

**REPORT TO: BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE -  
28 APRIL 2009**

**REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**REPORT ON: BEST VALUE SELF EVALUATION**

**REPORT NO: 194-2009**

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report proposes a programme of self assessment to prepare for the Best Value 2 audit and create a sustainable framework for the City Council for ongoing self assessment.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Project teams are created as follows:

- Performance Management Framework
- Corporate Project Governance
- Internal Communications
- Service Quality Assessment

2.2 Adopt the full programme of activity outlined in section 10 of the report.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There may be expenditure associated with performance management external reviews, internal communications and training for the PSIF model of assessment. Any expenditure will be contained within the City Council's overall approved Revenue Budget.

## **4. BACKGROUND**

The report covers the external stakeholder perspective as represented mainly through Audit Scotland and the Council Plan (Corporate Strategy). It then identifies the key processes that will be under scrutiny as the Council's approach to Best Value and for each proposes a review project.

## **5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT - EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

5.1 This report aims to set out a method for self-evaluation on performance management and improvement. This is consistent with Best Value (2) and the Council's corporate strategy.

5.2 Self-evaluation that satisfies external stakeholders concern that the Council is improving and achieving the community's outcomes is at the centre of the new approach to Best Value.

The Crerar review noted "self-assessment should be the core level of accountability, with less relevance on external scrutiny".

The concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA stated as one of its main components:

"The Scottish Government will work with local government to develop an agreed approach to the Crerar Review that will lead to improvements in performance management and self-assessments in performance management and self-assessment across the public sector thereby enabling a more focussed and proportionate inspection regime to apply to local government".

- 5.3 The concordat also calls for the Single Outcome Agreement as part of a national performance management arrangements. This ties in the Scottish Government's strategy (+15 National Outcomes) and the Statutory Community Planning Partners to a local agreement on priorities. The Council is also expected to produce an annual report on the Single Outcome Agreement which is due in September 2009. This brings the evaluation of partnership working into the scope of using a self-assessment framework.
- 5.4 The Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Indicator Directive for 2009 is different from previous directives. The specific indicators have been reduced to 25 but the Council is expected to "report a range of information, sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value". This is broken down into two generic headings:
- a) Corporate Management
  - b) Service Performance

This will be the subject of a separate report to the sub-committee.

- 5.5 The Chair of the Accounts Commission, J Baillie says in his introduction to the SPI direction:

"In all that has been said about the recent concordat, and the single outcome agreements with Councils and their community planning partners, it has always been absolutely clear that Councils still need to report on the quality, accessibility and value for money of all their services as part of their Best Value duties."

- 5.6 The Accounts Commission is a key external driver of corporate behaviour through the External Audit reporting function, which is itself influenced by the Priorities and Risk framework provided by Audit Scotland. This now closely resembles an annual audit on Best Value corporate management criteria.
- 5.7 The ultimate assessment of the Council will be the Best Value 2 audit framework. The phrase 'proportional and risk based' is used to convey the idea that the breadth and depth of the audit will depend upon feedback from other indications and regulatory sources. Implicit in this is that if the local authority is believed to have its own robust self-assessment process that is delivering change on current weaknesses and improving performance then external scrutiny from them will be a lighter burden.
- 5.8 The principles that the Best Value 2 Framework is being developed by are listed below:
- a stronger focus on outcomes as well as on corporate performance management processes
  - a greater emphasis on community leadership and the effectiveness of partnership working

- a stronger focus on the experience of citizens and service users
- improved coverage of service performance and the use of resources
- a more proportionate and risk-based audit approach, founded on self-assessment
- improved audit reporting and greater transparency of audit process
- improved support for improvement and sharing of good practice

The above list of principles can act as a guide to developing the Council's own self-assessment reports.

