
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	18 FEBRUARY 2003	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SALLY KNIGHT (EXT. 5728)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME - PROPOSED CHANGES	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM13

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the revised programme of Best Value Reviews be agreed as a basis for consultation with local people, parish councils, neighbouring authorities, employees and partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee on proposed changes to the existing programme of Best Value Reviews.

3.0 Detail

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council is required, as part of the Best Value regime, to carry out fundamental Reviews of the services that it provides.
- 3.2 At a recent meeting, the Audit Commission's Lead Inspector for Derbyshire recommended that the Council should review its current programme of Best Value Reviews to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the organisation (at member and officer level) to prepare adequately for the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This is scheduled to take place in winter 2003.

Key elements of CPA

- 3.3 Essentially, CPA brings together judgements about the quality of local services, corporate and managerial effectiveness and the organisation's capacity to improve local services.

3.4 The key elements of CPA for District Councils comprise:

- a **self assessment** of how the Councils consider its priorities and how these help to drive service improvements for local people
- a **peer challenge** of the Council's self assessment
- **cross cutting inspections** of *Balancing Housing Markets/Meeting the Decent Homes Standard* and *Clean, Green and Safe Public Space* to assess local service performance and corporate capacity

3.5 The information gathered from these sources, along with other material (such as performance indicator data and audit reports), will be used by the Audit Commission to form a judgement about Council services and corporate capacity to improve. This will place the Council in one of the following categories - *excellent, good, fair, weak or poor category* and the results will be made publicly available.

3.6 The Audit Commission will then work with the Council to agree improvement activity based on local priorities and a tailored package of audit, inspection and improvement work. In general, better performing Councils will have more freedoms and flexibility with usually less inspection.

3.7 A more detailed report on what needs to be done to prepare for CPA and the associated timetable will be presented to members in due course.

The current programme

3.8 A copy of the current Best Value Review programme is attached at Annexe A.

3.9 This provides for the commencement of 3 major, cross-cutting and 1 service specific Reviews in January/March 2003 i.e.:

- Environmental Planning and Control
- Customer Services and Electronic Service Delivery
- Procurement
- Housing Services Part 2: Landlord and Tenant Function

3.10 A further 5 Reviews are also in progress:

- Asset Management (*subject of a separate report on this agenda*)
- Human Resource Management
- Financial Services
- Housing Services Part 1: Strategic Housing
- Community Safety

Proposed Revised Programme

3.11 A revised programme is set out at Annexe B. It will be noticed that this only covers the period until April 2004 - beyond that, the programme will need to reflect CPA outcomes.

3.12 Specific comments on aspects of the programme are set out below:

Review (s)	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management • Human Resource Management • Financial Services 	<p>These will contribute to the self assessment. They need to be completed as soon as possible so that work can commence on the delivery of Improvement Plans.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety 	<p>Community Safety will be a key component of the <i>Clean, Green and Safe Public Spaces</i> inspection</p> <p>Crime and Disorder issues are being addressed via the joint Review with Derbyshire County Council. However, there is a need to progress the 'local' dimensions (e.g. environmental health public health protection services, licensing, dangerous buildings).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Services Part 1: Strategic Housing 	<p>There is a need to ensure that this Review covers all aspects of the <i>Balancing Housing Markets</i> inspection.</p> <p>The Review also provides the context for Housing Services Part 2 (Landlord and Tenant Function). This will need to address the requirements of the <i>Meeting the Decent Homes Standard</i> inspection. ie as part of CPA. This means we cannot delay Part 2 either.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Services Part 2: Landlord and Tenant Function 	<p>This will also need to address the requirements of the <i>Meeting the Decent Homes Standard</i> inspection.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement 	<p>Procurement is an important aspect of CPA.</p> <p>The Council has been recommended (as part of the follow up inspection of Development Control) to significantly develop its Procurement Strategy by September. The Review is part of this process.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, Green and Safe Public Spaces 	<p>This is a new Review (special study) that will need to be commenced as soon as possible in order to be ready for CPA.</p> <p>Areas to be covered include waste management, street cleansing, planning, leisure, community safety, economic development, partnership working, regeneration etc.</p> <p>It should be possible to build on outputs from earlier and/or current Reviews (e.g. <i>Cleansing the Environment</i>)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Planning and Control • Customer Services and Electronic Service Delivery 	<p>Postpone commencement until April 2004 due to the commitment of staff to other Reviews</p>

Consultation on the revised programme

- 3.13 It would be good practice to consult stakeholders before the programme is finalised. These include local people, parish councils, neighbouring authorities, employees and partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- 3.14 The Best Value Performance Plan Summary (which has to be published by the end of March) will provide an important means of consulting local people and community groups.

Conclusions

- 3.15 The forthcoming CPA requires modification to the Best Value Programme in order to focus staff resources and service inspection on that part of the programme relative to the CPA. Alterations have therefore been suggested for approval for consultation with local people, parish councils, neighbouring authorities, employees and partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be some costs associated with consulting stakeholders. However, these can be met from existing budgets.