

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 25 JUNE 2007

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE AUDIT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 336-2007

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on implementation of the Best Value Improvement Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Best Value Improvement Plan includes the Council's commitment to its sustainability policy. This includes monitoring performance and integrating sustainability into new plans and specifically the Council's procurement strategy.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The Best Value Improvement Plan includes the Council's commitment to develop equality action plans for each service as an integrated part of service planning.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 Dundee City Council adopted the Best Value Improvement Plan on 24 October 2005 (Report 626-2005). This was the product of the Best Value audit process and was endorsed by the Accounts Commission. The Improvement Plan is subject to ongoing audit by the Council's external auditor.

6.2 This report updates members on the progress made to date. The table in Appendix 1 sets out each item in the plan, an assessment of progress and, where appropriate, further action scheduled for 2007/2008.

7. PROGRESS REPORT

7.1 Since the Improvement Plan was agreed, the following key tasks have been completed:

- The Best Value Sub Committee agreed a report recommending it reviews a performance monitoring report at least twice per year, and these reports have been produced and scrutinised
- A system of reviewing progress on all agreed projects has been established and quarterly monitoring reports have been submitted to the Corporate Management Team.

- The Corporate Management Team functions have been reviewed. Committee agreed a report remitting the Management Team to hold meetings with a specific focus on performance and strategy, which is now fully operational.
- Each Department has completed an equality plan assessment and a report agreed by the committee in November 2005 requires any new policy being developed to complete an equality impact assessment. Training on equality impact assessments has been completed by over 100 officers. Equality schemes for race and disability have been completed and the gender equality scheme is out for consultation.
- The Council approved a new sustainability policy and action plan in February 2006
- New comprehensive service planning guidelines, including how service plans will be scrutinised by elected members, have been issued to departments. These include instructions on establishing SMART targets and improving the link to customer consultation and feedback, as well as guidance on benchmarking and option appraisal
- A Human Resource Strategy was approved by the Personnel Committee in December 2006
- A new streamlined Committee structure was agreed by the Council in May 2007
- Training has been carried out on business continuity and risk management has been incorporated into service planning guidelines
- The working group on integrating resource planning with service plans has developed processes which form part of the service planning guidance issued to departments
- The format and frequency of financial reports for revenue and capital was reviewed and this was the subject of a report to the Finance Committee in August 2006
- Corporate Procurement Manager post created and Corporate Procurement Strategy agreed in March 2007
- Asset Management Plan being circulated to departments in June 2007

7.2 The following items are subject to updated targets in Appendix 1:

- Equality schemes addressing age, sexual orientation and religion/belief will be prepared by Summer 2008
- New service plans will be developed by October 2007
- Results of a corporate EFQM assessment are being considered by the Corporate Management Team and the results will be reflected in development of the new Council Plan by August 2007
- A review of regeneration funding priorities will be complete by October 2007

8. **OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The Council has made good progress on implementation of its Best Value Improvement Plan. The monitoring of performance through the new Corporate Management Team (Performance and Strategy) and Best Value Sub Committee, linked to the new service plans, will further underpin the Council's duty to secure continuous improvement.
- 8.2 Ongoing monitoring of this plan will form part of the regular performance monitoring report to the Best Value Sub-Committee. It will also form part of the Council's public performance report and be subject to external audit.

9. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Depute Chief Executives and Assistant Chief Executives have been consulted on the contents of this report.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report 626-2005 - The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning.
Report 248-2006 - Best Value Audit - Improvement Plan

Alex Stephen
Chief Executive 19/06/2007

Plan ID	Status	Lead	Objectives	Assessment	Action for 2007/2008
A	Complete	Chief Executive	<p>Area for Improvement (A) Review of the political management and public performance reporting arrangements with a view to increasing openness and transparency of decision making, and ensuring members get better opportunities to exercise scrutiny and greater public accountability.</p> <p>Measures: Report reviewing how to improve openness, transparency and scrutiny of decision making through the political management and public performance reporting to be approved by Policy and Resources Committee in January 2006.</p>	Best Value Sub-committee remit expanded in relation to best value and efficient government. Quarterly report to the Council's management team showing the status of projects is summarised and presented for elected member scrutiny to the Best Value Sub-committee on a half yearly basis in June and in December.	Continue to report to the Best Value Sub committee by June 2007 and then December 2007
B	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	<p>Area for Improvement (B) Ensure that members take a more active role in reviewing the performance of services and take steps to ensure more systematic and comprehensive reporting from services to service committee.</p> <p>Measures: Review the service planning process and produce new comprehensive guidance and training on producing service plans and involving elected members in the process. Report to Policy and Resources Committee by June 2006.</p>	Guidance issued on new service plans which provides for involvement of members. System for regular performance reporting in place	Develop new service plans by October 2007, and continue to report to members on performance

