

## **BEST VALUE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN (Min 398/99)**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To seek Members' approval for the Best Value Annual Performance Plan. The publication of this Plan is a statutory requirement.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Under the Best Value legislation, local authorities are duty bound to produce annual Best Value Performance Plans. In addition, local authorities must ensure that these plans are available for public inspection and consideration, and that the contents are reproduced in a 'user friendly' public form. The first Best Value Annual Performance Plan needs to be approved and in place by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2000.
- 2.2 Members will recall that the draft guidance on 'Implementing Best Value', including guidance on the preparation and content of the Best Value Annual Performance Plan, was reported to Finance and General Purposes Committee last October (Min. 398/99). The final detailed guidance was issued by Central Government in December 1999 and has proved a useful template in producing the first plan.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.1 What it is?**

- 3.1.1 The Best Value Performance Plan provides details of what the Council does, how it has performed over the past year, and what targets it has set itself for the forthcoming year. It also contains details of the Council's Best Value Service Review Programme, which was approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee last November (Min. 470/287/99), and how the Council will use the programme over a period to seek to improve its services.
- 3.1.2 The guidance is relatively prescriptive as to what should be included in the Plan, although in this first year, the matters to be detailed are less than in future years, as details on service reviews, corporate consultation exercises, etc., are reported back and the work on performance indicators is further developed. In this year's plan, the Authority should include a summary of its objectives, an assessment of how it meets these, the programme of service reviews, performance indicators, standards and targets, and an assessment of performance with previous years.

#### **3.2 What has been included in the Plan?**

3.2.1 The first Plan now before Members contains elements of the Corporate Plan, the Borough Guide, other strategic documents produced by the Council e.g. the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, the Annual Financial Statement and the Quarterly Monitoring Reports. In addition, it includes details of the Service Review Programme agreed by Members and the Performance Indicators as specified by both Central Government and the Audit Commission. Thus, the majority of information contained within it is not new as such, rather it is presented in a different format.

3.2.2 In preparing the document, it is felt that there has been merit in bringing together and linking a wealth of information from a variety of sources. Certainly, the Plan provides a useful snapshot of the Authority, its services and performance, and has merit on that basis alone. Clearly, its value is likely to increase year on year as progress can be measured over time, although there remains concern over the nature and type of some of the performance indicators being prescribed, and their relative value as such.

### **3.3 How will the Plan be monitored?**

3.3.1 The Plan has to be reviewed and prepared on an annual basis, and thus Members will have the opportunity year on year to see how the Authority is measuring up against the various targets set. Internally, the form and content of the Quarterly Monitoring Reports will be amended to reflect the content of the Best Value Performance Plan and those performance measures contained within it. As now, that information will be circulated to Members on a quarterly basis. However, it is envisaged that there will also be a formal report on the Plan at the 6 monthly stage, which will be submitted to Finance and General Purposes Committee along with the half yearly review of the budget. As for the rolling programme of service reviews already agreed by the Council, these reviews, either on an individual service or cross cutting basis, will be reported through the relevant Service Committee, or Audit Committee, or a combination of both, as appropriate.

### **3.4 What happens next?**

3.4.1 Subject to the Plan being approved by Members, the Plan will be printed and made available for public inspection at the Council Offices, the Civic Suite reception and at libraries throughout the District. In addition, copies will be sent to partner organisations for information purposes. Space has already been reserved in the next edition of Rochford District Matters, due for distribution at the end of the month, to ensure that the District Council meets the requirements as detailed by Central Government in respect of public awareness about the document and its content. The intention is to provide a summary of the Performance Plan and to make the public aware of the availability of a

---

more comprehensive document. A copy will also be placed on the Council's web site.

#### **4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Plan makes reference to the Council's obligations in respect of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

#### **5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Plan makes reference to the Council's aspirations in respect of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The printing of this document can be funded from the Chief Executive's budget head. As with the Corporate Plan, the preparation of this Plan has impacted upon and will continue to require considerable senior officer time as it is developed and monitored
- 6.2 The Government has stated that it is looking to Best Value to achieve efficiency gains approximating to around 2% per annum of local authority expenditure. As Members are aware, under its 3 year budget strategy, this Authority has already targeted savings of 2% per annum simply to keep within agreed budget parameters. Members will also be aware that in commenting on the draft guidance on Best Value, this Authority has already made the point that, because of its size, additional resources should be given to the Authority to help it start up and develop this process. We have also made this point as a member of TACFIG.
- 6.3 The Best Value plan will be audited and inspections will be carried out following the service review. To help meet the cost of audit and inspection the Government has stated that it has given the Authority an additional allowance in 2000/2001. Unfortunately, in Rochford's case that allowance has been cancelled out by other adjustments to the grant calculation, the net result of which is that there appears to be no additional funding available for this aspect.
- 6.3 Clearly, in addressing the requirements of Best Value, it is important that we monitor its resource implications and at the same time ensure that a proper balance is maintained between output and processes.

#### **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 
- 7.1 The Best Value Annual Performance Plan has to be approved and in place by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000

**8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All parish and town councils will receive a copy of the Best Value Annual Performance Plan for information once it is approved.

**9 RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES** That subject to any specific comments and amendments, the Best Value Annual Performance Plan be approved. (CE)

Paul Warren

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

---

**Background Papers:**

None.

For further information please contact Paul Warren on (01702) 546366