

COMMITTEE: BEST VALUE SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE: 8 MARCH 2004

SUBJECT: MEMBER CONSIDERATION OF BV REVIEW OUTPUTS

REPORT BY: BEST VALUE OFFICER

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL COMMUNITY SAFETY

EQUALITIES ENVIRONMENT

FINANCIAL CONSULTATIONS

STAFFING OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. To seek Member views on a revised procedure for consideration of Best Value Review outputs.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Best Value Scrutiny Panel is recommended to comment on the proposed procedure for consideration of Best Value Review outputs.**

BACKGROUND

3. Since their formal introduction in April 2000, the council has undertaken over 30 Best Value Reviews. However, over the past four years, there have been significant changes, both in the methodology of best value reviews and also in the member processes operating within the council.
4. The introduction of new Executive and Scrutiny functions in May 2000 and the revised four-stage review methodology in April 2002 has helped integrate members into the review process. With member input at each of the four stages, the methodology tries to ensure appropriate member consideration of key outputs.

5. Current member and officer consideration of best value review outputs is outlined below:
- CDMT Improvement & Procurement – considers reports from all four stages of the review, focusing on both content and methodology;
 - Best Value Scrutiny Panel – considers reports from all four stages of the review under responsibilities delegated to it by Scrutiny Board. Considers both content and methodology;
 - Appropriate scrutiny committee – considers reports from stages one (project plan) and four (options analysis and improvement plan) via appointment of a panel of three members for each review. Focuses on content and makes recommendations to the Executive in respect of the improvement plan.
 - Trade Unions – represented on the CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board and the Best Value Scrutiny Panel.
 - Executive portfolio holder – consulted at three stages (Scope, Vision and Options and Improvement Plan). Focuses on content.
 - Executive – considers the Options and Improvement Plan for approval and selects the option for the future of the service. Focuses on content

REPORT

6. Following four years experience of best value reviews and major changes in member processes and review methodology in the intervening period, it is time to re-consider both the methodology and the process of member consideration of outputs. This is motivated by comments received from members and officers about the need to streamline the process, a lack of clarity of respective roles and excessive duplication of effort.
7. The current review methodology comprises four distinct stages along with post-completion monitoring. These are outlined in paragraph 10 below, along with proposals for member and officer consideration of outputs. A number of key principles underpin these proposals: ensuring clarity of respective member and officer roles; ensuring member “ownership” of best value reviews; avoidance of duplication of effort and the need to ensure that member consideration itself offers “best value”.
8. Each stage includes informal comments on draft reports by Policy & Performance (Chief Executive’s Department) and the appropriate Corporate Director. This is followed by consideration of both content and methodology at CDMT Improvement and Procurement Board.
9. The role of Scrutiny is significant in all four stages of the review. It is proposed that BV Scrutiny Panel consider the project plan – the key planning and resource planning document, as well as the vision and the options analysis & improvement plan. The proposed role of the appropriate scrutiny committee would be to consider the scope, the key service-related plan for the review and the options analysis & improvement plan. It is proposed that the scrutiny committee-appointed panel of three members is discontinued.

10. The four stages of the review along with proposals for consideration of reports are as follows:

Stage 1 – Project plan. This is used to manage the review and to help ensure that it is carried out effectively and on schedule.

- Policy & Performance / Corporate Director – early draft for informal comments and guidance
- CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board – consideration of content and advice from Policy & Performance on adherence to methodology;
- Portfolio holder;
- Best Value Scrutiny Panel (to which the portfolio holder is invited as witness) – consideration of content

Stage 2 – Scope. This sets clear limits to the review, detailing the services, strategic themes or corporate issues that the review will cover. This also involves undertaking preliminary research and member consultation to identify the key issues which will form the main focus of the review.

- Policy & Performance / Corporate Director – early draft for informal comments and guidance
- CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board – consideration of content and advice from Policy & Performance on adherence to methodology;
- Portfolio holder
- Best Value Scrutiny Panel (to which the portfolio holder is invited as witness) – consideration of content

Stage 3 – Vision. This stage develops a vision and a set of targets for the service for the following 4 years, based on the findings of research (addressing the 4Cs of comparison, consultation, challenge and competitiveness). Opportunities are identified for significant changes in service provision or procurement, particularly in services where performance is a key issue of the review. The overall aim is to define the improvements needed in cost and quality of the service, focusing on key issues identified in the Scope.

- Policy & Performance / Corporate Director – early draft for informal comments and guidance
- CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board – consideration of content and advice from Policy & Performance on adherence to methodology;
- Portfolio holder
- Best Value Scrutiny Panel (to which the appropriate portfolio holder is invited as a witness) consideration of content.

Stage 4 – Options analysis and improvement plan. This stage aims to develop options for achieving the targets set out in the Vision and to recommend one or more options. Furthermore, this stage includes an improvement plan for the service, based on the recommended option. The underlying aim is to achieve a significant improvement in the cost and quality of the service through step change.

- Policy & Performance / Corporate Director – early draft for comments and guidance
- CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board – consideration of content and advice from Policy & Performance on adherence to methodology;
- Best Value Scrutiny Panel – consideration of content & recommendations to Scrutiny Committee
- Scrutiny Committee (to which the appropriate portfolio holder is invited as a witness) – consideration of content and recommendations to Executive
- Executive – approval of report

Post-completion monitoring of implementation – monitoring the implementation of improvement plans to be undertaken. This would involve the Head of Service or review team leader (where appropriate) to report using a standard proforma.

- CDMT Improvement & Procurement Board – annually;
- Best Value Scrutiny Panel – annually

CONCLUSION

11. Comments are sought from the Best Value Scrutiny Panel on the proposed procedure for Member consideration of Best Value Review outputs.

APPENDICES

12. Appendix – Current Best Value Review Methodology

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

13. Current Best Value Review Methodology