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C	Complete	Assistant Chief Executive (Management)	<p>Area for Improvement (C) Develop and implement a Human Resources strategy that will ensure effective corporate management of staff absence, and ensure the Council's staffing establishment is as stream-lined and targeted as possible.</p> <p>Measures: Corporate Human Resource strategy developed and agreed by Personnel Committee by April 2006.</p>	Human Resource strategy approved by Personnel Committee in December 2006	
D	Complete	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (D) Develop more coherent links between planning and budgeting and allocation of resources in accordance with policy priorities and objectives.</p> <p>Measures: A working group will be established to bring forward measures aimed at integrating resource planning, including the financial costing of corporate/service objectives and new initiatives, into both corporate and service plans. Measurable financial performance targets will also be established and reported for significant areas. Targets: - Group in place by December 2005 - Partial implementation by May 2006 - Full implementation of agreed proposals in May 2007.</p>	Working Group developed processes which have been incorporated in new service planning guidance	Develop plans in accordance with guidance

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E	Complete	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (E) Review the format, content and frequency of financial reports to ensure members receive adequate information to monitor the financial position.</p> <p>Measures: The format of the revenue and capital expenditure monitoring to be reviewed by Management Team and reported to Finance Committee by January 2006.</p>	Review completed and report agreed by Finance Committee in August 2006	
F1	Complete	Chief Executive	<p>Area for Improvement (F1) Review the role of the Council Management Team (CMT) to bring a greater degree of corporate discipline to performance management, service review, and option appraisal ensuring that these are properly linked with corporate planning and budget setting processes and are better place Chief Executive to deliver continuous improvement.</p> <p>Measures: Review the functions of CMT and implement new performance management measures by December 2005. (note: reviews of service plans and option appraisal to be reported under other plan headings)</p>	Report 608-2005 was approved by the Policy & Resources Committee October 2005. This proposed separating the agenda of the Corporate Management Team into two meetings, one focusing on operational issues and the other on performance and strategy. The functions of the Corporate Management Team have since been reviewed and the new performance and strategy meeting is now operational.	This action is complete and will be subject to normal review procedures.

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F2	On Schedule	Chief Executive	<p>Area for Improvement (F2) Review the functions of CMT and implement new performance management measures by December 2005.</p> <p>Measures: Further review of performance management by June 2006.</p>	A report was agreed by the CMT (Performance & Strategy) in November 2005 setting out the format of a quarterly report covering performance on the objectives and projects in the strategic plan monitoring database. Quarterly reports have continued to be scrutinised	
G	On Schedule	Chief Executive	<p>Area for Improvement (G) Review the Council structure to ensure a better fit with corporate objectives, the needs of service users and organisational efficiencies.</p> <p>Measures: Review to be carried out and reported to Council for consideration by June 2006.</p>	Report on streamlining of Committees was agreed in May 2007	The wider issues relating to the Council's structure will be considered in parallel with developing a new Council Plan for 2007 onwards.
H	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	<p>Area for Improvement (H) Review the impact of community planning with the planning partners to ensure that all partners are directing adequate resources to agreed priorities.</p> <p>Measures: New Community Plan 2005/2010 was agreed and published in June 2005. The first annual monitoring review of the Plan and its 6 themes, to be done by October 2006, will include a review of impact and resource allocation.</p>	Evaluation report by Geddes Institute at University of Dundee was presented to Dundee Partnership Management Group in March 2007. Resource allocation to strategic themes being considered as part of review of regeneration priorities	Review of regeneration priorities to be complete by October 2007

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I	Complete	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)/Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (I) Take steps to share good practice more widely and systematically within the Council and the management team to make better use of benchmarking and option appraisal, building on examples of these already being used in parts of the Council.</p> <p>Measures: Review and report on the use of benchmarking and option appraisal in the Council, recommending what steps to take, by November 2005. Implement best practice and update service plans by May 2006.</p>	Examples of good practice are a feature of meetings of the Corporate Management Team (Performance & Strategy). A corporate strategy newsletter called 'Changing for the Future' has been issued. Benchmarking and option appraisal has been covered in the service planning guidance.	

