

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held in the Monsanto Suite, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen on Thursday, 11th October, 2001 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors E.C. Edwards (Leader), I.M. German, D.M. Holder, R.W. Hughes, G.M. Kensler, E.A. Owens, A.E. Roberts, W.R. Webb, K.E. Wells and E.W. Williams.

Observers: Councillor R.J.R. Jones.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

Councillor D.M. Morris.

ALSO PRESENT

Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Resources, Financial Controller and the County Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Acting Chief Executive informed Members of the death in service of Mrs. B.J. Galbraith, a Day Care Assistant at Prestatyn. Members were asked to stand in silent tribute.

1 URGENT MATTERS

The Leader gave notice of the following items which in his opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972:-

- (i) Item 12 Proposed A494 Ffynnon y Berth Improvement Scheme - map circulated. Members have received a number of representations in respect of this matter;
- (ii) Item 13 Best Value: Education - Specialist Support Services - sent under separate cover;
- (iii) Item 17 Grahams Site, Westbourne Avenue, Rhyl - item withdrawn;
- (iv) Item 21 Part II Prestatyn Ffrith Beach Festival Gardens - additional item, and
- (v) Verbal update on Llangollen

2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet held on 25 September 2001 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Item 6 Policy Agreements - The Director of Resources informed Members that the funding had not yet been released.

Page 3, third paragraph the figure should read £327k.

Page 3, fourth paragraph, Councillor G.M. Kensler asked that the word "bureaucratic" be inserted before the word "burden".

Item 11 Foot and Mouth Special Grant - Councillor E.W. Williams enquired when the next tranche would be considered by Cabinet. The Head of Economic Generation said a report would be presented to Cabinet on 23.10.2001.

Item 16 - Second paragraph, penultimate line, Councillor G.M. Kensler requested that the word "would" should be replaced by the word "should".

Item 23 Capital Programme Group Report - Councillor R.W. Hughes enquired whether approval had been received from the National Assembly for Wales in view of the urgency appertaining to Loggerheads Country Park. It was agreed Officers would make enquiries and report back later in the meeting.

***RESOLVED** that subject to the above the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 September 2001 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.*

3 RECRUITMENT

The Leader, Councillor E C Edwards submitted the following applications for approval:-

- (i) Sc 3 Clerk/Typist - Personal Services Admin: Children with Disabilities;
- (ii) Social Worker SW 1-3 - Personal Services: Purchasing, Rhyl;
- (iii) SO 1 Conveyancing Assistant - Personal Services: Housing Services;
- (iv) SO 2 Residential Homes Manager - Personal Services: Cysgod y Gaer;
- (v) SW 1-3 Social Worker - Personal Services: Mental Health, and
- (vi) SW 1-3 Social Worker - Personal Services: Hospital Social Work.

***RESOLVED** that the external advertisement of the above mentioned posts be approved.*

4 WLGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' retrospective approval to the attendance of Councillor E.A. Owens at the WLGA Annual Conference 2001 and the payment of expenses incurred.

At Cabinet on 31.07.2001 Members agreed the Leader should attend the Conference but in the event he had been unable to attend and Councillor E.A. Owens attended as his replacement.

***RESOLVED** that Members agreed in retrospect to Councillor E.A. Owens' attendance at the WLGA Conference on 6/7 September 2001 and the payment of expenses incurred by Councillor Owens.*

5 WALES EUROPEAN CENTRE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to use the County Council's corporate subscriptions budget to meet the cost of its annual subscription to the Wales European Centre Limited.

This report regarding the subscription had been requested by Cabinet at their meeting held on 30.08.2001. Until 1998/1999 the subscription had been included within the Council's subscription to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and from that date the Wales European Centre (WEC) had presented invoices direct to the Council in respect of subscription for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

***RESOLVED** that Members approved the use of the County Council's corporate budget to meet the cost of its annual subscription to the Wales European Centre Limited.*

6 LEADER PLUS

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' nomination of a Council representative to be a member of the Leader Plus company and of the Board of Directors. Cabinet had previously agreed the Council become a member of the CRAI (Clwydian Range Action Initiative). It was suggested that the nominee should have a Cabinet portfolio and have a detailed knowledge of countryside and tourism matters.

Councillor E.W. Williams suggested that an appointment of this nature could usefully be made by Full Council albeit that they should be informed as to the Cabinet's suggested nominee Councillor R.W. Hughes. Members discussed the matter and considered whether the decision should be made by Cabinet as recommended or in the manner suggested by Councillor E.W. Williams.

RESOLVED that Members agreed Councillor R.W. Hughes, Lead Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism be the Council's representative on the Board of CRAI Leader Plus.

7 CLWYDFRO CYFYNGEDIG

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' nomination of eight directors to serve on the board of Clwydfro (trading as Denbighshire Enterprise Agency). The nomination of the four existing directors of Clwydfro together with the three previous directors of Coastal Enterprise and the Leader as the Cabinet Member with the Economic Regeneration portfolio were the recommendations.

Councillor E.W. Williams and Councillor G.M. Kensler drew Members' attention to the former distribution of Members as between Clwydfro and Coastal Enterprise Limited, these Boards having previously been politically balanced. Members considered a number of variations to the proposals recommended but concluded that the recommendation contained in the report provided the most satisfactory solution.

RESOLVED that Members agreed eight directors serve on the board of Clwydfro Cyfyngedig, 4 directors being appointed from Cabinet and 4 appointed from amongst Scrutiny Members.

8 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - PTI CYMRU LTD

Councillor E.C. Edwards, Leader of the Council presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' nomination of a representative to attend the Annual General Meeting of PTI Cymru Ltd on 06.11.2001 at Llandudno Junction.

PTI Cymru was formed and funded by the National Assembly for Wales to introduce an all-Wales phone-based transport enquiry system and consists of stakeholders/service owners, the three major bus companies in Wales and the 22 Unitary Authorities in Wales.

After discussion Members agreed to circulate the request for nomination to the Groups and if more than one nomination be received the County Clerk in consultation with the Leader determine the nomination.

RESOLVED that Members agreed Council be represented at the Annual General Meeting of PTI Cymru Ltd to be held on 06.11.2001 at Llandudno Junction and that Groups be requested to make a nomination, with the County Clerk in consultation with the Leader determining the nomination if more than one was received.

9 NFLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE: DEVELOPING A LOCAL AGENDA FOR PEACE

The Leader, Councillor E.C. Edwards, presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' agreement to nominate either Councillor M.A. German or Councillor G. Jones, two of the Authority's representatives on the Wales Nuclear Free Forum to attend the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Annual Conference on 25.10.2001 in Glasgow.

Councillor I.M. German nominated Councillor G. Jones to attend the NFLA Annual Conference and that either Councillor M.A. German or Councillor T.M. Parry be nominated substitute.

RESOLVED that Members' nominated Councillor G. Jones to attend the NFLA Annual Conference to be held in Glasgow on 25.10.2001 and that either Councillor M.A. German or T.M. Parry be nominated substitute.

10 APPLICATION TO REGISTER LLANGOLLEN YOUTH CLUB PLAYING FIELD KNOWN AS "WILLOW HILL FIELD" AS A TOWN/VILLAGE GREEN

The Leader, Councillor E.C. Edwards, presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' authorisation of a procedure to deal with an application to register a new town/village green pursuant to Section 13 of the Commons Registration Act 1965. The application has been made by a local group "Save Our Green Fields" and covers land owned partly by the County Council and partly by Taymove Limited, a development company. The County Council has a dual role in respect of the application as both the Commons Registration Authority and landowner. It was therefore recommended that the County Council hold a non statutory hearing assessed by an impartial Inspector as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that Members agreed the County Clerk be authorised to continue to deal with the application on behalf of the County Council as Commons Registration Authority and to appoint Counsel :-

- (a) to act as an Inspector to hold an informal "inquiry" where oral evidence will be heard, and
- (b) to write a report to the Authority with a recommendation of how the application should be determined.

11 STAFF PROTECTION REGISTER

Councillor I.M. German, Lead Cabinet Member for Human Resources presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Cabinet approval to the establishment of a Staff Protection Register and to include as a budget pressure the annual support costs for the system at approximately £3,000 per annum with the initial system purchase cost of £15,000, being the subject of a bid on the Risk Management Fund. The aim of the at risk register was to provide information to staff prior to making visits to premises where there was a likely risk of assault, abuse etc from the householder/client in view of incidents that have already taken place within Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that Members approved the establishment of a Staff Protection Register and to include as a budget pressure annual support costs for the system at approximately £3,000.

12 PROPOSED A494 FFYNNON-Y-BERTH IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - INCLUSION OF BRIDLEWAY BRIDGE

The Leader, Councillor E.C. Edwards presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Council support for the inclusion of a bridleway bridge over the A494 Trunk Road, within the National Assembly for Wales' proposed A494 Ffynnon-y-Berth improvement scheme and to support / defend that view at a Public Inquiry. The Leader confirmed receipt of representations from local residents.

The National Assembly for Wales intended to improve a section of the A494 Trunk Road near to the Clwyd Gate Inn with an overbridge being provided to carry the Offa's Dyke public footpath and bridleway over the carriageway.

Councillor E.W. Williams suggested that by agreeing the recommendation Cabinet would be pre-empting a decision as the Planning Committee had not been consulted. The County Clerk reminded Members that Cabinet could support the recommendation in principle.

The Head of Highways and Transportation explained to Members that the National Assembly for Wales had requested support from the Authority for the inclusion of a bridleway bridge in a proposed scheme of improvements. Members agreed that safety was of the utmost priority on the A494 but could not support the recommendation until detailed proposals were made available.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the National Assembly for Wales be informed that subject to consideration of the detail the Council supported the inclusion within the scheme of safety improvements.

13 BEST VALUE: EDUCATION - SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES (SEN)

Councillor K.E. Wells, Lead Member for Education and ICT presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval to the Education Service Best Value Review of the Specialist Support Services (SEN) 'Options for Further Research' appended to the report.

Councillor G.M. Kensler congratulated the SEN Department on the clarity of the report.

Councillor E.W. Williams said that this type of report was part of the Best Value Toolkit approach and would help Departments when reviews were carried out.

Councillor E.A. Owens expressed concerns that the processes should be explained clearly to staff and that staff should be kept informed.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet approved the further research options identified in the report and that staff be kept informed.*

14. LLANGOLLEN UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Executive: Strategy gave Members a verbal update on the Draft Local Government Boundary Commission report on Llangollen.

Members discussed various issues regarding Llangollen.

The Leader asked Councillor R.J.R. Jones, one of the Local Members for his comments. Councillor R.J.R. Jones detailed local concerns and said further consideration of the matters was required. Councillor Jones thanked Members and officers for their continued support.

***RESOLVED** that Members noted the report and approved the commissioning of further work by Deloitte Touche. Members welcomed the draft proposal but agreed that it was necessary to respond fully to the Commission's report. Authority was given to pursue further work with Deloitte Touche should it prove necessary.*

15. LOGGERHEADS COUNTRY PARK

In response to a query on the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25.09.2001 by Councillor R.W. Hughes, the Financial Controller informed Members that verbal approval for severe weather grant for work on the bridges at Loggerheads Country Park had been received but no approval had been received for the Visitor Centre. It was expected to receive a letter of approval for work on the bridges in a week or so.

***RESOLVED** that Members noted the report.*

At this juncture (11.10 a.m) the meeting adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

***RESOLVED** under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

17 NON DOMESTIC RATE HARDSHIP RELIEF

(Councillor E.A. Owens and the Acting Chief Executive declared an interest in Application 6).

Councillor E.C. Edwards, the Leader presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval of the recommendations made on the applications received for Non Domestic Rate Hardship Relief.

