

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Council: 30 June 2010

Subject: Best Value Improvement Plan 2010/11

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the Best Value Improvement Plan (BVIP) for 2010/11. At the Improvement and Efficiency Executive on 13 April 2010 members requested that the BVIP be reviewed and refined to facilitate more effective scrutiny and increase the pace of change. This is outlined more fully at section 3.2.3. The plan has therefore been streamlined to focus attention on the key actions which will deliver strategic improvement.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 30 September 2009, Council agreed the establishment of four 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. Progress reports have been considered on a monthly basis by the I&EE and Council during January^{iv}, February^v and March 2010^{vi}.
- 2.2 Audit Scotland produced a progress report which it submitted to the Accounts Commission on 18 February 2010. This was the subject of a separate paper submitted to Council on 24 March^{vii}. This was followed by a meeting with the Accounts Commission on 15 April which was attended by the Chief Executive and Councillors, Agnew, Robertson, R. McColl and McBride.
- 2.3 This report was continued at the Council meeting on 26 May 2010 and has since been updated.

3 Main Issues

3.1 Key Achievements During 2009/10

- 3.1.1 During 2009/10 the following key achievements are noted below in relation to the Best Value Improvement Plan, categorised over the four workstreams:

Strategic Leadership

- **Adult Care Provision:**
 - Good progress being made in targeted and flexible home care provision – a key factor in shifting the balance of care
 - Provision of care reached performance target
 - Care services in the evening and weekends showing steady improvement
- **Asset Management:**
 - Asset Management Plan agreed September 2009
 - Independent review of approach undertaken April 2010
 - Strategy under development
- **Shared Services:**

Participation in preparation of Clyde Valley Review report and subsequent involvement in six workstream areas, these being:

 - Integrated Waste Management
 - NHS Integration
 - Back office services
 - Joint Economic Strategy
 - Social Transport and Fleet Management
 - Property sharing and local management in hubs
- **Financial / Budget Planning:**
 - Preparation / agreement of a ten year financial strategy document
 - Revision to the budgetary control process (new timetable - now monthly)
 - Review of charging policy
 - Preparation of a revenue income optimisation specification and evaluation of the project bids project (parked meantime as a result of the above)
 - Review of prudential reserves policy
 - Delivery of a balanced budget for 2010/11 & outline budgets for 2011/12 & 2012/13
- **Scottish Housing Quality Standard / Partial Stock Transfer –**
 - Housing capital programme has been aligned to support delivery of the standard.
- **NHS Integration**
 - Progression of Social Work Integration with local NHS services – various Council reports since October 2009 (NB: in June 2010 a Joint Executive Director for Social Work & Health was appointed)
- **Regeneration of the Schools' Estate**
 - All 3 “Phase 1” Secondary Schools (Vale of Leven Academy, Clydebank High School and St Peter the Apostle High School) delivered on schedule
 - New Bonhill and Goldenhill Primary Schools on programme for delivery in July 2010
 - “Phase 1” primary school (St Eunan’s) on programme for delivery in November 2010
 - Scottish Futures Trust funding secured for new Dumbarton Academy (66%/33% split between Scottish Government and

Council) with work to commence ahead of schedule in April 2011

- Waste Management:
 - November 2009 Committee approved the implementation of alternate week collection system
 - Aim to divert 6000 tonnes of waste from landfill & improve recycling rate to 43%
 - Bespoke Education/Awareness campaign introduced to support transition
 - Phase 1 has been introduced as agreed from April 2010 and is contributing successfully to increased recycling rates in these areas (Dumbarton, Renton & Vale of Leven)
 - Phase 2 will be introduced from December 2010
- Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) strategic self-evaluations carried out, including Social Work & Health's participation in a national pilot

Competitiveness

- Establishment of a competitiveness review programme to assist with embedding the process into general service delivery

Organisational Culture

- The Corporate Management Team have participated in various individual and team development activities to develop their role in leading the organisation through change
- Management development programme embedded for first line and middle managers
- Implementation of leadership development programme for all senior managers
- Revision of discipline and grievance policies and procedures (to be implemented in September 2010)
- Development of workforce planning
- Introduction of regular pulse surveys

Community Engagement

- Average 72% response rate to Citizens' Panel surveys and positive evaluations from panel members, including over four separate surveys two thirds to three quarters state that the Council and our community planning partners are listening to what panel members are saying
- 31 staff have participated in the Consultation Institute's training towards the Certificate of Professional Development in Consultation – training to foster good practice

3.1.2 The new Strategic Priorities for 2010/11 will be incorporated into the Best Value Improvement Plan once they have been agreed by Council.

