

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN (BVPP)
WORKING GROUP

10 May 2006

PRESENT:

Councillor B Hoare (Chair)
Councillor M Hill
Councillor A Roy

Thomas Hall Corporate Manager
Dale Phillipson Corporate Manager
Tracy Tiff

1 Election of Chair

It was moved by Councillor Roy and seconded by Councillor Hill that Councillor B Hoare be elected Chair of the Best Value Performance Plan Working Group.

2 Introductions and Protocol for the meeting

This Group is a Scrutiny Working Group rather than a Task and Finish Group and is undertaking a Scrutiny activity rather than carrying out a review.

The Chair suggested the minutes of this meeting be produced in short, action point format.

3 Current positions

The timetable for the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) was circulated: -

- First draft to the Improvement Board 24 May
- Second draft to all Councillors for comment w/c 29 May
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee 14 June
- Final draft to the Improvement Board 15 June
- Cabinet 26 June
- Full Council 26 June
- Final document to be produced 30 June

The timetable was restrained due to the corporate priorities not as yet being set.

The reason for setting up this Working Group was explained – Councillors had been frustrated for the last two years regarding the BVPP process, especially

last year's plan that had been presented to Full Council for approval but 19 sections had required further information. Councillors needed to have involvement and knowledge of the BVPP process. There is a need for clarity of what Councillors and staff can expect from the BVPP process and how Overview and Scrutiny can be involved. This short Scrutiny activity would look at the BVPP process to ensure the integrity of the process, which should include Councillor involvement. The Working Group would carry out a short piece of work that might recommend further work to be undertaken. If further, wider work was carried out; it would benefit the involvement of non-Executive Councillors.

The Working Group discussed the Corporate Plan and the BVPP and heard that: -

- Corporate Plans are individual to Councils regarding the level of detail included, size etc.
- The BVPP is a drier, denser document. The BVPP must contain information on approximately 200 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), the previous year's audited performance and compare three years targets. Examples of best practice have been obtained for next year's Plan.
- It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual BVPP but it is not a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce a Corporate Plan. However, it is seen as best practice.
- Ideally, next year's process would begin with the Corporate Plan being completed first. There would be a lengthy consultation process involving the community, stakeholders, partners and Councillors. At the end of this process the BVPP would be produced.
- Best value is becoming less relevant but legislation has not changed, but the method in which Councils are assessed has changed. Best Value requires Councils to review its services every three years. NBC is not carrying out best value reviews but under the guidance of the Government Monitoring Board (GMB) is undertaking service reviews (similar criteria to best value reviews)

4 Scoping Exercise

The Working Group would look at: -

- The timetable for the BVPP for the previous two years.
- The BVPP process for last year.
- An improved BVPP process for next year.
- Examples of best practice
- Raising the awareness of the BVPP and Councillors' knowledge in best value performance
- How the service reviews link with best value reviews (the performance management framework sets out this information and could be distributed to Councillors)

