

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Council : 24 March 2010

Subject: BV Improvement Plan

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan (BVIP) for discussion.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 30th September 2009, Council agreed the establishment of 4 new workstreams to progress the key priorities emerging from the latest BV Audit¹. 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 Council² in October 2009 with the finalised Plan being agreed by Council³ in December 2009. A progress report⁴ was considered by the I&EE on 19th January and by Council on 27th January 2010. A further progress report was considered by the I&EE on 9th February and a subsequent report⁵ was submitted to Council on 24th February. This report was scrutinised by the I&EE on 9th March.
- 2.2 Audit Scotland produced a draft progress report which it submitted to the Accounts Commission on 18th February 2010. The Accounts Commission formally published its findings on 11th March. This is the subject of a separate paper to be submitted to this Council meeting.

3. Main Issues

Reports from the Four Best Value Workstreams

3.1 Strategic Leadership

- 3.1.1 The Strategic Leadership Workstream last met on 23rd February 2010. Progress with the action plan was reviewed. .

3.1.2 Strategic priorities 09/10.

Templates which define progress and action required on each of the strategic priorities have been completed and will now be monitored by the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

3.1.3 Role Definition

The January meeting of the workstream recognised the need to clarify the different roles of elected members, the CMT, the Strategic Leadership workstream and the Senior Management Network. The

emphasis of this was on how the various levels contribute to achieving the Strategic Leadership priorities. The results of this work were reported to the February meeting of the workstream. The final version of this work will now be discussed with elected members.

3.1.4 Review of Strategic Priorities

A further requirement over the next few months will be to review the 8 strategic priorities. This will include finalising action plans and developing milestones. Further progress on developing long-term financial planning will also be reported to the Strategic Finance working group. On the basis of recommendations from the I&EE, Council has now agreed a revised approach to strategic decision making – which includes the development of ‘Business Days’. A programme for 6 Business Days in 2010/11 is being developed, however Council has agreed that the 1st Business Day on 14th April should focus on a review of the current strategic priorities, and it will also offer an opportunity to consider the options for marketing West Dunbartonshire as a place to live, work and visit.

3.1.5 Review of Risk Management

The February meeting of the Strategic Leadership workstream heard preliminary results from the review of risk management. An action plan will now be developed.

3.1.6 External Support

A new pilot programme facilitated by the Improvement Service (IS) for Elected Member development is being set-up and further details will be available in due course. The Chief Executive of the IS is due to attend the I&EE in April and May to outline the programme and provide further external advice and support to the Council.

3.2 Competitiveness

3.2.1 Progress to date

The Competitiveness Workstream Group has now met on 5 occasions with all departments being represented. Work undertaken thus far includes the production of the competitiveness framework document, selection of services being scrutinised and position statements on benchmarking status to establish clear data for future action plans.

3.2.2 Reporting timetable to Service Committees (May cycle)

Service Committees are now approaching for May 2010 and all departments will present reports outlining status as at the end of 2009/2010 together with action plans going forward for 2010/2011 demonstrating how the 21 chosen service areas will demonstrate competitiveness.

3.2.3 Action planning arising from benchmarking position statements

It is evident that there exists a varying degree of benchmarking expertise and involvement. The priority service areas also vary considerably in relation to opportunities for benchmarking. This ranges

from national data produced by APSE and the like for some services to no national or regional data being held in a large number of services. In these latter cases, this means that services will need to establish their own benchmarking arrangements with partners. Whilst baseline information has now been gathered to determine opportunities for benchmarking, the pace of progress will vary and be dependent on data available or becoming available. Action plans will be included in the reports to the May Committee cycle outlining plans to address where the gaps outlined above are to be tackled.

3.2.4 Future Areas of work

New actions and milestones will be devised for progress and monitoring activity during 2010/2011 for all 21 service areas. It is envisaged that each of the 21 Service Managers undertakes a half-day session using the Benchmarking Learning Outcome document. It would also be intended that some work be undertaken with Managers on options appraisal which naturally follows on from benchmarking activity outcomes.

The group intends to undertake the specific role of project management for the remainder of 2009/2010 and throughout 2010/2011 (and beyond for all other services to be considered as appropriate). It is hoped that this process will lead to competitiveness becoming embedded in all service delivery.

