

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education and Libraries**

Date: **8 March 2005**

By: **Chairman of the Education and Libraries BVPI Project Board**

Title of report: **Best Value Performance Indicator Targets for 2005-2006**

Purpose of report: **To update the Committee on findings relating to specific BVPI targets for 2005-2006 and recommend further action**

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**RECOMMENDATION – that the Committee approves the recommendations relating to targets for BVPIs 38, 39, 44,159d as set out in the report**

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Member involvement in challenging performance is vital both to improve services and to improve accountability for the County Council's results. Members and officers found the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) review board sessions, held in 2004, to be informative in identifying and examining areas of poor performance.

1.2 A further key area where member involvement can be of benefit to service improvement is in BVPI target setting. The most recent Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) highlighted the setting of targets as an area to be addressed. Accordingly, each scrutiny committee (with the exception of Audit and Best Value) has re-established a BVPI board to:

- review a selection of BVPIs to help ensure that targets are sufficiently ambitious;
- “stretch” the department, being mindful of the key priorities of the Council and the available resources; and
- ensure that these targets are supported by robust action plans and monitoring arrangements.

1.3 The BVPI board set up by the Education and Libraries Scrutiny Committee comprises Councillors McPherson (Chairman), Kenward and Kramer met on 17 February 2005 to consider the targets for selected BVPIs.

1.4 To assist with the process, performance “front sheets” were used summarising the relevant information on each BVPI target. Advice and detailed background information was provided to boards by managers and scrutiny lead officers.

## **2. Review of Education and Libraries BVPI targets**

2.1 The board scrutinised the targets set for BVPIs 38, 39, 44 and 159d. Set out below is a summary of the board's findings and recommendations.

(a) *BVPI 38 (the percentage of 15 year olds in schools maintained by the LEA achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* - C) and 39 (the percentage of 15 year olds in schools maintained by the LEA achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A\* - G including English and Maths*

2.2 The board received the following information about target setting for these BVPIs:

- the national target is for 60% of pupils to achieve five or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent by 2008.
- schools set their own targets based on prior attainment of individual pupils.
- there is an expectation that the LEA will set its own target for 2006 that at least matches the aggregate of its schools' own targets and is no lower than the agreed 2005 target.
- the aggregate East Sussex schools' target for 2005/06 is 58.7%. the LEA target for 2005/06 is 59%. This has been agreed by the DfES. (The LEA target for 2004/05 was 56%).

2.3 BVPI 38 and BVPI 39 are attainment measures. Standards of achievement of pupils are monitored by the Education Standards Panel. An annual report into standards and quality of provision in maintained schools and colleges is prepared each year by the school improvement service which includes these BVPIs. However, they are not specifically highlighted as such within the report. The report is a high profile public document published on the website, and is an important reference document used by the public and schools.

#### 2.4 Recommendations

- A) The annual report produced by the schools improvement service clearly shows which indicators are BVPIs.
  - B) Targets for these BVPIs are scrutinised by the Education Standards Panel at their meeting in June.
  - C) The Education Standards Panel reports back its findings and recommendations to the appropriate scrutiny committee.
- (b) *BVPI 44 (number of pupils permanently excluded during the year from all schools maintained by the LEA) and 159d (the percentage of permanently excluded pupils provided with alternative tuition of at least 20 hours or more)*

2.5 The board noted that there are several difficulties associated with current target setting and measurement against both of these indicators. The situation may be further complicated in the future as it is possible that different indicators may be used in these areas. The difficulties include:

- the problems in comparing statistics – some are measured in the school year, others in the financial year
- central government attitudes to permanent exclusions change from time to time, calling into question whether a low rate is necessarily always 'good'
- the changing and sometimes conflicting guidance from central government, in particular guidance issued by DfES in October 2004 set out a change in the way in which the time to make full provision should be measured (ie from the date the headteacher excludes rather than from the Governors' Disciplinary Committee) and changes to the number of hours a week that constitute full time provision at each key stage – it is unclear whether these changes are to be incorporated into the BVPI definitions
- the methods of measurement, eg for BVPI 159d, pupils who are provided with alternative tuition within 16 days of the governors' disciplinary meeting are not included in the statistics
- possible differences in methods of measurement by other local authorities, eg some put all permanently excluded pupils on the roll of pupil referral units.

