

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Council : 24 February 2010

Subject: BV Improvement Plan & External Support

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan (BVIP) for discussion. It also reviews progress towards engagement of external support.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 30th September 2009, Council agreed the establishment of 4 new workstreams to progress the key priorities emerging from the latest BV Auditⁱ. Progress on developing the Plan has been overseen by the Improvement & Efficiency Executive Working Group (I&EE) at its monthly meetings. Progress in developing the plan was reported to Councilⁱⁱ in October 2009 with the finalised Plan being agreed by Councilⁱⁱⁱ in December 2009. A progress report^{iv} was considered by the I&EE on 19th January and by Council on 27th January 2010. This latest progress report was considered by the I&EE on 9th February 2010.
- 2.2 Audit Scotland has produced a draft progress report which it intends submitting to the Accounts Commission on 18th February 2010. A response to the draft was returned to Audit Scotland on 1st February 2010. The final version as submitted to the Accounts Commission will be made available in due course.

3. Main Issues

Reports from the Four Best Value Workstreams

3.1 *Strategic Leadership*

3.1.1 Performance indicators.

Work has commenced on identifying indicators which will assess the outcomes of Strategic Leadership activity. This was a focus at the January meeting of the workstream.

3.1.2 Role Definition

In addition, the January meeting of the workstream recognised the need to clarify the different roles of elected members, the Corporate management Team, (CMT), the Strategic Leadership workstream and the Senior Management Network. The emphasis of this was on how the various levels contribute to achieving the Strategic Leadership priorities. The results of this work will be reported to the next meeting of the workstream, and will then be discussed with members.

3.1.3 Review of Strategic Priorities

A further requirement over the next few months will be to review the 8 strategic priorities. This will include finalising action plans and developing milestones. Further progress on developing long-term financial planning will also be reported to the Strategic Finance Working Group.

3.2 Competitiveness

3.2.1 Competitiveness Framework

A report proposing a corporate competitiveness framework and the competitiveness report and action plan produced by the Council's auditors, KPMG, were submitted to the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee for consideration in January. The report will now be submitted to the Audit & Performance Review Committee, (A&PRC), in February and the Joint Consultative Forum, (JCF), in March, prior to submission to the full Council.

3.2.2 Priority service areas

The main work of the group is to oversee the 21 priority competitiveness and benchmarking studies. Progress reports on these are due to the four main service committees in May 2010 and will be peer reviewed by the Group.

3.3 Organisational Culture

3.3.1 Management Development

The second phase of Institute of Leadership & Management, (ILM), programmes are now underway in partnership with Clydebank College. This involves over 50 managers in further programmes at varying levels. The first of four Chartered Management Institute, (CMI), programmes (Certificate in Team Leading) is being delivered by the Council's Organisational Development team and further programmes are scheduled for April, August and November. There is now a strong planned programme of development underway targeted at developing front line to middle manager levels in effective management practice and behaviours.

3.3.2 Leadership Development

The tender exercise for the leadership development programme targeted at senior manager levels is now complete and subject to Committee approval in mid-February. The development of this work based programme will commence in February with delivery scheduled for March. This will facilitate a 12 month development programme for the Corporate Management Team, all Heads of Service, and Service Managers. In partnership with the Strategic Leadership workstream a framework outlining the roles and responsibilities of key leadership groups across the Council (e.g the Corporate Management Team, the Senior Manager Network) is currently being developed to provide greater clarity on the parameters and collaboration of each group and how this builds strategic leadership capacity.

3.3.3 Intranet

As part of the Council's Internal Communications Policy and to provide equality for all employees in terms of access to information, a project is underway to re-design and improve the Council Intranet. This will include a single Content Management System allowing employees to access the intranet remotely and from home and provide new features and the opportunity for employees to interact online. Following a formal tender process it is anticipated this will launch in September 2010. Corporate Communications have re-established the Council's Web Development Group who will meet in early February to progress the development of new and up-to-date content for the new Intranet.

