

Committee: SCRUTINY 2 – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Date: 4 DECEMBER 2002

Agenda Item No: 5i

Title: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE LEGAL AND MONITORING SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW - FINAL REPORT

Authors: Michael Perry (01799) 510416

Members Councillors R. Copping, D. Miller and R. Stone

Summary

- 1 This report details the findings of the Corporate Performance Legal and Monitoring Services Best Value Review and proposes an improvement plan to be put to Resources Committee.

Scope of report

- 2 The review considered whether legal services (including land charges), internal audit, the monitoring officer and corporate performance meet customer expectations and whether they could be provided more effectively and efficiently.
- 3 The review of internal audit coincided with negotiations to enter into a partnership arrangement initially with Epping Forest District Council but later with Stevenage Borough Council. A full report was prepared for Resources Committee on 11th September 2002 when it was resolved that the partnership with Stevenage Borough Council be approved. The partnership is now under way and performance is being monitored.

Brief description of the services

- 4 Legal Services support other departments within the Council, in particular Planning, Environmental Health, Housing, Office Services, Benefit Fraud, Community and Leisure, and the Council as a whole. In addition Legal Services provide services to the public. More details of these services can be obtained from the background papers. The cost of the service to the Council for the year 2001/2 was £356626 gross, £343926 net. This included £47695 for the PFI project however.
- 5 The Monitoring Officer has responsibility for ensuring the Council does not act in a way which may be unlawful and is also responsible for probity issues. Since the new ethical code came into effect he also acts as Monitoring Officer for Town and Parish Councils within the District. Regulations will be published shortly requiring Monitoring Officers to investigate certain complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by Councillors of the

District, Town and Parish Councils. There is no separate record kept for the cost of providing these services, nor is there a budget item for monitoring services.

What we are currently achieving

- 6 Legal Services are keeping as much work as possible “in house”. In the current financial year Legal Services have instituted 23 benefit fraud prosecutions, have carried out one planning injunction, two enforcement Public Inquiries, 3 possession actions on grounds of nuisance and 4 prosecutions for Environmental Health. This type of work has traditionally been outsourced. The estimated additional costs had this work been outsourced would have been £38951.
- 7 Monitoring Services – training has been provided for District, Town and Parish Councillors by way of workshops with regard to the new Code of Conduct.

What we have done in this review

- 8 Legal Services:-
 - a. Challenged whether it will be able to meet the requirements of its clients, whether it is the most cost efficient means of providing that support, whether it has effective systems and procedures and whether the Land Charge Service can be improved.
 - b. Compared the provision of the service with Maldon District Council with regard to both service delivery and costs and with North Kesteven District Council by data comparison.
 - c. Consulted with Members, managers, officers and outside solicitors
 - d. Competed with outside solicitors in the provision of legal services
- 9 Monitoring Services:-
 - a. Compared the provision of the service with Maldon District
 - b. Consulted with Members of the Standards Committee, District, Town and Parish Councillors upon the role the Monitoring Officer should perform in the future.
- 10 Corporate performance:-
 - a. Examined how the Council wanted to address the government’s modernising agenda
 - b. Compared the Council’s current approach with other authorities in the Daventry Group and beyond
 - c. Consulted with Members, managers and officers

Answers to the fundamental questions

- 11 These were largely dealt with in the report to this Committee on 3 July 2002. However there were some issues that remained outstanding.
- 12 One specific question for Legal Services was whether there were better ways of providing the service either in-house, outsourcing or in partnership. The

conclusion drawn in the report on 3 July was that there may be a case for employing a further advocate to reduce expenditure on external representation. The benchmarking exercise (reported to this Committee on 9 October 2002) provided overwhelming evidence that this would be of benefit. In terms of hourly rates for its fee earners this authority outstrips private practice by a considerable margin and compares very favourably with other local authorities. However when comparing the costs of legal services per head of population this authority is significantly more expensive. The sole reason for this is the amount of spend on external legal fees.

