

Best Value

Best Value guidance is changing all the time. Following the first year of reviews the Best Value Inspectorate advised Local Authorities to reduce the number they undertook and to make them more strategic.

The latest Best Value and Performance Improvement circular from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, issued in March 2003, identifies that too much attention has been focused on ensuring compliance with the 4C's (Challenge, Consult, Compare and Compete) at the expense of the outcomes and improvements. More importantly it highlights that the two most important C'-s are challenge and competition.

Over the past three years East Herts Council has undertaken 21 reviews, as follows:

Year 1 – 2000/01	Year 2 – 2001/02	Year 3 – 2002/03
Affordable Housing	Benefits	Front Line Services
Community Safety	Building Control	Corporate Procurement
Cultural Services	Grants	Legal Services
Grounds Maintenance	Highways Services	
Revenue Collection	IT	
Street Cleansing	Land Charges	
	Office Services	
	Play Services	
	Refuse Collection and Recycling	
	Renovation Grants	
	Strategic and Financial Management	
	Town Centre	

The improvement plans resulting from these reviews are monitored on a six monthly basis and reported to Performance Scrutiny.

Currently there are four reviews that are currently being undertaken (they were identified for Year 4 – 2003/04 Best Value Programme), they are on:

- Development Control
- Health and Living Support
- Environmental Stewardship
- Organisational Development

It is anticipated that these will be completed by September 2004.

In light of our status as a 'good' authority, the Best Value Review Programme for 2004/05 is less about a formal review programme and more about where through dialogue with the

Audit Commission we agree that an area from our Improvement Plan would benefit from inspection.

Based on current guidance that any inspections should be about outcomes in terms of service delivery rather than organisational process, the focus for inspection in 2004/05 will be Leisure Services and 2005/06 Housing Services. Both services are highlighted in our improvement plan.

SECTION 6: INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS




(Tables to be updated once all outturn performance submitted)

All local authorities are required to measure the effectiveness of their services against a set of National Best Value Performance Indicators.

The wallchart, contained at the back of the Best Value Performance Plan, shows the performance that East Herts has achieved against all national and local indicators over the past three years, as well as the targets the Council has set for improvement in the current year, and over the following two years.

Out of 107 Best Value and Local performance indicators:

(107 is the number of performance indicators, including sub parts, where outturn data has been reported and targets were set for 2003/04)

62%		Indicators were either on or above target
7%		Indicators were 1-5% off target
30%		Indicators were 6% + off target
2%		Performance could not be determined as there is currently no system to collect the indicator

When compared to outturn performance in 2002/03:

(This analysis is based on 106 indicators where 2002/03 performance was reported)

57%		Have improved
10%		Have stayed the same
31%		Have got worse
2%		Performance could not be determined as there is currently no system to collect the indicator

APPENDIX 1: STATEMENT OF CONTRACTS

During 2003/04 there were no new contracts awarded which involved the transfer of staff.