

10 BEST VALUE REVIEWS 2003/2006**Report By: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION****Wards Affected**

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To determine (a) Councillor representation on the review teams for the 2003/04 Best Value Reviews, following the local elections, (b) to review the scope of the best value review of SEN Assessment and provision for statemented pupils, and (c) to consider the remaining reviews in the 5-year programme.

Financial Implications

2. Financial implications from Best value reviews will be met from within the approved budget for the Education Service.

Report**(a) Review Panels**

3. The Committee is currently engaged in two reviews under the Best Value programme. The reviews cover the Inspection and Advisory Service and Assessment of Special Educational Need (SEN) and provision for statemented pupils. It is anticipated that each review will be completed in the early spring of 2004.
4. The membership now needs to be reconsidered following the outcome of the local elections and the Committee arrangements made since then. The Committee are therefore invited to determine two or three Councillor representatives for each of the two Panels.
5. It is proposed that, as a preliminary step for the reviews, familiarisation seminars will be held for each of the groups. The Director of Education will circulate the proposed dates for those seminars along with suggested dates for the working meetings of the review teams.

(b) Scope of the review of SEN assessment and provision for statemented pupils

6. The Best Value Review of SEN Assessment and Provision for Individually Statemented Pupils began in March 2003. When the review was originally planned, it was intended that it would consider individual support for statemented pupils and the contribution of the Educational Psychology Service to the process. The role of the support teams and the other functions of the Educational Psychology Service were not included. In view of the fact that virtually all of the statutory assessment process follows legislation, there is comparatively little opportunity to effect improvements through a review following the original, limited scope.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Dr Eddie Oram, Director of Education on (01432) 260801, or
Stephanie Hood, Policy Planning and Review Officer on (01432) 260879

7. The Review Team has met twice under the chairmanship of Dr Sue Ferguson. It has been the unanimous view of the members of the panel that the remit is too narrow, given recent national changes in funding, inclusion and disability legislation. Specifically, the group intend to widen its research and discussions to cover the role of other SEN support services, the wider role of Educational Psychology Service, other funding mechanisms, delegation of SEN funding, monitoring and the possibilities of inter-agency working. The widened remit would involve bringing forward the review of the Learning Support Service and the Physical and Sensory Support Service and, to some extent, revisiting the earlier Review of the Medical and Behavioural Support Service. It would also involve lengthening the time frame of the review to the Spring of 2004 to allow for additional research.
8. Widening the scope of Best Value Reviews is in line with Audit Commission recommendations that a more strategic overview should be taken by Local Authorities when considering Best Value Review Programmes.
9. A Stage One Report for the existing scope has been completed. However, it was not thought appropriate to present to the Education Scrutiny Committee until a decision has been taken regarding the breadth of the review.

(c) The Review Programme

10. Appendix 1 lists the programme of reviews completed to date, and shows the remaining subject areas yet to be reviewed under the programme agreed in February 2001.
11. Experience has confirmed that each review is resource intensive. It is important to ensure, therefore, that the scope of each review is sufficiently wide to make it possible for a comprehensive review of the Education Service to be completed in a programme covering one or two reviews each year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee are asked -

- (a) to agree the composition of the two review teams and the associated initial timetable;**
- (b) to consider the programme, and determine whether or not any adjustments are required at this stage;**
- (c) the Committee accepts the widening of the scope of the Best Value Review of Special Educational Needs Assessment and Provision for Individual Statemented Pupils to include other SEN support services, the wider role of the Educational Psychology Service, other funding mechanisms, delegation of SEN funding, monitoring and the possibilities of inter-agency working.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

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