
REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	16 OCTOBER 2003	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	OPEN:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CLLR R BELL (CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF THE SCORING SYSTEM FOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the Finance and Management Committee:

- receives this report
- adopts the revised scoring system for service development proposals and capital projects as detailed at Annexe A
- notes the intention of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to carry out a 'post implementation' review of the revised system after the 2004/5 budget round

2.0 Purpose Of Report

2.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- outline the results of a review of the scoring system for service developments and capital projects
- make recommendations to link the scoring system more closely to the Council's Key Aims and the community's priorities

3.0 Detail

Background to the Review

3.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee indicated its intention to carry out a review of the scoring system for new revenue and capital spending in a report made to this Committee on the 2003/2004 Budget proposals. (Minute No. FM/83 of 18 February 2003 refers).

3.2 The review was prompted by concerns about:

- the heavy weight placed in the scoring criteria on financial considerations (compared with the contribution that the proposal would make to the achievement of the Council's Key Aims and the community's priorities)
- the time spent by officers in compiling bids which stood little chance of success

3.3 The Committee discussed the scoring system on three occasions – 16 June, 30 September and 6 October, receiving helpful contributions from the Chief Finance Officer and the Financial Services Manager.

The present scoring system

3.3 The present scoring system has been in place since the 2001/2002 budget round. All bids for new service developments (revenue spending) and capital projects are made on a standard 'proforma'. A Member Panel 'scores' the bids against a number of set criteria and the results are submitted to the Service and Financial Planning Working Group. The Working Group then reviews the bids (including the scores) before making recommendations to this Committee.

3.4 Officers make bids in October/November each year and in June/July, if resources allow this. Members are also invited to make proposals in the context of their consideration of new Service Plans for the forthcoming year.

3.5 The table below summarises the current weightings attached to the scoring criteria:

	Revenue spending bids	Capital spending bids
Financing and External Support	50%	50%
Statutory requirement?	10%	0%
Contribution to national targets/initiatives	10%	10%
Contribution to Council's Key Aims	25%	30%
Contribution to Service Plans	5%	10%
Total	100%	100%

3.6 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee recognised that current system has a number of benefits – it is transparent, shows why some bids might not be successful and provides clear guidance to the Service and Financial Planning Working Group. However, members considered that too much emphasis was given in the scoring criteria to financial considerations at the expense of the Council's wider priorities as reflected in the Key Aims of the Corporate Plan.

The revised scoring system

3.7 With the help of officers, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee has developed a revised scoring system which gives more weight to Council priorities and which incorporates the new, important area of risk management. The revised system and explanatory notes are attached at Annexe A.

3.8 Members should note that proposals to review and roll forward the Corporate Plan may lead to changes in the list of primary and secondary Key Aims. The new Corporate Plan will now cover a three year period (in line with the reporting requirements of Circular 03/03) and provide clear guidance on Council priorities.

3.9 The table below summarises the new weightings attached to the scoring criteria

	Revenue spending bids	Capital spending bids
Council Priorities	48%	48%
Local and National Priorities	16%	16%
Risk Analysis	21%	18%
Financing and External Support	15%	18%
Total	100%	100%

3.10 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considers that these changes will help to ensure that the resources made available for service developments and capital projects are directed to Council priorities. However, it plans to review the operation of the system at the end of the budget round to confirm its relevance and effectiveness.

Other considerations

3.11 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee also had concerns about the amount of time spent by officers in compiling potentially unsuccessful bids. The Committee received reassurances that some bids were resubmissions from previous years and that the in house process provided a valuable check on the viability of proposals, especially if external funding was being sought.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 The Council has in place a system for scoring bids for service development and capital projects. It is important that Members continue to be involved in the scoring process and that policy committees take the opportunity when they consider Service Plans of identifying the bids they would like to be taken forward.

4.2 The proposed changes to the scoring system are intended to place more emphasis on the delivery of community priorities through the Council's Key Aims.

