

Best Value 2

1. Summary

1.1. The following report informs the Audit Committee on the implications for the Council presented by BV2

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Audit Committee :

- Note the progress being made by the Council in preparation for BV2

3. Detail

3.1. Background

3.1.1. The Accounts Commission published a consultation paper on BV2 in May 2009. This identified the proposed characteristics of a BV2 and sought views on the proposals. These characteristics are:

- Vision and Strategic Direction
- Partnership Working and Community Leadership
- Community Engagement
- Governance and Accountability
- Performance Management and Improvement
- Use of Resources

3.1.2. Following the consultation process, the Accounts Commission identified 5 pathfinder BV2 Councils: Highland, Borders, East Ayrshire, Dundee and Angus. These Councils are currently undergoing an assessment and review process against the BV2 criteria. The findings of this process are being collated and will form the basis for guidance and implementation of the full BV2 assessment process. This includes the preparation of a series of toolkits for Councils to use in the BV2 process.

3.1.3. The Audit Scotland Progress Report in December 2008 stated that the Council would continue to be monitored and consideration given to whether it would be appropriate to revisit the Council at an early stage in Best Value 2.

3.1.4. As reported at Agenda Item 3, Grant Thornton has issued a further Best Value Progress Report on the Council. This provides a positive framework for the Council to move forward on, recognising a significant improvement and increased pace of change and reform to meet best value expectations.

3.2. Preparation for BV2

3.2.1. The Council identified in its January 2009 Improvement Plan a series of improvement actions to carry out over the 2009/10 period. These actions were informed by progress towards BV2 and put the tools in place for the Council to meet the targets set by BV2.

3.2.2. A key element to BV2, as set out in the Crerar review, is the implementation of a robust approach to self assessment. The Council has moved forward on this, agreeing in October 2009 that the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) be the mechanism adopted to undertake self assessment and that SMOG and SMT be the appropriate bodies for the initial corporate assessment to be undertaken. A project implementation plan for PSIF is currently being prepared. The corporate self-assessment will be carried out in March 2010 when the new management team is appointed.

3.2.3. Joint scrutiny risk assessments are a new feature of BV2 and will be carried out by the different scrutiny bodies that audit the Council working together. Officers of the Council are currently gathering information to analyse as the first stage in the Council's own risk assessment.

3.2.4. Officers are also carrying out a gap analysis based on the BV2 criteria, including analysis of the toolkits that have been developed as part of the BV2 pathfinder process.

3.2.5. A paper is being prepared for the Council's Strategic Management Team to establish a senior level group to coordinate the preparation for BV2.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The Council has made good progress in preparing for BV2 and is undertaking further analysis on the basis of information available to ensure that all the criteria will be met and that the Council is well prepared for a BV2 assessment.

5. Implications

5.1. Legal

The Council has a legal responsibility to comply with the best value requirements set out in the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.

5.2. Financial	None
5.3. Personnel	The personnel resources required for the audit process will be identified once the guidance is developed in more detail.
5.4. Equal Opportunities	None
5.5. Policy	None

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