cross cutting service reviews. Given the Council's relative inexperience it is difficult to quantify the levels of support required. Nonetheless, those levels will be significant and will exceed those devoted to the 1998/99 programme.
- 6.2 Initial lessons learnt from the Service Review Pilots indicate that time is needed for the following tasks:
- (a) lead officer (from a different service) scoping and guiding the review process;
 - (b) lead manager of the service supporting the review, providing information, contacts;
 - (c) Member involvement;
 - (d) organising external involvement of stakeholders;
 - (e) collecting, analysing and benchmarking information;
 - (f) conducting consultation exercises; and
 - (g) writing review recommendations.
- 6.3 Staff involved in the pilot exercise have found it difficult to meet the one or two day per week commitments made and this is one of the reasons why not all finished. Staff in the Corporate Policy Unit have also struggled to provide an adequate level of support to the reviews.
- 6.4 Reviews have also taken place from a standing start. In many instances information about the services and performance was not adequate. This could be tackled over time if all services were systematically being encouraged and supported to build up systems according to the Quality Management Framework, as suggested earlier in this report.
- 6.5 As service reviews need to be carried out in an independent fashion then staff are to be made available across directorates and services to review services for which they are not responsible

- 6.6 Further, in order to maintain corporate consistency and challenge to the review process, each review is to be led by a member of the Chief Officer Board.
- 6.7 There are a wide range of support requirements for the Best Value process. As well as officers supporting reviews, analysis needs to be undertaken to explore whether some corporate or departmental resources could be reconfigured to assist the process eg internal audit, training, finance and accountancy services.
- 6.8 A re-organisation of the Chief Executive's Office, in particular the Corporate Policy Unit, provides the opportunity to strengthen resources for service planning and performance. A post is required to co-ordinate Service Reviews corporately and to adopt a project management approach, to ensure consistency and rigour of approach and bring in projects on time. A full or half time Administrative Officer is also required to update project plans, arrange meetings and co-ordinate information exchanges. A financial appraisal is attached at **Annex A**.
- 6.9 This level of support for Best Value is in line with or less than that emerging in other local authorities. **Annex B** gives examples of specific posts and teams being established elsewhere.
- 6.10 Resources are also required for public opinion testing and consultation. The ability to gather quantitative data from the whole population through regular surveys is especially important for those services where our "customers" are the whole community. Such data will be essential for Best Value reviews of such services and will contribute towards the Authority's Community Leadership role. Conducting regular opinion surveys would also meet one of the criteria for achievement of Beacon Status. Citizens' Panels have proved invaluable as tools to test public opinion and it is also recommended that the Council joins the Warwick University Research Consortium as the development of shared approaches to service assessment is crucial to support the 'compare' element of best Value..
- 6.11 It is therefore recommended that:
- (a) £86,230 is approved as a supplementary estimate for the 1999/2000 year with £102,430 in a full year;
 - (b) these sums are recouped from savings identified as a result of Best Value reviews.

7. **Implications**

7.1 Environmental

Assessment of environmental impacts is being developed as an integral part of Best Value reviews.

7.2 Equalities

Equalities are identified as an essential part of a Quality Management approach and equality measures are being developed as an integral part of Best Value reviews.

7.3 Financial

The additional costs of service reviews needs to be analysed and worked out in detail within the next few months.

7.4 Legal

There will be a legal requirement upon the Council to ensure Best Value starting from 1 April 2000.

7.5 Staff and Accommodation

It is estimated that additional staff are required to support the Best Value process.

8. **Conclusions**

8.1 The Council's approach to Best Value is based on its Quality management framework. Lessons learnt from the review pilots suggest that significant resources will be required to support the review process. An initial but ambitious programme of reviews is identified for the forthcoming year and functions identified that will be needed to strengthen the Council's approach to performance measuring and monitoring in general and the service review process specifically

Background Papers: Quality Management Framework