

APPENDIX 1 - FINANCE SERVICES – BEST VALUE REVIEW

| KEY ISSUE | PROGRESS & WORK OUTSTANDING |
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| <p>REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE & COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Bringing the payment of undisputed invoices within 30 days to 100%. ❑ Analyse and review cost of services and produce updated benchmarking data. ❑ Liase with other councils regarding processing of transactions for creditors, debtors, payroll and insurance claims. | <p>Monitoring reports on creditor payment performance now on public folders and distributed to all staff other than Divisional Managers, so that relevant information is filtered to the right person. Performance did improve in the previous 12 months from 84% to 92%, although the Government target is now 100%!</p> <p>Work still required on getting behind where and why some invoices are delayed and giving the PI a higher profile within the authority.</p> <p>Costs have been broken down and analysed as part of the current Service Level Recharge/Budget process. No further comparison yet undertaken with the Derbyshire Benchmarking Club (update will be provided at the meeting).</p> <p>As part of reference site visits in connection with the replacement FMS, opportunities were undertaken to investigate how debtors and creditors are processed in other authorities. Staffing levels and the degree of centralisation were (surprisingly) similar at all 4 authorities to SDDC, although the introduction of a new FMS had provided a more effective way of working and released staff time for more pro-active work, for example, focusing on chasing and collecting debt.</p> <p>Have also contacted other authorities that are/have undertaken similar reviews to exchange information. Work still required on firming this up.</p> |
| <p>IMPROVING FINANCIAL (IT) SYSTEMS & REPORTING</p> | <p>Substantial progress made in selecting a replacement FMS, recommendation of preferred supplier imminent. Implementation by 1st July 2003 still on target.</p> |
| <p>CROSS CUTTING ISSUE – COMBINING DEBT COLLECTION</p> | <p>No progress to-date on this issue.</p> |

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| <p>REVIEW SCOPE FOR REDUCING INTEREST RATE ON FIXED EXTERNAL DEBT</p> <p>THE ROLE & SERVICES PROVIDED BY FINANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Developing the use of multi-skilling. □ Review contact points and investigate a "one-stop" approach to service provision. □ To develop a consistent level of advice from staff in Finance Services. □ Further consultation with service users on their specific requirements concerning financial information and support. □ Raising the general awareness of the role of FS, its staff services and processes. | <p>No progress to-date on this issue.</p> <p>Changes to roles and responsibilities, especially for Accountancy, are currently being drawn up to reflect the "1 Accountant to 1 Divisional Manager" scenario and to inject greater interchange between the 2 units of Accountancy and Exchequer. Firmer details to be worked on and reported after consulting on and testing proposals.</p> <p>Service users requirements for financial information to be pursued post FMS implementation.</p> <p>The mechanics of training for new employees as part of the induction process currently being pursued with Head of Personnel, as are training courses of "Finance for Non-Financial Managers"</p> |
| <p>EXPLORE OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE JOINT WORKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Build on links established with neighbouring authorities and explore potential for more joint working. □ Contact potential external service providers through an "open day" and obtain appropriate feedback | <p>A meeting of staff from SDDC & ESBC recently took place. Resolved to look further at Risk Management, Partial Exemption and other VAT issues, and to exchange final account timetables and procedures.</p> <p>Open day attended at Northwest Leicestershire DC to gauge feedback. Current private sector unlikely to be interested in this package of services. Consideration being given to "testing" market for all support services at the Council, including finance.</p> <p>Identification & work on future operation of "non-core" functions still to be undertaken.</p> |
| <p>REVIEW FINANCIAL PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTATION, CHECKS & BALANCES</p> | <p>No substantial progress made as yet. However, tenderers for the new FMS have all made provision early in their project implementation plan to work with and advise the Council on "business re-engineering" to go hand in hand with a new system. It is planned to take full advantage of this. Mechanics of corporate group to examine developments in financial procedures still to be undertaken.</p> |