

Cheltenham Borough Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Social and Community) - 3rd October 2002

Progress on Best Value Review Improvement Plans

Report of the Best Value Manager

1 Summary and recommendation

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on progress with the improvement plans arising from the best value reviews as at September 2002.
- 1.2 I therefore recommend that the actions taken to date be approved.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Social and Community Committee with an update on progress with the implementation of the improvement plans that were agreed and approved as a result of the best value reviews carried out over the last three years. The intention is that this report will not only enable members to consider the progress made to date, but will enable members to have the opportunity to question relevant officers should they wish to do so.
- 2.2 **Please note: if members wish to question officers about specific actions outlined in this report, could they please notify the Best Value Manager before the meeting so that arrangements can be made for the officer to attend.**

3 Background

- 3.1 To date, sixteen best value reviews have been undertaken. The progress achieved against the resulting improvement plans will be considered by the respective overview and scrutiny committees. They are therefore split as follows:

	Completed
Environment	
Engineering	1999/2000 - pilot
Development Services	2000/2001
Operational Services Support	2000/2001
Protecting Our Environment	2002/2003 - due to start
Social and Community	
Homelessness	1999/2000 - pilot
Art Gallery and Museum	2000/2001

Managing Council Housing	2001/2002 - update 9/9/02
Crime and Disorder	2001/2002
Funding of External Bodies	2001/2002 - sub-group
Sports Facilities and Development	2001/2002 - not complete

Economy and Business Improvement

Audit and Assurance	1999/2000 - pilot
Complaints & Customer Services	1999/2000 - pilot
Legal Services	1999/2000
Property Services	2000/2001
Festivals and Entertainments	2000/2001
Central Support	2000/2001
Effective Communications	2001/2002
Exchequer Services	2002/2003 - due to start
Elections & Civic Administration	2002/2003 - due to start

3.2 Attached to this report is a table which outlines the recommendations made in respect of the art gallery and museum, the officers responsible for implementing the recommendations and the target implementation dates. Progress against each action is shown in the right-hand column against the respective action. Please note that the titles of some of the responsible officers will have changed under the re-structure.

3.3 It should be noted that the 2002/2003 reviews are shown above for information purposes only. These are due to start and it is unlikely that a report and improvement plan will be available before next year. A further exception includes the review of Managing Council Housing, since the committee received an update on the implementation of the improvement plan at their meeting on the 9th September 2002.

4 Implications

Financial

Legal

Personnel

**Equal opportunities, social
justice and anti-poverty**

Environmental

Health and safety

Background papers

Contact officer

Accountability

Best value review reports and supporting papers
 Nick Hatton, Best Value Manager, 01242 775035,
 NicholasH@Cheltenham.gov.uk
 Duncan Smith
 Social & Community

Recommendation	Target Date/ Responsible Officer	Progress to Date 08/02
1. Request capital budget provision to take forward the plan for the smaller scale development of the Art Gallery & Museum, to meet the needs identified by the review in the areas of education, special exhibitions, storage and circulation/access.	For 2001/02 financial year. Head of Service.	Completed.
2. Request capital budget provision for urgent works to improve the physical condition of storage areas and facilitate public access to the collections housed in them - essential works which cannot wait to be resolved as part of the larger development scheme	For 2001/02 financial year. Head of Service.	The balance of the funding will be spent within the current financial year. Action point otherwise complete.
3. Request revenue budget provision to improve and re-launch the outreach loans service.	For 2001/02 financial year. Head of Service.	Outreach loans service renamed 'Museum Take-away' fully launched from September 2002.
4. Request revenue budget provision for urgent conservation work to those parts of the collections that have deteriorated, or are at risk of deteriorating, as a consequence of being housed in inadequate conditions - e.g. the playbills collection, the ethnography collection and the edged weapons.	For 2001/02 financial year. Head of Service.	Conservation audit of reserve collections carried out identifying priorities for the future. <i>Action points 2,3 and 4 have led to substantial improvements in respective areas.</i> [italicised and paragraphed as refers to points 2,3 and 4]
5. Conduct a 'visioning' exercise with key stakeholders, to develop a five year vision for the Art Gallery & Museum service.	Dec 2001. Head of Service.	To feed into service planning and staff training sessions in Autumn 2002. Philosophical underpinnings have fed into structural review.

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6. Continue to work with the Exeter group of authorities, and others, to explore in greater depth areas of comparative deficiency identified during the review - e.g. in marketing, education visits and the management of collections.	Dec 2001. Head of Service.	First session held 26 th September 2001 on care of collections, research enquiries, education & outreach. Second session held on 17 th May 2002 on marketing and exhibitions. All participants found both very worthwhile, discussing ways we might all improve the way we do things. A third session is planned.
7. Review staffing structure and skills mix to ensure that it is suitable to maximise the potential of the new development.	May 2002. Head of Service.	Action point completed with two successful sessions for all staff: May: Working smarter rather than harder. June: How to get others to buy into what we do.
	Autumn 2002	Broad structure anticipated August 2002. Full restructure to be completed by October 2002.
8. Obtain planning permission for the development plan of the AG&M.	March 2002. Head of Service.	Planning application actually submitted June 2002. To be considered Autumn 2002 depending on when English Heritage's advice is received.
	2002-2003. (Stage 1 application to HLF).	Expectations that funding might be found to carry process forward to 2002-2003 have not come to fruition. Funding gap until council makes budget decisions in February 2003.

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9. Make an application for the Charter Mark award in line with the corporate directive.	Sept 2002. Head of Service.	Some preparatory work undertaken but work on hold pending Council restructure and place of service within that structure.
10. Monitor any developments on the issue of trust status - e.g. with Festivals & Entertainments - should such developments indicate that it will become a feasible means of future service provision.	Present to 2006. Assistant Director Health & Wellbeing.	Further developments will be monitored.
11. Continue to monitor Gloucestershire County Council's plans for developing the library service in Cheltenham, should these plans have an impact upon the AG&M.	Present to 2006. Assistant Director Health & Wellbeing.	No action on moving anticipated for some time, as County have just invested heavily in refurbishing the premises. Quarterly meetings held with the County Library Service to maintain overview and pursue cross-sectoral opportunities. High level meeting held with County on Feb 27 th 2002. Further developments will be monitored and reported.
12. Review progress against the various action points in this plan on a bi-annual basis, starting in June 2001.	From June 2001. Assistant Director Health & Wellbeing.	Last meeting held 24 th July 2002 (G Breeze, R Levett and P Wilson).