2.6 Despite the problems associated with target setting, the board noted that the department has to set BVPI targets.

2.7 Regarding permanent exclusions, the Board noted the following:

- In East Sussex the rate of permanent exclusions has remained static for several years, whereas in some LEAs the number has increased.
- in 01/02 there were 86 permanently excluded pupils; in 02/03 89, and in 03/04 90. Pupils placed in alternative schools are tracked
- the average time for finding alternative provision for excluded pupils was 9.6 days in the autumn term of 2004, a significant improvement on previous performance.
- if there is an indication that pupils may be at risk of permanent exclusion specific work is undertaken with the individual to reduce the risk.
- there was a dramatic increase in the number of permanent exclusions in the autumn term, predominantly in Hastings. The service manager believes that this trend is being experienced nationwide, but this will not be clear until the BVPIs outturns are published nationally.
- in the east of the county there are approximately three times the number of permanent exclusions per 1,000 pupils than in the west.

2.8 The board noted that the department was focussing on improvements in this area. A protocol has been developed with the school admissions team to ensure rapid reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. Two Area Reintegration Officers have been appointed, one for the east and one for the west of the county. Schools have responded and their views are being collated. There has also been a move in the county for schools to group together in local clusters, and work is underway to identify generic and specific local issues with hard to place pupils, and possible alternative methods of provision.

## 2.9 Recommendations

A) The front sheets should:

- be expanded to explain actions in more detail, along with any national or local context
- contain specific numbers as well as percentages of pupils
- clearly indicate when the impact of current actions are likely to be shown in performance.

B) The department should re-evaluate the BVPI targets to ensure they are realistic in terms of current performance and the national situation.

C) The department should present a progress report on permanent exclusions to the September scrutiny committee.

COUNCILLOR MCPHERSON  
Chairman, Education and Libraries BVPI Project Board

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Local Member(s): All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:  
BVPI performance information

## **Background Information about Best Value Performance Indicators in the context of performance management at East Sussex County Council**

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) were introduced in 1997 as part of plans for local government modernisation. While BVPI results are annual, the complete life-cycle of a BVPI covers a two year period from consultation on the definition to the use of audited data.

### **Lifecycle of a BVPI**

- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) sets BVPI definitions after consultation with local authorities and publishes statutory guidance by March.
- The ODPM set national targets in the Government's priority areas and set out which BVPI targets are to be determined locally.
- Local authorities are then required to set targets for BVPIs (that are not new or nationally set) for the next three years.
- BVPI data is collected as per the definition between April and March.
- Chief Officers' Management Team, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and County Council monitor data quarterly against those BVPIs in the Council Plan and in the Public Service Agreement and request detailed performance reports to enable them to tackle performance issues at an early stage.
- By June, outturn BVPI data and audit trails are put together and outturns are published in the Council Plan together with three-year targets
- The Internal Audit team check our compliance with definitions on BVPIs identified as 'high risk'. Departments carry out a self assessment of compliance with the definition and performance against targets to determine which BVPIs are high risk. Internal Audit also take into account those identified by the Audit Commission as high risk and that have previously been 'qualified' because the data reported was not considered to be robust.
- Audit Commission carry out an external audit of data between July and September. This verification of results enables auditors to check that data has been calculated according to the set definition and enables local authorities to compare results nationwide. If the Audit Commission have doubts about our data then they may place a 'reservation' on a result. Through a process of moderation this reservation may be lifted if the auditor is satisfied or the reservation may result in a 'qualification' which means that our data does not meet the definition and will be automatically placed in the bottom quartile. Final audited results are published in December and quartile positions for the previous financial year's data are determined. The quartile positions are published in a compendium to allow national comparison of service provision. In setting targets, we need to have regard to our duty to achieve continuous improvement.

