
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 15
DATE OF MEETING:	19 FEBRUARY 2002	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: DS1

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the revised 5 year programme of Best Value Reviews be agreed as a basis for consultation with key stakeholders, including parish councils, neighbouring authorities, employee representatives 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 agreed 5-year programme of Best Value Reviews.

3.0 Detail

Introduction

3.1 All of the Council's services have to be reviewed within a 5-year period ending in March 2005. A copy of the agreed programme is set out at Annexe A.

3.2 However, guidance from the Audit Commission and the recent Local Government White Paper underline the need to review this programme prior to the publication of the next Best Value Performance Plan.

3.3 In '*Changing Gear*' (September 2001), the Audit Commission recommends that Councils should refocus their Reviews to ensure that they are ambitious, realistic and focused on delivering improvements that are both stretching and challenging.

3.4 The recent Local Government White Paper conveys a similar message:

- Councils should undertake fewer Reviews
- Reviews should be more strategic and challenging
- Reviews should reflect national and local priorities.

- Third parties (service users, other external stakeholders, 'independents') should be represented on Review Teams.

Proposed Changes

3.6 A copy of the proposed revised programme (with progress to date) is attached at Annexe B

3.7 The aim has been to:

- Continue to reduce the total number of Reviews by combining service areas and making provision for large strategic reviews where there is some scope for improvement
- Develop an more outward customer focus and start to tackle the more difficult cross cutting issues (as recommended by the District Auditor)
- Respond to national and local priorities. (National priorities are crime health, education and transport: local community priorities are the provision of high quality, value for money services, community involvement and the protection of the environment)
- Exploit the opportunities for joint working with other authorities (another White Paper theme)
- Reflect progress and issues arising from the Year 2 Reviews (in particular, little/no progress on Customer & Support Services, Cemeteries and Car Parking Reviews and the decision to undertake the Review of Housing Services in 2 parts) and to balance the workload across the organisation

3.8 The overall effect is to reduce the number of Reviews from 23 to 20.

3.9 Members will also note the proposal to respond to an invitation from Derbyshire County Council to take part in a joint Review of Community Safety in Year 3. This will help to build up capacity within the organisation for dealing with major, cross cutting issues and should also lead to better more 'joined up' outcomes for service users.

Consultation on the revised programme

3.10 It would be good practice to consult key stakeholders before the programme is finalised. These include Parish Councils, neighbouring Councils, employees and representatives of the business community and voluntary sectors.

Proposed Inspection of Year 2 Reviews

3.11 The Best Value Inspectorate has informally indicated that they will be inspecting the following Year 2 Reviews:

- Asset Management and Human Resource Management (around September 2002)
- Financial Services - with the Year 1 Financial Management and Control (early in 2003)

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There will be a small cost associated with consulting key stakeholders. However, this can be met from existing budgets.

5.0 Background Papers

'Changing Gear: Best Value Annual Statement 2001' Audit Commission
(September 2001)

'Strong Local Leadership - Quality Public Services' DTLR (December 2001)