3.3.4 Elected Member involvement

Councillor George Black is now involved in the group and has participated in the January group meeting to gain an understanding of the group's role and the planned programme of work.

3.4 Community Engagement

3.4.1 Partnership approach to Community Engagement.

The Partnership Link Officers has now met on 2 occasions and continues a focus on joint arrangements such as:

- Implementation and monitoring of the use of the National Standards for Community Engagement
- The development and delivery of accredited training to support the National Standards for Community Engagement
- The development of a Partner Consultation Calendar
- The development of a Partner approach to the use of consultation mechanisms such as the Citizens' Panel
- The development of induction materials to support community involvement in Community Planning processes
- The review of West Dunbartonshire Community Day

This group reports to the main Community Engagement Workstream, which has now met on 5 occasions.

3.4.2 Performance Indicators.

These are under development to assess the outcomes of Community Engagement activity. The most recent discussions at the February meeting refined the approach to developing PIs and considered good practice from the QMIE (Quality Management in Education) approach.

3.4.3 Petitions Committee.

The February meeting of the workstream considered an options paper on the development of a Petitions Committee – or other appropriate arrangements - for West Dunbartonshire Council (this issue had been remitted to the group from Council). The I&EE have proposed that further details of the proposal should be reviewed at the next I&EE meeting and then be presented to the Community Participation Committee (CPC) for its views before a recommendation is made to Council. This will extend the initial timescales for this action.

- 3.5** The action plans developed by the 4 Workstreams mainly focus on the period until the end of 2009/10 and an integrated Action Plan is shown as Appendix 1.

3.6 External support

Support falls into a number of categories. These include:

- Support for the I&EE
- Support for individual elected members
- Support for Leader/Chief Executive

3.6.1 Support for the I&EE

Colin Mair of the Improvement Service attended the meeting of the I&EE on the 8th December and has been invited to future meetings and has confirmed his attendance at the April and May meetings of the I&EE.

3.6.2 Support for Elected Members

The Improvement Service have agreed to pilot a series of workshops/training seminars with Members which could be rolled out to other Councils in order to promote examples of sharing best practice. It is proposed that the seminars cover such issues as 3-year financial planning, corporate governance, performance management, prioritisation (of outcomes and delivery options), scrutiny and governing through partnership. The I&EE have proposed the setting up of a number (5-10 per year) of 'business days' where in-house and external training/development sessions could be concentrated into single whole days which would be planned significantly in advance to enable better attendance. The I&EE agreed that this approach should be piloted for 2 or 3 sessions and then evaluated.

3.6.3 Support for Leader/Chief Executive

Colin Mair has also offered to set-up regular (6-monthly) meetings with the Chair of Cosla, two other Council leaders and two other Chief Executives. This is under development.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There is currently a budget of £105,000 set-aside for funding the BV Improvement plan. As at Period 9, total spend was £55,726. The remainder has been substantially committed for the following:

- External scrutiny training for Elected Members
- Management Development
- Senior Managers' Network development.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Strategic Risk SR012 (Poor reports from external sources) currently has a score of 9 (significant impact, very high likely likelihood of occurring). The target is to reduce the overall score to 4. Scrutiny by the Council of the new BVIP is a key component of meeting this risk reduction target.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** No significant issues are identified at this stage regarding potential equality impact of this action plan

8. Conclusions & Recommendations

- 8.1** Elected Members are asked to review and comment on the progress of the action plans.
- 8.2** Elected Members of the Council are asked to recommend that the options and issues involved in any plan for a Petitions Committee should further considered at the next I&EE and be presented to the Community Participation Committee for its views prior to the finalised proposals being brought to Council.

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Date: 11 February 2010

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Appendix 1: Progress of Best Value Improvement Plan

Background Reports

ⁱ [**Audit Scotland** \(July 2009\): The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning: West Dunbartonshire Council – A Progress Report](#)

ⁱⁱ [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(October 2009\). Report to Council on Progress of Developing BV Improvement Plan](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(December 2009\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)

^{iv} [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(January 2010\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)