- 13 The Member Reference Group agreed that there would always be the unforeseen case where outside assistance would be necessary which could not be budgeted for (examples would be a major planning appeal, a judicial review or in some cases foreseeable but non-recurring expenses such as the Local Plan Inquiry). However the majority of legal work which has been outsourced in the past is predictable and can and should be budgeted for rather than be a drain on reserves. The Group were of the view that the budget figure of £25000 for external legal services ought to be sufficient to cover the need for such services save for the exceptional items referred to above. The Member Reference Group therefore recommend that an additional litigation and planning lawyer be appointed to the Legal Services Team to achieve this goal. A job description has been prepared and approved by CMT and the Member Reference Group. It is currently undergoing evaluation. A copy may be inspected with the background papers
- 14 During the Challenge Event held on 5th June 2002 it was suggested that the appointment of a procurement officer may be of benefit in reducing costs of purchases. At the meeting of this Committee on 9 October 2002 Members requested evidence of the potential benefits. The Member Reference Group considered that this should take the form of case studies to show how savings had been achieved in other authorities.
- 15 Enquiries of the Daventry Group and other authorities have revealed that few district councils have procurement officers. Of the seven district councils that responded to enquiries regarding procurement officers only 2 have such posts. Three Rivers District Council have recently appointed a procurement officer following a Best Value Review on procurement. They helpfully supplied a summary of what they perceive the advantages of a procurement officer to be but were unable to supply any evidence of savings achieved. A copy of the summary can be inspected in the Background Papers. South Holland District Council have also recently appointed a procurement officer. It is too soon for that Council to say what savings may be achieved by that post and they were unable to provide any case studies from other authorities which informed the decision to make an appointment.
- 16 In the absence of evidence that savings would be generated the Member Reference Group felt it would not be prudent to recommend pursuing the appointment of a procurement officer at this stage.

- 17 Further benchmarking has taken place to enable the question “How does the Council wish to address the requirements of the government’s modernising agenda” to be addressed.
- 18 6 members of the Daventry Group replied to the enquiries regarding the position of a policy officer. The results are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 19 The Member Reference Group considered that this Council would be unable to meet the requirements of the modernising agenda within the resources currently available. The Group understood the need for a corporate approach. There is a need for someone to formulate, drive forward, co-ordinate and monitor corporate policy and performance. At its meeting on 16 October 2002 the Member Reference Group requested CMT to prepare a job description setting out what CMT saw as the role of a policy officer. CMT responded with a job description for a Performance Manager, which title was felt to more accurately reflect the responsibilities CMT would wish such an officer to undertake. This was approved by the Member Reference Group on 6 November 2002. A copy is attached at Appendix 2. The proposed post is currently undergoing evaluation.
- 20 It was the view of the Member Reference Group that such a post is necessary to enable the Council to achieve improvements in corporate performance by adopting a corporate approach and also to deal with the government’s modernising agenda.

Answers to the specific questions

- 21 Although these were considered in the report to this Committee on 3 July 2002 it is appropriate to revisit these in the light of the evidence received during the review.

Question Will the Legal Services Team be able to provide sufficient support to meet the future requirements of client departments?

Response Legal Services is under-staffed. Consequently it is unlikely that the team will be able to meet all of the needs of client departments in-house. Those needs which cannot be met in-house will either go unmet or be outsourced. If another solicitor was appointed to assist with litigation and planning it would not usually be necessary to outsource work of a standard nature.

Question Is the Legal Services Team the most cost effective means of supplying that support?

Response Legal Services is able to supply support to client departments in

house cheaper and more effectively than outside sources, including the Essex Advocacy Partnership.

Question Does the Legal Services Team have effective systems and procedures?

Response Currently the Service does not have a case management system. As reported to this Committee on 9 October 2002 members were impressed with a demonstration of a case management system and further evaluation is required.

