
REPORT TO:	Overview Organisation and Improvement Scrutiny Commission
DATE:	16th April 2007
DEPARTMENT:	Harrogate International Centre (HIC) Department of Development Services (DDS)
REPORTING OFFICER:	Stuart Quin (<i>Director, HIC</i>) Nigel Avison (<i>Head of Property and Economic Development, DDS</i>)
SUBJECT:	BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
FORWARD PLAN REF:	N/A

1.0

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report is to update the Commission on progress of one of the strategic cross-cutting Best Value Service Reviews, initiated by the Council in 2001 and suggests how further development of individual activities should be reported and monitored in the future.

2.0

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That the report be received.
- 2.2 That the progress made on individual elements of activities be noted (as per Appendix 1).
- 2.3 That the officer group on this project be formally disbanded.
- 2.4 That, in the future, progress on the issues which comprise this review be monitored and developed through the relevant portfolio holder and co-ordinated through the regular monitoring and review of the Council's Strategic and individual Service Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASON/S FOR DECISIONS

3.1 In order to ensure that there is a clear and explicitly agreed method of assessing progress and handling reviews of the discrete activities which comprise this review.

3.2 To bring the position into line with the revised council approach in co-ordinating progress reports on its services and agreed actions.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

4.1 **To continue with the current management and monitoring approach** This is rejected because it involves duplication of effort and is expensive in time and organisation. It would, therefore, hamper progress in other areas of work, when there is a more efficient means of ensuring adequate management and review, particularly through the Strategic Plan monitoring undertaken in the Department of Corporate Policy and Improvement.

4.2 **To take no action** This is rejected because there needs to be a clear audit trail on how the on-going activities are being managed and progressed.

5.0 BACKGROUND

5.1 **The Best Value Review of the Local Economy** This was a strategic cross-cutting review which the Council embarked on 5 years ago in 2001 as part of its formal, agreed programme in responding to statutory obligations to review service performance. The Review was developed on the notion that all Council services that had a significant bearing on the local economy should be considered as a composite joined-up approach.

The Review was conducted by a number of officers across the departments who reported to the Scrutiny Steering Group consisting of members and selected members of the Economic Development Forum, local business community and other related stakeholders. The Review was the subject of two detailed external inspections.

5.2 Since then of course, the Government has changed its approach to oversight of service performance through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Framework and these earlier Best Value reviews are no longer appropriate. Instead, delivery of Best Value is part of the duty on all Councils to seek to continually improve services in a joined-up way in line with its local priorities in the Council's Strategic and Corporate Improvement Plans (2005 to 2008) with external audit and assessment provided by the Audit Commission through the CPA process.

6.0 PROGRESS ON THE REVIEW

6.1 The table attached as Appendix 1 has been used as the core reference to both the composition of the Review, and it's progress.

6.2 The table has been updated to represent the current position as of April 2007 and it can be seen that much has been achieved. Those items which are still on-going are now tracked as part of relevant service and departmental plans.

7.0 RECONFIGURING MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

7.1 The methodology for managing and monitoring described in item 5 above, was extremely expensive in officer (and stakeholder) time and, whilst there were clear benefits realisable from this co-ordinated approach, the evolution of best value into a more strategic high level assessment of the council's performance and "corporateness" offers a clear opportunity to shift this process into what are more efficient management structures.

The view is taken therefore that the Best Value Service Review Officer Group should be disbanded, and that the relevant Departmental and Service Plans specifically identify the individual projects which are then monitored by the Portfolio holder. A joined-up approach is achieved by the Corporate Plan and the monitoring of key priority actions – a mechanism with which it is assumed Members are familiar.

Background Papers -

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SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

		Implications are		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
A	Economy	✓		
B	Environment	✓		
C	Social Equity			
i)	General	✓		
ii)	Customer Care / People with Disabilities	✓		
iii)	Health Implications			
D	Crime and Disorder Implications		✓	

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable.