

**REPORT TO:** POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 17 APRIL 2006  
**REPORT ON:** BEST VALUE AUDIT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
**REPORT BY:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**REPORT NO:** 248-2006

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee on implementation of the Best Value Improvement Plan.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

**4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

The Best Value Improvement Plan includes the Council's commitment to its sustainability policy including monitoring performance and integrating sustainability into new plans and specifically the Council's procurement strategy.

**5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The Best Value Improvement Plan includes the Council's commitment to develop equality action plans for each service as an integrated part of service planning.

**6. BACKGROUND**

6.1 Dundee City Council adopted the Best Value Improvement Plan on 24 October 2005 (Rep 626-2005). This was the product of the Best Value audit process and was endorsed by the Accounts Commission. The Improvement Plan is subject to ongoing audit by the Council's external auditor.

6.2 This report updates members on the progress made to date and sets specific milestones for the year 2006/2007. The table in Appendix 1 sets out each action, an assessment of progress and a specific milestone for 2006/2007.

**7. PROGRESS REPORT**

7.1 Since the improvement plan was agreed the following tasks have been completed:

- The Best Value Sub Committee agreed a report recommending it reviews a performance monitoring report at least twice per year.
- A system of reviewing progress on all agreed projects has been established and will produce quarterly monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team.

- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) functions have been reviewed and a report (608-2005) was agreed by committee remitting a new CMT to meet with the specific role of performance and strategy. This is now fully operational.
- Each Department has completed an equality plan assessment and a report agreed by the committee in November 2005 requires any new policy being developed to complete an equality impact assessment. Training is being carried out in respect of this work.
- The Council approved a new sustainability policy and action plan in February 2006 (110-2006).

7.2 The following actions are due in the next quarter (before the recess).

- New comprehensive service planning guidelines including how service plans will be scrutinised by elected members agreed by the Committee.
- Human Resource strategy report to the Personnel Committee.

7.3 The following items are subject to updated targets in Appendix 1.

- the working group on integrating resource planning with service plans is not yet operational. A new target of October 2006 has been set for proposals from this working group.
- the format and frequency of financial reports for revenue and capital will now be the subject of a report to the Finance Committee in June 2006.
- A review of benchmarking and option appraisal practices will now follow on from the service planning guidelines to be issued in June 2006.

7.4 Longer term actions are on schedule although in the case of reviewing the Council's structure, business continuity and procurement strategy heavily dependant on national decisions expected later this year.

## 8. **OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

8.1 The Council is making reasonable progress on its Best Value Improvement Plan. The actions on monitoring performance through a new CMT and Best Value Sub Committee linked to the new service plans will further underpin the council's duty to secure continuous improvement. It is important to keep the next actions on schedule regarding human resource strategy, structure and procurement. It is estimated that by April 2007 the Council will have addressed the specific items in the Improvement Plan.

8.2 Future monitoring of this plan will form part of the twice yearly performance monitoring report to the Best Value Sub-Committee. It will also form part of the Council's public performance report and be subject to external audit.

## 9. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Depute and Assistant Chief Executives have been consulted on the contents of this report.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report 626-2005 - The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning.

Alex Stephen

Chief Executive ..... 11/04/2006

Plan ID	Status	Lead	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
A	Complete	Chief Executive	Area for Improvement (A) Review of the political management and public performance reporting arrangements with a view to increasing openness and transparency of decision making, and ensuring members get better opportunities to exercise scrutiny and greater public accountability. <b>Measures Report reviewing how to improve openness, transparency and scrutiny of decision making through the political management and public performance reporting to be approved by Policy and Resources Committee in January 2006.</b>	Report to the Best Value sub-committee 26th January expanding the remit in relation to best value and efficient government. Quarterly report to the Council's management team showing the status of projects will be summarised and presented for elected member scrutiny to the Best Value sub-committee on a half yearly basis in June and in December.	Develop the half-year monitoring reporting system to the Best Value Sub committee by June 06 and then Dec 06.
B	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	Area for Improvement (B) Ensure that members take a more active role in reviewing the performance of services and take steps to ensure more systematic and comprehensive reporting from services to service committee. Measures <b>Review the service planning process and produce new comprehensive guidance and training on producing service plans and involving elected members in the process. Report to Policy and Resources Committee by June 2006.</b>	A consultation meeting with departments took place Chief Executive in January on the objectives and success criteria for new service planning guidelines. The new guidance is to be in place Chief Executive for June 2006 for publication of new service plans in 2007.	Report to the Policy & Resources Committee in June 06 on the new service plan guidelines and on how these involve Elected Members.