The Financial Controller said each case had been considered on its own merits and after further consideration of application 5, he recommended Members grant that application. Therefore, 2 of the 6 applications were recommended for consideration for hardship relief. Members discussed the 6 applications.

RESOLVED that Members agreed Applications 1, 3 and 4 as detailed in the report be refused. Members further agreed that Applications 2 (subject to provision of further information); 5 and 6 be approved for 100% domestic rate hardship relief.

18 APPLICATION TO REGISTER LLANGOLLEN YOUTH CLUB PLAYING FIELD AS A TOWN GREEN

Councillor W.R. Webb, Lead Cabinet Member for Property presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' authority to take action as the freehold owner of part of land comprising Llangollen Youth Club Playing Field in relation to an application received under Section 13 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 to register the land as a town green.

RESOLVED that Members agreed:-

- (a) the application for registration of the land owned by the Council and forming part of the Llangollen Youth Club Playing Field as a town green should be opposed for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 of this report;
- (b) the Officers be authorised to take whatever action is necessary by way of research of the historical use of the relevant land or otherwise to effectively formulate the Council's grounds of opposition to the registration application;
- (c) (subject to paragraph 7.4 below) that Counsel should be instructed to present the Council's case at any public inquiry into the application for registration, and
- (ch) that (if considered appropriate) consideration should be given to the appointment of Counsel to jointly represent both the Council and Taymove on such terms as may be agreed between the parties.

19 GRAHAMS SITE, WESTBOURNE AVENUE, RHYL

Item withdrawn.

20 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT - LLANGOLLEN

Councillor E.C. Edwards, The Leader presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' approval of a 'top up' grant of £15,000 in respect of a Disabled Facilities Grant towards the cost of carrying out essential adaptation works at the home of a disabled person.

The Head of Public Protection and Regulatory Services informed Members that all Local Authority are required to provide disabled facilities grants.

RESOLVED that Members agreed the Head of Public Protection and Regulatory Services be given the authority to approve an additional discretionary top up grant of up to £15,000 making a total of £20,000 discretionary top up.

21 DIRECT PAYMENTS

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' agreement to funding for a Direct Payments Support Organisation as agreed by Cabinet on 19.04.2001. Members were asked to recommend the approval of the Service Specification and its use as the basis for a tendering process to appoint an organisation to support the Direct Payments scheme in Denbighshire.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Support Services informed Members that Disability Groups had been fully consulted.

RESOLVED that Cabinet accepted the proposed Service Specification for a Support Organisation for the Direct Payments Scheme in Denbighshire and agreed that the Specification be used as the basis for a tender to appoint the Support Organisation.

22 REPLACEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR SOCIAL SERVICES (CARE.COMM)

Councillor A.E. Roberts, Lead Cabinet Member for Personal Services presented the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' authority to purchase a new AS/400 Central Computer to host the Care.Comm system, the primary information source for operational and strategic planning for the Social Services Client Information System.

Councillor E.A. Owens expressed concern over the increased funds required. The Head of Strategic Planning and Support Services detailed the original cost but Council at that time had approved only partial funding. The Head of Strategic Planning and Support Services said this was part of a partnership with Social Services Departments in Conwy and Flintshire Councils.

Members discussed the provision of the system in detail.

The Corporate Director of Resources emphasised that insufficient funding had been approved in the capital plan and that this would have to be agreed by Full Council. Members agreed to amend the recommendation at 7.2 to enable Council to consider a capital allocation.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approved the single tender agreement to use Tec Trade for the procurement of the AS/400 server, and
- (b) A report be presented to Council seeking capital funding to permit the full and complete installation of the system.

23 PRESTATYN FFRITH BEACH FESTIVAL GARDENS

Councillor W.R. Webb, Lead Cabinet Member for Property presented the report (circulated at the meeting) seeking Members approval to enter into a lock out agreement with McDonald's as detailed within the report.

RESOLVED that Members authorised officers to enter into a lock out agreement for a maximum period of six months, with System Capital Golden Property Ltd to permit ground surveys and estimated costs to be prepared in respect of the proposed drive thru restaurant.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 p.m.

VACANCY CONTROL
APPROVAL FOR THE FILLING OF VACANT POSTS
BY EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

Directorate: Resources Service: Revenues

Post Title: Support Services Manager Salary Grade: PO3

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

(This part must be completed for all posts)

The Support Services Manager is responsible for the maintenance of the Revenues computer system which deals with the payment of housing benefit to claimants totalling £20 million and the billing and collection of charges (Council Tax/NNDR/Sundry Debtors/Housing Rents) totalling £75 million. It is imperative that upon the present post holder leaving on the 30/11/01 that there is a continuity of service and given Corporate IT are not able to support the specialist application software it is imperative that the post be filled at the earliest opportunity.

It has been agreed with the trade union, subject to Cabinet approval, that the post be advertised internally and externally simultaneously on the basis that in assessing candidates for the position prior consideration will be given to internal candidates, all other things being equal.

Cost Implication

The additional spend for this post (full year effect) can be contained within the Service budget.

Financial Controller Statement

The continued improvement in Revenues Service delivery will be jeopardised if this post is not filled as a matter of urgency.

Signed: Mervin Hughes PP (Corporate Director) Date: 15/10/2001

Signed: Ann Owens (Cabinet Lead Member) Date: 15/10/01

TO: CABINET

Signed: _____ (on behalf of the Cabinet) Date: _____

Approved Refused

Comments/Reasons _____

Please return this form to the Director of the Employing Directorate.

VACANCY CONTROL
APPROVAL FOR THE FILLING OF VACANT POSTS
BY EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

Directorate: PERSONAL SERVICES

Service: HOUSING SERVICES

Post Title: RESIDENT WARDEN, ST ASAPH

Salary Grade: SC 2

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

(This part must be completed for all posts)

SIMILAR POST ADVERTISED RECENTLY WITH NO INTERNAL APPLICATIONS. PERMISSION REQUESTED TO ADVERTISE BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY AT SAME TIME. ESSENTIAL TO FILL POST TO PROVIDE COVER FOR ELDERLY RESIDENTS IN SHELTERED SCHEME.

Cost Implication *

- 1 The additional spend for this post (full year effect) can be contained within the Service budget.
- 2 ~~The appointment will lead to a budget overspend of £ k.~~

* Delete as appropriate

Financial Controller Statement

FINANCE IS AVAILABLE FROM WITHIN HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT.

Signed: [Signature] (Corporate Director) Date: 10.10.01

Signed: [Signature] (Cabinet Lead Member) Date: 10/10/01

TO: CABINET

Signed: _____ (on behalf of the Cabinet) Date:

Approved Refused

Comments/Reasons

VACANCY CONTROL
APPROVAL FOR THE FILLING OF VACANT POSTS
BY EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

Directorate: ENVIRONMENT Service: ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Post Title: Assistant Tourism Officer Salary Grade: Scale 5

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

(This part **must** be completed for **all** posts)

This is an additional post to be filled on a temporary basis for the period ending 31/3/03. the post is funded through an EU Objective One ERDF project and failure to appoint will result in grant clawback.

Cost Implication *

1 The additional spend for this post (full year effect) can be contained within the Service budget.

2 XXXXXXXX

* Delete as appropriate

Financial Controller Statement

The costs in connection with this temp. post will be funded from Objective 1 Grant.

Signed: [Signature] (Corporate Director) Date: 12/10/07

Signed: [Signature] (Cabinet Lead Member) Date: 12/10/07

TO: CABINET

Signed: _____ (on behalf of the Cabinet) Date: _____

Approved Refused

Comments/Reasons

Please

return this form to the Director of the Employing Directorate.

VACANCY CONTROL
APPROVAL FOR THE FILLING OF VACANT POSTS
BY EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

Directorate: ENVIRONMENT Service: ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Post Title: Tourism Officer Salary Grade: SO1

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

(This part **must** be completed for **all** posts)

This advertisement is to fill an existing vacant post on a permanent basis. The post is an essential element of the Council's input to an EU Objective One ERDF project and failure to appoint will result in grant clawback. Internal advertisement resulted in no suitable candidates coming forward.

Cost Implication *

1 The additional spend for this post (full year effect) can be contained within the Service budget.

2 XXXXXXXXXXXX.

* Delete as appropriate

Financial Controller Statement

While the budget for the Department is not currently under pressure, the budget for the Directorate as a whole is required to address a projected overspend of £18k after validation.

Signed: [Signature] (Corporate Director) Date: 14/10/01

Signed: [Signature] (Cabinet Lead Member) Date: 12/10/01

TO: CABINET

Signed: _____ (on behalf of the Cabinet) Date: _____

Approved Refused

Comments/Reasons

Please

return this form to the Director of the Employing Directorate.

CABINET 23.10.2001

AGENDA ITEM: 4V

VACANCY CONTROL
APPROVAL FOR THE FILLING OF VACANT POSTS
BY EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

Directorate: ENVIRONMENT

Service: PLANNING

Post Title: PLANNING OFFICER

Salary Grade: SCALE 4 - SO1

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT
(This part must be completed for all posts)

The post has been advertised internally. Closing date 24 September. The post has become vacant following the appointment of the post holder to another post. The post is in the Development Plan Team. The post is essential to enable the Council to adopt the Unitary Development Plan. We are at an advanced but critical stage with the UDP.

Cost Implication

1. The spend for this post (full year effect) can be contained within the Service budget.
2. ~~The appointment will lead to a budget overspend of £ — k.~~

Delete as appropriate

Financial Controller Statement

The budget for the Planning Service is currently under pressure from reduced income and the cost of planning appeals, although costs from planning appeals have in the past been seen as an allowed overspend beyond the control of the Head of Service. The need for the post will have to be balanced against the unresolved and ongoing elements of the budget

Signed: [Signature] (Corporate Director) Date: 14 Sept 01 *Planners*

Signed: [Signature] (Cabinet Lead Member) Date: 13 Sept 2001 *Planners*

TO: CABINET

Signed: _____ (on behalf of the Cabinet) Date: _____

Approved

Refused



Comments / Reasons

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR E A OWENS, LEAD MEMBER FOR FINANCE

DATE: 23 October 2001

SUBJECT: REVENUE BUDGET 2001/02

1 Decision Sought

That in the light of the latest budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the attached appendices, members consider further actions to reduce the balance of overspendings on services.

2 Reason For Seeking Decision

The need to deliver the Council's agreed Recovery Action Plan and budget strategy which calls for positive balances by the end of the current year .

3 Cost Implications

The latest projections show a projected overspend at year end of £ 118k

4 Financial Controller Statement

Failure to remove negative balances by the year end will reduce resources available for services in future years and endanger the Recovery Plan.

5 Consultation Carried Out

Lead Cabinet Members are consulting in an ongoing basis with Heads of Service to agree necessary remedial action to prevent overspends in 2001/02.

6 Implications On Other Policy Areas Including Corporate

The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council.

7 Recommendation

That Members note the figures in the appendices and consider necessary remedial actions to ensure the elimination of negative balances by the end of the current financial year.

MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2001/2002

PERIOD ENDING 30TH SEPTEMBER 2001

| Directorates | - Year to Date - | | | - Totals - | | | | Projected Variance (Previous Report) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Budget Profile | Actual to 30th September Plus Commitments | Variance | Budget as per Budget Book | Budget As at 30th September | Projected Outturn | Variance | |
| | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | |
| Lifelong Learning | | | | | | | | |
| Individual Schools Budget | 18,729 | 17,770 | -959 | 36,209 | 36,054 | 35,704 | -350 | -300 |
| School Funds Held Centrally | 3,100 | 3,207 | 107 | 8,242 | 8,397 | 8,433 | 36 | 36 |
| Non School Funding | 288 | 245 | -43 | 615 | 615 | 615 | 0 | 0 |
| Leisure Services | 1,395 | 1,668 | 273 | 2,486 | 2,490 | 2,490 | 0 | 0 |
| Culture | 884 | 947 | 63 | 2,030 | 2,030 | 2,030 | 0 | 0 |
| Countryside | 198 | 265 | 67 | 360 | 360 | 360 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 5,865 | 6,332 | 467 | 13,733 | 13,892 | 13,928 | 36 | 36 |
| Lifelong Learning Total | 24,594 | 24,102 | -492 | 49,942 | 49,946 | 49,632 | -314 | -264 |

Notes:

All re-profiling exercises to be completed
All reserves not yet matched

Comments

Individual Schools Budgets

This is based on the latest outturn projections for each of the schools. (-£350k)

School Funds Held Centrally

Special Education - This pressure has been removed subject to County Council approval of Cabinet minutes to meet this pressure from contingency in 2001/02.