## 6 THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Council Plan incorporates three broad aims.

- Achieving the Community Plan Vision (now SOA)
- Modernising and Improvement Services
- Sound governance of the Council's assets and resources

- 6.1 The Council's strategy is to co-operate with partners, provide Best Value services in-house and modernise through technology and system improvements. 'Changing for the Future' embraces both the economic strategy, the use of new communication technologies and working practises to achieve efficiencies and improvements.
- 6.2 A decision to use the Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) was approved by the sub-committee (December 2008) based on the Council's history of using the EFQM model for self-assessment. The City Council also uses the SOLACE/CIPFA Code of Corporate Governance to carry out an assessment of corporate governance standards.
- 6.3 A key part of the Council Plan that a Best Value Audit may focus on is how corporate objectives such as modernisation and improving services are carried out. For example, how are projects including the new Dundee House, One Stop Shop, Corporate Information Infrastructure (Citizen Account, and ERDMS) set up and resourced. The role of the Improvement and Efficiency Board is central to this.
- 6.4 In order to conduct a self-assessment at the corporate level it is important to define the key processes that deliver performance improvement. These will be the subject of assessment teams. A list of the key processes is provided in the next section of the report.

## 7 KEY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PROCESSES

**Strategic Planning:** does the SOA. Council Plan and service planning involve the right people to create a vision and strategy to direct the future work of management at all levels?

**Performance Reporting:** do reports to governing bodies deliver accountability for management on Best Value indicators and delivery of approved plans including the new SOA?

**Community Leadership:** does the quality of engagement with elected members and other community representatives achieve responsiveness to local community issues?

**Service Users views:** is the effectiveness of the feedback loop between service users experience and management driving initiatives to improve the service?

**Corporate Projects:** does the corporate body select priority projects and resource the delivery of those projects that require deployment across service departments to achieve the benefits of the project for corporate objectives?

**Internal Communications:** how effective is the process that enables staff to be aware of and able to act on priorities, policy changes, shared best practices and support corporate projects?

**Service Quality Assurance:** is there an effective approach to ensure each service is pursuing quality and efficiency improvements? This is what the PSIF aims to achieve as it assesses results, process improvement (e.g. lean systems), performance management and leadership. A summary PSIF output report is proposed in Appendix 1.

- 7.1 The proposed self-assessment activities address these key processes. The method of self-assessment is in itself a key process. So that the evidence collected fits in with the PSIF model the review should address the common questions associated with PSIF evaluation scoring.

These are:

Approach - is there a clear approach based on best practice principles

Deployment - is the approach deployed in all the areas of Council work that need to

Assessment and Review - is the approach subject to continuous improvement

Results - are there improving trends in the results achieved with the approach

## 8 GOVERNANCE

The Improvement and Efficiency Board will provide the high level governance. The following project teams should be created:

- Performance Management and Reporting (Golden Thread) - Chair, Assistant Chief Executive
- Corporate Project Governance - Chair, Depute Chief executive (Finance)
- Internal and External Communications - Chair, Head of PR
- Quality Assessment - Chair, Performance and Improvement Manager

9 **BUDGET**

There will be expenditure associated with external review consultants, training, potential secondments and communications, and these will be contained within the Council's overall approved Revenue Budget.

10 **CORPORATE BEST VALUE SELF ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME**

The tables that follow develop a self assessment programme of activity to prepare the Council for Best Value 2 and a long-term sustainable self assessment regime.

