

Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee – 2008/09 programme

v.17 February 2009

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Item	Objectives / notes	Action / timescale
Standing items		
Quarterly Performance Monitoring reports against the Council Plan.	These reports provide a summary of the Council’s performance for the parts of the Council within the committee’s terms of reference. Key service targets assessed as red or amber are included in the report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber (where there is concern about the likelihood of achieving the performance measure by the end of the year) together with recommendations for action • Red (where the performance measure is assessed as inappropriate or unachievable). 	All meetings from November 2008
Forward Plan	A <i>snapshot</i> of the Council’s Forward Plan is appended to each committee agenda. The purpose is to enable members to identify and highlight relevant issues for scrutiny. Options for dealing with items identified include: briefing paper, items on scrutiny committee agenda; more in depth scrutiny review.	All Meetings / Democratic Services
Reconciling policy and resources (RPR)	12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee established a RPR Board. Draft Council Plan policy steers were endorsed by the committee which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questioned whether any revisions or clarifications to policy steers were needed as a result of the economic downturn. • questioned whether the Council should establish area forums (in response to the section of the report on the national and local policy context); such a step may encourage greater involvement of local people and could enable ward budgets to target small locally-needed issues with minimal 	September – March (annual)

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	bureaucracy.	
Audit functions		
Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan	Sets out the internal audit strategy, including key themes and detailed coverage across departments for the year ahead.	June (annual)
Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion	Gives an overall opinion on the Council's framework of internal control; summarises key audit findings and performance against key indicators.	June (annual)
Internal Audit Progress Reports	<p>These summarise quarterly key audit findings, highlight significant control issues and report on delivery of the audit plan and internal audit services' performance against performance indicators.</p> <p>Reports include comments on sharing information from internal audit progress reports with other scrutiny review boards and committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 March 2008: Committee requested report back on building maintenance action plan. • 10 March 2008: Building maintenance contractors in schools: Committee requested a report on the new corporate policy to be in place by April 2008. • 12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested report on addressing weaknesses for ESCC and Serco SAP transport process and use of consultants. 	All meetings (quarterly)
Annual Audit and Inspection Plan	<p>Sets out audit and inspection work to be carried out by Council's external auditors. From 2007/08 PKF are the external auditors.</p> <p>19 June 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee wished to be kept abreast of the following 'areas for improvement':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a focus on the improvement programme in adult social care services • Increasing efforts to persuade the waste collection authorities to agree a county-wide waste strategy • Reconsidering how the County Council can deliver an improved transport infrastructure, including energising partners to look for innovative solutions to rural transport matters 	<p>June (annual)</p> <p>Progress to be incorporated into quarterly Council Plan monitoring reports</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the council's approach to equality and diversity. 	
Annual Governance Report	<p>Sets out the external auditors' conclusions from their audit of the accounts and the <i>Use of Resources</i> element of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).</p> <p>12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested updates on investigations into two objections to the Accounts relating to Eastbourne parking and the Waste PFI.</p> <p>[October 2008: the external auditors, PKF, determined that the two objections relate to of use of resources/value for money rather than correctness of accounting procedures and consequently do not impact on their unqualified opinion; the Council's 2007/08 Accounts have been signed off. Investigations into the two concerns are ongoing and will be reported when complete]</p>	September (annual)
Audit and Inspection Annual Letter	Sets out the Relationship Manager's overall view of the Council's performance, including the CPA Direction of Travel Assessment, overall CPA scores and results of assessments and inspections by other bodies e.g. Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Ofsted.	March (annual)
Risk Management Annual report	<p>Provides: an assessment of the adequacy of risk management arrangements; planned improvements for the year ahead; and an update on the strategic risk log.</p> <p>19 June 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested future cross referencing between the risk management log and internal audit plan to ensure consistency of information being provided.</p>	June (annual)
Strategic risk monitoring log	Provides a chief officer view of the strategic risks facing the authority.	All meetings
Monitoring Officer's Annual Review of Governance	<p>Sets out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and includes an improvement plan for the coming year, and the corporate assurance statement which will form part of the statement of accounts.</p> <p>12 June 07: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Governance Committee that the improvement plan for the Corporate Governance Framework should include reference to diversity and the progress made to date to improve the Council's performance in this area.</p>	June (annual)