Potential cost of Soulbury pay restructuring (£18.3k)

Reinstatement of Clothing grants (£23k)

School furniture requirements (£5k)

Rental of alternative school furniture store (£2.4k)
(old store condemned by Health and Safety)

Delay in appointment of staff (-£13k)
overspends reported in previous outturn report have been removed

Culture and Leisure

Overspends reported in previous outturn report have been removed further to proposal put forward by Cllr. A. Owens for some pressures to be met from "Contingency" subject to County Council approval of Cabinet minutes.

Remaining balance of pressures (£139k) to be met by savings from within Culture & Leisure in 2001/02.

MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2001/2002

PERIOD END September 2001

| Directorates | - Year to Date - | | | - Totals - | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| | Budget Profile | Actual to end Sep Plus Commitments | Variance | Budget per Budget Book | Budget As at end September | Projected Outturn | Variance | Projected Variance (Previous Report) |
| | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k |
| Environment | | | | | | | | |
| Highways and Transportation | 2,043 | 2,054 | 11 | 5,468 | 5,181 | 5,181 | 0 | 0 |
| Public Protection & Community Services | 3,274 | 3,212 | -62 | 7,297 | 7,003 | 7,003 | 0 | 0 |
| Economic Regeneration | 459 | 513 | 54 | 771 | 771 | 771 | 0 | 0 |
| Planning Services | 381 | 353 | -28 | 778 | 823 | 842 | 19 | 33 |
| Design and Construction | 807 | 858 | 51 | 163 | 915 | 915 | 0 | 0 |
| Support Services | 237 | 279 | 42 | 206 | 505 | 505 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Environment | 7,201 | 7,269 | 68 | 14,683 | 15,198 | 15,217 | 19 | 33 |

MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2001/2002

PERIOD ENDING 30TH SEPTEMBER 2001

| Personal Services | - Year to Date - | | | - Totals - | | | | Projected Variance (Previous Report adjusted for allocation from Contingency) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| | Budget Profile | Actual to 30th Sept. Plus Commitments | Variance | Budget as per Budget Book | Budget As at 30th September (Including extra Allocation agreed by Committee) | Projected Outturn 2001/2002 | Variance | |
| | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | |
| Children and Families | 1,633 | 1,848 | 215 | 3,454 | 3,704 | 3,815 | 111 | 128 |
| Intake A & C M (North) | 2,326 | 2,219 | -107 | 4,826 | 4,747 | 4,590 | -157 | -298 |
| Intake A & C M (South) | 1,514 | 1,469 | -45 | 2,715 | 3,010 | 2,873 | -137 | -116 |
| Provider | 2,769 | 2,865 | 96 | 5,159 | 5,204 | 5,447 | 243 | 248 |
| Strategic Planning | 1,383 | 1,283 | -100 | 3,140 | 2,914 | 2,935 | 21 | 50 |
| Total Personal Services | 9,625 | 9,684 | 59 | 19,294 | 19,579 | 19,660 | 81 | 12 |

Notes:

- Budgets currently being profiled

Comments

Problem Areas as follows:

Children and Families

Increasing numbers of Children coming into care some requiring expensive residential placements

High demand within Fostering service

Assessment & Care Management - North

Community Care Older People Increase in Demand
 Community Living Increase in Demand
 Work Opportunities Increase in Demand

Assessment & Care Management - South

Community Care Older People Increase in Demand

Adult Services - Provider

Elderly Residential Services - Increase in Staff Sickness Levels + reduction in income levels

MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2001/2002
Summary of Pressures
PERIOD END September 2001

| Directorates | - Year to Date - | | | - Totals - | | | | Projected Variance (Previous Report) |
|--|------------------|------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Budget Profile | Actual to end Sep Plus Commitments | Variance | Budget per Budget Book | Budget As at end September | Projected Outturn | Variance | |
| | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | £k | |
| Lifelong Learning (excluding schools delegated) | 5,865 | 6,332 | 467 | 13,733 | 13,892 | 13,928 | 36 | 36 |
| Environment | 7,201 | 7,269 | 68 | 14,683 | 15,198 | 15,217 | 19 | 33 |
| Personal Services | 9,625 | 9,684 | 59 | 19,294 | 19,579 | 19,660 | 81 | 12 |
| | 22,691 | 23,285 | 594 | 47,710 | 48,669 | 48,805 | 136 | 81 |
| | | | | Strategic Development Schemes | | | 32 | |
| | | | | | | | 168 | |
| | | | | Capital Financing Charges - Savings | | | -50 | |
| | | | | | | | 118 | |

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: LEAD MEMBER FOR FINANCE

DATE: 23 October 2001

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

1. DECISION SOUGHT

To provide alternative resources to enable quality applicants to the Council's Strategic Development Scheme to be allocated funding.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

In view of the substantial commitments already earmarked for this financial year out of the Strategic Development Scheme, there is a significant under provision of resources to enable new quality applications meeting the criteria to be met. This is a one off situation since the Council has taken action to reduce long standing commitments starting from the next financial year.

However, in view of the large number of quality applications which would inevitably be disappointed, a sum of £31,756 of revenue funding needs to be identified to be added to the unused allocation of £23,794 to enable quality applications to be taken forward.

A list of applications together with recommendations will be presented to a future Cabinet.

3. COST IMPLICATIONS

The unused allocation of the Strategic Development Scheme of £23,794 leaves a sum of £31,756 to be identified to provide a total provision of £55,550.

4. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The implications of this proposal are included as a pressure in the report on the current year's budget. In the light of the previous report on Revenue Budget this pressure may be funded from reduced capital financing changes.

5. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

A widespread advertising programme forming a competitive process was carried out. The Leader and the Lead Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism all agreed and supported the proposal.

6. IMPLICATION ON OTHER POLICY AREAS

Policy implications including corporate.

Many of the groups who are seeking assistance actively support many Council Corporate Strategies including Anti-Poverty, Economic Development and the developing Community Partnership Strategy

7. RECOMMENDATION

That a sum of £31,756 be allocated for this year to top up the Strategic Development Scheme.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR W R WEBB, LEAD MEMBER FOR PROPERTY

DATE: 23 OCTOBER 2001

SUBJECT: PROJECT 11 - 6 GORDON AVENUE, RHYL

1 DECISION SOUGHT

Approval to submit an application for planning approval for a change of use from a homeless hostel to educational use.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The present Project 11 site is presently in accommodation which is shared with Rhyl High School and Rhyl Youth Club on the Rhyl High School site. John Messum (Behavior Support Service Manager) has expressed his concern at the limitations of the existing site and the need to relocate to a more suitable location.

No 6 Gordon Avenue, Rhyl has been identified as a potentially suitable premises for the group. This property is a terraced house, formally a Homeless Hostel, owned by DCC Housing Services and is currently vacant.

Planning consent is required in order to house the Project 11 Group.

3 COST IMPLICATIONS

The client provisionally assess the cost of conversion will be in the region of £20,000 and an application will be forwarded to the Capital Projects group to secure funding, after undertaking a more detailed estimate of cost.

4 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The granting of planning permission will not in itself mean automatic approval for incurring Capital Expenditure. A scheme justification will need to be made through the Council's Capital Projects Group to secure funding for any development proposal.

5 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Lifelong Learning: The Corporate Director Sioned Bowen supports the Proposal.

Local Members: Cllr Joan Butterfield supports the proposal.

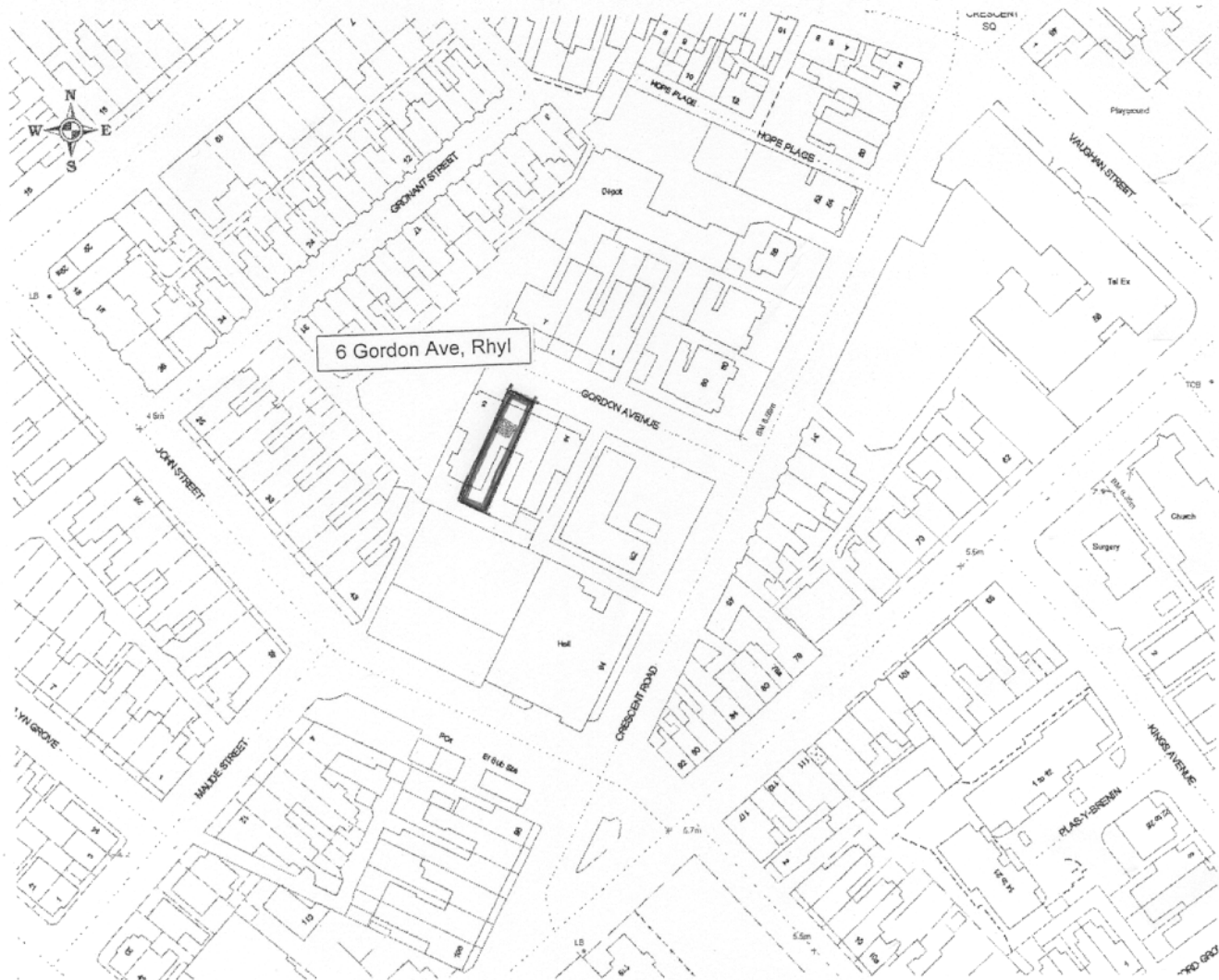
Head of Planning: Confirms the need for planning approval.