Question Whether Land Charge Services can be improved by alternative methods of collecting information for replying to formal land charge search enquiries?

Response At present there is a greater risk in alternative methods of information gathering. However when the Planning Department is relocated at Saffron Walden there will be scope to investigate this option further.

Question What opportunities are there for an Internal Audit Partnership to improve service delivery?

Response A partnership has now been entered into with Stevenage Borough Council for the provision of Internal Audit Services

Question What role should the Monitoring Officer provide in future to the Council, the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils?

Response Aside from the statutory functions of the post the need for further guidance on members' interest (perhaps in the form of most commonly asked questions and their answers) and information for those considering seeking election to the Council or a Town or Parish Council were identified. Officers and Members are providing workshops for prospective Councillors in November.

Question How does the Council want to address the requirements of the government's modernising agenda e.g. Best Value, corporate performance and community strategy?

Response The Member Reference Group wishes to see the Council recognised as at least a striving council moving on to high performing. It recognised the necessity of acting in a corporate

manner to achieve this status and believes that the creation of the post of Performance Manager to perform the functions set out in the job description at Appendix 2 will be required to enable the Council to achieve this aim.

Question How do other similar sized authorities approach the supply of legal and monitoring officer services and corporate support?

Response This has been dealt with in the benchmarking data contained in this report and the report to this Committee on 9 October 2002

Improvement Plan

22 As a result of the review the Member Reference Group proposes the following Improvement Plan:-

Objective/Implications	Action	Target Date	Budget Implications
1 Reduce dependence on outsourced legal services in order to improve the service to client departments by increased availability to in-house advice and to reduce expenditure by the Council.	1(a) Employ a litigation/planning lawyer	1(a) May 2003	Post being evaluated but estimated at PO 5 – 8 (£26943 - £28827). Projected savings on annual spend on external legal representation £56650
	1(b) Where there is lack of in-house expertise to undertake work (e.g. compliance with EU procurement	1(b) procurement for the Housing Department 31 st May 2003. Other projects and when the	EU Zero impact initially as the work would be outsourced in any event. Thereafter the ability to handle the work

	requirements for contract renewals currently required by the Housing Department) to seek to work on projects in partnership enabling officers to gain the experience to handle future projects	need arises			in-house would eliminate the need for external legal spend on such items. As these are not regularly occurring matters however it is not possible to express these savings in budgetary terms.
2 Improve case handling management systems to enhance service delivery by running standard procedures, time recording and improved management control systems	2(a) Subject to evaluation, costings and availability of funds, introduce a computerised case management system	2(a)	31 st	March	As yet IT have been unable to identify resources to evaluate any systems or obtain costings.
	2(b) Pending 2(a) above to revise and introduce file recording and time recording systems to improve management control and cost recovery	2(b)	31 st	March	Within existing budget
	2(c) Pending 2(a) above to introduce standard	2(c)	31 st	March	Within existing budget

	procedures for routine work		
3. To promote a corporate approach to the services offered by and the policies of the Council to ensure that the Council is perceived as being at least a striving authority to obtain the benefits and greater freedoms available	3. Employ a Performance Manager to carry out the functions referred to in Appendix 2	3. 30 th April 2003	Post being evaluated but estimated at PO 5 - 8

Consultation

As agreed by the Member Reference Group Heads of Service (other than the author of this report) were consulted upon the contents of the proposed Improvement Plan by way of questionnaire. The consultation document is available for inspection with the background papers. A summary of the questions and responses is set out at Appendix 3.

RECOMMENDED That the Committee approves the Improvement Plan and recommends it for adoption to Resources Committee.