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The Council's Statement of Accounts	Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee has a responsibility to review the accounts prior to approval by the Governance Committee.	September (annual)
Anti Fraud & Corruption Strategy	10 March 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee considered developments in anti fraud and corruption work, the outcomes of a self assessment against CIPFA's "Managing the Risk of Fraud" and noted the revised anti fraud and corruption strategy before being approved by Governance Committee.	No further action.
Best value and scrutiny reviews		
Scrutiny review of council procurement and local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)	<p>19 June 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee established a scrutiny review of "Council procurement and local SMEs". The project board comprises Cllrs Tutt (Chairman), Ensor, Gadd and Whetstone.</p> <p>The Board is examining the extent to which the Council's procurement processes offer 'a level playing field' to local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who wish to access contract opportunities with the Council.</p>	<p>Paul Dean (Project Manager)</p> <p>Interim report - Mar 09</p> <p>Final report – July 09</p>
Best Value Review of a Strategy for a Joint Waste Authority	<p>This review was reported to: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee on 29 November 2006; Cabinet on 30 January 2007; and County Council on 20 February 2007. Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee endorsed the review's recommendations, viz. that all local authorities in East Sussex should (1) continue to work towards closer and better working relationships, potentially including Brighton and Hove, and for that purpose create appropriate formal agreements, and (2) explore the creation of a consortium of all the authorities.</p> <p>19 June 2007: Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a draft Municipal Waste Management Strategy and recommended adoption with an annual review of action plans and a five year review, together with all the district and borough councils, of the headline strategy and supporting annexes.</p> <p>Monitoring reports to T&E Scrutiny Committee: Nov 2007 and June 2008.</p>	Complete
Scrutiny review of the County Council's	This cross cutting scrutiny review was managed by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Sparks represented the Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee on the Review Board. It	Claire Lee

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relationship with the voluntary and community sector (VCS)	<p>reported to Cabinet 3 June 2008 and County Council on 22 July 2008.</p> <p>Some of the key outcomes of the review were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear guidance on establishing the East Sussex LINK (Local Involvement Network) • improved sharing of bidding and other expertise between the County Council and VCS • alignment of statutory sector funding streams to facilitate access by the VCS • improved guidance for council officers and flexible procurement processes to benefit smaller VCOs • a recommendation that the County Council cease Member nominations to VCOs based on funding requirements, and encourage voluntary relationships with local VCOs and VCS 'infrastructure' organisations instead; Members to be provided with a concise 'signposting' resource. 	<p>(Project Manager)</p> <p>Monitoring reports to Community Services Scrutiny Committee: Nov 08 / June 09.</p>
Executive Best Value Review of Passenger Transport	<p>This review was undertaken by an Executive member board with the opportunity for scrutiny members to provide evidence at key stages. The Board comprised Cllrs Tony Reid (Chairman), Keith Glazier and Matthew Lock. The Board reviewed the impact on key council policies on passenger transport provision; assessing ways of increasing efficiency and maximising income wherever possible. In particular it is addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the sustainability of rural bus services and alternatives including community transport • specific areas of high spend including home to school transport , special education needs and social care transport • a range of organisational issues and relationships between departments responsible for commissioning and providing passenger transport. <p>Reports to Cabinet/scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 30 January 2007 / 5 June 2007 – Cabinet agreed denominational home to school transport policy ▪ 5 June 2007 – Cabinet: mileage allowances for non statutory home to school transport journeys <p>24 September 2007: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee commented on:</p>	Complete

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ need to set a timescale for the agreement of the SLAs between Transport and Environment and Children's Services/Adult Social Care ▪ that a single taxi <i>contract</i> is preferred to attempting to contract with a <i>single provider</i>; a single contract should include all taxi providers who contract with the Council. <p>25 September 2007: Cabinet endorsed the report.</p> <p>14 October 2008: Best Value Review Board reconvened to monitor the recommendations. Agreed to commission and Bus Strategy and Community Transport Strategy.</p>	
Other scrutiny issues		
Local handling of complaints about Member conduct	<p>The Annual Report for standards complaints will contain the following elements to be reviews by the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ complaints received and outcomes of initial assessments ▪ action taken and lessons learnt ▪ actual costs to the Council, trends and anticipated future costs. 	June (annual)
Economic development	<p>12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested a relationship map of all interested organisations. A presentation by the Head of Strategic Economic Development and Skills on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Context – Council Policy Steer, recognised economic underperformance etc ▪ Nature of the East Sussex economy – evidence base ▪ Role of ESCC and the Council priorities ▪ Wider national context e.g. Sub National Review. 	Complete
Carbon Management Annual Report	<p>In 2004/05 East Sussex County Council took part in the local authority carbon management pilot programme run by the Carbon Trust. Cabinet approved the resulting Carbon Management Action Plan on 19 April 2005 and agreed that an annual report be submitted to the Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee to review progress against the plan. The action plan contains a target to</p>	June (annual)

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	reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 14% by 2009/10 compared to 2001/02.	
Age Well Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	November 2006: Committee requested update report to a future meeting.	Mar 09
Planning School Places	21 November 2007: Committee noted progress and referred concerns about changes to the way funding for special educational needs pupils occurs. [Children's Services Scrutiny Committee included this issue in its work programme]	Complete
Business Transformation Programme (Adult Social Care)	21 November 2007: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee welcomed progress and requested quarterly updates to committee Members. The programme is to reach a conclusion in November 2008. Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee is considering the final report on 27 November to which Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee Members are invited.	Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 27 Nov 08
Capital projects – improving delivery	12 June 2007: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested post implementation reviews conducted on property projects and lessons to be learned from review findings. 21 November 2007: Committee endorsed proposals to improve delivery of capital projects and requested future progress reports. 12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee requested a tour of recent projects.	Complete
Corporate Sustainable Buildings Policy & Strategy	12 September 2008: Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee noted the policy and measure for implementation.	Complete

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