6 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

Will release accommodation at Rhyl High School.

7 RECOMMENDATION

That the Council seek planning approval for the change of use of the homeless hostel into a building for the provision of education.



Project 11, No 6 Gordon Avenue, Rhyll.



Alan Evans MBA MSC ACA
Corporate Director - Resources
Cyfarny ddwr Corfforaethol - Adnoddau
Roger Parry CPFA
Swyddog Eiddo Corfforaethol
Corporate Property Officer

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Hawfiraib y Goron. Cewir pob hawl.

Scale:
1: 2500

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor David Morris

DATE: November 2001

SUBJECT: Adoption of Open Spaces Resulting from New Developments

1 Decision Sought

- i) Approval to adopt open space required by Planning Conditions imposed by the Council in respect of approved housing development.
- ii) To allocate sufficient revenue budget to maintain adopted open spaces and together with play equipment erected thereon.

2 Reason For Seeking Decision

- 2.1 Members will be aware that planning condition imposed on developers will often require them to allocate land within the proposed development for use as "open space" which can include the provision of play equipment.
- 2.2 Currently there are 5 areas of land resulting from recent developments that have fulfilled the specification laid down in the Planning Applications. (**See enclosed location plans**). Accordingly, the developers are now requesting that the Council adopt them in accordance with the terms of the conditions set at the planning stage.
- 2.3 The sites are as set out below:-

A) Anwyl Construction Company Ltd

2 sites in Rhyl - Rhodfa Maes Hir and Tynewydd Village Green.

1 site in Bodelwyddan - Clos Deganwy, Parc Castell Est.
1 site in Prestatyn - Nant Hall Rd.

B) Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd

1 site in Denbigh - Y Weirglodd

- 2.4 It is expected that open spaces in respect of a number of other housing sites where similar conditions have been attached to the approval will come up for adoption over the next two to three years and, there will of course be others as the planning process continues.

3 Cost Implications

- 3.1 There are significant revenue implications which need to be addressed affecting the grounds maintenance budgets following the adoption of any open space or play area. Unfortunately the current Local Plan did not specify the requirement for commuted sums to cover the cost of maintenance arising from the adoption by the Council and accordingly the additional cost of maintenance must therefore be found elsewhere. At the time of the preparation of this report the total cost of the required maintenance varies with the type of area adopted (play equipment or open space). The liability currently stands in the region of £10,500.

4 Financial Controller Statement

- 4.1 The cost of this proposal forms part of the service's bids for additional funding for next financial year and will be considered as part of the budget setting process. This will either

result in additional budget provision or a need to accommodate the costs within existing budgets.

5 Consultation Carried Out

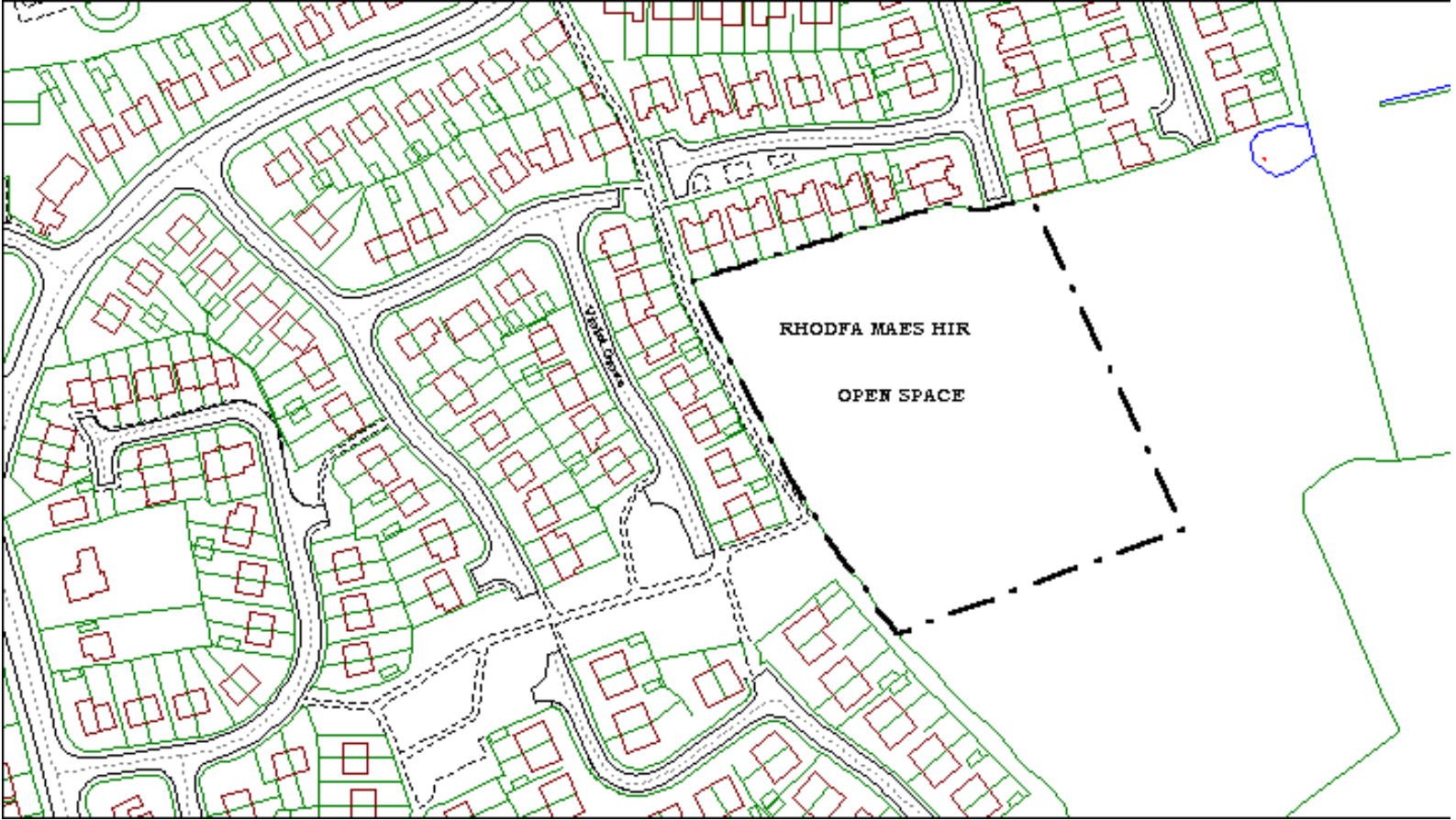
- 5.1 Developers having been required through the Planning Conditions to provide these areas and facilities, there is now an expectation that the County Council should, in accordance with the agreements reached adopt all sites so dedicated. The developers are now pushing for adoption.

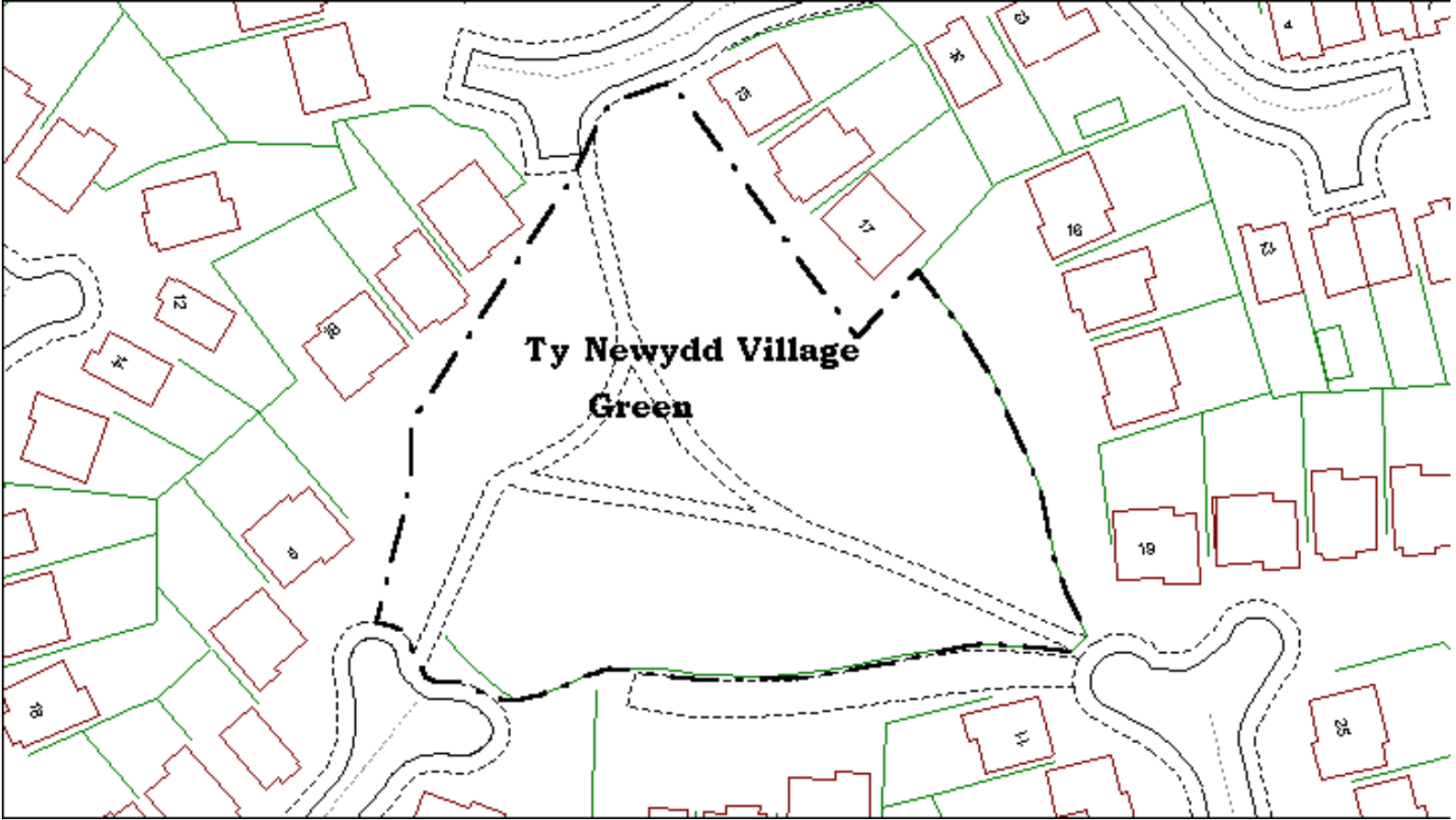
6 Implications On Other Policy Areas Including Corporate

- 6.1 The open space and play area provision is being sought through the imposition of Planning Conditions in order to conform to nationally recognised standards set in respect of new housing developments.
- 6.2 The proposed new Unitary Plan for Denbighshire contains proposed changes to the policy whereby developers will be required to provide adequate commuted sums for an initial maintenance period of any new open space or play area provision for a limited period of years.

