



PORTFOLIO AREA: STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Date of Meeting: 2nd September 2002

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: **BEST VALUE BUDGET REVIEW**

Report of: **Town Clerk & Chief Executive**

Report reference: **TC 158/02**

Summary:

To consider the rationalisation of the Best Value budget in light of Comprehensive Performance Assessment and developments in the City Council's approach to Best Value.

Recommendations:

1. The current Best Value budget of £100,000 is reduced by £55,000 to £45,000 as of 2003/04
2. That a further report will be submitted shortly to identify how Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be best served by this remaining budget of £45,000 in 2003/04.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1. The Best Value budget currently amounts to £100,000 per annum. This has been used to support the Best Value process, particularly with consultancy support and customer research needs (including funding of statutory surveys required by Best Value legislation).
2. It is clear that the City Council needs to continue to meet its statutory commitments with regard to survey work e.g. general customer satisfaction survey (every 3 years – required in 2003), benefit claimants and planning applicants as well as the consultation requirements of individual services.
3. However, as Best Value has become more widely understood throughout the Authority and with fewer reviews as a result of our thematic approach the need for costly consultancy support is receding somewhat. However, there remains a considerable need to provide corporate support, guidance and administration for Best Value Reviews. In addition, the workload of the corporate performance team is set to increase with the Council's preparation for Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
4. It is acknowledged that the thematic approach to Best Value is creating more complex project management, benchmarking and research related issues. This is exacerbated by the difficulty that members of review teams have in creating sufficient capacity in their day to day jobs to undertake a Best Value Review, which is a particularly resource intensive process. It is also anticipated that this type of work will increase with the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which is an extension to Best Value and will involve the entire organisation both in the preparation, inspection and subsequent action plan. Although currently there is no clear guidance on the frequency of this process there is a possibility that it may be required on an annual basis. All of which will be in addition to the regular programme of Best Value reviews and will require a significant amount of co-ordination and support.
5. With a diminishing need for costly consultancy work, a reduction in the Best Value budget is therefore now achievable. However, to continue to undertake the required level of consultation, review support and survey work it is proposed that £45,000 per annum is retained from the current Best Value budget.
6. It is further proposed that a subsequent report is submitted to the Executive to outline how this £45,000 may be best used to meet the resource implications of Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2003/04.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation will follow as part of the budget consultation.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

N/A

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

Corporate Management Team has considered and noted this proposal.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

None

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The current Best Value budget of £100,000 is reduced by £55,000 to £45,000 as of 2003/04

11.2 That a further report will be submitted shortly to identify how Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be best served by this remaining budget of £45,000 in 2003/04.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the City Council to continue to meet its statutory and service requirements in respect of Best Value consultation and to support Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment processes.

