

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Corporate Services Committee – 28th March 2007

Subject: Best Value Audit – Costs of Preparation of Response

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides some information about the cost of the preparation of the response to the Best Value Audit report.

2. Background

2.1 At the meeting of the Corporate Services Committee on 31st January 2007, Members requested, “that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the committee providing total costs to the Council for the preparation of the response to the Best Value Audit, including the costs of external advice.”

3. Main Issues

3.1 The costs of preparing the response to the Best Value Audit fall into a number of categories:

- Staff time
- Printing, photocopying & stationery
- Telephone calls
- Independent analysis of the staff survey results
- Legal advice
- Press work

3.2 *Staff Time*

A number of officers were involved in different aspects of the work, however the Council does not operate a system of time recording for specific pieces of work. It is therefore not possible to provide any accurate costings for the staff time involved in the preparation of the response. (No overtime was paid in connection with any of this work.)

3.3 *Printing etc.*

Printing, photocopying & stationery costs and telephone costs are contained in global departmental and section budgets, and there are no separate records which would allow an accurate costing of the resources used to prepare the response.

3.4 *Survey Analysis*

The independent academic analysis of the staff survey was carried out by Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities. The cost of the work by Glasgow University was £1,997.50, and the cost of the work by Strathclyde University

was £750. The total cost was £2,747.50. This work has also provided an important benchmark for the Council's own staff survey, which will take place shortly.

3.5 *Legal advice*

Legal advice from Junior Counsel was obtained prior to the Accounts Commission Hearing. Counsel was asked to peruse and comment on the procedures for the hearing and he was also asked to comment on the Audit Report and the Council's proposed response thereto. Counsel was specifically asked to confirm that the procedures being adopted at the hearing would not be open to challenge and that all relevant matters were covered in the Council's submission. The total cost for Counsel was £3,500.

3.6 *Press work*

Some additional journalistic resources were used in the period leading up to the hearing. These focussed on the promotion of activity in areas of work outwith the immediate remit of the Best Value hearing. The cost of this work was £2,400.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no Personnel issues relevant to this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications relate to the cost of preparing the response to Best Value Audit.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 This report did not require a risk assessment.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The information available on the costs of preparation of the response to the Best Value Audit is set out above. Nevertheless, the recording systems currently in place within the Council do not allow us to provide a fully detailed total cost.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Members are asked to note the information contained in this report

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: Minute of Corporate Services Committee 31st January 2007.

Wards Affected: All