7 Recommendation

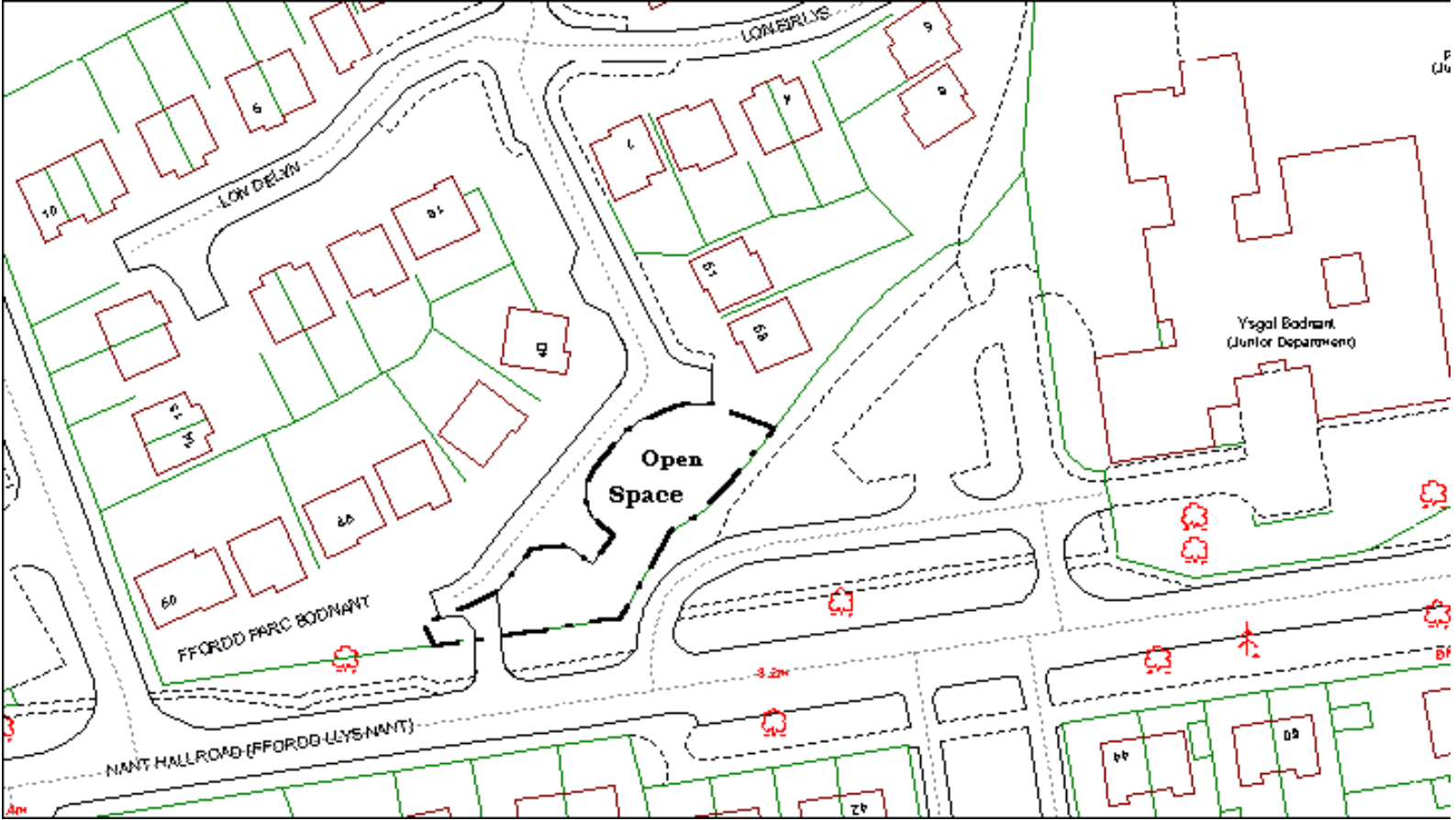
- i) That current open space and play areas which have been required through Planning Conditions be adopted. In accordance with the requirements set through the Planning Process.
- ii) Adequate revenue budget funding be provided to cover the maintenance of these sites.
- iii) Until the formal publication of the new Unitary Plan a Policy is developed to ensure that the interests of Denbighshire County Council are met and that the adoption procedure is undertaken with the minimum of delay.
- iv) Until the Unitary Plan comes into force, the adoption of either open space or play provision is formally agreed and undertaken at the initial Planning Stage and adequate budgetary provision either through seeking commuted sums (if it is a new development) or by identifying revenue implications which will be required upon completion of the development (if it is a development which has previously had Planning Permission but without final detail).

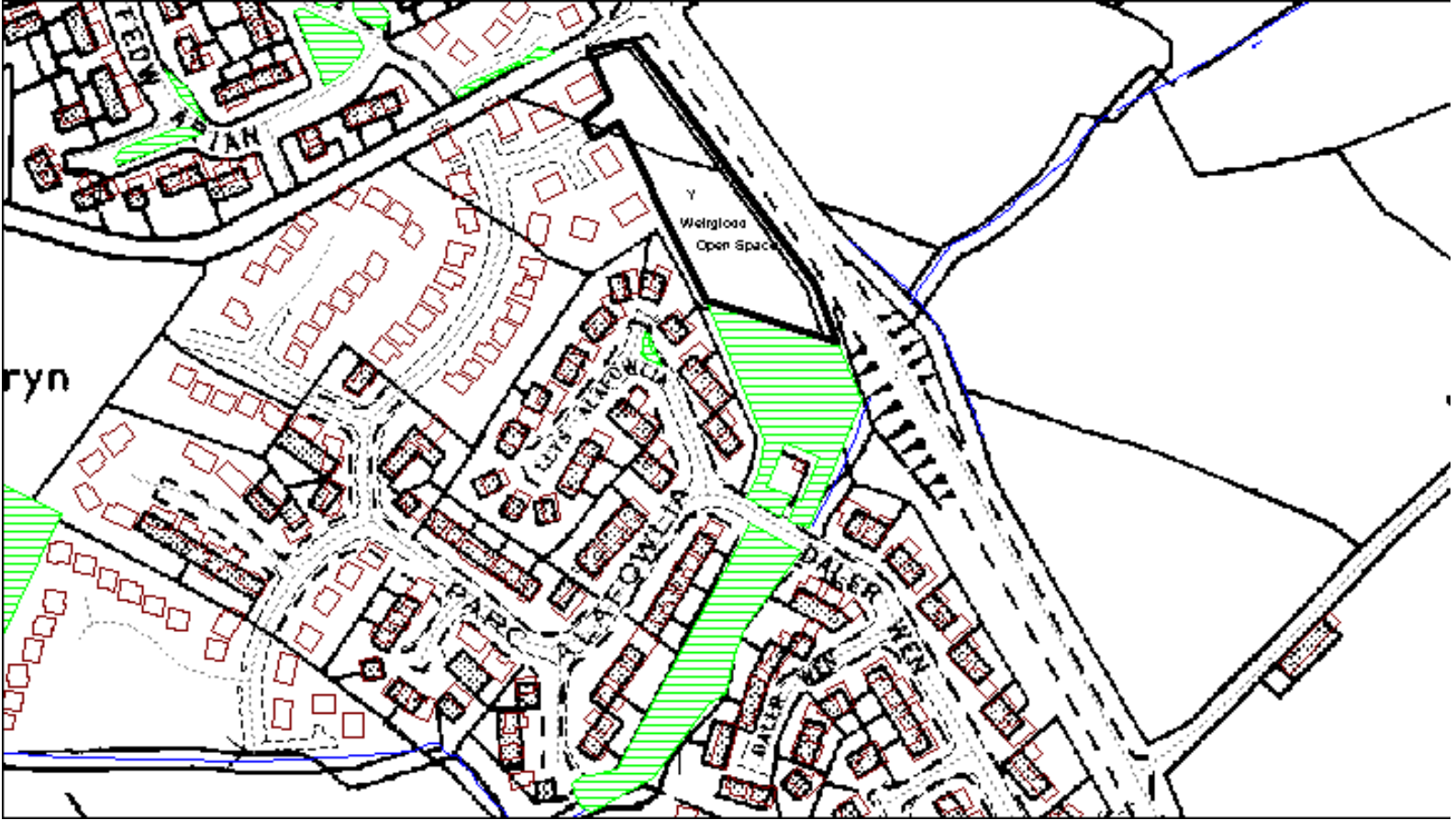




Playing Role







CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR D M MORRIS, LEAD MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 23 OCTOBER 2001

SUBJECT: RUTHIN WASTE TRANSFER STATION

1 Decision Sought

1.1 To seek approval to negotiate with the existing service provider for the management of Ruthin Transfer Station to extend the Contract for a further 12 months.

2 Reason For Seeking Decision

2.1 The existing Agreement to manage the Ruthin Waste Transfer Station is due to expire on the 30 November 2001.

2.2 The Welsh Assembly is currently working to produce an All Wales Waste Strategy. Until such times that the Authority has a clear Waste Strategy to work to within the County, the future need for this Transfer Station will not be known. A decision is sought to extend the current management contract by 12 months. It is hoped this will be subsumed in the new contract when it is operational.

2.3 The alternative to extending the current Agreement with the existing service provider for 12 months, would be to re-tender the work. We would need to do this for a period of at least four years to allow Tenderers to provide an economical tender - allowing for procurement costs of plant and containers needed to manage the facility. This may be a disadvantage to the Authority in progressing our future Waste Strategy in a timely fashion.

3 Cost Implications

3.1 There will be no change to current budgetary requirements, apart from the additional funding to meet the annual increase in contract rates in line with the Contract's Index linking.

4 Financial Controller Statement

4.1 The costs of indexation will need to be identified for consideration as part of the provision for inflation to be built into service budgets for next financial year.

5 Consultation Carried Out

Discussions have taken place with the existing Contractor who has indicated he would be willing to extend the contract for a further 12 months.

6 Implications On Other Policy Areas Including Corporate

6.1 By extending the Contract for a further year, it does not cause undue problems or delay in implementing a new Waste Strategy once that is approved and in place.

7 Recommendation

7.1 To proceed to negotiate with the existing service provider for the management of Ruthin Transfer Station to extend the Contract for a further 12 months from the 1st December 2001 in line with the terms contained within the existing contract.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR E W WILLIAMS, LEAD MEMBER FOR BEST VALUE

DATE: 23 October 2001

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND BEST VALUE - PROGRESS REPORT

1 DECISION SOUGHT

That the successful implementation of Denbighshire County Council's Performance Management Framework by April 2002 and the improvement of performance information and systems becomes a priority for members and officers.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 The District Auditor's Draft Best Value Audit Report 2001/2002 and Action Plan was received on the 24 September (Appendix I). The Authority has thirty working days to consider the report and make a formal response. The DA requested a brief response by the Authority to the report prior to a meeting to discuss the report with Denbighshire members, officers and the Acting Chief Executive which took place on the 2 October (Appendix II). The District Auditor is to give a presentation on the final report to Council on the 27 November.

2.2 In order to avoid a qualification or direction next year it is imperative that the Authority's corporate performance management framework is successfully implemented and becomes fully effective by the 1 April 2002 and there is considerable improvement of performance information, systems and targets. To assist members with the improvement of PI collection and recording an internal audit manager has been seconded to the Performance Management and Best Value Team who will provide regular reports to Cabinet and Operations Management Board which will highlight problem areas and suggest remedial action (Appendix III).

2.3 In order for this work to be valuable, the full commitment of Cabinet is required to ensure that each service is providing accurate information which is used productively. A failure to use the information by managers inevitably leads to poor data collection and recording and has been identified as an area of weakness for the Authority.

3 COST IMPLICATIONS

- Corporate Costs
Production of Performance Management Handbook and training - staff time, within budget
- Service Costs
Training (payment for courses supporting implementation of Performance Management Framework
Systems - possible costs incurred from updating failing performance information systems as identified in Appendix I

4 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

Performance Management is an important tool for local authorities seeking to demonstrate Best Value and value for money in service provision. Any costs both one off and longer term resulting from this process will need to be identified and contained within budgets. The process should however lead to improved service efficiencies in the future.

5 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

The Authority has consulted with District Audit on the proposed Performance Management Framework and has received positive feedback with the caveat that the system is fully implemented by April 2002

Recommendations relating to the introduction of a performance management system and the improvement of the Authority's performance information and systems have regularly been included in monthly reports to Operations Management Board.

6 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The full implementation of a performance management framework will ensure that the Authority delivers on and monitors the achievement of its priorities.

