

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Council: 27 October 2010

Subject: Best Value Improvement Plan 2010/11

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report presents an update on the Best Value Improvement Plan (BVIP) for 2010/11. At the Improvement and Efficiency Executive (I&EE) on 13 April 2010 Members requested that the BVIP be reviewed and refined to facilitate more effective scrutiny and increase the pace of change. The plan has therefore been streamlined to focus attention on the key actions which will deliver strategic improvement. The revised plan was first reported to Council at the meeting on 30 June 2010ⁱ.

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 Auditⁱⁱ. Progress on developing the Plan has been overseen by the I&EE at its monthly meetings. Progress in developing the plan was reported to Councilⁱⁱⁱ in October 2009 with the finalised Plan being agreed by Council^{iv} in December 2009. Progress reports have been considered by the I&EE and Council during January^v, February^{vi} and March 2010^{vii}.

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^{viii}. 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 submitted to the I&EE on 30 September 2010.

3 Main Issues

Reports from the Four Best Value Workstreams

3.1 Strategic Leadership

3.1.1 At a recent meeting of the group on 15 June 2010 the Chief Executive circulated the remit of the Workstream to confirm the priorities and ensure all areas of the remit are being addressed by the group.

3.1.2 The following actions were agreed at the meeting on 15 June:

- Prepare development sessions for Managers on measuring outcomes
- Review current performance management framework send comments to the Head of Audit, Performance & Strategic Planning to allow collation before the next meeting
- Submit Benchmarking toolkit and report to committee for Elected Member approval and comment

Role of Improvement and Efficiency Executive

3.1.3 At the Council meeting on 30 June 2010, it was agreed that meetings of the I&EE would be held quarterly and that these meetings would be open to all Elected Members but the I&EE would retain its core membership.

3.1.4 It should be noted that the I&EE last met on 13 April 2010 as the meeting scheduled for 17 June 2010 did not take place due to lack of Elected Member attendance.

3.2 Competitiveness

3.2.1 Progress to date

The Competitiveness Workstream Group has met on 10 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 and submission of reports to all Service Committees. The reports provided an update on progress so far and detailed key milestones within each service area.

3.2.2 Reporting timetable to Service Committees

The reports below were submitted to service committees as follows:

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

As a result of these reports being presented to service committee, departments are now working to the key milestones agreed by each individual committee.

3.2.3 Benchmarking Position Update

As previously reported, it is evident that there exists a varying degree of benchmarking expertise within each service area. There is also considerable variation in relation to opportunities for benchmarking.

Services will need to establish their own benchmarking arrangements with partners where relevant. A benchmarking toolkit has been designed which outlines an approach to assist in establishing competitiveness. This will involve making comparisons of performance against a number of factors which will include cost and quality. A development course is currently being designed for managers to assist in the roll out of this toolkit. The course will be delivered by the quality team within the Chief Executive's department and will involve managers completing some pre course data collection prior to attendance.

3.2.4 Future Areas of work

Prior to reviewing any other areas of work, it is essential that the review of the original 21 services that were selected is completed. The next meeting of this group is scheduled for 8 October where the outcomes of each individual service committee decision will be discussed and the establishment of a clear workplan will ensure that the 21 services will be in a position to demonstrate competitiveness.

3.3 Organisational Culture

Leadership development programme

3.3.1 The Progressive Leadership programme continues and senior managers have now completed three development modules focused on the arenas of leading change, leadership theory, and strategic planning. Participants have also been provided with one-to-one support through individual coaching sessions and the provision of external feedback on the work-based assignments is currently underway.

3.3.2 Prior to Module 4 in November a strategic review of the programme will be undertaken to ensure it continues to address the development needs of senior managers balanced with organisation's requirement to develop strategic leadership capacity. The outcomes of this review will be incorporated into the development of a broad leadership and management development strategy which aims to set out a clear purpose and approach to leadership and management development for the Council.

Staff Engagement - Pulse Survey

3.3.3 The outcomes of the first pulse survey have been collated and the results will be reported back to staff through the October Core Brief. Based on the outcomes of the wider Employee Survey in 2009 the pulse survey was designed to explore three key result areas in more depth:

- staff understanding of the Council vision
- issues impacting on staff morale
- staff feeling more valued

3.3.4 The survey was issued to a targeted group of 1200 staff and a 21% response rate was achieved, with an increased response from work groups who are traditionally difficult to reach including staff within depots, schools, and care homes. Whilst caution needs to be exercised in correlating the results and feedback to the wider population, or using as a comparison to the Employee Survey results, the data and opinions obtained from a modest number of staff reflects a lot of information that cannot be ignored and has important value regardless of the response rate.