### **BVPIs in the context of the Council Plan**

The Council Plan is the high level business plan for the County Council that sets out the key priorities for the coming year. It has been developed in line with the reconciling policy and resources process and sets out targets, actions and measures to be achieved during 2004/05. It is supported by departmental, unit, team and individual plans. The measures in the Council Plan include BVPIs and also local indicators that are monitored quarterly by exception report at Chief Officers' Management Team, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and County Council.

### **BVPIs in the context of the Public Service Agreement**

The local Public Service Agreement (PSA) is between East Sussex County Council and the Government and is supported by East Sussex Strategic Partnership. The PSA covers the period April 2003 to March 2006. The Government has paid the partnership pump priming money to achieve enhanced targets. If the enhanced targets are achieved, the partnership will receive a performance reward grant.

There are 13 Public Service Agreement targets, 12 of which are clearly labelled in the Council Plan under the appropriate portfolio and another, referred to as the 'cost effectiveness' target, which is made up of 26 separate sub-targets. Performance measures are a mix of BVPIs and local indicators. The PSA is monitored quarterly by Chief Officers Management Team, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and County Council.

### BVPIs in the context of Comprehensive Performance Assessment

There is a national Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework for all local authorities incorporating judgements about core services and council ability to improve. In December 2003, East Sussex County Council was judged as 'Good'.

All BVPIs that contributed to the CPA December 2003 score are shown in the Council Plan and listed below. Receiving a qualification or not submitting a BVPI result has a detrimental impact on BVPIs that contribute to our CPA score. BVPIs where no information is returned, are scored at zero percentile; qualification results in a score of 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, ie lower quartile. Once BVPI results have been audited they contribute to the refresh of the CPA score in December.

Service	No. of BVPIs	Definition	BVPI No.	Raw Scores 2002/03	Percentile Dec 03	Average percentile	Overall score 1 = poor 4 = good
Planning	2	% major applications within deadline	109a	46%	not provided	43%	2
Planning		% satisfied with planning service	111	77%	43%		
Transport	6	Condition principal roads	96	1.35%	86.0%	45%	2
Transport		Condition non-principal roads	097a	53.4%	1%*		
Transport		Road safety - killed/injured	99	68.00%	90.0%		
Transport		satisfied - public transport info	103	48%	45%		
Transport		satisfied - bus services	104u	44%	33%		
Transport		% crossings/disabled facilities	165	58.6	18%		
Waste	4	waste recycled/composted	082a+b	19.7%	100.0%	67%	4
Waste		% waste landfilled	082d	78%	85%		
Waste		kg waste/head	084	517.91	46%		
Waste		satisfied civic amenity sites	090C	71%	37%		
People	8	women in senior management	011a	35.14%	68%	52%	3
People		ethnic employees in senior mgt / pop	11b/17b	21.28%	54%		
People		sickness absence	012	9.23	41%		
People		early retirements	014	0.56%	29%		
People		ill health retirements	015	0.22%	91%		
People		disabled employees/popln	016a/b	1.20%	25%*		
People		ethnic employees/poln	017	73.89%	78%		
People		% buildings with disabled access	156	7.95%	34%		
Financial Admin	1	% invoices paid in 30 days	008	79.80%	23%	23%	1
Libraries	3	users who found books	118a	51%	4%	38%	2
Libraries		users who found info	118b	78%	69%		
Libraries		Satisfaction with libraries	119b	69%	42%		

There is a new CPA framework proposed for 2005 which will focus more on community leadership, financial management, value for money and procurement.

For further information, contact Charlotte Thackray, Strategic Performance Manager (01273 482122).