7 RECOMMENDATION

That Members ensure the Authority's performance management framework is successfully implemented and performance information and systems are improved.

CEO ~ JO

Best Value Audit Report –
BVPP 2001/2002
Denbighshire County
Council

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- Statutory audit certificate and opinion



DISTRICT AUDIT

| | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| Reference: | NW114A2001 – Draft version |
| Date: | September 2001 |

KEY MESSAGES

Purpose of report

This is the report that the auditor is required to provide on the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) under Section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Our statutory certificate and opinion are attached at Appendix 1.

The purpose of the report is to inform Members and Directors of the key issues which arose from the audit of the second BVPP and the actions which are required.

This year's audit of the BVPP has, in line with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice, been integrated with the rest of the audit.

Our work included a detailed follow up of progress against recommendations made in the first BVPP audit and an assessment of overall progress in relation to Best Value.

Overall findings and conclusions

The 1999/2000 Best Value Audit report concluded that the Council's arrangements for implementing Best Value were under-developed. This was, in part, the result of organisational changes due to management and political restructuring at a time when the Council was continuing in its attempts to implement a financial recovery plan.

Progress has been made in strengthening corporate management arrangements and systems to support Best Value. The policy and financial planning framework, supported by the new performance management handbook, is currently being implemented throughout the Council. The handbook contains agreed corporate guidelines on areas such as performance monitoring and target setting and, if consistently and correctly applied, should result in significant improvements to the existing arrangements.

The importance of the successful implementation of the framework cannot be over emphasised. Despite a number of detailed recommendations in the previous year's audit report, performance management within the Council remains weak and it is imperative that the new corporate performance management system becomes fully effective from the Council's target date of 1 April 2002.

This will require significant improvements to be made in a number of areas, including those concerned with performance measurement and performance information. Over 35% of Performance Indicators (PIs) contained in the BVPP, and examined during the course of the audit, were incorrectly calculated or could not be adequately supported by working papers.

Improvements in the Council's overall 2000/2001 performance, as reported in the BVPP, appear to be mixed. It must, however, be emphasised that much of the performance information on which this assessment is made may be unreliable. If the Council is to achieve continuous service improvements it will need reliable information on which to assess performance and the attainment of targets.

The structure and content of the BVPP is much improved over last year. It now provides a more meaningful strategy document that is intended to illustrate key issues of concern to the Council and the public. As before, the Council needs to ensure that the systems that underpin the performance measurement and reporting in the BVPP are appropriate to support its use as a strategic document for performance management.

The Council has continued to develop its approach to Best Value Reviews. Comprehensive and clear guidance is included in the latest version of the Best Value Toolkit which, if correctly applied, should form the basis for more effective Best Value Service Reviews that are clearly focused on results and targeted service outcomes.

Conversely, the Best Value Review programme has fallen behind schedule with only two out of 13 of the 2000/2001 reviews completed. In addition, a number of the nine reviews, planned for 2001/2002, remain at an early stage. This could have serious repercussions for the Council, as all services must be reviewed by 31 March 2005. The remainder of the five-year programme must be more effectively managed if reviews are to be delivered on time, to the required standard and result in service improvements.

This Statutory audit report which was issued on 31 October 2001:

- includes a qualified opinion on the BVPP
- contains recommendations which require a formal response from the Council
- does not recommend that the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection or that the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) gives a direction.

The Council must consider this report and formally respond to the recommendations within 30 working days.

1

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the auditors

Under the Local Government Act 1999, specified local government bodies are required to comply with the general duty of Best Value, which is defined as making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The audited body is required to publish annually a BVPP, which summarises the body's assessments of its performance and position in relation to Best Value. The audited body is responsible for preparing the BVPP and for the information and assessments that are set out within it, and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. It is also responsible for putting in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems, from which the information and assessments in the BVPP are derived.

Auditors should consider and report on whether the audited body has complied with statutory requirements in respect of the preparation and publication of its BVPP.

The Best Value Performance Plan 2001/2002

Considerable progress has been made towards making the BVPP a more meaningful strategy document that identifies key issues for both the Council and the public. The Council needs to ensure that the information systems that underpin its production, and use as a strategic document for performance management, are robust.

The BVPP has not, however, been prepared in accordance with statutory requirements as a significant number of the reported PIs have been incorrectly calculated and/or are produced by unreliable systems. For this reason, the audit opinion contains a qualification.

Compliance

With the exception of the inaccuracies in a number of the reported PIs, the BVPP was compliant in all major respects with NAW legislation and statutory guidance. There are, however, a number of issues the Council could consider to further improve the BVPP.

Performance information

Last year's BVPP was given a qualified opinion on the basis that there were significant omissions of the 1999/2000 PIs.

The Council has made considerable efforts in terms of the PI content of this year's BVPP with the majority of the required PIs now included. Missing PIs have been reported to officers during the course of the audit.

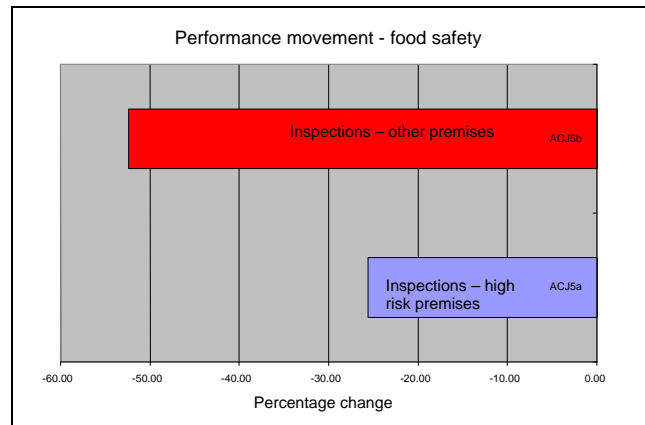
However, in order to be fully compliant in this area, the Council must have arrangements in place to ensure that information in the BVPP is robust and presents a fair and accurate reflection of performance for the year.

This is not currently the case. Although the BVPP provides a good deal of information around aims, objectives, performance and targets, much of its usefulness is negated through inaccurate performance information. Over 35% of the PIs tested during the audit were incorrectly calculated or inadequately supported by working papers.

The following exhibits demonstrate how inaccurate information may affect the usefulness of the BVPP as a tool which readers and users of Council services can utilise to assess performance.

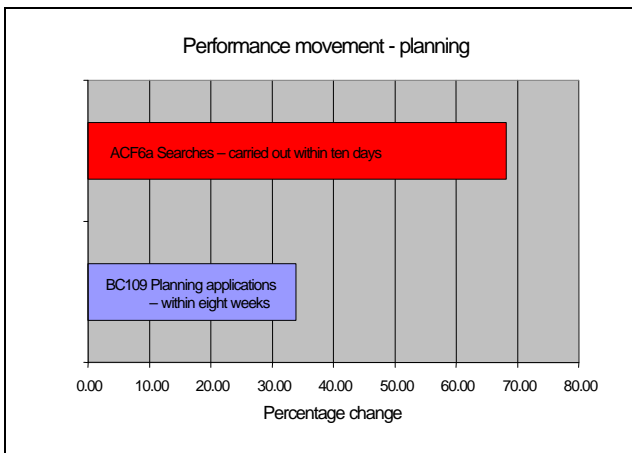
The first exhibit reflects the movement in performance between 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 for inspections of food premises. It shows that performance for the inspection of 'other premises' (shown in red) **has fallen** by over 50%. A recalculation of the PI during the audit revealed that year-on-year performance was, in fact, largely the same.

EXHIBIT 1



The next exhibit shows **an improvement** of nearly 70% in respect of the percentage of planning searches carried out within ten days. Again, a recalculation revealed that performance for 2000/2001 was on a par with the previous year's level and had been incorrectly reported in the BVPP.

EXHIBIT 2



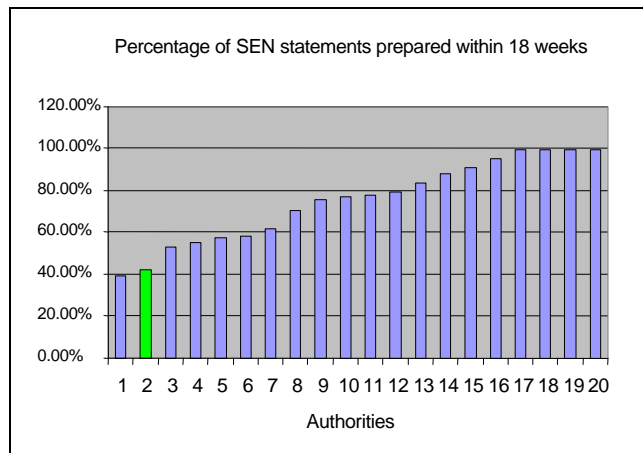
Commentary on performance

The BVPP contains some comparative information concerning trends over the last two years and comparisons with the English and Welsh averages (where available). Unfortunately, because of the inadequate information systems and the resulting mis-statement of PIs, a number of these comparisons are unsound.

A 'performance assessment' is included for each directorate summarising aspects of 2000/2001 service delivery issues. Further improvement to the commentary could, however, be made to better explain specific areas of weaker and stronger performance and enable more informed conclusions to be drawn from the comparative information.

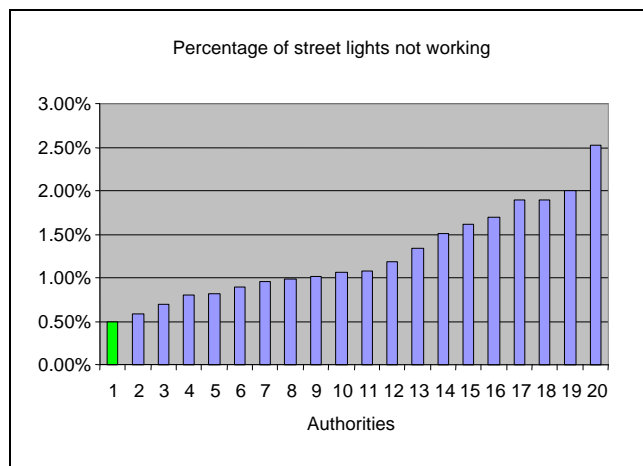
For example, the following exhibit shows the Council to be one of the poorest performers in preparing Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements with only 42% prepared within 18 weeks compared with the four best performing authorities at 100%. Establishing explanations for such differences, and reporting them in the BVPP, would provide readers with the necessary information to hold the Council more accountable for its performance in specific service areas. It would also assist the Council in identifying 'good practice' service delivery options and, therefore, improve its own performance through informed choices on alternative service processes.

EXHIBIT 3



Conversely, the following exhibit shows the Council to be the best performer in keeping its street lights in working order. In this case, the BVPP could be used to explain to readers how the Council has achieved such a high level of performance.

EXHIBIT 4



Targets

The majority of the mandatory 2001/2002 performance targets required under statutory guidance are included in the BVPP. Unfortunately, a number of the targets may be inappropriately set as they are likely to be based on inaccurate performance information.

Any missing targets have been reported to officers during the course of the audit.

Quality assurance

A corporate quality assurance system has recently been introduced which, if consistently and robustly implemented, should significantly improve the reliability of performance information.

The successful implementation of the new system is extremely important as the Council has not, in the past, had adequate arrangements in place to undertake an internal quality review of the accuracy of the PIs included in the BVPP. This, in turn, has contributed to the level of inaccuracies reported in the previous sections and has led to a number of difficulties with the verification of the performance information included in this year's BVPP.

A major difficulty experienced during the audit of PIs was the absence of a clear audit trail to support a number of the 2000/2001 PI estimates and 2001/2002 targets in the BVPP. Consequently, additional effort was required to 're-create' supporting documentation. In some instances, the re-created working papers resulted in figures that differed from those recorded in the BVPP. Working papers need to be compiled and maintained to support all entries in the BVPP. For example, where population data is used to calculate performance information, it should be on the basis defined in statutory guidance and used consistently throughout the organisation.