3.3.5 The primary role of the pulse survey is to gauge the current working climate of an organisation and identify employee concerns and reactions in relation to on-going initiatives. The results from this survey highlighted:

- 60% of staff recognise the Council's vision
- 80% feel that their day-to-day job helps to deliver the Council's vision
- Staff morale is improving with 47% agreeing their moral is generally good
- 47% of respondents feel valued

3.3.6 Whilst it is difficult to make a direct comparison with the Employee Survey results, mainly due to the different approach and deployment of the pulse survey, the results do indicate a positive change and this validity is supported by recurrent key themes highlighted through the respondent's feedback and suggestions for improvement:

- Support and development for leadership roles
- Continue to strengthen people management skills through development programmes
- Revise the performance and personal development framework
- Communicating more information on organisational restructures
- Increase face-to-face communication
- Develop new ways for staff recognition
- Concerns around the financial challenges facing the Council

3.3.7 The Pulse Survey results will be considered by the Strategic Leadership workstream in early October and where necessary existing improvement and operational plans will incorporate new actions to address the issues raised.

Budget consultation with staff

3.3.8 During August a series of staff roadshow events were presented to engage and consult with staff as part of our budget planning process. These forums were primarily to inform staff on the significant financial challenge facing the Council, highlight some of the key options currently under consideration, discuss the implications for how we work

together going forward, and gather ideas and suggestions from staff on how the Council can cut non-essential spending and deliver its services more efficiently.

- 3.3.9** The demand for these events exceeded expectations with over 600 staff participating in six forums over three days. Through a workshop discussion staff were asked to put forward their ideas on how the Council could cut waste, avoid duplication, make efficiencies, and improve services in the context of the current financial challenges. The collective views from each event have since been collated into a report which has been circulated to Elected Members and will be presented to the Strategic Finance Working Group in early October.
- 3.3.10** Consultation of this kind is very challenging considering the complexities of the budget planning process and aspects of the Council's organisational culture which may influence staff participation in the process. However staff feedback at the end of each workshop highlighted a strong appreciation and positive reaction to forums of this kind. Staff felt that the forums had been particularly valuable and informative through the direct communication and open discussion, and the process demonstrated a genuine and meaningful approach from the Corporate Management Team to engage and consult with staff.
- 3.3.11** The outcomes of the staff consultation will be communicated to staff through the Core Brief in October. Regular updates will be provided to staff as future plans progress to ensure an on-going dialogue is maintained across the organisation.

3.4 Community Engagement

- 3.4.1** The Council has widened its approach to Budget Consultation with a series of budget consultation workshops for employees, budget roadshows for the public and a citizens' panel survey.
- 3.4.2** Building on previous training, a further 60 courses will be run before the end of March 2011 involving around 28 employees. The courses are being run by the Consultation Institute and we are joining up with Glasgow Housing Association and Young Scot to share courses and deliver best possible value for money (approximately £110 per person, per course – a saving of 58.5% on full prices).
- 3.4.3** A Consultation Toolkit with guidance for employees has been finalised and will be put on the intranet by the beginning of October.
- 3.4.4** Progress with implementing Community Planning Partnership (CPP) community engagement tender has been rapid and effective. ODS working in collaboration with forums themselves to agree the level of admin support and scope out a learning programme, all Forums now participating. Learning programme for community forum members will

commence soon. Community Forum members attended a training course on Covalent during July 2010.

3.4.5 The Vale of Leven Chair has resigned. A new chair and office bearers require to be appointed.

3.4.6 ODS assisting with establishment of a CPP community engagement Coordination Group. The membership and functions of the group are currently being designed. This group of officers from CPP partner agencies including several Council departments will serve to extend and strengthen the strategic and operational impact of the BVIP Community Engagement workstream.

3.4.7 The issue of a Petitions Committee was discussed in a report to the Community Participation Committee on 16 June. The Committee agreed that current mechanisms were sufficient and recommended to Council to maintain the status quo.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 For financial year 2010/11, a budget of £108,500 was set aside for funding the BV Improvement plan. As at Period 5, total expenditure £11,142 which can be analysed as follows:

	<u>£</u>
Organisational Culture	8,653
Miscellaneous	364
PSIF	2,125

TOTAL	£11,142
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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 Members are asked to review and comment on the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan for 2010/11.
- 8.2 Members are asked to note the decision made at the Council meeting on 30 June 2010 in relation to the I&EE holding meetings on a quarterly basis.

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Date: 11 October 2010

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Appendix 1: Best Value Improvement Plan 2010/11

Background Reports: See below

Wards Affected: All

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- i [West Dunbartonshire Council \(June 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan 2010/11](#)
- ii [Audit Scotland \(July 2009\): The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning: West Dunbartonshire Council – A Progress Report](#)
- iii [West Dunbartonshire Council \(October 2009\). Report to Council on Progress of Developing BV Improvement Plan](#)
- iv [West Dunbartonshire Council \(December 2009\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)
- v [West Dunbartonshire Council \(January 2010\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)
- vi [West Dunbartonshire Council \(February 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan](#)
- vii [West Dunbartonshire Council \(March 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan](#)
- viii [Audit Scotland \(February 2010\). The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning: West Dunbartonshire - A Progress Report](#)