
REPORT TO:	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM:	5
DATE OF MEETING:	28 OCTOBER 2002	CATEGORY:	RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER		OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE (595811) CHRIS SWAIN (595812)	DOC:	c:/ks/myfiles/bestvalue/oct02update
SUBJECT:	BEST VALUE REVIEW: FINANCIAL SERVICES PROGRESS REPORT	REF:	KS
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	FM13

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the progress report be noted.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 Is to provide an update on the best value review into financial services, and in particular work undertaken since the baseline assessment and the identification of the key issues by the review group.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The review of financial services covers the following activities:

- Revenues and Benefits.
- Finance Services, incorporating Internal Audit, Exchequer Services, and Accountancy

Finance Services

3.2 A summary of the key issues and progress to-date, together with work outstanding is set out in Appendix 1.

Revenues and Benefits

3.3 **Focus Groups** – the professional partners meeting is being arranged hopefully for November/December but it is proving difficult to find anyone interested in attending a housing benefit recipients group – to-date 75 letters have been sent!

3.4 **New Revenue System** – final work is being carried out on the evaluation of the suppliers and it is anticipated that the project group will make a recommendation to the Joint Committee by the end of October.

3.5 **Joint Working with East Staff BC.** – following on from a very successful meeting, agreement was reached to work jointly on the following projects:

- ❖ The introduction of paperless Direct Debits
- ❖ Direct Debit publicity campaign in the local newspaper
- ❖ Joint working on the best way to deal with committal applications for non-payment
- ❖ Joint working on serving bankruptcy notices in appropriate cases
- ❖ Investigating the provision of joint housing benefit legislation training (with the introduction of the new tax credits system)

4.0 **Financial Implications**

4.1 None at this time, although clearly they will be assessed as part of the best value review.

5.0 **Corporate Implications**

5.1 Financial Services impact upon almost every service area across the Council, and the outcome of this review should therefore, benefit the Authority overall.

6.0 **Community Implications**

6.1 None directly

7.0 **Background Papers**

None