The Council will be required to publish its 2000/2001 actual performance information in next year's BVPP and this will be subject to audit. It is important, therefore, that the Council calculates the final year-end position and subjects the figures to the new quality assurance procedures.

Further, the financial information in this year's BVPP was not presented in accordance with CIPFA's Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP). The Council intends to adopt the BVACOP during this year for the preparation of future financial information. The Council must ensure that all financial information included in next year's BVPP is calculated and reported in accordance with the Code.

Publication and distribution

The Council has fully complied with the requirement to publish its BVPP by 30 June 2001. Copies were placed in all libraries and Council offices.

Impact

The presentation and content of the BVPP is well designed, user friendly and concise. It has the capability of communicating the key messages effectively to readers, subject to making the improvements outlined above.

Statutory recommendations

- | | |
|----|---|
| S1 | Ensure all the required PIs and targets are included in the BVPP. |
| S2 | The recently introduced quality assurance system is rigorously applied and monitored to ensure that the accuracy of performance information included in the BVPP is improved. |

Other recommendations

- R1 Include more detailed explanations around areas of weaker and stronger performance: to further assist readers in the interpretation of PIs and assessment of the Council's performance.*
- R2 Working papers to support the final out-turn figures for 2000/2001 are retained for both Internal and External Audit: to assist in the independent verification of performance information.*
- R3 The final out-turn figures for 2000/2001 PIs are produced and made available for audit as soon as practicable: to limit the potential for significant inaccuracies in the information for 2000/2001 reported in next year's BVPP.*
- R4 All financial information included in next year's BVPP is calculated in accordance with the BVACOP: to comply with NAW statutory guidance and make comparisons of performance more meaningful.*

Integrating Best Value into the Council's business

The Council continues to integrate Best Value procedures into corporate structures and processes. Scrutiny committees have been operational since July 2000 and the new Corporate Director (Resources) has overall responsibility for Best Value.

The new arrangements have, however, been implemented against a continuing background of changing political and senior management arrangements. This, in turn, has affected the overall pace of implementation of the Best Value agenda.

The Council continues to develop its policy and financial planning framework and plans to implement a fully operational performance management system from 1 April 2002.

Significant improvements will, however, have to be made, particularly in the areas of departmental service plans, target setting and performance monitoring and reporting, if the performance management system is to work effectively and deliver service improvements.

Culture

The recent structural and management changes support the Council's intentions to develop a Best Value culture as part of the 'day job'.

There is, however, scepticism in some areas of the Council that the application and practice of Best Value will lead to improved service delivery. The greatest concern amongst some officers and Members is that Best Value may be an unwelcome distraction from the Council's main business and hinders rather than helps service delivery. This is particularly relevant to resources made available to the Best Value Reviews which is seen generally by the Heads of Service as a key issue to the successful establishment of a Best Value culture.

Despite this, latest indications suggest that staff, particularly those involved in the most recent service reviews, have shown a high degree of commitment and enthusiasm and believe the review process, if undertaken correctly, can result in improved service delivery. These indications are encouraging and should help to improve the overall perception of Best Value and assist in integrating the required practices and procedures into the day to day management of the Council.

Corporate framework

The corporate framework within the Council continues to develop. The changed political arrangements, introduced over the previous 12 months, are providing a greater degree of political stability and direction for the Council. The new senior management structure has also been implemented with the aim of strengthening corporate and strategic arrangements.

The new management structures include a Corporate Director (Resources) with direct responsibility for integrating Best Value throughout the Council. Member involvement in Best Value continues to strengthen through the work of service scrutiny committees for Personal Services, Life-Long Learning, Resources and the Environment. In addition, members of the Best Value Scrutiny Committee and Lead Cabinet Members are an integral part of Best Value Review Teams.

Although these developments are to be welcomed, integration of the Best Value agenda is still not as advanced as the Council would wish. For example, discussions with Members involved in the service scrutiny committees indicated some uncertainty around their roles and responsibilities in challenging the findings of reviews.

In particular, there was some confusion around the relative scrutiny roles of the Best Value Scrutiny Committee, Lead Cabinet Members and service scrutiny committees. (Our report on Democratic Renewal, issued in July 2001, comments on these points and makes specific recommendations to strengthen scrutiny).

Nevertheless, the changes to the corporate framework appear to have improved the integration of Best Value into the Council's business. It is, however, too early to assess whether the changes will result in the continuous service improvements required under Best Value.

It is therefore important that the effectiveness of the new structures is continuously monitored, particularly by Members, to ensure the necessary outcomes are achieved.

Performance management

Policy and financial planning framework

The Council continues to develop and implement a performance management system in stages through the establishment of the policy and financial planning framework and the new performance management handbook.

The framework outlines the necessary stages for effective performance management as:

- setting of strategic objectives
- policy review
- preparation of performance, business and service plans
- budget setting
- performance monitoring.

Although the framework and the handbook contain all the necessary elements for an effective performance management system, it is imperative they are fully and consistently implemented by the Council's target date of 1 April 2002.

Strategic objectives

Some elements of the framework have already been implemented. A new visioning process has been undertaken by the Leader of the Council, Acting Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors. This has established a new corporate vision, which is focussed on providing a well managed, solvent Council and will have the development of young people as its main theme. Four corporate priorities have been developed to support the vision. Consultation on the corporate objectives is to be undertaken during November/December 2001.

Policy review

For future years, it is intended that the policy review process will produce objectives and priorities within an appropriate financial framework. To inform this process the following will be taken into account:

- financial performance
- statutory framework
- Best Value Reviews
- SSA information
- user satisfaction/consultations.

Departmental service plans

Departmental service plans (DSPs) have been produced and details stored in the newly established service plans database. Objectives included in the current DSPs tend to be action rather than performance based. Also, a number of objectives are not supported by measures of performance.

All future DSPs are intended to include objectives, actions and performance information linked to corporate priorities. The performance information will be held on a corporate database of national and local PIs.

Budget and target setting

The budgeting part of the framework will be aligned to the policy review and service planning elements, be driven by service objectives, priorities and targets, and culminate in an agreed budget by February of each year.

Target setting is currently weak with little evidence of a corporate approach and Member involvement in setting 2001/2002 targets. The performance management handbook does, however, outline the Council's new target setting policy. Robust application of the policy should assist in setting consistent and challenging targets.

Performance monitoring

Corporate performance monitoring will be carried out in three areas:

- Financial performance will be reported every three months to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team. Remedial action will, if necessary, be taken and the impact fed into subsequent policy reviews.
- Performance information will also follow the same process and in the same timescale. Reports in this case are to be electronically produced via the PI database.
- DSPs will again be monitored by the same process but at intervals of every six months.

The implementation of performance monitoring and reporting is to be welcomed. The Council will, however, need to monitor the effectiveness of the new arrangements. For example, the frequency of reporting will need to be monitored to ensure that poorer performing services are identified early to allow timely remedial action to be taken.

Training

Although the Council provides training and support for carrying out Best Value Reviews, discussions with officers and Members have identified a requirement for a series of awareness raising sessions. A better understanding of Best Value, and how it should be an integral element of day to day management, will help to bridge the gap between corporate intentions and operational reality.

Statutory recommendations

- | | |
|----|---|
| S3 | Monitor the effectiveness of the corporate arrangements in securing continuous service improvements. |
| S4 | Ensure priority is given to the implementation of the policy and financial planning framework to provide a fully operational performance management system by 1 April 2002. |

Other recommendations

- R5 Ensure there are sufficient resources for undertaking Best Value Reviews: to alleviate concerns of senior officers, improve the effectiveness of service reviews and assist in establishing the Best Value culture.*
- R6 Ensure that the processes detailed in the new performance management handbook are applied consistently across the Council: to assist in improving all stages of performance management and thereby the overall performance of the Council.*
- R7 Undertake Best Value awareness raising sessions for Members and officers: to help bridge the gap between corporate intentions and operational reality and assist in further integrating Best Value into the Council's activities.*

Improving services

The Council's overall performance, as represented by the PIs reported in the BVPP, appears to be mixed. Conclusions must, however, be viewed against the concerns regarding the accuracy of performance information.

The Best Value Review process has been significantly revised since the early reviews were undertaken. The revisions in structure and process provide the basis for effective and efficient service reviews although there is still scope for improvement in the application of the 4Cs.

The Best Value Review programme has fallen behind schedule with only two of 13 Year 1 reviews completed. The programme needs to be moved forward with vigour and purpose if reviews are to be delivered on time, to the required standard, and result in service improvements.

Challenge

Key questions to assist in the challenge of existing service provision are included in the revised Best Value Toolkit. An examination of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) review, which is the one service review completed to date using the requirements of the revised approach and Toolkit, indicated that the Council is taking seriously its responsibility to challenge the 'status quo' in the way services are delivered. This is further evidenced by the ongoing review of the Council's Home Care Services which has resulted in a staged approach to the purchase of domiciliary care from the independent sector.

Challenge is, however, one of the most difficult of the 4Cs to apply, and it is important for the Council to continue to provide the guidance, support and prompts to encourage a consistent and challenging examination of all services. It is important that Members continue to monitor the robustness of challenge as part of their scrutiny role.

Compare

The Council recognises the importance of comparing its performance with that of other organisations. Although the Best Value Toolkit states that comparison is only an approximate means of indicating success and failure, it recognises that the learning potential of comparison is that it identifies differences and allows the Council to search for explanations for those differences. The explanations should inform choices on alternative objectives, priorities and processes for service delivery.

The Best Value Reviews examined during the audit have actively sought external comparisons. Some, such as the Home Care Services, have used comparative information to support the decision to vary the current method of service delivery. There is, however, a lack of consistency with some reviews having only limited success in sourcing and applying comparative information. This is mainly due to a lack of forward planning for the collection of information and is an issue which affects the whole performance management of the Council.

Wherever possible, use should be made of national indicators derived from other local authorities' BVPPs, and local indicators derived from benchmarking clubs etc, as a means of identifying significant differences in performance and identifying alternative 'good practice' service delivery models. Consideration should be given to extending the role of the corporate Best Value Team to assist in the early sourcing and provision of comparative information.

Consultation

The Council has developed and approved a consultation strategy that is managed by the corporate Best Value Team.

Whilst these arrangements are desirable to assist in co-ordinating the various consultation exercises, the corporate Best Value Team will need to be suitably resourced to cope with the potential demands.

There was clear evidence in the reviews examined, including Home Care Services and ICT, that consultation had been an important factor in deciding the future method of service provision.

The Council intends to further utilise the Citizens' Panel for the 2002 consultation programme with other methods being used, where appropriate. Such consultation is to be welcomed and should allow for informed feedback on, amongst other issues, the Council's new strategic priorities and revisions to the five-year Best Value Review programme.

Competition

It is important for the Council to demonstrate a robust approach to competition when considering service delivery options. A competition strategy has been produced which is intended to assist the Council in ensuring that the use of fair competition is one of the options for service procurement considered in all Best Value Reviews.

A number of the reviews examined, including Payroll and ICT, provided some information around the considerations given to subjecting the services to competition. There is, however, a lack of consistency and detail around how such information is to be used as the Council's approach to the results of competition, and its 'endorsement of fair competition', remain unclear.

Integral to the Council's corporate approach to addressing competition will be the development and implementation of a procurement strategy. The importance of a procurement strategy in promoting the consistent identification and analysis of alternative service delivery options was highlighted in last year's audit report. At the time of reporting, no such strategy has yet been developed.

Without clear guidance on procurement, the Council cannot be confident that all reviews are consistently carrying out rigorous appraisals of the various options available. The Council should finalise and approve its procurement strategy as a matter of urgency.

