

# **Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel**



**Date of Meeting: 11 February 2008**

# SCRUTINY



Epping Forest District Council

**Portfolio:** Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services (Councillor C. Whitbread)

**Subject:** Best Value Performance Plan 2008/09 – Summary Version

**Officer contact for further information:** S. Tautz (Ext 4180)

**Committee Secretary:** A. Hendry (Ext 4246)

---

## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the content of the Council's summary Best Value Performance Plan for 2008/09 be agreed; and**
- (2) That the Scrutiny Panel agree proposed arrangements for the consideration of the full version of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2008/09.**

## **Report:**

### **Background**

1. (Deputy Chief Executive) The Local Government Act 1999 and the Best Value regime require the Council to produce an annual performance plan. The Plan is required to:
  - (a) summarise the Council's successes in meeting its key priorities, objectives and targets for the current year;
  - (b) show where these priorities, objectives and targets were not met;
  - (c) inform customers of the Council's key priorities, objectives and targets for the forthcoming year; and
  - (d) compare the Council's performance for with that for previous years.
2. The Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) is traditionally produced in two versions each year. A detailed version of the Plan is prepared each June for the Audit Commission and other bodies involved in the evaluation of the Council's performance, which is also made available to those who desire a comprehensive explanation of the authority's plans and activities. In addition and in accordance with a best practice recommendation of the Audit Commission, a summary of the BVPP is also distributed to all households in the district within the explanatory leaflet issued with the annual Council Tax demands each March.
3. The statutory requirement to produce an annual BVPP has been revoked as part of the new performance framework for local government, set out in the 2007 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' White Paper. This will therefore be the last performance plan to be produced in the current form, although it will nevertheless be important for the Council to continue to publish information in regard to its priorities and performance, and this may in future be achieved through an expansion of the Annual Report.

## **Best Value Performance Plan – Summary Version**

4. The draft summary BVPP for 2008/09 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. In order to minimise costs and contain the summary within the Council Tax leaflet, the detail of the draft summary relates primarily to the achievement of the Council's main objectives for the current year and its targets for 2008/09. Fuller detail in relation to the Council's priorities, objectives, performance and improvement will be set out in the full version of the BVPP to be published in June 2008. The Scrutiny Panel is requested to consider and agree the draft summary BVPP.

## **Best Value Performance Plan – Full Version**

5. The full BVPP is required to be published by 30 June each year, and must be considered by the Cabinet and formally adopted by the Council. A draft version of the full BVPP has previously been considered by the Scrutiny Panel each April, although the consideration of the draft plan at this stage in the year has always meant that the reporting of outturn performance information and the achievement of other improvement actions for the year is unavoidably incomplete.

6. In order to address this issue and allow time for end of year performance details to be incorporated before members consider the BVPP and, as this is the last meeting of the Scrutiny Panel during the current year, it is proposed that for 2008/09 a complete version of the draft Plan be individually circulated for comment to all members of the Scrutiny Panel early in the new municipal year. If this approach is agreed, any issues raised by members on the proposed format, structure and content of the BVPP would be reported to the Cabinet when it considers the draft BVPP at its meeting in June 2008.

7. The Scrutiny Panel is requested to agree these arrangements for the consideration of the full version of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2008/09, which reflect those adopted for 2007/08.

### **Reason for decision:**

8. To enable the publication of summary performance information within the Council Tax demands to be issued in March 2008 in accordance with best practice identified by the Audit Commission, and to provide members with complete outturn performance and improvement information to enable full consideration of the BVPP.

### **Options considered and rejected:**

9. None. In previous years the summary BVPP had been hand-delivered, but for the last five years production costs have been reduced at the request of members to enable it to be contained within the Council Tax leaflet. The full BVPP is required to be published by 30 June each year, and must be formally adopted by the Council.

### **Consultation undertaken:**

10. All Directors contribute to the content of the summary and full versions of the BVPP. The draft summary BVPP has been agreed by the Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Management Board. The full BVPP will be considered by the Cabinet in June 2007.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget Provision:** The publication of the summary BVPP will be met from within existing Performance Management Unit budgets

**Personnel:** The publication of the summary BVPP will be met from within existing Performance Management Unit staff resources

**Land:** Nil

**Council Plan/BVPP Reference:** Council Plan Section 8 – ‘How We Measure Our Achievements’.

**Relevant Statutory Powers:** Local Government Act 1999

**Background Papers:** None

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** Nil

**Key Decision Reference (if required):** None