

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Report Reference: C/014/2007-08.**  
**Date of Meeting: 11 June 2007.**



**Portfolio:** Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

**Subject:** Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08.

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That a report be made to the Council at its meeting to be held on 28 June 2007, recommending that the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2007/08 be adopted; and
- (2) That the Joint Chief Executive (Resources) be authorised to amend the draft Best Value Performance Plan as necessary prior to its adoption by the Council, to incorporate outstanding details in relation to the Council's user satisfaction performance for 2006/07.

### **Report:**

1. The Local Government Act 1999 and the Best Value regime require all local authorities to publish an annual performance plan by no later than the end of June each year. The draft version of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2007/08 has been circulated separately to the Cabinet, and a copy placed in the Members' Room.

2. It will be noted that the draft BVPP reflects the portfolio structure of the authority that was in operation until the recent annual council meeting. Members are reminded that the BVPP is statutorily required to be formally adopted by the authority, and must therefore be considered at the meeting of the full Council to be held on 28 June 2007. The adoption of the BVPP is additionally a matter reserved to the Council by its constitution.

3. The requirement to prepare an annual performance plan provides an opportunity for authorities to articulate proposals for improvement in the coming year, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. BVPPs are required to:

- (a) summarise the Council's successes in meeting its key priorities, objectives and targets for the last year (2006/07);
- (b) show where these priorities, objectives and targets were not met; and
- (c) detail key priorities, objectives and targets for the forthcoming year (2007/08).

4. The BVPP is produced in two versions each year. The detailed version subject of this report is primarily prepared for the Council itself, the Government, the Audit Commission, and other bodies involved in the evaluation and assessment of performance. It is intended that the audience for performance plans should be primarily the authority itself, as members and officers with responsibility for delivering local services need to be aware of priorities in order to influence improvement measures. However, the detailed BVPP is also available to those who require a comprehensive explanation of how well the Council is performing and its future plans. In addition and in accordance with a recommendation of the Audit Commission, a

summary of the BVPP is distributed to all households in the district within the explanatory leaflet issued with the annual Council Tax demands in March each year. The summary version of the BVPP issued in March 2007 also reflected the previous portfolio structure of the authority, and was agreed by the Cabinet on 19 February 2007.

5. The Department of Communities and Local Government issues guidance to local authorities on the content of BVPPs, stipulating what matters should be included. In recent years the Government has focused on improvement and performance as its main priorities, and has given authorities classified by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process as either 'Excellent' or 'Good', freedom from BVPP reporting in as much detail as originally necessary. BVPPs are required to concentrate on improvement planning and how weaknesses will be addressed, and to demonstrate improvement proposals for the coming year. In accordance with the Government's approach to deregulation, it is no longer necessary to publish information in performance plans that can be obtained from other sources and, as a result, the following no longer need to be published in the BVPP:

- CPA scores (where available);
- Summary financial information;
- Progress in implementing improvement measures over the past three years (e.g. Best Value Reviews);
- Progress against Local Public Service Agreements (now known as Local Area Agreements);
- Details of the way in which the Council exercises its functions.
- The five-year programme of Best Value Service Reviews;
- An efficiency summary or consultation statement;
- Historical, quartile and other comparative data on Best Value Performance Indicators; and
- Local Performance Indicator data.

6. However, local authorities may choose to include any, or all of this information in their plans if they consider that it helps improve understanding of improvement proposals, or their context. With the exception of CPA scores and the efficiency summary, the majority of these matters have traditionally been included in the Council's BVPP.

7. To reduce the overall length of the BVPP, the majority of the detail not now statutorily required has been transferred to the Council Plan for 2006 to 2010. However, areas such as the Council's CPA score and improvement proposals, and Local Performance Indicator (LPI) data have continued to be detailed in the BVPP. Although not required to be included, it is considered appropriate to continue to incorporate these matters and historical, quartile and other comparative data on Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) within the BVPP, as these details are an essential part of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

8. Annual BVPPs are required to include details of outturn performance over the past year for all BVPIs, and to include targets for the forthcoming year and subsequent two years. Although these details are provided within the draft BVPP for the majority of BVPIs and LPIs, the results of number of indicators related to customer satisfaction are currently awaited from research agencies that have recently conducted surveys on behalf of the Council, and it has not therefore been possible to include performance outturns for these indicators. These outstanding details will be incorporated within the BVPP prior to the consideration of the draft plan by the Council.

9. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft BVPP for 2007/08, to recommend to the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2007 that the Plan be adopted, and to authorise the Joint Chief Executive (Resources) to amend the draft document as necessary prior to its adoption by the Council, to incorporate the information currently outstanding in relation to user satisfaction. The draft BVPP has been circulated to all members of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which has not yet met during the 2007/08 municipal year, and any comments received from members of the Scrutiny Panel will

be reported to the Cabinet meeting.

**Statement in Support of Recommended Action:**

10. The agreement of the recommended action will enable the publication of the BVPP to meet the prescribed timescale. Failure to adopt and publish the BVPP by 30 June 2007 will result in the qualification of the Plan by the Audit Commission.

**Other Options for Action:**

11. No other options are available in this respect. The Council is statutorily required to publish its BVPP for 2007/08 by 30 June 2007. Adoption of the BVPP is a matter reserved to the Council, which is not currently scheduled to meet again in order to meet this deadline.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

12. The draft BVPP for 2007/08 was issued to all members of the Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel immediately following the annual council meeting on 17 May 2007. The format and content of the draft BVPP for 2007/08 has been subject to consultation with Management Board and all Heads of Service.

**Resource Implications:**

**Budget Provision:** Publication of the BVPP can be met from the budget provision of the Performance Management Unit for 2007/08.

**Personnel:** Publication of the BVPP can be met from the staff provision of the Performance Management Unit for 2007/08.

**Land:** Nil.

**Council Plan/BVPP Reference:** Council Plan 2006-2010 Section 8 – ‘How we Measure Our Achievements’.

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

**Background Papers:** Nil.

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

**Key Decision Reference (if required):** Forward Plan - Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.