Best Value Reviews

Best Value inspections were carried out during the year on Housing Rents and Library and Information Services. A number of shortcomings were identified by the inspectors in the process and outcomes of both reviews. These were acknowledged by the Council and actions taken to learn the lessons for future reviews.

Nevertheless, and as illustrated in this report, the Council still has much to do to ensure that current and future reviews result in significant improvements to services.

The increased involvement of Members, and of staff providing the service, throughout the Best Value Review process is a positive step in developing the Best Value culture and facilitating ownership of the process and its results. These, and other good practice areas, are reflected in the revised Best Value Review Toolkit. It is vital, however, that the effectiveness of the new arrangements is continuously monitored. Members must be part of this process in ensuring that the necessary outcomes are achieved:

- improved service outcomes through the implementation of improved processes for achieving continuous service improvement
- choice of the most appropriate option for service provision.

Only two out of 13 of the 2000/2001 Best Value Reviews have been completed. The remainder are ongoing, have been moved to later in the review programme or have been cancelled.

Although all nine of the 2001/2002 reviews have commenced, some remain at an early stage. The combination of these factors will inevitably place extra pressure on the Council to carry out the appropriate level and range of reviews of all their services and functions by 31 March 2005.

Although each Best Value Review is scheduled to be planned, resourced, monitored and reviewed on an individual basis, with a target date for completion, there is no overall project plan for all reviews to ensure delivery within set timescales. Given that the first year programme was not achieved, it is now critical that the revised programme is both manageable and deliverable.

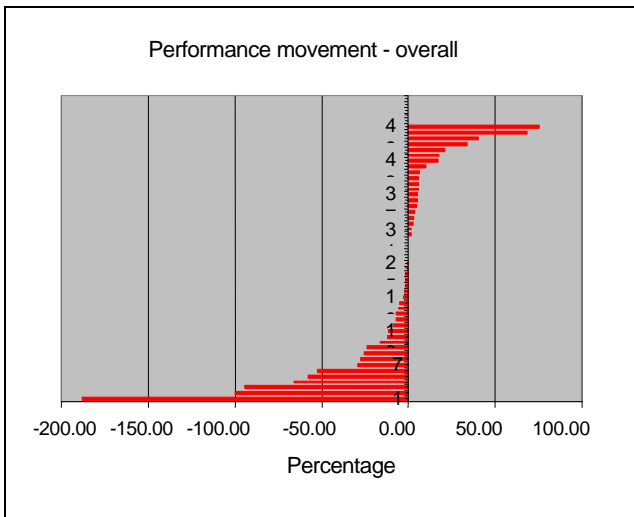
Experiences at other authorities have found that the service review process, whilst proving very useful, is very resource intensive often impinging on officers' other responsibilities. It is, therefore, vital that the staff, skills and time needed to carry out reviews are identified as early as possible and are commensurate with the likely benefits from the review.

The involvement of the corporate Best Value Team should be designed to alleviate some of this pressure. It is important, therefore, that this Team is appropriately staffed in terms of numbers and skills. Given the demanding programme of reviews, and the role of the corporate Best Value Team in the wider aspects of performance management, the function appears under-resourced and should be reassessed as soon as possible.

2000/2001 performance

The following exhibit shows the percentage movement in the Council's performance over a range of national indicators between 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

EXHIBIT 6



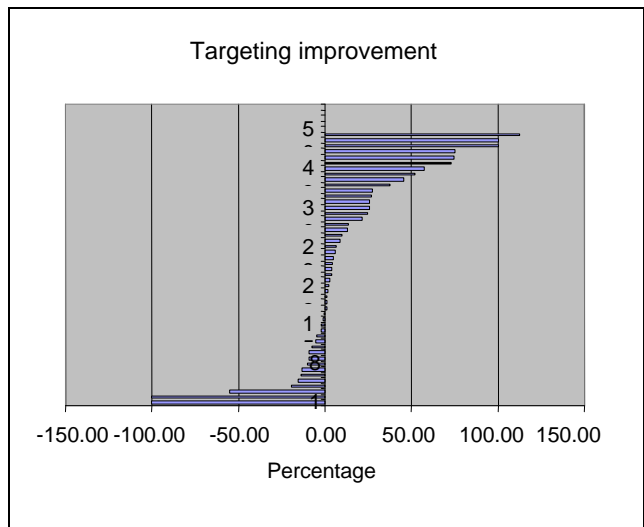
Of the 48 national indicators reported in the BVPP only 19 (40%) show an improvement in performance with 26 (54%) showing a downturn.

On this information alone, the Council's overall performance appears to be mixed. However, and as previously reported, much of the information could be unreliable while a small number of year-on-year comparisons may be invalid due to changes in some PI definitions. There may also be planned reasons for reductions in performance.

It is not, therefore, possible to be certain about whether the Council's overall performance has started to improve.

Similar problems exist when reporting targets to improve services. Of the 48 national indicators included in the following exhibit, 31 (65%) are targeted to improve but there are also 17 (35%) ostensibly targeted to result in a downturn in performance. Again, a small number of comparisons may be invalid because of changed definitions between years.

EXHIBIT 7



There are several questions the Council needs to consider concerning target setting, including:

- How useful are the targets if they are based on significantly inaccurate out-turn information?
- Are some targets too challenging or not challenging enough?
- Are there valid reasons for setting targets to reflect a downturn in performance?

- Are the targets set consistent with corporate objectives?
- Have action plans been drawn up that identify how and with what resources the targets will be achieved and services improved?

Statutory recommendations

- S5 Monitor the effectiveness of the new arrangements for Best Value Reviews to ensure that the necessary service improvements are achieved.
- S6 Develop a project plan to monitor overall progress of reviews.
- S7 Finalise and approve a procurement strategy to assist in the consistent application of 'fair competition' and clarify service delivery options.

Other recommendations

- R8 *Utilise national indicators from other Councils' BVPPs, and local indicators derived from benchmarking clubs etc, to identify significant differences in performance: to inform choices on service processes, objectives and priorities.*
- R9 *Identify information requirements in advance of the commencement of reviews: to assist in completing reviews on time.*
- R10 *Identify staff, skills and time needed to carry out reviews well in advance of commencement and ensure they are commensurate with the likely benefits: to improve the effectiveness of the reviews and their outcomes.*

R11 *Ensure sufficient resources within the corporate Best Value Team: to support Best Value Reviews through, for example, co-ordination of the various consultation exercises and early generation and collection of comparative information.*

5

Responding to challenge

The Council is responsive to external challenge but needs to ensure that intentions are translated into action.

The response to the 1999/2000 Best Value Audit report has been mixed with only 14% of the recommendations fully implemented although a further 64% have been partially addressed.

The Council has implemented a number of the recommendations arising from the inspection of Housing Rents including the instigation of a second Best Value Review (Project Team met 20 July 2001), appointment of additional Housing Rents Officers and the production of rent account statements (rolling programme from October 2001).

Similarly, progress has been made on some of the recommendations following the inspection of the Library and Information Service although development of a three-year strategy has been delayed until the new Minimum Standards for Public Libraries in Wales is published in October 2001.

Other recommendation

R12 *Rigorously monitor the implementation of action plans: to ensure that improvement opportunities are realised.*

Denbighshire County Council's Draft Response to the District Audit's Best Value Audit Report - BVPP 2001/2002

As highlighted in the District Audit's report, the Authority has made considerable progress in the implementation of its policy and financial planning framework and performance management systems and the structure and content of the BVPP is much improved over last year. The Council aims to have a fully effective performance management system in place by the 1 April 2002 and has produced a Performance Management Handbook and a programme of training for members and officers in order to achieve this. The Performance Management Framework will ensure that performance is reported regularly to members and senior management ensuring that remedial action can be taken where necessary.

Denbighshire County Council acknowledges that, in common with other local authorities, its performance information and systems require significant improvement. The improvement of performance measures is a priority for the Authority and to ensure that this area of work is driven forward an internal audit manager has been seconded to the Corporate Best Value Team with specific responsibility for the audit of statutory and local performance indicators and their systems. All statutory performance indicators and targets will be internally audited to a quality assured methodology by the end of November 2001 and revisited to ensure that any recommendations have been implemented at the beginning of next year.

It is also recognised that the Corporate Best Value Team must be sufficiently resourced and this is being addressed by the secondment of an internal audit manager, and the use of internal auditors to act as facilitators and critical friends for each Service Review. Additionally, a part-time post is being advertised to assist with corporate consultation. This will ensure that the Corporate BV Team can concentrate on effectively project managing the Best Value Review programme, providing training to members and officers and developing areas such as performance management, procurement and benchmarking. Resources are also being strengthened within Departments. Performance Indicator Contacts who are responsible for performance indicators and their targets and Performance Indicator Data Contacts who are responsible for the collection of data have been identified within services and are being supported by the BV Team who have produced a Performance Indicator Guide for their information. Officers within services who have a responsibility for Best Value and performance management have also been formally identified so that information can be cascaded more effectively throughout the organisation.

The Authority's Review Programme has been revised using a new selection methodology which has resulted in far fewer more strategic reviews. This, coupled with the strengthening of the Best Value Team, will ensure that the programme is more effectively managed and all services are reviewed within the statutory deadline. The issue of identifying the resources required for reviews well in advance of their commencement has already been recognised and was the subject of a report to Operations Management Board on the 19 July 2001. To address this issue the BV Team have already met with Project Team Leaders for 2002 to explain the process and to request the completion of draft Project Plans. The Best Value Toolkit will be revised following receipt of the draft of the revised Best Value Guidance which will be available at the end of November.

A Procurement Working Group has been formed to produce a procurement strategy and consider the recommendations of the Better Value Wales report. Meetings have already taken place between the BV Officer and Project Team Leaders for 2002 reviews to ensure that the staff and resources required for carrying out the review are identified early in the process.

Please note:- Page 10 should read the Council has developed and approved a corporate Communications Strategy which is supported by a Best Value Consultation Strategy and managed by the Best Value Team.

**Performance Indicators - Internal Audit Review Process
Progress Report 1st October 2001**

Introduction

1. On 25th September 2001 Martin Roberts of the Internal Audit Section was seconded to the Best Value Unit with a remit to provide assurance that the Performance Indicators used by Denbighshire are robust, accurate and timely.

Scope

2. Performance Indicators in this instance refer to any Statutory, Audit Commission or Local Indicators that are required or are developed by the Authority.
3. The Internal Auditor will review all such Indicators, following a predetermined Plan of Audit, ensuring that each conforms to the required internally developed Quality Assurance Standard.

Plan of Audit

4. The Plan of Audit was devised after considering the timetables set by the various outside bodies involved in the review of Denbighshire's performance indicators, such bodies include the National Assembly for Wales, the Audit Commission and Denbighshire through the Performance Review Process.
5. As stated in the Performance Management and Best Value Unit Report it is imperative that all the residual Audit Commission Performance Indicators are audited by the end of October and National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators by the end of November.

Findings

6. Since the secondment began the Internal Auditor has visited the following Services:

Education
Social Services
Housing
Environment
Transport
Cultural and Related Services

with Corporate Health and Environmental Health & Trading Standards to be visited week commencing 1st October 2001.

7. The purpose of these initial preaudit visits was to ensure that all the staff responsible for compiling the PI's for their service were made aware of the importance of collating accurate PI information and also to confirm that the correct definitions for each PI was applied.
8. During each visit staff were reminded of the need to produce for each PI a file containing all the relevant information so as to permit an audit. These individual PI files must contain a system description, working papers and any copies of reports used to collate the figures. The purpose being to provide a clear audit trail.

Next Stage

9. Once each service is visited a detailed audit for each of the 30 Audit Commission Performance Indicator may be performed using the files compiled. These individual audits of the systems behind the indicators will be completed by 30th October 2001.