

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 25 August 2010

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**Subject: WDC Continuous Improvement Strategy**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to present a draft Continuous Improvement Strategy to Council, which harmonises the approaches that will be used to ensure services are continuously improving and systematically delivering best value.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Improvement and Efficiency Executive agreed that the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) would be used as the corporate approach for continuous improvement across the Council.

### **3. Main issues**

#### Continuous Improvement Strategy

- 3.1** A Continuous Improvement Strategy has been designed to harmonise and improve the use of quality management frameworks and review activity across the Council.
- 3.2** PSIF self evaluation and improvement will be used as the core corporate tool of accountability and improvement. Operating in tandem, will be a prioritised programme of review activity to challenge and improve services, including:
- benchmarking to establish the competitiveness of services
  - process review to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes
  - option appraisal to review if the configuration of the services deliver best value, with a focus on shared services and
  - community engagement and consultation to identify perceptions about the quality of the service, determine service objectives and priorities
- 3.3** PSIF will be implemented using a hierarchical approach to ensure that the Community Planning Partners (CPP), the CMT, Departments and services are all reviewing and improving their performance.
- 3.4** Strategic PSIF roll out will not include Education as they will continue to use Quality Management in Education (QMIE).

- 3.5** A programme of competitiveness testing reviews has been developed for twenty one service areas across the Council which are being reported to respective service committees. A service profile will be created for each service highlighting their performance and relative position in the market. It would be intended for all services to check their competitiveness over a period of time and the process would be repeated for each service at appropriate time intervals e.g. every 5 years.
- 3.6** To standardise the process and ensure managers have appropriate skills and expertise a Benchmarking Toolkit and Learning Outcome has been developed. The toolkit has gained national recognition from SOLACE and the Improvement Service.
- 3.7** Option appraisal will be the natural progression for any services if they are proven not to be competitive following a competitiveness review.
- 3.8** A programme of process management reviews has been developed to streamline service provision and reduce duplication.
- 3.9** To retain an element of independent challenge, continuous improvement will be managed by the Chief Executive's Quality Section who will work with a key officer from each Department with responsibility for continuous improvement.
- 3.10** However, responsibility for continuous improvement across service area lies with Managers at all levels in the organisation. The role of the Quality virtual team is to provide direction and support to drive the agenda forward.

#### **4. People Implications**

- 4.1** One new permanent post is in place in the Chief Executive's Department and a virtual team will be appointed consisting of one officer from each Department who will assist when required.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** Resources to drive forward continuous improvement will be found within existing resources.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** The level of risk and priority attached to implementation of this strategy is high. This is primarily because issues raised in the strategy require to be progressed. Lack of progress would also affect the Best Value Improvement Plan and work with external inspection agencies on the Assurance and Improvement Plan. Not to implement PSIF and the programme of reviews would result in a higher level of scrutiny and would reflect badly on the

Council. However, the fact that the strategy has been designed will contribute in some way to mitigating this risk.

## **7. Equalities Impact**

**7.1** The Continuous Improvement Strategy recognises the role of impact assessment and some individual elements of the strategy will entail an equalities impact assessment.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**8.1** Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the Continuous Improvement Strategy.

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**Chief Executive**  
**Date: 9 August 2010**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Continuous Improvement Strategy and associated appendices

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All