
REPORT TO:	Environment and Development Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	14th November 2002	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	John Birkett Planning Services Manager	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Best Value Review of Development Control Implementation Plan Progress	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: G

1.0 Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee note the progress in Implementing the Action Plan following inspection of the Best Value review and give consideration to any matters as necessary.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To advise the Committee of progress in Implementing the Action Plan following inspection of the Best Value review.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Council's Development Control Service was inspected in October 2000 and the Final Report published in March 2001. The service was judged to be fair(one star) but not going to improve. Nevertheless, an Implementation Plan was drawn up based on the Inspectors' recommendations. This was incorporated into the Service Plan and has formed the basis for development activity since that time. The Audit Commission has advised of their intention to make a follow up visit to review progress with implementing their recommendations.

3.2 At their request, reports have been prepared that address the main issues of concern to the inspectors who will visit these offices in the first week of December. The reports are attached as appendices to this report. They give details of actions taken to implement the recommendations of the inspectors and fulfil the planned actions, the Council put in place as a consequence. They also demonstrate the service meets the performance indicators required by the Government to a very large extent.

3.3 Considering the level of resources applied, the Council can be relatively proud of the success in achieving many of the items in the Action Plan together with good progress with the remainder.

3.4 Nevertheless, comparisons with other Councils and the experience of absences arising out of staff vacancies do show that the service needs more staff to remain

stable and develop to meet the agenda that Best Value imposes. In particular, affording the public better access to decision making, through pre-application advice, (verbal and documentary) and being able to address the Committee in person lacks adequate resourcing.

4.0 Financial, Corporate, Community Implications

4.1 As detailed in the accompanying reports.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The conclusion of the inspection may be judged to have been harsh, bearing in mind progress since that time. Nevertheless, to overcome the criticism that the service will not improve because it is under-resourced, further staff inputs need to be made.

6.0 Background Papers

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