## Dundee City Council Corporate Performance and Improvement Self-Assessment 2009

Key Process	Approach	Deployment	Review Activity	Deliverables	Lead Officer	Start/End
Performance Management Framework	<p>Is there a 'golden thread' between Community/Corporate and Team Plans?</p> <p>Are the right people involved?</p> <p>Are the products fit for purpose?</p>	<p>Are all departments deploying the corporate approach?</p> <p>Are teams at service level engaged in the process?</p>	Golden Thread Healthcheck Corporate and Department Assessment (10 teams)	<p>CMT workshop and report</p> <p>10 short bullet points reports for services participating</p>	Assistant Chief Executive	March 2009 - July 2009
Performance Reporting	<p>Do the annual and quarterly performance reporting product facilitating accountability and scrutiny by Members?</p> <p>Is the approach compliant with corporate governance code best practice?</p> <p>Is the scope of information broad and/or deep enough?</p>	<p>Are all corporate and services reported on consistently?</p> <p>Are all stakeholders providing feedback?</p>	Golden Thread Healthcheck	Part of above	Assistant Chief Executive	March 2009 - July 2009
			Corporate Code of Governance	Governance report and schedule of performance report products	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	March 2009 - July 2009
Community Leadership	<p>Are the structures of Dundee Partnership Groups aligned with Vision and Strategy?</p> <p>Are local community planning partnerships fit for purpose?</p>	<p>Are the right organisations represented in community planning groups?</p> <p>Are all areas covered by an effective local community planning partnership?</p>	PSIF assessment carried out by Dundee Partnership Co-ordinating Group on theme groups and local community planning partnership	Theme group assessments and local CHP assessment presentations to Dundee Partnership Management Board	Performance and Improvement Manager	<p>Start June 2009</p> <p>End December 2009</p>

<b>Key Process</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Deployment</b>	<b>Review Activity</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Start/End</b>
Service User Feedback	<p>Is there a sound corporate method for service user feedback?</p> <p>Is the scope of tools and questions aligned with the performance management and reporting framework?</p> <p>Do the feedback tools align with improvement methods?</p>	<p>Are all strategic plans informed by service user feedback?</p> <p>Do all services capture and use service user feedback in a systematic way?</p>	<p>Survey of corporate and department activity and results.</p> <p>Review reports with elected members for feedback on adopting new methods</p>	<p>Report to Improvement and Efficiency Committee</p> <p>Experiment with new media method</p> <p>Toolkit for training service managers</p>	Corporate Planning Officer	<p>March 2009</p> <p>June 2009</p>
Corporate Projects	As the approach to selecting and managing corporate projects best practice	Are all corporate projects managed in a consistent approach?	Survey of a sample of corporate projects	Reports to Improvement and Efficiency Board	Depute Chief Executive (Finance)	<p>April 2009</p> <p>August 2009</p>
Internal Communication	Does the approach to internal communications support the vision and strategy?	Are all departments using the corporate approach?	Focus group of service managers meet Chief Executive to test key vision and strategy messages	Key messages document with service alignment examples`	Chief Executive Support from Head of PR	<p>April 2009</p> <p>July 2009</p>
	Are the methods of internal communications best practice?		Short-life internal communications group to review corporate approach and produce a costed proposed for a sustainable plan e.g. publications and intranet	Costed communication plan	Head of Public Relations	<p>April 2009</p> <p>July 2009</p>

<b>Key Process</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Deployment</b>	<b>Review Activity</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Start/End</b>
Service Quality Assurance	<p>Is there a sound corporate approach to self-assessment that ensures each department is achieving continuous improvement?</p> <p>Does the scope of the assessment cover all the Best Value principles?</p> <p>Does the approach satisfy Best Value/Crerar Review requirements</p>	<p>Are all departments carrying out a self-assessment programme?</p> <p>Are all services included in the assessment?</p>	<p>Conduct a PSIF in all departments</p> <p>Appoint for one year a PSIF support team of seconded officers to support the programme</p>	<p>Department assessment 'scorecard' on results, strengths, and areas for improvement for Improvement and Efficiency Board</p> <p>Department ends up with own trained team</p>	Performance and Improvement Manager	<p>April 2009</p> <p>June 2010</p>



11. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no issues in this regard to report on.

12. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance.

13. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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Performance and Improvement Manager ..... 22/04/2009

**PSIF High Level Report**

This would form the output of a PSIF assessment and could be used as a regular scorecard report to the Improvement and Efficiency Committee.

**SERVICE****Key Results from SOA/Council Plan/Service Plan**

Definition	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/ 2010	Improving Trend Y/N	Target

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION****KEY FACTORS ON SERVICE QUALITY**

Definition	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/ 2010	Improving Trend	Target

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Key Result Area	Improvement Action	Lead Officer