Background Papers – Best Value Review File (Michael Perry’s File)

Report to Resources Committee 11th September 2002 on
Internal Audit Partnership with Stevenage Borough Council

APPENDIX 1

(Summary of benchmarking on corporate performance)

South Holland District Council	Policy and performance team comprising Head of Service (SP 42 – 46), Senior Performance and Policy Officer (SP 32 – 41) and 2 Performance and Policy Officers (SP 27 – 31). Department covers:- <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BV co-ordination2. Writing the BVPP and summary3. Performance Management4. CPA consultation5. Responding to government consultation6. Miscellaneous policy issues The team may take over the responsibility for the Community Strategy but this is not within its remit at the moment.
South Northants District Council	A policy officer on grade 5 (£23700 - £27483) responsible for:- <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Corporate policy development2. Best Value3. Co-ordinating consultation4. Isp support5. Community safety6. Complaints7. Management of two officers responsible for performance management, research and information
Stratford District Council	Has a policy officer on scale PO 1 – 4 and a number of

officers throughout the authority who deal with various policy issues

Tewksbury District Council Head of Performance and Scrutiny and his assistant are responsible for policy, performance and scrutiny issues

West Oxon District Council Previously had a policy officer but the post holder was promoted and the responsibilities were distributed to other officers or retained by the Chief Executive who was however given additional support. The authority also has a Head of Audit and Performance Review Officer

APPENDIX 2

Draft Job Description for a Performance Manager

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Performance Manager
[Click here to type your post number]

Post Number:

Service:[Click here to enter your BC
[Click here to type your section]

Section:

Reporting to: [Click here to enter who you report to]
[Click here to enter location]

Located:

Responsible for: [Click here to enter if you are responsible for staff]

OVERALL PURPOSE OF JOB

(summary in no more than two or three sentences)

1. To advise on the implications of Government and local policy initiatives and support managers in planning and implementing change.
2. To coordinate performance management activities across the Council.
3. To coordinate the Council's procurement activities and pursue specific projects as required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To coordinate preparation for and follow-up of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and any inspections for the Council.
2. To assist managers in ensuring service plans meet Government and local priorities.
3. To ensure performance is monitored and that timely reports are made to CMT and members.
4. To produce the Council's best value performance plan.
5. To provide support and advice on best value reviews.

6. To ensure that the Council's procurement strategy is implemented in relation to the review and securing of all services.
7. To provide advice and support for officers and members in identifying and pursuing options for service provision.
8. To progress individual projects as assigned by CMT in collaboration with relevant colleagues such as a local service agreement with Essex County Council.
9. To represent the Council at relevant external meetings.
10. To keep informed about latest Government developments and good practice advice and advise officers and members accordingly.
11. Maintain records and data as required

If you have any problems completing this form please contact Personnel

PERSON SPECIFICATION/SELECTION CRITERIA

The following person specification lists the criteria that have been agreed for the person we are seeking to recruit. These criteria will be used for both the short listing of applications and at the interview stage. **It will help your application, therefore, if you can provide information on the application form of your experience ability to meet the criteria** either through your previous employment, social activities or in the home.

1 Knowledge

- a) Understanding of current issues for local government

2 Skills

- a) Analytical skills
- b) Influencing skills
- c) Numeracy and presentation of data
- d) Organisational skills
- e) Ability to work with people at all levels

3 Experience

- a) Experience of working across different disciplines

4 Qualifications/Training

- a) Degree or equivalent professional qualification

5 Circumstances

[Click here to enter your details]

Effective date 1.1.00/ Date last reviewed: [Click here to enter date]

Please sign this job description below when you are satisfied with its contents

Postholder's name (please print)	Postholder's signature	Line manager/ supervisor	Head of service	Director/Chief Officer
Date	Date	Date	Date	Date

Effective date

APPENDIX 3
Heads of Service Consultation Questionnaire

**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE LEGAL AND MONITORING SERVICES BEST
VALUE REVIEW 2002/03**

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Legal services should recruit a litigation and planning lawyer to ensure that as much contentious and planning related work as possible is carried out in-house

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Four consultees strongly agreed. Four agreed.

