Best Value Introduction

Audit Scotland describes Best Value as "ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public." The duty of Best Value applies to all public bodies in Scotland. It is a statutory duty for local authorities, such as councils.

In 2016 a revised framework for the auditing of Best Value was approved by the Accounts Commission. A key element of the framework is the publication of a Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for the council at least once during a five-year period. It is informed by the Annual Audit Report, other statutory reports and Audit Scotland reports including the Local Government Overview series (performance, finance) published annually.

The BVAR will be considered by the Commission, in public, and action may be required of the council. The fieldwork for the BVAR for Aberdeenshire Council will take place between February and April 2019.

The fieldwork for the development of the BVAR includes:

- Interviews with councillors, senior officers and partner organisations;
- Observation of council, committee and board meetings;
- Review of documents and performance data and;
- Focus groups with councillors, officers and community groups.

Each council's BVAR incorporates an analysis of the Best Value characteristics aligned to the themes of:

- Vision and strategic direction;
- Performance;
- Use of resources;
- Partnership working;
- Improvement and transformation

Case Study Criteria

As part of our preparation for our Best Value Assurance Report we will be compiling a narrative to show the council's transformation since the last Best Value Audit. In order to do this, the Best Value Key Officer group will be sourcing case studies from all services. To ensure that the case study stays relevant to Best Value's key themes, the below criteria has been set out:

- Please ensure that a relevant link with BV criteria is demonstrated throughout
- Where relevant, please complete each section of the template as fully as possible
- Each section must contain narrative along with relevant links of evidence
- Each case study should show a consistent and clear link to at least one of the council's 11 priorities (point 6).

Case Study Template -

Infrastructure Services – Litter Prevention Action Plan and associated Street Cleansing Policy and Procedures

How does this link with the criteria of Best Value?
"ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public." • Vision and strategic direction; • Performance; • Use of resources; • Partnership working; • Improvement and transformation Under vison and strategic direction, the Litter Prevention Action Plan is a key part of our strategy in dealing with littering and fly-tipping. By shifting the focus onto prevention, this follows the recommendations of the Christie Commission: prevention is more sustainable than reactionary measures. At the same time, we are reviewing our Street Cleansing Policy and Procedures to make sure they are fit for purpose in order to make best use of resources. The LPAP requires a more collaborative approach to dealing with littering and fly-tipping not just with the Services of Aberdeenshire Council, but also working in partnership with community groups and businesses.

How does this link to our priorities?
This links to the following Council Priorities: Council Priority 1 – Support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy. By reducing the level of littering and fly-tipping we create an environment that our residents wish to live in and look after, we attract more visitors and businesses are more willing to locate here Council Priority 10 – Having the right people in the right place doing the right thing at the right time. We make best use of our resources as effective prevention can mean we can concentrate on sweeping/removing detritus rather than having to deal with litter and fly-tipping Council Priority 11 – Protect our special environment including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse emissions. As with priority 1 we help protect our special environment. Also, by providing ways for people to recycle their waste either through Recycling on the Go bins or at our Household Recycling Centres, we reduce waste.

What research was undertaken to ensure best practice?
We attended and contributed to workshops on the creation of Litter Prevention Action Plans run by Keep Scotland Beautiful who also provided help and guidance throughout the process. We also used information from other Local Authorities to help us create our Litter Prevention Action Plan and associated Street Cleansing Policy and Procedures. We have consulted with the following organisations – Trade Unions (GMB & Unison), Neighboring Local Authorities (Moray , Aberdeen City, Angus and Perth and Kinross), Police Scotland, Forestry Commission, National Farmers Union, Network Rail, BEAR Scotland, Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum, Aberdeenshire Community Councils, Zero Waste Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful, and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency,

What was the background to the case study?
The new Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2018 – CoPLAR, was adopted at the end of June 2108 and replaced the 2006 CoPLAR. This institutionalises prevention in relation to keeping land clear of litter and refuse into statutory guidance and promotes a new approach to litter and fly-tipping. It focuses on prevention instead of clean up and encourages actions based on specific interventions and collaborative efforts to drive change.

What activity was undertaken?
The Infrastructure Services Committee approved the production of one Litter Prevention Action Plan to work across all Council Directorates and geographical areas. A working group was set up with representatives from Customer Communication, Roads, Landscape Services, Transportation, Property & Facilities, Housing, Environmental Health, Education and Waste Management. The introduction of CoPLAR 2108 presented an opportunity for the Waste Services to provide a clear Street Cleansing Policy and accompanying Procedures. The final Litter Prevention Action Plan and Street Cleansing Policy is due to go to the Infrastructure Services Committee for approval in November 2019 and will then be implemented in 2020 with a cross service group leading it.

How did this contribute to improved outcomes?
The aim is to have an improved environment for residents, businesses and visitors which is easier to maintain.

How did this assist in delivering value for money?
By focusing on prevention and encouraging behavioural changes we will make better use of existing resources and create and a more sustainable environment.

What did we learn?
The process is not completed yet, so we are still learning. However, we know that the environment in which people live, work and visit is important to their wellbeing and by changing behaviour we hope to create one that is safer, better for both social and mental health and attracts more visitors and businesses.

Please attach any supporting documents/evidence relevant to the case study**