

BEST VALUE FOLLOW UP REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The external auditor has recently completed a Best Value follow up review. The report is positive about the Council's progress and notes the challenges facing the Council. There are 2 action points.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members note the outcome of the Best Value Follow Up Review in particular the positive comments on progress made by the Council.
- 2.2 Members note that the action plan points are being addressed and will be monitored by the Audit Committee.

3 DETAIL

- 3.1 Grant Thornton the Council's external auditors carry out an annual follow up review of Best Value. The review this year has also been influenced by the Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) which was reported to the Executive in August
- 3.2 The overall conclusion are positive highlighting:
- Significant and rapid improvement since June 2008
 - The key building blocks for future improvement are now being embedded
 - The new management team are showing the necessary leadership, enthusiasm and commitment to embed a performance culture
 - Work is underway to deliver outcome based performance measures and simplify and strengthen links to the Corporate Plan and SOA.
 - The budget consultation approach has been a positive development.
- 3.3 There are a number of challenges facing the Council:
- The financial challenges facing the Council and all other public sector bodies is noted
 - The Council could do more to ensure citizens are well informed about its performance.
 - Whilst more SPIs have improved by 5% than declined by 5%

there are still some areas of performance the Council needs to improve.

- Although the Council has lower absence rates than most other Councils there was an increase in absence in 2009/10

3.4 There are 2 action points in the report and these are already being addressed:

1. The Council must move to outcome-based performance measures and ensure that there are clear links between the Corporate Plan and SOA. Use of the outcome indicators developed by the Improvement Service will allow the Council to take advantage of benchmarking opportunities.
2. The Council should document its corporate framework for evaluating budget savings options to ensure they fully reflect corporate priorities.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The report is positive about the Councils approach on progress. More challenges and action points have been identified. The Council is aware of these and is already taking action.

Sally Loudon
Chief Executive