2. Recognising that matters will arise where legal services lack the expertise to undertake certain tasks, that in such circumstances wherever possible the work should be outsourced on a partnership working basis to enable expertise to be developed for future similar projects.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Three consultees strongly agreed, four agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed

3. Subject to evaluation, costings and availability of funds legal services should introduce a computerised case management system

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Five consultees agreed, three neither agreed nor disagreed. One consultee stated that IT are currently understaffed and it may be inappropriate to introduce new systems until this issue has been resolved.

4. In the event that Members approve the improvement plan to incorporate the recommendation at 2 above it will be some time before such a system can be introduced. In the interim it is proposed that
- a. Legal services should revise and introduce manual file and time recording systems to enable the some of objectives sought to be achieved by the introduction of a computerised case management system to be provided (whilst recognising that such systems will fall significantly short of what is desirable)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Four consultees agreed, four neither agreed nor disagreed. One consultee stated that an in-house time recording system is being developed which may be capable of being used until a case management system is introduced.

- b. Legal services should work towards introducing standard procedures for routine work to optimise the use of available resources

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

One consultee strongly agreed, six agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed.

5. The Council should employ a Performance Manager to carry out the functions referred to in the job description appended to the draft report as Appendix 2 to [this report]

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Five consultees strongly agreed, three consultees agreed. One consultee however expressed concern that the scale of the work required was grossly understated and that any appointee should have sufficient authority, status and grading to make SMT and CMT take notice.

6. The employment of a Procurement Officer should not be considered further at this time and the procurement element of the Performance Manager's role (assuming the employment of such an officer) be monitored to ascertain whether the expansion of that role (by either recruiting an assistant or a dedicated officer) would be of benefit to the Council

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------

Five consultees agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed, one disagreed being concerned that a Performance manager would lack the necessary expertise in procurement which is a specialist area.

Committee: Scrutiny Committee 2 – Resources and Environment

Date: 4 December 2002

Agenda Item No: 6

Title: Policy Priorities for 2002/03 – Position at October 2002

Priority	Action/progress	Lead Officers
New Cttee system effective	Constn Task Group to meet again to deal with some specific further issues	AF/MP
Low Council Tax	Budget fixed for 2002/03; 2.5% current figure for planning purposes for 2003/04. Reports to November Committees.	CMT
Transfer activities to Town & Parish Councils	Transfer of the Close Garden progressing; SWTC considering other possible areas.	RS
Scrutinise appointments	Ongoing	All Managers
Partnership working	Partnership working continuing. New arrangements for audit now in place	All Managers
PFI Leisure Scheme	Contractors now on site. Aim to open in 2003.	KC
Review Arts Devlpt & sports	Part of BV review in Community & Leisure	SMc
Reduce Community Safety costs	Taking advantage of Govt funding	SMc
Reduced cash targets for cttees	Included in budget plan for 2002/03; further cuts planned for 03/04	CMT
Reduced speed limits	Opportunities to pursue are taken when ECC consult on principles or on specific schemes	SMc/JM
Pursue policy on airport	Major programme of work on SERAS being pursued.	EF/BP
Complete Local Plan	Second deposit period now underway; next stage local plan inquiry, expected Spring 2003	JM/RH
Extend recycling	Additional activities being piloted. Funding from Essex Env't Trust now approved for new work. Included in PSA targets	RS/PD
Encourage Council house sales	Ongoing	RC
Enable more affordable housing	Ongoing	RC/JM
Pursue sponsorship	Some progress made in relation to budget target – to be included in budget reports to November Committees	CMT. All Managers
Prepare Community Strategy	Draft Community Strategy in preparation – consultation to begin by end 2002	EF
Financial gains from BV reviews	Progress on a review by review basis	BP/review lead

		officers
Seek Dunmow office transfer	Moves now being implemented – due for completion January 2003	JD/DD
Press ECC for more locally determined highways budget	Ongoing – raised in response to ECC re Local Service Agreement	JM