Reports from the Four Best Value Workstreams

3.2 Strategic Leadership

3.2.1 At the group's recent meeting on the 20 April 2010, the Chief Executive led a robust, free and frank discussion on how the improvement agenda is being taken forward. There was significant discussion around the remits and formats of the Strategic Leadership group itself, the BVIP, the Improvement and Efficiency Executive and the Business Days.

3.2.2 The following actions were agreed:

- The Chief Executive to provide details of Accounts Commission letter and findings for 2009 and 2010, the remit of the Strategic Leadership group and the agenda for the 16 June 2010 Business Day
- All members of the group to provide comment on BVIP actions for 2010/11 and consider whether they will deliver the success required
- Directors to consult wider Management Teams about BVIP and feedback results to the Manager of Quality
- All members of the group to comment on what the strategic priorities should be in 2010/11 and feedback results to the Manager of Quality
- All members of the group to identify areas of best practice from their own Departments which could be implemented across the Council
- Ideas for discussion with members at the June 2010 Business Day were also requested to be submitted to the Manager of Quality
- A report on all responses to be available for consideration at the next meeting
- The suggestion of a Challenge Panel to be pursued

3.2.3 Role of Improvement and Efficiency Executive

At the meeting of the Improvement and Efficiency Executive on 13 April 2010 the Working Group agreed to note the following which was approved at the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on 24 March 2010:-

This Council recognises the positive comments received within the Best Value Progress Update report on the good levels of performance across a wide range of services, including education and social work.

Council also recognises that whilst the Best Value Improvement Plan addresses the Accounts Commission findings there are still serious concerns about the Council's pace of change and its ability to demonstrate progress.

It further recognises that the Accounts Commission welcomes the Council's arrangements for external support for both elected

members and senior officers and that they recommend that Council takes urgent steps to make the most effective use of this support.

Council agrees that the Best Value Improvement Plan is reviewed as a matter of urgency to ensure that its priority and focus delivers the increased pace of change to meet the Accounts Commission's findings.

It also agrees that the Improvement and Efficiency Executive Working Group considers a change to the Working Group format to encourage a more pro-active participation of all elected members in the drive for improvement, whilst recognising its scrutiny role.

The Improvement and Efficiency Executive Working Group should address these issues at its next meeting on 13 April 2010, and this meeting should be open to all elected members to ensure the widest range of ideas and views.

Furthermore, the Council seeks clarification from the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland on the comments regarding member officer relationships. This can be explored during the Council's follow up meeting with the Accounts Commission on 15 April 2010.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Working Group also agreed:-

- (1) to note that the up-to-date Best Value Improvement Plan would be submitted to the Council meeting in May for consideration; and
- (2) to note the importance of ensuring that early engagement took place with Members in terms of driving forward the Best Value and Competitiveness Framework agenda;
- (3) that the Working Group should be opened up to all Members to attend, but that it retain a core membership;
- (4) to note that it was essential that Members scrutinised the key issues involved at meetings of the Working Group and that it was suggested that Members particularly review the content of the Best Value Improvement Plan as a matter of urgency in order to ensure it best fitted the Council's improving performance priorities and focused on increasing delivery of the pace of change in order to address the Audit Commission's findings;
- (5) to review the frequency of meetings of the Working Group in order that it achieved its purpose and was primarily focused on encouraging a pro-active participation from all elected members in

delivering the change necessary in terms of improvement, whilst taking cognisance of its scrutiny role; and

- (6) to note that Council had now agreed a revised approach to strategic decision making – which included the development of ‘Business Days’. A programme for 6 Business Days in 2010/11 was being developed, however Council had agreed that the first Business Day on 14 April 2010 should focus on a review of the current strategic priorities, and it would also offer an opportunity to consider the options for marketing West Dunbartonshire as a place to live, work and visit. (The note of the meeting held on 13 April is attached to this report – see Appendix 1).

