

TO: SCRUTINY 2 – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

ON: 28 MARCH 2002

Agenda Item No: 5

Title: BEST VALUE REVIEWS 2002/03

- (i) Legal and Monitoring Services – M Perry ext. 416**
- (ii) Planning Services – J Mitchell ext. 450**
- (iii) Street Cleansing Services – R M Secker ext. 580**

Summary

- 1 Appended to this report is the proposed Terms of Reference for the following reviews.
 - (i) Legal and Monitoring Services
 - (ii) Planning Services
 - (iii) Street Cleansing Services
- 2 These reports will be considered by the Environment and Transport Committee and the Resources Committee on 19 and 21 March.
- 3 Any points raised by Members at those Committees will be reported verbally at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Terms of Reference be approved.

(i) LEGAL AND MONITORING SERVICES

Terms of Reference

Scope

The review will consider whether the following services, namely legal, including land charges, internal audit, role of the monitoring officer and corporate performance

- meet customers expectations
- can be provided more effectively and efficiently

The aim is to show what we are currently achieving and how we are going to improve in future

The Services

- The services and their costs will be briefly described

- The reason(s) why the current services are being provided will be explained (including outlining the Council's statutory duties), e.g. how they relate to the strategic objectives, Council policies and priorities.

Some fundamental general questions

- What is the Council wanting to achieve in the future in relation to these services?
- Does the Council have a statutory duty to provide all these services?
- If not, should the Council cease to provide the service and if so what is the likely impact?
- If the services are to be continued, are there better alternative ways to deliver the service either in-house, by outsourcing or in partnership?

Some specific questions

- Will the Legal Services Team be able to provide sufficient support to meet the future requirements of client departments?
- Is the Legal Services Team the most cost effective means of supplying that support?
- Does the Legal Service Team have effective systems and procedures?
- Whether Land Charges Services can be improved by alternative methods of collecting information for replying to formal land charge search enquiries
- What opportunities are there for an Internal Audit partnership to improve service delivery
- What role should the Monitoring Officer provide in future to the Council, the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils?
- How does the Council want to address the requirements of the government's modernising agenda e.g. Best Value, corporate performance and Community Strategy?
- How do other similarly sized authorities approach the supply of legal and monitoring officer services and corporate support?

How we will carry out the review

The answers to the **challenging** questions above will be assisted by

- **Comparing** where practical with service providers in similar Councils by probing questions rather than attempted statistical comparisons
- **Consulting** with Members, managers officers and, where appropriate, others to supplement where necessary existing evidence
- **Competing** where appropriate with other providers

The Process

- The Member Reference Group will meet regularly with officers.
- There will be a challenge event in March/April.
- There will be notes available on the review progress to Members and staff.
- There will be reports to Scrutiny Committee.
- An improvement plan will go to Scrutiny Committee in December and Resources Committee in January 2003.

Membership of Review Team

- Members To be confirmed
- Officers Michael Perry, John Mercer, Keith Loudon, Su Whiston
- Core Team Other officers will be contributing
- Critical friend To be announced (part of the core team)

(ii) PLANNING SERVICES

Scope

The review will consider whether the planning services, namely;

- planning policy, including local plan, inputs into strategic and regional
- planning and transport
- building conservation
- landscape design and conservation
- footpaths and rights of way
- Bridge End Gardens
- development control, including enforcement
 - continue to remain a community priority
 - meet customer expectations
 - can be more effectively and efficiently provided

The aim is to show what we are currently achieving and how we are going to improve in future

The services

- The services and their costs will be briefly described
- The reason(s) why the current services are being provided will be explained eg how relate to strategic objectives, Council policies and priorities

Some fundamental general questions

- What is the Council wanting to achieve in relation to planning services?

- Are planning services positively contributing to the community planning agenda?
- Does the Council have a statutory obligation to provide the services and, if so, to what extent?
- If not should the Council cease to provide the service and, if so, what is its impact?
- If the services are to be continued are there better alternative ways to deliver the services – in-house, outsourcing, partnership, sponsorship?

Some specific questions

- Are planning services sufficiently focused on meeting the needs of all customers?
- Are we working to the greatest effect, with others, to bring real benefits to the Uttlesford community in terms of access to planning services?
- Are we working effectively with other service providers, eg housing, building control, transportation, health, environment?
- Are we making the best use of IT in delivering services to our customers?
- What is the most efficient and effective staffing structure and level of resources to meet future requirements, including potential legislative changes, and to achieve enhanced performance?
- Is there any scope for income generation?

How we will carry out the review

The answers to the **challenging** questions above will be assisted by

- **Comparing** where practical with service providers in similar areas recognised as being high performers – probing questions rather than attempted statistical comparisons
- **Consulting** with users, partners to supplement where necessary existing evidence
- **Competing** where appropriate with other providers

The process

- The Member Reference Group will meet regularly with officers
- There will be a challenge event in April/May
- There will be notes on the review progress to members and staff
- There will be reports to Scrutiny Committee
- An improvement plan will go to Scrutiny Committee in December and the Policy Committee in January 2003

Membership of the Review Team

- Members To be confirmed
- Officers Core team of John Mitchell, John Grayson, John Bosworth, Jim Gemmell, Frank Chandley, Connie Thomson and Val Rogacs
Others will be contributing
- Critical friend To be advised (page 4 of core team)

(iii) **BEST VALUE REVIEW – TERMS OF REFERENCE STREET CLEANSING SERVICES**

Scope

The review will consider whether the following services, namely street cleansing, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and litter bins

- meet national and local standards, and remain a community priority
- meet customer expectations
- could be more effectively and efficiently provided

The aim is to show what is currently being achieved and how any improvements can be made in future.

The Services

- The services and costs will be briefly described.
- The reasons why the current services are being provided will be explained and the links to strategic objectives, Council policies and priorities.

Some fundamental general questions

- Does the Council have a statutory duty to provide the services?
- Are the services meeting current required standards?
- What contractual arrangements are appropriate to meet future requirements?

Some specific questions

- What standards are appropriate?
- How should any improvement in standards be addressed?
- How can services be better controlled/documentated/audited?
- Is the client/contractor split necessary or desirable?
- Can the service react to seven day trading conditions or other requirements?
- Can the procedures and response to abandoned cars and fly tipping be improved?
- Can parts of the service be better delivered by others?

How we will carry out the review

The answers to the **challenging** questions above will be assisted by

The answers to the **challenging** questions above will be assisted by

- **Comparing** where practical with service providers in similar areas recognised as market leaders – probing questions rather than attempted statistical comparisons.
- **Consulting** with users, partners to supplement where necessary existing evidence.

- **Competing** where appropriate with other providers.

The Process

- The Member Reference Group will meet regularly with officers
- There will be a challenge event in April/May
- There will be notes on the review progress to members and staff
- There will be reports to Scrutiny Committee
- An improvement plan will go to Scrutiny Committee in December and the Policy Committee in January 2003.

Membership of Review Team

- Members To be confirmed
- Officers Core team of Richard Secker, Peter Dickson, Diane Burridge and Rosemary Danton
Others will be contributing
- Critical Friend Mike Felgate – Essex County Council (part of core team)

Background Papers: BVPP 2002/2003