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**REPORT TO:** CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 (b)  
**DATE OF MEETING** 3 DECEMBER 2001  
**REPORT FROM:** PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
**MEMBERS'**  
**CONTACT POINT:** J WILLOUGHBY EXT. 5729  
**SUBJECT:** HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT –  
BEST VALUE REVIEW

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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline to members progress made to-date in undertaking the Human Resource Management Best Value Review.

### 2.0 Baseline Assessment

2.1 Since the last report in September, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to collate and analyse the baseline assessment. The detail of this analysis, key findings and conclusions will be reported to the Finance & Management Committee in January 2002.

2.2 The assessment has addressed the following areas: -

- ❖ Profile of the District
- ❖ Scope of the Review
- ❖ Democratic Process inc. User & Employee Involvement
- ❖ Corporate Vision & Objectives
- ❖ Legal Framework
- ❖ Current Resources
- ❖ Service Costs
- ❖ Organisational & Management Structures
- ❖ Current Standards, and Best Value Performance Indicators
- ❖ SARATOGA Comparative Benchmarking
- ❖ Audit Group Comparisons

- ❖ East Staffs BC Comparative Benchmarking
- ❖ Corporate Employment Policies & Procedures
- ❖ Service Providers
- ❖ Relationships with other Internal services
- ❖ Who are our Stakeholders?
- ❖ Local, Regional, and National Context of Service
- ❖ Recommendations from Significant Others

### 3.0 Applying the 4 C's

- 3.1 **Challenge** – a range of data has been collated from existing management information systems, performance indicators, divisional service plan, corporate plan, reports from significant others, committee reports and decisions etc. and analysed to determine a profile of where the service is now.
- 3.2 This work has been predominately undertaken by the Personnel & Development Division, and collated by the Personnel and Development Manager. To challenge this assessment, a meeting has been set up for 28 November 2001, which will bring in 'challengers' from the existing review team, and Best Value Working Group, to challenge its findings and key issues summarised.
- 3.3 **Compare** - The Performance Data collated, has been compared in a number of ways.
- 3.4 The Best Value Performance Indicators have been analysed in relation to Government National Targets.
- 3.5 The Division also undertook the services of SARATOGA, who provide a benchmarking service for Local Authority Personnel Services. They are working in partnership with SOCPO – Society of Chief Personnel Officers. SOCPO have produced a number of Local Performance Indicators for the Audit Commission to measure Best Value in Personnel Services, and SARATOGA, hold the formulae for calculation and database of results for comparison.
- 3.6 The Key comparisons were made against district authorities on the database, that had undertaken the comparative exercise, and against the national averages, which includes the private sector. A follow-up report has been provided.
- 3.7 A comparative telephone survey was also undertaken to clarify specific areas agreed by the review team, with our Audit Group authorities.

- 3.8 Following a meeting with East Staffs BC, some comparative information undertaken during their review this year was also analysed and compared to our position.
- 3.9 **Consult** - A written questionnaire was sent out 40 employees, plus Divisional Managers, and CMT members. The questionnaire was to assess their view of the current level of service, and whether or not they perceived it to be improving, staying the same, or deteriorating. They were also given a further option of confirming whether or not they were aware we undertook the service.
- 3.10 Following the advice of those Councillors on the review team, a telephone questionnaire was undertaken of members by the Employee Development Officer, to focus on similar themes to the staff questionnaire. This was preceded by a letter that made them aware of what we were trying to do and what to expect. It was promised to provide feedback on the outcomes.
- 3.11 The Personnel and Development general staff meetings that are held monthly have had the Best Value Review as a standing item since some 6 months prior to its commencement. All relevant documents relating to the review are placed on a shared drive for the staff to view, and a considerable amount of work in preparing the baseline assessment has involved the staff. There are a number of the staff on the review team.
- 3.12 Additionally a specific consultation meeting was held with them, to formally ask their views on the comparative performance data results, and the feedback from the consultation surveys. They have provided a group written response to these questions.
- 3.13 **Compete** - Some analysis has been undertaken of the survey conducted by East Staffs BC, on the areas of work that authorities in their Audit Group have outsourced. This shows a general theme of limited outsourcing in small authorities, and more specifically where there is any, it tends to be for Occupational Health services, including Counselling.
- 3.14 Some initial discussions have taken place, to explore opportunities for partnership working.

#### **4.0 Resources**

- 4.1 There has been some difficulty over recent months in availability of review team members, and due to the nature of the work at this stage of the project; a significant part of the workload has fallen to the Personnel and Development Team. From 1 April 2001 to 30 September 2001 approximately 400 hours has been directly spent on work for the review by the team, with about one third of this being the Personnel & Development Manager's time.
- 4.2 Additionally there is the time for the rest of the review team, in terms of meeting on average every 3-4 weeks.

## **5.0 Timescales**

5.1 These have fallen behind slightly in terms of collating the baseline, however, it is anticipated that other work that has been undertaken alongside this task, will bring the project back on target by end January 2002.

## **6.0 Summary**

6.1 The Baseline Assessment has now been completed.

6.2 This will be challenged at a meeting at the end of November 2001, where the group will also draw out the key issues for the authority.

6.3 A number of comparative exercises have been undertaken.

6.4 A range of consultation exercises have been undertaken, to consult with service users, members, and Personnel & Development staff.

6.5 Some analysis of outsourcing trends has been analysed. There have also been initial discussions on joint working approaches with another authority.

6.6 Resources remain a pressure, with significant time being required from the Personnel & Development Division.

6.7 Timescales although a little delayed currently, should be back on course, with the report to Finance & Management in January 2002.