

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL - 16 JUNE 2004

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMY

10. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2004

RECOMMENDATION - that (A) the Council agree the proposed format and content of the Best Value Performance Plan 2004, and

(B) the Executive Director (Rachel Stopard) be authorised to make any additional changes to the Best Value Performance Plan, appended to this report, as required to satisfy Government and audit requirements

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report introduces the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004. This is a statutory plan that must be published by the end of June each year. The requirements for such a plan are specified in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999.

2.0 CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

2.1 This report, in terms of producing a Best Value Performance Plan, contributes to one of the Council's seven corporate objectives, which is 'Improve the sustainability of the organisation'. However the achievements and targets detailed in the plan contribute to all seven corporate priorities.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Local Government Act 1999 requires all best value authorities to prepare an annual Performance Plan. It provides an opportunity for authorities to articulate their proposals for improvement for the coming year and show targets for future performance.

3.2 The requirements that authorities need to meet when preparing an annual Performance Plan have been revised over the the last few years. Recently the ODPM have published an update on 'Guidance on Best Value Performance Plans'. The guidance contains updates on three key issues.

Issue 1: Audience for Performance Plans

- 3.3 The guidance states that whilst Performance Plans should be public documents, authorities should not view the public as the primary recipients. The primary audience for the plan is the authority itself.

Issue 2: Content of Performance Plans

- 3.4 It will no longer be necessary to provide information that can be obtained from other sources. Hence information on CPA score, summary financial information, progress in implementing improvement measures over the past 3 years and outcomes and impacts arising from those measures are no longer compulsory. However authorities may choose to include such information if it helps improve understanding and puts planned improvement into context.
- 3.5 In addition the Government has proposed that the Performance Plan requirements will differ dependent on an authority's CPA categorisation.
- 3.6 For authorities categorised as 'excellent' or 'good' the Government has reduced its Performance Plan requirements further. For example the Government will accept the authority's annual corporate plan as meeting the statutory requirement, providing that it is identified as a 'Performance Plan' and contains the following information:
- Outturn data for Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs)
 - Targets for BVPs in the current year and subsequent 2 years, and
 - Confirmation that they are adopting the Code of Practice in their approach to workforce matters and contracting

Issue 3: Timing of Performance Plans

- 3.7 Authorities will be able to prepare and publish their Performance Plans at any time up to the end of June.

4.0 EAST HERTS BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

- 4.1 The attached Appendix 'A' (Pages 92 - 137) presents the proposed text and 2003/04 outturn performance for the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Best Value Performance Plan be published in an A4 booklet format and on the Internet and issued to Members, Directors Board, Heads of Service, Team leaders and stakeholders e.g. Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police Authority, Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford Primary Care Trust etc as in previous years. In addition a summary of the Performance Plan will also be made available and distributed to all members of staff.
- 4.3 The national and local performance indicators will be produced on a wall chart, allowing all information on an indicator to be read across e.g. past and future performance.
- 4.4 Both the full Best Value Performance Plan and the wall chart will be distributed in the new East Herts wallets (these have been developed as part of the re branding exercise for East Herts)
- 4.5 Due to the time-scales involved the production of outturn performance is not always achievable until the time of publication for instance financial information and information from third parties.
- 4.6 All outturn performance is audited internally prior to publication and hence some figures, depending if they have been calculated as per the national definition may be subject to change.
- 4.7 In addition to the statutory information, it is proposed that information on the following is provided to give a further overview and context:
- The Community and the Council's objectives and priorities
 - Service Planning and Financial Management Framework and Performance Management
 - East Herts Priorities
 - CPA and Best Value
- 4.8 The production of this statutory document is, inevitably, a complex process. In previous years, last minute guidance from the Government and the Council's external auditor has led to changes having to be made to the text and information presented, right up to the deadline for printing.
- 4.9 It is recommended that the Executive Director (Rachel Stopard) is

authorised to publish the Best Value Performance Plan by the Government deadline of 30 June 2004, and to make any additional changes to the text as required to satisfy Government and audit requirements.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 All staff were consulted on the proposed format and content of the plan through Team Brief. In particular they were invited to put forward case studies of best practice for inclusion in the plan.

5.2 Performance Scrutiny considered an earlier draft of the plan on 4 May 2004.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Section three of the report sets out the specific legal implications for producing a Best Value Performance Plan.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

8.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific Human Resource implications arising from this report.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

A copy of the revised guidance on Best Value Performance Plans can be found on the Internet path below:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_027537.pdf

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