3.3 Competitiveness

3.3.1 Progress to date

The Competitiveness Workstream Group has met on 7 occasions with all departments represented. Work undertaken thus far has included the production of the competitiveness framework document, selection of services being scrutinised, position statements on benchmarking status to establish clear data for future action plans and the preparation of reports to all Service Committees following a peer review carried out at Meeting No. 6 of the group on 24 March 2010.

3.3.2 Reporting timetable to Service Committees

Service Committees have received / will receive reports outlining status as at the end of 2009/2010, together with action plans going forward for 2010/2011 showing how the 21 chosen service areas will demonstrate / have demonstrated competitiveness as appropriate:

Committee reports status:

- Social Work report presented to 19 May 2010 Committee
- Educational Services report presented to 12 May 2010 Committee
- Corporate Services report being presented to Committee in August 2010
- Housing, Environment and Economic Development report being presented to Committee in June 2010.
- Chief Executive report presented to Audit and Performance Review Committee on 7 April 2010

3.3.3 Action planning arising from benchmarking position statements and peer review

As reported at the I&EE meeting on 9 March 2010, it is evident that there exists a varying degree of benchmarking expertise and service areas also vary considerably in relation to opportunities for benchmarking meaning that services will need to establish their own benchmarking arrangements with partners where relevant. Whilst baseline information has been gathered to determine opportunities for benchmarking, the pace of progress will vary and be dependent on data available or becoming available. Actions have been included in the reports already

presented/being presented to service committees outlining plans to address where gaps are to be tackled.

3.3.4 Future Areas of work

New actions and milestones will be devised for progress and monitoring activity during 2010/2011 for any/all of the initial 21 service areas as applicable. It is still envisaged that Service Managers undertake a half-day session using the Benchmarking Learning Outcome document and that some work be undertaken on options appraisal which naturally follows on from benchmarking activity outcomes. The group may require to undertake the specific role of project management throughout 2010/2011 where deemed appropriate. As noted in previous reports to I&EE, it is hoped that this process will lead to competitiveness becoming embedded in service delivery.

3.4 Organisational Culture

Managing Change as Leaders

3.4.1 The Progressive Leadership Programme for senior managers commenced in mid April with the first module focused on 'Developing Effective Leaders of Change'. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to explore the change process (strategic and operational) and their role in leading the organisation's current change agenda through inspirational leadership and effective communication with staff.

3.4.2 Following the workshop participants are required to complete an assignment focused on the steps each manager will take to implement the change process, display the leadership values, and manage perceptions within their teams. This work will be externally assessed and will link into the second module in mid June which builds on the change process and specifically addresses the key elements and behaviours of positive leadership.

3.4.3 Alongside the main development programme the Corporate Management Team are also participating in separate workshops specifically focused on their strategic role in leading organisational change and developing pragmatic approaches to increasing the pace of change within the Council. These sessions have enabled the CMT to establish a set of clear priorities for moving forward and the actions they will take as a team to leverage change within the organisation.

Staff 'Pulse' Survey

3.4.4 As part of the Employee Survey action plan it was agreed to implement more regular feedback from staff and develop a more meaningful and productive dialogue with staff as part of our employee engagement strategy. The introduction of regular pulse surveys is a method for routinely, simply, and more regularly tapping into the ever-changing climate within an organisation. It will enable the Council to carry out a

health check on employee perceptions and explore at a deeper level the results from the annual survey. This type of short survey has an agenda setting function whereby it focuses employee's attention on particular issues and is issued every four to six months to a rotating targeted group of staff.

3.4.5 The Council's first pulse survey will be issued mid June and will focus on gaining a better understanding of some of the key results which emerged from the 2009 Employee Survey. These areas will be important to address as part of the Council's cultural change programme and aim to ensure our improvement plans and actions are focused on the real concerns of staff in the current organisational climate:

- Understanding of the Council vision
- Staff feeling valued
- Improving staff morale

3.4.6 The survey will include a number of broad based closed questions but also open questions to encourage staff feedback and suggestions for improvement. A key issue will be to ensure the survey reaches remote work groups since the response rate within the annual survey from these particular staff groups was particularly lower than anticipated and the results may not have been entirely representative of these groups. The survey will be administered by the Organisational Development Team and the results communicated in early August.