3.3 Organisational Culture

3.3.1 Leadership development programme

The initial development phase for the programme content and delivery is now progressing and a launch date of the 1st April is planned for the programme. The programme will incorporate a blended learning approach with modular workshops focusing on strategic leadership behaviours and practice combined with one-to-one coaching to support senior managers in embedding their learning and leadership practice.

3.3.2 Employee Survey

The 2009 Employee Survey findings and improvement recommendations have now been formally published and communicated to staff through the Core Brief framework. A special 4 page pull-out has been published within Westlife to highlight the key findings and communicate how the improvement plan will be developed. A programme of action planning will now be taken forward by the Culture group in partnership with departmental teams to provide an opportunity for employees to have an input on the planned improvement and feedback their views on what will improve working life within the Council.

3.3.3 Intranet

A corporate web development working group, led by Corporate Communications, has been established to progress the content cleanse and re-design of the Council intranet as part of a wider redevelopment of online communications. The scope and remit of the group has been agreed, with representation from services across the

Council. A design concept, technical specification, page templates, and a navigation guide have been provided to the group for agreement and a deadline for the content cleanse to be completed of the 31st May. A comprehensive project brief and tender document has been prepared for the technical build, which will deliver a Council portal incorporating the internet and intranet. This project will deliver a new Council website with a combined intranet, and allow all employees regardless of workgroup or work location to access the intranet from remote locations or from home. The web build is expected to begin at the beginning of May with a delivery date of October 2010.

3.3.4 Performance and personal development framework

The development and implementation of a revised approach to the current PDP process is a key priority and aims to support a balanced and better focus on individual performance and personal development plans linked to skills and behaviours required to do the job. Equally the framework aims to address specific feedback within the Employee Survey and facilitate developing consistent management practice in managing the individual performance of staff and providing face-to-face feedback on performance achievements. A behaviour framework will be included within the process, setting-out the required behaviours for staff and managers in carrying out their role and delivering services. The revised framework is in the early development stages and has been delayed due to internal team restructures and resource capacity however targeted resources have now been identified and this project will be developed and implemented over the next three months.

3.4 Community Engagement

3.4.1 The Community Engagement Workstream has now met on 6 occasions, with the latest meeting on 2nd March. Progress with the action plan was reviewed. This is attached as the appendix to this report.

3.4.2 Partnership approach to Community Engagement.

The Partnership Link Officers has now met on 3 occasions and continues a focus on joint arrangements such as:

- Implementation and monitoring of the use of the National Standards for Community Engagement
- The development and delivery of accredited training to support the National Standards for Community Engagement

A recent joint training session on performance monitoring arrangements was well attended and well received.

3.4.3 Performance Indicators.

These are under development to assess the outcomes of Community Engagement activity. The most recent discussions at the March meeting focussed on proposals to monitor issues such as Tenant Participation and consultation feedback outcomes.

3.4.4 Petitions Committee.

The March meeting of the workstream considered a more detailed options paper on the development of a Petitions Committee. This included information on the type of activity undertaken by petitions committees elsewhere in Scotland. The I&EE has now considered the proposals and has agreed that they be presented to the Community Participation Committee (CPC) for its views before a recommendation is made to Council.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There is currently a budget of £105,000 set-aside for funding the BV Improvement plan. As at Period 10, total spend was £75,061. The remainder has been substantially committed for the following:

- Management Development
- Senior Managers' Network development.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 Strategic Risk SR012 (Poor reports from external sources) currently has a score of 9 (significant impact, very high likely likelihood of occurring). 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 & Recommendations

8.1 **Members of the Council are asked to review and comment on the progress of the action plans.**

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 11 March 2010

Persons to Contact: David Webster, Manager, Improvement & Performance. Telephone 01389 737143
E-mail: david.webster@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
Liz Cochrane, Head of Service, Policy & Performance. Telephone 01389 737271
E-mail: liz.cochrane@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Progress of Best Value Improvement Plan

Background Reports

¹ [**Audit Scotland** \(July 2009\): The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning: West Dunbartonshire Council – A Progress Report](#)

² [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(October 2009\). Report to Council on Progress of Developing BV Improvement Plan](#)

³ [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(December 2009\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)

⁴ [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(January 2010\). Report to Council on BV Improvement Plan](#)

⁵ [**West Dunbartonshire Council** \(February 2010\). Report to Council on Best Value Improvement Plan](#)

Wards Affected: All