

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Best Value
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 24 November 1998	
REPORT AUTHOR: George McNally	
REF: JD/GMcI/DH	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Social Work Committee of the progress which has been achieved to date, on the Social Work Department's Best Value Plan.

2 BACKGROUND

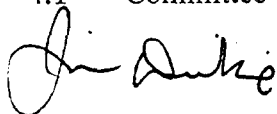
- 2.1 The Social Work Department in common with other Council Departments was required to produce a Best Value Plan and proposals to compare its services and performance against other appropriate agencies.
- 2.2 The first year of the plan requires the Social Work Department to undertake a detailed study of its Child Care Services which have an approximate value of £5.2 million.
- 2.3 In addition to its Child Care Services the Department has been involved in other aspects of the work associated with Best Value and which cover a range of current services.

3 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 Schedule one of this report provides a synopsis of the progress which has been achieved to date on the Department's Best Value commitments.
- 3.2 The work and responsibilities associated with Best Value are such that a considerable investment of staff time and resources have been required in order to meet the Department's Best Value responsibilities.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work

For further information on this report please contact George McNally, Principal Officer (Strategy) (TEL: 01698 332063)

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
Department of Social Work
Best Value Plan - Update:

Key Development Tasks	Progress Achieved
<p>Customer/Citizen Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the Council's values and principals. - Service review and development consultation with users. - Develop good quality public information materials. - Develop systematic measures for consulting with users and carers. - Review user satisfaction with Social Work complaints procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Care Plan published, Community Care Forum established, Joint Accommodation Plan published. - Intensive Home Care pilot beginning October 1998. - Consultation with looked after children beginning October 1998. - Community Care leaflets published November 1998. - Children's Services Plan. - Development of materials for ethnic minorities and for people with sensory impairment. - Initial work being undertaken for completion June 1999. - Initial work and process comparisons being undertaken.

Key Development Tasks	Progress Achieved
<p>Sound Strategic Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link information strategy and systems to Best Value Regime. - Improve recording and analysis of aggregate needs. - Continue to develop I.T. systems. - Review adequacy of information systems to inform later stages of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information Technology (I.T.) working group established. - Improvements being made to Social Work Information System (SWIS) by March 1999 - improved management reports. - Work continuing with both hardware and software. Additional programming time allocated. - April 2000 onwards.
<p>Sound Operational Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a framework to conduct an audit of management skills, training and development needs. - Conduct major reviews of Department structure in year four of plan. - Develop reporting systems to inform operation management beginning at area team level. - Promote communication via Best Value Newsletter. - Implement an Absence Reduction Plan to ensure Best Value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management training ongoing and completed by April 1999. - Year 2002. - Begin October 1998 and continuing. - First issue distributed October 1998 and continuing throughout plan. - Absence management training done for all line managers also communication to all staff jointly with Trade Unions.

Key Development Tasks	Progress Achieved
<p>Sound Operational Management (cont)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote best practice through sharing of information and staff development beginning with Community Care for people with learning disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supported Living initiative. - Person centred planning-training given to staff.
<p>Sound Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and continue to develop financial systems which allow effective control. - Ensure management training addresses development of skills and competence in financial management. - Ensure budgets kept under review and used to best needs of clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systems in place - Variance reports, Budget Control reports, Capital Exp reports, Committee Cycle reports. - Management training programme November 1998. - Senior Resource Officers - training and regular briefing meetings. - Systems in place.
<p>Performance Measurement and Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of performance indicators to enable cost and quality comparisons. - Establish systems of feedback for service users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's Service performance indicators in place. - In progress for Community Care Assessment and Home Care. - Currently underway for Child Care. Also for Parents and Carers - Intensive Home Support initiative beginning January 1999.

Key Development Tasks	Progress Achieved
<p>Continuous Improvement Quality Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish departmental task force to develop user, carer feedback. - Identify three no cost quality initiatives in first year of plan. - Ensure training for all staff reflects principals and values of Best Value. - Review quality methods based on E.F.Q.M. model and other appropriate tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task force remit and membership currently being finalised. - Redundancy protocol established; Benefit take-up campaign; Reception areas, all establishments. - Staff briefings to be conducted and Best Value to be incorporated in next years training plan. - European Forum on Quality Management (E.F.Q.M.) materials have been developed and are being deployed in Child Care.
<p>Costing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen current systems to enable identification of unit costs across the range of services. - Establish systems to enable costs of individual care packages to be identified. - Development of integrated Financial/Care Management information systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SWIS system improvements, also improved budgetary and variance control reports. - Supported Living Initiative now established. - Also Intensive Home Care work progressing, to be established January 1999. - Beginning 1999, systems currently being evaluated.

Key Development Tasks	Progress Achieved
<p>Benchmarking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure appropriate benchamrking criteria are established. - Identify other relevant agencies for benchmarking purposes. - Implement costs and quality comparison for Children's Services and Home Care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Done for Child Care October 1998, ongoing for Criminal Justice and Home Care. - Underway via Local Interest Group with other authorities and COSLA Best Value (Social Work) Network. - Work underway for Children's Services; beginning 1999 for Home Care Services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Option appraisal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be carried out each year as part of the Best Value Study for services identified in the Best Value rota.
<p>Competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider each year through the Best Value Studies whether services compare favourably in terms of cost and quality. Appraise options in the light of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First appraisal April 1999