

Scrutiny Panels

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REPORT

2004/5 BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME

1. Matters for Consideration

- 1.1 Scrutiny Panels are requested to express views and comments on proposals to defer the Best Value Review programme for 2004/5.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 4 February 2004, the Cabinet authorised Management Team to consult with scrutiny panels on the Best Value Review programme for 2004/5. This was in response to a paper (Appendix I) submitted outlining the concerns of Management Team on the staff capacity to deliver all of the actions set out in the portfolio plans.
- 2.2 The report indicated that some actions outlined in the plans should be the subject of further consideration as to their value and contribution to the priorities of the Council. This included the Best Value Review programme for 2004/5.
- 2.3 The Best Value Reviews identified for the coming financial year were:
- Services to Households (Council Tax and Benefits, Environmental Health Personal Services, Building Control Personal Services)
 - Services to Businesses (Business Rates and Grants, Economic Development, Environmental Health Business Services, Building Control and Tourism Services)
 - Community Services (Forward Planning, Nature Conservation, Community Development, Social Inclusion and Transportation)
- 2.4 The principle service units involved with these reviews would be:
- Forward Planning and Transportation
 - Revenues and Benefits
 - Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism
 - Environmental Health Services
 - Development Services
 - Best Value
 - Community Initiatives
- 2.5 All 4 Scrutiny Panels may have an interest in the review areas with Planning and Economic Development and Transportation and Environment the greatest impact.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The issues set out below have been considered in making the recommendation to the scrutiny panels.
- Best Value Reviews are resource hungry in terms of staff commitment.
 - Best Value Reviews are similarly resource hungry on Councillors' time and efforts.
 - The highest impact will be on those units already committed to work towards the transfer of customer services into a new contact centre.
 - The 2003/4 Best Value Reviews of Street Services and Balanced Housing Markets have yet to be completed and will be rolled over into next year.

- The recent review of the Overview and Scrutiny function indicated that it was appropriate to reconsider how Best Value Reviews fit within the annual scrutiny programme.
- The Audit Commission have confirmed that it is acceptable for us to defer these reviews pending the completion of last years' reviews and the reconsideration of the whole Best Value programme in the light of our CPA assessment.
- It would be appropriate to review our Best Value programme in response to the CPA report when published in late April.
- Those units affected are already identifying significant change as a result of the business process re-engineering currently being completed as part of the customer services review.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Scrutiny Chairs on behalf of their panels are requested to recommend to Cabinet that they accept the Management Team's view that the Best Value Review programme for 2004/5 should be deferred pending a full review of the whole programme to be completed after the CPA report is published in April.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

None

5.2 Legal

None

5.3 Personnel

More staff capacity to focus on political and organisational priorities.

5.4 Human Rights

None

5.5 Environmental Implications

None

5.6 Council's Core Values

None

5.7 Community Safety

None

5.8 Wards Affected

None