

**ANGUS COUNCIL**  
**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2001**  
**ANGUS COUNCIL - BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME**  
**Report by the Chief Executive**

**ABSTRACT**

This report suggests the way forward for Angus Council with regard to its Best Value Service Review Programme.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee agree to:-

- a) Acknowledge and welcome the significant professional development and operational benefits that have accrued as a consequence of the work undertaken on Service Reviews to date.
- b) Instruct the Chief Executive to meet with departmental management teams with a view to:
  - i) Aligning Best Value Service Reviews more with the broad areas covered in individual Service Plans.
  - ii) Supporting departments to put in place appropriate corporate business management arrangements which will help to identify significant areas of activity which might be subject of particular Service Review as a consequence of significant change in that particular area

**2. INTRODUCTION**

- a) We are currently in year 4 of a 5-year Best Value Review Programme, and much of what has been done to date has been useful.
- b) The council has agreed to introduce crosscutting reviews with 7 being undertaken during the current financial year. (Report No. 960/00 refers). These are:

- i) Looked After Children.
- ii) Marketing/Promotion.
- iii) Building Based Community Services.
- iv) External Funding Opportunities.
- v) Low Utilisation of Services and Facilities.
- vi) Charging for Services.
- vii) Staffing Budgets and Establishments.

- a) The council is being encouraged by the Scottish Executive to become more strategic in terms of the reviews undertaken, and to change the balance between crosscutting and service specific reviews.
- b) Exercises have already been undertaken by Chief Officers and the Policy and Performance Unit to identify links between crosscutting and departmental service reviews to show linkages between departmental service reviews, and identify ways in which service review programmes could be rationalised in light of crosscutting reviews and the desire to be more strategic.
- c) Audit Scotland has focused its best value activities generally through the PMP audit process. Performance Management and Planning and PPR have emerged over the past two years as significant issues. The issues of competition and procurement seem to be the next areas that they might ask questions about.
- d) Best value legislation proposals are expected in the autumn and will impact upon issues such as trading powers and CCT which will be repealed. These factors, along with others, will impact on the new 5-year service and crosscutting review programmes.
- e) Proposals related to Modernising Government are also pertinent and the Leadership Advisory Panel has already reported.
- f) Our own proposals re the 'E' Government plan are also of significance.
- g) Chief Officers are of the view that there has been significant professional development benefits to those who have been involved in the process, as well as significant operational benefits as a consequence of the work that has been undertaken.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Best Value has been a huge learning curve for Angus Council, as it has been for the whole of local government in Scotland.

However, we now have a resource in our possession (staff across the council with significant experience in undertaking Best Value Reviews) which can now more effectively manage the Best Value processes. This will stand us in good stead as we move the Best Value process forward, particularly with regard to the cross cutting and strategic reviews. As a 'learning' organisation, the Council should now reflect the progress made and agree new ways in which to take the

Best Value processes and programmes forward.

Best Value is an evolving process and we must be willing to adapt our approach as we continue to learn from the process.

There is much in the service review discipline and current model which we should be retaining, and indeed developing, as we move forward to make Best Value an integral part of the way we do our business.

When the original service review model was drafted, and in the early days of Best Value when workshops on the model were being delivered to staff, we expressed the hope that the model would evolve into a service improvement tool which would be used as a matter of course by departments.

At that time, it was envisaged that departments would establish in-house service improvement teams to review a service or a process with the aim of improving that service or process.

In terms of how we might move forward the following is suggested as an option:-

Angus Council receives significant praise for the strategic planning processes it has put in place. If we recognise the collective importance of the various aspects of the strategic planning process, then no matter the political or management structures adopted by the organisation, it would be reasonable to expect that each department should review, on a regular basis, all of its activities. This should not be part of the best value service review programme, but more as a normal part of the service or department reviewing overall performance.

The division of the whole service for review purposes should in the main relate to the broad service areas set out in the various service plans. For larger departments these could form a rolling programme of reviews.

However, annually, and within the formal Service Review process, departments should, as appropriate, undertake reviews which relate to priority areas of activity, which as a consequence of national or local change, are considered to be in need of critical review, resulting in a more dynamic approach to reviewing our services. E.g. Modernising government and 'E' Government issues.

Within a community planning context, it is also likely that inter agency services and activity will need to be reviewed, and again this type of review will need to be included in our, and other organisations', best value service review programmes.

All of the above would lead to the development of a best value review programme that:-

- is strategic in nature. (Crosscutting)
- is addressing fundamental issues faced by the organisation as a whole
- is related to the corporate plan
- is pertinent to the whole of the public sector, and

- is fundamental to the wellbeing of the Angus community (in its widest sense)
- is planned annually in advance across the council

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to consider the contents of this paper and in particular the suggested way forward.

It is further suggested that the Chief Executive and officers from the Policy and Performance Unit, meet with departmental management teams with a view to working with departmental management teams and supporting them to put in place appropriate business management and Best Value service review arrangements in line with this paper.

It is also recommended that the Strategic Issues Team and the Financial Review Team draft a series of guidance notes and booklets to support departments in undertaking regular review of their services.

Thereafter, it is suggested that the following be collated into a single but comprehensive set of guidance notes:-

- Strategic Calendar
- Service Planning with integrated 3-year Budget Guidelines
- Personal Action Plan and Performance Appraisal Guidelines
- Performance Management and Planning Guidelines
- Best Value Service Review Guidelines and Booklets
- Balanced Scorecard

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this Report.

### **5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this Report.

### **6. CONSULTATIONS**

All Chief Officers have been consulted with during the preparation of this Report.

**A B Watson**  
**Chief Executive**

**Note:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this paper.