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J	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	<p>Area for Improvement (J) Ensure that all service plans are SMART and that these and Council strategies are able to demonstrate that they respond to customer views as expressed through consultations and surveys.</p> <p>Measures By July 2006: All service plan performance targets and strategic project milestones to be reviewed to make them as SMART as practicable. Public consultation and communication strategies to be prepared and approved for all services. Feedback reported via service plan reports to committees. Monitoring and reviewing effectiveness of consultation and communication via new CMT roles and via Service Plan reports to Committees.</p>	Service Plan guidance includes instruction on making SMART targets and improving the link to customer feedback and consultation	Develop Service Plans in accordance with guidance
K1	On Schedule	Director of Leisure & Communities	<p>Area for Improvement (K1) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development.</p> <p>Measures: Develop and implement Equality Action Plans for each service, by December 2005.</p>	At the P & R Committee November 2005 it was agreed that committee reports relating to new policy must be accompanied by an equality and diversity report which at a minimum would be an Equality Impact Assessment form. The Council has completed Race and Disability Equality schemes and the Gender Equality scheme is out for consultation. Service Plan guidance covers equality issues	Equality schemes addressing Age, Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief to be prepared by Summer 2008. Service Plans to be developed in accordance with guidance on equalities

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K2	Complete	Head of Waste Management	<p>Area for Improvement (K2) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development.</p> <p>Measures: Sustainability performance to be specifically monitored via the CMT, and Service Plan and Council Plan reporting procedures, from July 2006 onwards. Sustainability Policy in place Chief Executive following approval by Committee in October 2005. A comprehensive environment policy framework to be developed and approved by Committee by December 2005.</p>	<p>The Council's Sustainability Policy Review Group met in September 2006 to review progress against Corporate Priorities and action plan for sustainable development. Report was submitted to P&R Committee in November 2006 outlining progress to date in implementing Council's Sustainability Policy and recommend priority activities for following year. New Service Planning Guidelines (2007-2010) have been developed that will include requirements for reporting on sustainable development progress. Guidance being transferred to Intranet.</p>	This action has been completed.
K3	Complete	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (K3) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development.</p> <p>Measures: Sustainability criteria incorporated into Council's procurement strategy by December 2006</p>	<p>Corporate Procurement Strategy, including sustainability criteria, approved by Policy and Resources Committee in March 2007</p>	
L	On Schedule	Chief Executive	<p>Area for improvement (L) Renewal of the importance of leadership in establishing a culture of Best Value.</p> <p>Measures: Carry out a rigorous corporate EFQM self-assessment process and implement resulting action plan by August 2006</p>	<p>A corporate EFQM Self Assessment has been carried out and the results are being considered by the Corporate Management Team.</p>	<p>Results of EFQM assessment to be reflected in development of new Council Plan by August 2007</p>

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M	On Schedule	Director of Economic Development	<p>Area for Improvement (M) Extend asset management arrangements across the Council to ensure assets are managed in the most effective way possible and are explicitly matched to the Council's objectives.</p> <p>Measures: Complete property surveys and have information in accessible computer-based system by February 2006. Draft Asset Management Plan issued for consultation by September 2006. Finalisation, approval and implementation of Asset Management Plan by July 2007.</p>	Asset Management Plan being circulated to departments in June 2007	
N	On Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (N) Ensure that the Council's approach to risk management fully reflects business continuity issues and civil contingencies.</p> <p>Measures: All departments of the Council to produce their own detailed business continuity plans in an agreed format by December 2005. Business continuity plans to be modified in the light of specific obligations imposed by the Civil Contingencies Bill - target date dependent on publication date of the Bill</p>	Departments identified their critical services for business continuity planning by December 2005. The Audit and Risk Management Sub-Committee approved a report in March 2006 setting out training requirements for departments and the wider business community for creating business continuity plans. Further training for Departments was held in February 2007, dedicated to helping them construct their Business Continuity Plans. A Council wide Business Continuity Plan template had been issued by the Insurance and Risk Management section in January. The new Service Planning process of the Council has incorporated a specific section on Risk Management. The template highlights whether risks identified by departments in their Risk register have a Business Continuity impact (as well as other impacts) and in this way each Service Plan is linked to each Department's Business continuity plan and to their Risk register	Service plans to include risk management/business continuity issues.

O	On Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (O) Ensure that the Council's approach to procurement at all levels achieves best value.</p> <p>Measures: Prepare bid for funding assistance to take forward procurement-related proposals under Efficient Government Initiative by July 2005. Investigate extension of joint working initiatives with other local authorities and public sector agencies to maximise buying power etc by October 2005. Annual review of corporate procurement strategy (incorporated as part of overall annual review of Council Plan Performance by July 2006.</p>	Post of Corporate Procurement Manager created to lead and develop the Council's corporate procurement policy	