

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
BEST VALUE WORKING GROUP

held at the Council House, Walsall, on  
Friday 14 May 2004,  
at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Sanders (Chairman)  
Councillor Anson  
Councillor Turner

Officers:

Mr. S. Chapman – scrutiny and best value officer  
Mr. F. Powell – constitutional services officer

APOLOGY

An apology for non-attendance at this meeting was submitted on behalf of Mrs. Helen Dudson – scrutiny and best value officer.

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2004

The working group approved, as a correct record, the notes of the meeting held on 16 April 2004.

SUMMARY OF BEST VALUE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS  
HELD DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2003/04

A briefing paper by the scrutiny and best value officer was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The working group thanked officers for this report and expressed the view that the investigations undertaken by this working group should continue and that a small working group was a suitable vehicle for continuing the work of scrutiny.

## Decision

That the contents of the paper setting out the summary of meetings of the best value working group held during the municipal year 2003/04 be noted.

### ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ON THE COST OF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

A briefing paper prepared by Helen Dudson and Steve Chapman was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members were advised that a meeting was held on 4 May 2004, between Steve Chapman, Helen Dudson and Simon Corden of the E-Government Team to discuss electronic systems for the collection of information on the cost of performance reviews as requested by members at their previous meeting on 16 April 2004.

The working group was advised that there were several ways of collecting data electronically, but that each method would only cover part of the information which was believed to be required by members.

The working group was informed that currently there was no best model practice available on the electronic system for the collection of information on the cost of best value reviews and that contact with other Local Authorities on this matter had revealed no additional data. At the present time, it was suggested that advice be sought from both internal and external audit and that it was important for officers to confirm with members the reasons and purpose for this activity so it would be possible to have a system which best meets members requirements before research costs increased.

The best value and scrutiny officer (Mr. S. Chapman) requested confirmation from members on the matter of costs of best value reviews and the working group was asked a series of questions which were relevant to this matter:-

- What information do members want collected, e.g. costs of officer time etc. or savings on before and after costs of service provision?
- Will this add value to the process?
- How would it benefit best value reviews?

- Is this to be a one-off or run on every best value review?
- Such a system would have implications on the way in which best values would have to be managed.

At this point in the meeting, the best value matrix document was circulated to the working group and was considered in the light of the information relating to best value review costs.

The working group was advised that there could be significant funding implications for some of the electronic systems for collection of information on the costs of performance reviews and that, because of this, it would be appropriate for any recommendations on this matter to be considered by the resources, performance management and best value scrutiny and performance panel.

The working group noted this information, together with the fact that it would be unlikely that there would be another meeting of the panel in this municipal year and, accordingly, decided to defer consideration of the matter to its successor working group.

#### Decision

That, given the cost implication for the use of electronic systems for the recording of best value reviews costs consideration of this matter be deferred to the working groups successor body.

### PERFORMANCE PLAN – UPDATE

Members received a brief presentation from the best value and scrutiny officer, Steve Chapman.

Members were advised that the performance plan update document would be considered by Cabinet in May 2004 and the document would have to be published by 30 June 2004.

#### Decision

The working group noted the information on the best value performance plan.

### BEST VALUE REVIEW MATRIX

At this point in the meeting, members were provided with a copy of the draft best value review matrix for the municipal year 2004/2005.

Members were advised that this matrix had not yet been considered by the Council's executive management team.

#### Decision

The working group noted the verbal information on the draft matrix and that it would, in due course, be considered by the executive management team.

### THANKS OF CHAIRMAN

At this point in the meeting, the Chairman requested that the thanks of the working group be forwarded to all officers who had participated in its work over the last year.

### TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....