

REPORT TO: BEST VALUE SUB-COMMITTEE - 16 MAY 2002

REPORT ON: PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT NO: 451-2002

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee of the importance and general developments of Public Performance Reporting within the Best Value framework.
- 1.2 To advise the committee of the current public reporting procedures adopted by Dundee City Council particularly in relation to the Annual Report and the Statutory Performance Indicators.
- 1.3 To specify the need for reporting arrangements to be updated in order that the authority meets the best practice requirements of Public Performance Reporting as outlined in the Accounts Commission's report "Getting to know your services".

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee adopt the procedures as specified in Appendix I of this report in order that the authority complies with the Public Performance Reporting requirements of Best Value. This will enable the stakeholders to access performance information much earlier than previously, ie within four months of the close of the financial year.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any financial implications arising will be contained within the current Revenue Budget for the preparation of the Annual Report.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Since 1993/94 Scottish Local Authorities have been required by statute to provide information on how well they have carried out their activities. The Local Government Act 1992 placed a duty upon the Accounts Commission to direct local authorities to publish predetermined performance information which will assist the public and other interested parties in making comparisons by reference to the criteria of cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 6.2 To date Dundee City Council has met these requirements principally through the publication of the Annual Report which contains the Statutory Performance Indicators and the Abstract of Accounts. The Statutory Performance Indicators

are also published each year in a prescribed format in the local newspaper and selected Performance Indicators in the Housing News.

- 6.3 Developments in Public Performance Reporting through the Best Value strategy have meant that these procedures have had to be reviewed. Local Authorities are obliged to make attempts to ensure that performance information is more meaningful to the stakeholder and more easily readable. This means that the traditional format of the Annual Report is no longer sufficient to meet what the average reader might find of interest about a local authority. The proposals contained within this report meet with criteria set out in the Accounts Commission's report "Getting to know your services" and this is best practice on public reporting.
- 6.4 As a result of this review it now seems appropriate to split the current Annual Report into two documents, these being the Abstract of Accounts and the Performance Report. The format of the Abstract is prescribed whereas the authority has control over the format of the Performance Report. Efforts will be made to make the latter report simple and easy to understand in order to communicate with the largest number of people. In addition, this will mean that the public will have access to the performance information much earlier than previously was the case.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The new Performance Report will provide the authority with additional scope to explain its performance in relation to targets, past performance and that of other authorities. It will enable the authority to explain its actions and inform the electorate on a much more timely and comprehensive basis.

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DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING PROCEDURES

The authority will publish a Performance Report each year. The timing of the publication will be immediately after the annual accounts are completed in order that the performance information is as up to date as possible.

The report will be prepared in accordance with best practice and contain comparisons of the authority's current performance against targets, past performance and the performance of other comparable local authorities.

Responsibility for the report will remain with the Finance Department although the report will be compiled by a Project Team consisting of representatives from Finance, Corporate Planning and Design Services.

In order to obtain maximum exposure of the document, it will be placed on the authority's Intranet site. In addition, distribution will also be via the Internet and copies of the document will be available in all Council properties. Copies will also be sent to other public sector bodies, voluntary and community organisations throughout the City.

The Statutory Performance Indicators advertisement will continue to be published prior to 30 September each year in the format prescribed by statute.