Committee: Scrutiny Committee 2 – Resources and Environment

Date: 4 December 2002

Agenda Item No: 7(iii)

Title: Legal Services Service Plan 2002/2003 – Progress Report

Commitment/target	6 month outturn	Comment
Existing staffing levels to be maintained	Achieved	The trainee legal officer with the team at the start of the year left the Council in August. The post has now been filled
Transfer library source material so far as possible to electronic material with associated costs savings	Achieved	
Revise local land charge search fees in the light of increased charges from County and increased competition from search agents	Achieved	Fees were increased by £24 per search with revisions to the fees for additional enquiries. £20 of this increase was attributable solely to an increase in the fees paid to County. Since the fee structure was revised however under government initiatives we have been obliged to reduce the fees by 18% for searches on line.
Continue with staff training as necessary	Achieved	The solicitors in the team have fulfilled their Continuing Professional Development requirements in a way which meets the needs of the service. The new trainee legal officer is currently studying for the Legal Executives Qualification Part 1
Explore seeking Lexcel accreditation	Outstanding	Lexcel accreditation is not practically

(dependant upon funding)		achievable without a computerised case management system. As part of the Best Value Review it was agreed that subject to an evaluation and costings a computerised case management system would be introduced. As yet IT have not been able to identify resources to carry out this exercise
Enter into service level agreements with client departments	Partially achieved	An informal service level agreement has been reached with the Benefit Fraud Unit and is being met. Further work is necessary with other client departments.
Undertake best value review	Partially achieved.	A report on the review and draft improvement plan is being presented to Scrutiny 2 Committee for consideration.
Reduce the use of outside solicitors by carrying out more work in-house	Being achieved	Reliance on outside lawyers has been reduced to the minimum possible with current resources with significant savings on external spend. For the first 6 months of the financial year 2002/3 the external spend for legal services (excluding PFI) was £19402 compared to last years total (excluding PFI) of £81683
Re-evaluate external service providers where the use of these is necessary to ensure best value	Being achieved	Monitoring of the performance of external providers is an on-going exercise.
Revise charging rates for legal work to	Achieved	Where it is possible to charge for work this is

maximise income		now being done at the rates recommended by the Lord Chancellor's Department which are significantly higher than those being charged previously
Continue to process 100% of local searches within the national PI of 10 working days	Being achieved	No searches have been processed outside of the national PI. Consistently 99% of searches are processed within 7 days or better. Only twice in the last 6 months has it taken 8 days to reach 100%



Committee: Scrutiny Committee 2 – Resources and Environment

Date: 4 December 2002

Agenda Item No: 7(iv)

Title: Financial Services – 6 Monthly Performance Monitoring – October 2002

Commitment/Target	6 month outturn	Comments
Performance Targets		
P1 Meeting statutory deadlines for publishing final accounts and having them audited without qualification on accountancy grounds.	On target for current December 31 final publication deadline.	Current resource levels now assessed to be a constraint to achieving P1 to P4 in future.
P2 Meeting statutory deadlines for budget approval and Council tax setting.	On target	
P3 Meeting statutory deadlines for producing the Council's financial PIs and other BVPP information.	Achieved so far	BVPP publication required by 30 June. See A1 comments below.
P4 Meeting the deadlines set for returning the wide range now required of financial information and bids for resources to Government Departments.	Achieved so far with only one exception. RO forms due 31 July were a few days late. Still a marked improvement.	The Government is now requiring more and more information before 31 July. See A1 comments below.
P5 Avoiding any material financial penalties imposed by Inland Revenue or Customs & Excise for unsatisfactory tax compliance.	Achieved so far	
P6 Avoiding any adverse comment from the Council's external auditors as to the adequacy of Budgetary Control within the Council.	District auditor is currently assessing information provided to Members to date	
Key aims for 2002-2003		
A1 To prepare for producing draft final accounts for publication by 30 June, in half the time previously available with no additional staff resources	Pilot of new timetable carried out this year. Assessed <u>technically</u> achievable but does need extra resources.	The volume of work expected in the period up to June / July will exceed the resources available to do it.
A2 To introduce debit and credit card facilities for making payments to the Council's cashiers by the summer of 2002 and then to facilitate the wider implementation of e-payment functionality throughout the authority	Behind schedule but live implementation is imminent.	Most preparations now in place, including banking arrangements and cashier training. IT system modifications awaited.
A3 To successfully implement the new approved payroll arrangements by	Achieved to time.	

