

**COMMITTEE:** BEST VALUE SCRUTINY PANEL

**DATE:** 6TH JULY 2004

**SUBJECT:** ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION BV REVIEW

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION

**CONTACT OFFICER:** MEHMOOD KHAN (EXT 6172)

**IMPLICATIONS:**

<b>LEGAL</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>
<b>EQUALITIES</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS</b>
<b>STAFFING</b>	<b>OTHER</b>

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To advise the panel of the current situation and status relating to the E&T BV Review and to seek a view as to the extent to which work from the aborted BV Review of 2002 can be used as part of this Review.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. **Committee is recommended to:**
  - (i) **Note the report.**
  - (ii) **Determine whether the key issues identified in the aborted BV Review of 2002 continue to be appropriate for examination (see paragraph 8).**

**BACKGROUND**

3. A Best Value Review of the Engineering & Transportation Service was attempted in 2002 but aborted in October of that year because of the departure of key staff in

the Division. Staffing levels within the division have continued to suffer since that time with the result that the BV Review was never resurrected.

4. The present Head of Engineering & Transportation was appointed to post in early 2003 and undertook, with caveats, to try and re-commence the aborted review by September 2003. Unfortunately the staffing situation continued to deteriorate to such an extent that this was not possible and in December 2003, the Head of Engineering & Transportation advised CDMT that because of the resource problems, a commencement of a Best Value Review was not possible until July 2004 at the earliest.
5. The Head of Engineering & Transportation had commenced a re-structuring of the division in July 2003, which was completed in November 2003. A recruitment campaign commenced in January 2004, which led to the crucial senior and middle management posts in the division being largely filled between March and June 2004 although a large number of vacancies in the technical ranks still remain to be filled.
6. In the meantime, in order to meet the undertaking to commence the BV review by July, the Head of Engineering & Transportation began searching for appropriate support to help with the review. A consultant was identified through the tendering process for the Town Centre Development Framework exercise currently being undertaken and negotiations have been taking place in relation to price and quality of the support this consultant can provide.

## **REPORT**

7. An urgent report was taken to Executive Committee of the 21 June 2004 to gain a waiver from Standing Orders to enable this particular consultant to be engaged without any further competition processes. Executive supported the request and the Consultant is likely to be formally appointed during the next few days, subject to agreement of price and quality of the proposed work. It is likely that the Consultant will report to a steering group comprising the Head of Engineering & Transportation, Head of Policy & Performance and other relevant officers.
8. The Head of Engineering & Transportation has been working closely with the Head of Policy and Performance to finalise the brief against which this consultant will be engaged with a view to commencing the BV Review on approximately 19th July.
9. Although the Council's standard 26-week BV methodology will be used in the completion of this review, it is proposed that the scoping stage of the previous review is adopted together with fresh material known to have arisen during last 24 months. The following key issues were developed from the aborted review with the proposed additional fresh material being shown in brackets thus { }:

**Parking:** Effectiveness, efficiency and mode of operation of of parking enforcement, policies relating to parking on pavement & verge parking, policies relating to provision of parking in and around the town centre and secure cycle parking. {Additional matters relating to enforcement of bus lane and moving vehicle offences}.

**Road safety:** Prevention of speeding, improving safety around schools, providing road safety training, making Luton safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Public transport:** Improving frequency and reliability of bus services, reducing the price of travel.

**Consultation:** Improving how the public are consulted about roadworks and transportation issues.

**Capacity:** Ensuring the Council has the capacity to fulfil its transportation objectives, particularly significant projects such as Translink, the East Luton corridor and town centre regeneration. {Infrastructure projects associated with the sustainable communities developments to the northwest of Luton; projected growth of London Luton Airport & the corridor towards Hitchin; funded transport proposals in the town centre and the Town Centre Development Framework}.

**Management and working practices:** Examine the scope to improve procedures and working practices in order to improve service and project delivery.

8. If the panel is minded to accept that the key issues identified by the aborted review (together with the additional issues) continue to be appropriate, this will mean that the review can dispense with the scoping stage and move swiftly to the Vision and Options Analysis stages.

### **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

10. Dispense with all the work previously done and start from afresh.

**Implications:** Time would be lost for no significant benefit in identifying the key issues.

11. Accept and develop the scope and key issues from the previous review and move to swiftly to Vision and Options Analysis stage for the new review.

**Implications:** Greater time will be made available to consider and evaluate the vision and options for implementation.

### **APPENDIX**

12. None

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

13. None