

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
Report by Chief Executive
Council Meeting: 29th August 2007

Subject: Audit of Best Value and Community Planning

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report notes the visit of Audit Scotland in August and the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan

2. Background

- 2.1** Following the Public Hearing in late November 2006 the Accounts Commission required the Council to prepare an improvement plan and for Audit Scotland to re-visit the Council and assess the progress of the plan as of 31st July 2007.
- 2.2** The Member-Officer Working Group has been monitoring the improvement plan regularly, and last met on the 7th August. At this meeting, as well as considering the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan, the Group discussed the content of the Position Statement requested by Audit Scotland and also noted the arrangements for the visit of the audit team in mid-August.
- 2.3** Audit Scotland carried-out on-site audit work in the Council during 13-17 August as part of their assessment of our progress.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Position Statement contains a background to the Audit process, general comments on progress, and an evaluation of progress made on the various priorities in the improvement plan during 2007.
- 3.2** The Position Statement was circulated to all councillors by email on 8th August, which also noted that a CD of the evidence was available on request. It is also available on the intranet at http://intranet.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/chiefexec/Best%20Value/BV%20Audit%20Sub%20Dec%2005/best_value%20Audit.htm
- 3.3** The meeting of Member-Officer Working Group on 7th August provided an opportunity for Elected Members to comment on progress and to support the draft position statement. Following further comment from the Leader of the Administration and the Leader of the Opposition, the final document was sent to Audit Scotland on the 8th August.
- 3.4** The audit team conducted interviews with five councillors (Cllrs Robertson, Rooney, Calvert, Bollan and McLaughlin), the Chief Executive, three other members of the CMT as well as the Principal Policy Officer and the Section Head (Performance Management). Two focus groups of middle managers and trade union officials were also held, as well as interviews with Scottish Enterprise and the chair of the Community Planning Partnership.

- 3.5 Following the on-site visit Audit Scotland will consider their findings and produce a draft report – probably in late October, which will be considered by the next meeting of the member-officer working group.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The 2007/8 budget has a general provision of £350,000 built in, with an additional £70,000 added to departmental budgets, to fund the Best Value Improvement Plan.

Following the addition of the 7 senior posts as a result of the Brodies report, some £110,000 worth of savings were made on items that were previously included within this budget. The Revenue Budget is now £240,000

Spend to end P3 is shown in the table below, along with a full-year forecast

There are also £440,000 of capital items; progress of these will be reported in a subsequent report.

	Spend to P3	Forecast	Progress
External Assistance			
Brodies -Structures	£33,274	£33,274	Complete
Solace-Efficient Gov + competitiveness	£0	£26,250	Complete
K3 (Planning & Performance Management)	£6,908	£25,000	In progress
K3 (Management Development)	£0	£10,250	In progress
IBP (Staff Survey)	£9,334	£14,000	2/3 of Fee paid to date
People Resolutions – Dignity at Work	£0	£25,000	In progress
Hexagon - scrutiny	£1,500	£1,500	Complete
Staff Costs			
Sustainable Development Officer	£8,966	£33,000	Started 16/4
Biodiversity officer	£0	£10,000	Started 13/8
Equal Opportunities Officer	£7,391	£35,000	Started 30/4
Other Costs			
Community Plan preparation	£12,605	£0	to be re-coded to community planning
PSIF Training	£0	£15,000	Not started
Fresh New Start- Conference, staff communications etc	£2,320	£10,000	Conference planned for October
Option Appraisal Training	£1,400	£1,400	Complete
TOTAL	£83,698	£239,674	

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 No Risk Analysis is required at this stage.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Council is invited to comment on the progress of the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 22 August 2007

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: Minutes of Member-Officer Working Group 7 August 2007
Position Statement circulated 8th August 2007

Wards Affected: All Wards