Plan ID	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
C	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Management)	Area for Improvement (C) Develop and implement a Human Resources strategy that will ensure effective corporate management of staff absence, and ensure the Council's staffing establishment is as stream-lined and targeted as possible. <b>Measures Corporate Human Resource strategy developed and agreed by Personnel Committee by April 2006.</b>	Plan to report on a Human Resource strategy is underway.	Report on Human Resource Strategy to the Personnel Committee by April 06.
D	Behind Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	Area for Improvement (D) Develop more coherent links between planning and budgeting and allocation of resources in accordance with policy priorities and objectives. <b>Measures A working group will be established to bring forward measures aimed at integrating resource planning, including the financial costing of corporate/service objectives and new initiatives, into both corporate and service plans. Measurable financial performance targets will also be established and reported for significant areas. Targets: - Group in place Chief Executive by December 2005 - Partial implementation by May 2006 - Full implementation of agreed proposals in May 2007.</b>	Working Group has not yet been set up.	Working group on integrating resource planning with corporate and service plans will be established by June 06. The proposals of the group will be reported on by Oct 06.

Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
E	Behind Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	Area for Improvement (E) Review the format, content and frequency of financial reports to ensure members receive adequate information to monitor the financial position. Measures <b>The format of the revenue and capital expenditure monitoring to be reviewed by Management Team and reported to Finance Committee by January 2006.</b>	A survey has been issued to key stakeholders on financial report formats but yet to be completed.	Proposals on the format and frequency of financial report issued to the Finance Committee by June 06.
F1	Complete	Chief Executive	Area for Improvement (F1) Review the role of the Council Management Team (CMT) to bring a greater degree of corporate discipline to performance management, service review, and option appraisal ensuring that these are properly linked with corporate planning and budget setting processes and are better place Chief Executive to deliver continuous improvement. Measures <b>Review the functions of CMT and implement new performance management measures by December 2005. (note: reviews of service plans and option appraisal to be reported under other plan headings)</b>	Report 608-2005 was approved by the Policy & Resources Committee October 2005. This proposed separating the agenda of the Corporate Management Team into operation and performance and strategy. The functions of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have since been reviewed and the new performance and strategy CMT is now operational.	This action is complete and will be subject to normal review procedures.

Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
F2	On Schedule	Chief Executive	Area for Improvement (F2) Review the functions of CMT and implement new performance management measures by December 2005. <b>Measures Further review of performance management by June 2006.</b>	A report was agreed by the CMT (Performance & Strategy) in Nov 2005 setting out the format of a quarterly report covering performance on the objectives and projects in the strategic plan monitoring database. The first of these reports was made to the CMT performance and strategy in Feb 2006.	This action is linked to the development of the effectiveness of the quarterly and half-year monitoring reports, the Strategic Plan Monitoring Database and the new Service Plan guidelines. The new Service Plan guideline report to the P & R committee in June 06 will link these into a holistic view of performance management.
G	On Schedule	Chief Executive	Area for Improvement (G) Review the Council structure to ensure a better fit with corporate objectives, the needs of service users and organisational efficiencies. <b>Measures Review to be carried out and reported to Council for consideration by June 2006.</b>	Options in relation to structure being considered	Report to the Policy & Resources Committee in June 06 on developments in the Council's structure. The wider issues relating to the Council's structure will be considered in parallel with developing a new Council Plan for 2007 onwards.
H	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	Area for Improvement (H) Review the impact of community planning with the planning partners to ensure that all partners are directing adequate resources to agreed priorities. <b>Measures New Community Plan 2005/2010 was agreed and published in June 2005. The first annual monitoring review of the Plan and its 6 themes, to be done by October 2006, will include a review of impact and resource allocation.</b>	External assessment of quality of Partnership work agreed as part of Dundee University's Monitoring and Research programme for 2006. Discussions held with the Improvement Service regarding pilot project on analysis of value added through strategic theme groups.	First annual review of the Community Plan and strategic themes to be presented to the Dundee Partnership Management Group in November 06. Revised performance monitoring framework for Dundee Partnership to be agreed Oct 06. Improvement Service project on added value through strategic themes to begin in Jun 06 and report Oct 06.

Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
I	Behind Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)/Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	Area for Improvement (I) Take steps to share good practice more widely and systematically within the Council and the management team to make better use of benchmarking and option appraisal, building on examples of these already being used in parts of the Council. Measures <b>Review and report on the use of benchmarking and option appraisal in the Council, recommending what steps to take, by November 2005. Implement best practice and update service plans by May 2006.</b>	Examples of good practice are a feature of meetings of the Corporate Management Team (Performance & Strategy).A report on furthering this is still to be prepared but will form part of the guidance on service planning.	A corporate Strategy newsletter for staff will be introduced on the modernising government theme by June 06. The Service Plan guidance to be reported on by June 06 will include guidance on benchmarking and option appraisal. A review of training needs associated with the service plan guidelines will be completed by December 06.



Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
J	On Schedule	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)	Area for Improvement (J) Ensure that all service plans are SMART and that these and Council strategies are able to demonstrate that they respond to customer views as expressed through consultations and surveys. <b>Measures By July 2006: All service plan performance targets and strategic project milestones to be reviewed to make them as SMART as practicable. Public consultation and communication strategies to be prepared and approved for all services. Feedback reported via service plan reports to committees. Monitoring and reviewing effectiveness of consultation and communication via new CMT roles and via Service Plan reports to Committees.</b>	A consultation meeting with departments has taken place Chief Executive on new service plan guidance. The next Step is the Corporate Planning Dept to issue draft guidance in February. A quarterly reporting system to the new Corporate Management Team (Performance & Strategy) will include a report on the actions taken to make all the objectives in plans SMART. The first of these will report using the Strategic Plan Monitoring Database reports as at end of Dec 2005 for the February meeting.	The December performance monitoring report to the Best Value sub committee will report on the number of actions in plans that a measurable assessment (SMART) can be given on. The Service plan guidelines to be published in June 06 will deal with setting SMART objectives and public consultation.
K1	On Schedule	Dir. Leisure & Communities	Area for Improvement (K1) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development. <b>Measures Develop and implement Equality Action Plans for each service, by December 2005.</b>	Departments have made assessments on equality action plans required. At the P & R Committee 14 Nov 2005 it was agreed that committee reports relating to new policy must be accompanied by an equality and diversity report which at a minimum would be an Equality Impact Assessment form.	The Equality Impact Assessment process will be implemented by March 06. The Action plan process will be included in the service plan guidelines to be issued in June 06.

Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
K2	Completed	Head Waste Management	Area for Improvement (K2) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development. <b>Measures Sustainability performance to be specifically monitored via the CMT, and Service Plan and Council Plan reporting procedures, from July 2006 onwards. Sustainability Policy in place Chief Executive following approval by Committee in October 2005. A comprehensive environment policy framework to be developed and approved by Committee by December 2005.</b>	The Council's Sustainability Policy, Corporate Priorities and Action Plan were agreed by CMT on the 29th November 2005. A report 110-2006 was agreed by the P&R Committee in Feb 06. The Council's Sustainability Policy Implementation Group will take forward the action plan and review annually. New Service Planning Guidance is currently being developed that will include requirements for reporting on sustainability development progress.	This action has been completed.
K3	On Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	Area for Improvement (K3) Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery, and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development. <b>Measures Sustainability criteria incorporated into Council's procurement strategy by December 2006</b>	No further developments anticipated until June 2006 when bid to the Efficient Government Fund regarding procurement strategy will be known. Sustainability considerations re procurement may then be developed at that time.	Sustainability policy included in procurement strategy by Dec 06.
L	On Schedule	Chief Executive	Area for improvement (L) Renewal of the importance of leadership in establishing a culture of Best Value. <b>Measures Carry out a rigorous corporate EFQM self-assessment process and implement resulting action plan by August 2006</b>	It is planned to conduct a corporate EFQM Self Assessment between May and September 2006.	Corporate EFQM self assessment report on the council's leadership of continuous improvement capability approved by the CMT by Sept 06.

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M	On Schedule	Dir. Economic Development	Area for Improvement (M) Extend asset management arrangements across the Council to ensure assets are managed in the most effective way possible and are explicitly matched to the Council's objectives. Measures <b>Complete property surveys and has information in accessible computer-based system by February 2006. Draft Asset Management Plan issued for consultation by September 2006. Finalisation, approval and implementation of Asset Management Plan by July 2007.</b>	The Computer based GVA system has been rolled out to all depts.	Draft Asset Management Plan issued for consultation Sept 06. Final Asset Management Plan issued July 2007.
N	On Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	Area for Improvement (N) Ensure that the Council's approach to risk management fully reflects business continuity issues and civil contingencies. Measures <b>All departments of the Council to produce their own detailed business continuity plans in an agreed format by December 2005. Business continuity plans to be modified in the light of specific obligations imposed by the Civil Contingencies Bill - target date dependent on publication date of the Bill</b>	Departments identified their critical services for business continuity planning by Dec 05. The Audit and Risk Management Sub-Committee approved a report in Mar 06 setting out training requirements for departments and the wider business community for creating business continuity plans.	Department business continuity plans will be in place Chief Executive by Dec 06.

Order	Status	Responsibility	Objectives	Assessment	SMART Target 2006-2007
O	On Schedule	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>Area for Improvement (O) Ensure that the Council's approach to procurement at all levels achieves best value. Measures</p> <p><b>Prepare bid for funding assistance to take forward procurement-related proposals under Efficient Government Initiative by July 2005. Investigate extension of joint working initiatives with other local authorities and public sector agencies to maximise buying power etc by October 2005. Annual review of corporate procurement strategy (incorporated as part of overall annual review of Council Plan Performance by July 2006.</b></p>	<p>A stage 2 bid to the Efficient Govt' Fund has been submitted (Mar) 06. This will have a highly significant influence on the Council's procurement strategy. No further significant developments anticipated until outcome around June 2006.</p>	<p>Report on Procurement Strategy to the Corporate Management Team April 06. Report on Procurement Strategy will be subject to the outcome of the EGF bid process.</p>