September 2002.		
A4 To begin serious investigations into the available options for a replacement financial information system capable of handling e-procurement progression, the euro and intranet access to financial information, in time to build any cost projections into the capital programme for 2003-2004.	On target. Market intelligence obtained and a preferred procurement strategy identified.	Procurement and implementation to be built into service planning for 2003-2004 onwards. Resource implications.
A5 To achieve practical implementation of a new code of practice on the reporting by officers of financial information to Committees, for use by the first budget round of 2002-2003.	Not progressed. Interim summary produced of revised Chief Officer responsibilities under Financial Regulations.	Intranet publication facilities now expected to be made available to Financial Services from February 2003.
A6 To progress in line with the action plan the other initiatives arising from Best Value Review including providing support, as required, for the Council's ongoing investigations into alternative service delivery arrangements for corporate support services.	Financial Services not yet required to support investigations. Other issues continue to be progressed eg. Risk Management Strategy. (but see comment.)	The practical need to prepare a procurement "shopping list" reduced by the publication of "Towards a National Strategy for LG Procurement" in July.

Committee: Scrutiny Committee 2 – Resources and Environment

Date: 4 December 2002

Agenda Item No: 7(v)

Title: Revenue Services (attached)

BVPI / Local PI	Description	Overall Target for 2002/2003	6 Month Outturn Target	6 Month Outturn Performance	Comment
Local Taxation					
BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected	98.70 %	58.38 %	58.97 %	Majority of Council Tax is collected over 10 months.
BV10	Percentage of Business Rates collected	99.82 %	57.99 %	59.98 %	Majority of Business Rates is collected over 10 months.
Local PI	Percentage of Direct Debit Council Tax payers	65.00 %	65.00 %	66.53 %	Locally determined target.

BVPI / Local PI	Description	Overall Target for 2002/2003	6 Month Outturn Target	6 Month Outturn Performance	Comment
Local PI	Percentage of Direct Debit Business Rate payers	60.00 %	60.00 %	62.15 %	Locally determined target. The Council recently received a national award from BACS in recognition of the yearly increase in the percentage of DD payers.
Benefits					
BV78a	The average number of days taken to process all types of new claims	35	35	19.96	Target is based on the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) national top quartile performance standard target of 36 days
BV78b	The average number of days taken to process all types of changes in circumstances	9	9	3.75	Target is based on the DWP national top quartile performance standard target of 9 days
BV78c	The percentage of all types of renewal claims processed on time	83.00 %	83.00 %	93.47 %	Target is based on the DWP national top quartile performance standard target of 83 %

BVPI / Local PI	Description	Overall Target for 2002/2003	6 Month Outturn Target	6 Month Outturn Performance	Comment
BV79a	The percentage of correct calculations	97.00 %	97.00 %	94.90 %	Locally determined target as no DWP national performance standard target set. The method of carrying out quality checking has been reviewed and changed to improve performance.
BV79b	The percentage of overpayments recovered	58.00 %	29.00 %	33.14 %	Locally determined target as no DWP national performance standard target set.
Local PI	The percentage of all new claims processed within 14 days	90.00 %	90.00 %	93.43 %	Target is based on the DWP national top quartile performance standard target of 90 %.
Local PI	The percentage of new rent allowance claims paid on time	82.00 %	82.00 %	89.13 %	Target is based on the DWP national top quartile performance standard target of 82 %.