3.5 Community Engagement

3.5.1 In relation to Partnership Link Officers, two recent developments have been:

- A Partner Consultation Calendar for WDC website (partners can link to this from their websites) which is ready for launch; and
- The West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel survey plan for 10-11 (with input from Thematic Groups).

3.5.2 The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) community engagement tender process is now complete, and was approved by the Tendering Committee on 26 May 2010. The contract has been awarded to ODS, who will begin work with immediate effect. The key early priorities will be to meet with Community Forums and begin the task of delivering professional administrative support and capacity building. In agreement with the Forums, ODS will develop a skills development and training programme particularly focused on assisting those community residents currently involved in various CPP structures. ODS will also begin work on assisting the CPP to develop its Community Engagement Coordinating Group. This group will take over the coordinating role of the current interim BVIP Partner Link Group. Its early focus will be on improving partners skills and knowledge in delivering high quality community engagement.

3.5.3 The issue of a Petitions Committee was referred in a report to the Community Participation Committee on the 14 April. The item was continued to its next meeting on 16 June to allow more time to agree a response to the options proposed.

3.6 External support

In order to take forward the arrangements for the provision of external support for:

- Peer Support;
- Development Sessions for Elected Members;
- 'Critical Friend' Support; and
- Strategic Leadership

a report was submitted to the Improvement and Efficiency Executive on 13 April 2010 by the Improvement Service, providing an update on developments since the December 2009 meeting of the Executive and to agree timescales for future work.

Colin Mair of the Improvement Service and relevant officers addressed the meeting and the Working Group then agreed:-

- (1) to note the context of the Accounts Commission's recent update report on the Council and its emphasis on continuing concern about 'member/officer' relations and 'strategic leadership' by elected members;
- (2) to note that the Accounts Commission did, however, endorse the proposals agreed at the December 2009 meeting of the Executive for formalisation of peer support for the political and executive leadership of the Council; development sessions for elected members led by the Improvement Service and a 'critical friend' arrangement for the Executive chaired by the President of COSLA – these now required to be scheduled in and progressed without any delay;
- (3) to note that the Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development would prepare a briefing note for Members on the training and development issues in supporting elected Members to undertake their roles more effectively and with much more focus; and
- (4) to note that the Chief Executive already had in place arrangements in regard to peer support and continuing professional development.
- (5) that the Improvement Service will arrange for Development Sessions with Elected Members to consider '3 year financial planning' and 'setting corporate priorities'. It is hoped that these sessions take place prior to the summer recess.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 For financial year 2009/10, a budget of £108,500 was set aside for funding the BV Improvement plan. As at Period 13, total spend was £84,533. This expenditure can be analysed as follows:

	<u>£</u>
Public Sector Improvement Framework	4,112
Performance Management	1,223
Competitiveness	2,500
Organisational Culture	76,698

TOTAL	£84,533
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5.2 For financial year 2010/11, a budget of £108,500 has been set aside, of which £4,153 has been spent as at Period 2, with all of this being on Organisational Culture.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 Strategic Risk SR012 (Poor reports from external sources) currently has a score of 8 (critical impact, likely to occur). 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 & Officer's Recommendations

8.1 Elected Members are asked to note the progress made during 2009/10 in relation to the Best Value Improvement Plan.

8.2 Elected Members are asked to review and comment on the new Best Value Improvement Plan for 2010/11.

8.3 Elected Members are asked to review the frequency of I&EE Working Group meetings in order that it achieves its purpose. It has been suggested that meetings are held quarterly and that meetings would be open to all Elected Members but it would retain its core membership.

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Chief Executive
Date: 18 June 2010

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Appendix 1: Note of the Meeting of the Improvement and Efficiency Executive 13 April 2010

Appendix 2: Best Value Improvement Plan 2010/11

Background Reports

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- 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](#)
 - v [West Dunbartonshire Council \(February 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan](#)
 - vi [West Dunbartonshire Council \(March 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan](#)
 - vii [Audit Scotland \(February 2010\). The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning: West Dunbartonshire - A Progress Report](#)

Wards affected: All Wards