

1. SUMMARY

As members will be aware, a robust approach to self assessment is now a prerequisite for Councils to address service and organisational improvement and will be required to meet the criteria of a Best Value 2 (BV2) audit. In order to continue to increase the pace of change in the Council's improvement journey, this paper presents a recommended route for the Council to take forward the Public sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) as the preferred method of self assessment, as agreed by SMT on 14th October.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. Notes that the SMT has agreed to sign up to PSIF as the Council's preferred self assessment tool.
2. Agrees to member involvement in the Corporate Assessment process through the Senior Members and Officers Group (SMOG).

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 As a result of the Crerar review in 2007, which recognised the disproportionate burden of inspection, regulation and audit on Councils, self assessment by public sector organisations is now recognised as core process in ensuring continuous improvement and best value in delivering services. The process of self assessment uses a series of targeted questions that are asked of the service or organisation by trained individuals with the results then being assessed and fed into a plan for improving the service or organisation.
- 3.2 Self assessment processes have been taking place in individual services across the Council as part of audit inspections from SWIA, HMIE and the Housing Regulator. The Council has responded well to these assessments, demonstrating a capacity amongst services to develop and implement the skills required to carry out critical analyses of service provision. In all cases, the process of self assessment has resulted in a positive approach to changing and improving the services concerned.
- 3.3 PSIF is currently the preferred method of self assessment for the majority of Scottish Councils. Co-ordinated by the Improvement Service, PSIF is currently being mapped to HMIE and SWIA self assessment procedures.
- 3.4 Recognising the importance of introducing the self assessment process to senior officers across the Council, the Improvement Service was invited to undertake an initial exercise on self assessment, using PSIF, at the recent

Chief Officers and Senior Officers (COSO) meeting in August 2009. This highlighted a number of issues for the Council that would be improved by implementation of self assessment. Feedback from officers attending the day was very positive, highlighting the PSIF exercise as a most useful and informative session and there was a desire to continue to develop the approach. Following this, SMT agreed on 14th September to proceed with PSIF as the preferred self assessment tool.

- 3.5** Implementation of PSIF across the Council is a significant task, but one which complements the improvement changes that are already taking place. It is also clear that several services already have experience of successful self assessment. A project plan is being developed that would establish an initial process of training and the initiation of a 'corporate assessment'.
- 3.6** The corporate assessment process involves the Strategic Management Team and can also involve elected members. It is recommended that the Executive agree to the Senior Members and Officers Group (SMOG) being the group which undertakes the Corporate Assessment process. This will enable elected members and senior officers to work jointly on the improvement agenda through PSIF.
- 3.7** The initial project plan for the introduction of PSIF indicates a total additional cost of £12,040. This includes training, 'e' tool and the corporate assessment. 2 core staff will be identified from the Chief Executive's Unit. These core staff will work with staff identified by Directors from throughout services. These staff will receive training to carry out the self assessment process and form part of the wider PSIF team. The PSIF team will have a senior officer identified as sponsor and board level management of the PSIF project would lie with the SMT.
- 3.8** Following the Corporate Assessment of the Council for PSIF, 2 services will be identified as pilots, one which has experience of self assessment and one which does not. It is recommended that the service with self assessment experience is from Community Services.

4. IMPLICATIONS

FINANCIAL	£12,040 to purchase the required training and tools (from existing budgets)
PERSONNEL	Training and support will be given to all personnel involved in the self assessment process.
EQUALITIES	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out on the project.
POLICY	None

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