

## 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 – Power Apps work Allocation Business System

How does this link with the criteria of Best Value?

The utilisation of the Power Apps business system has been a key enabler of the re-design of the Support Service function of Infrastructure Services, a service of more than 2,000 employees covering a diverse range of services from Planning to Roads Maintenance to Economic Development and Transportation. The App has supported the implementation of several Admin Hubs by working as a work allocation and tracking system for all non-routine tasks, to enable the introduction of new and more efficient ways of working, generating service improvements and financial cost savings through staff reductions. Hence it links to Best Value through supporting the implementation of a transformational strategic vision, improving performance and making better use of our resources.

How does this link to our priorities?

Support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy  
Deliver responsible, long-term financial planning  
Have the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time

The use of this business system directly links to the above priorities in that it has contributed to:

- improved service to those delivering support to the Aberdeenshire economy
- the generation of £800,000 reduction in staff budgets which can be diverted to front line delivery work
- Ensuring that we utilise our support service staff to the best and most productive use

What research was undertaken to ensure best practice?

A spec providing detailed requirements was drawn up and ICT was consulted. Three costed options were drawn up and the Power App as now used was designed in-house to meet business needs; this continues to be modified and further developed.

What was the background to the case story?

The structure of support services was redesigned and moved from 16 small specialist teams to 4 larger generic administration hubs and the divestment of a portion of specialist admin staff to become embedded within relevant functions. This division was based on an extensive set of data and the desire was to implement the new structure with an increased degree of efficiency and management, to allow the hubs to objectively and efficiently handle all non-routine work arising from a wider variety of sources. Thus, it was recognised that a work allocation system that would provide high quality management information was required and the Power App as used in the hubs was born.

What activity was undertaken?

Please see paras above

How did this contribute to improved outcomes?

The App has enabled objective and efficient management of non-routine work arising from a wide variety of sources. It further allows this work to be freed from geographical boundaries as any job submitted in any part of the Shire can be picked up and completed in any other part of the Shire. In time, through this approach, it may be possible to reduce the number or change the composition of hubs as geographical ties should theoretically disappear. Equally importantly, the App has also allowed, for the first time, production and analysis of detailed management information about the work submitted to and carried out within the hubs which will inform better and more efficient management.

How did this assist in delivering value for money?

The Admin Project as a whole has generated savings of £800k per annum; the utilisation of Power App within the hubs has been a central pillar of the implementation of this project.

What did we learn?

We learned:

- Change is challenging and implementation takes patience and persistence from all involved
- Design of a bespoke App is not an instant fix – modifications continue
- The production of management information is of significant benefit - it is already highlighting an array of issues that would previously have gone unrecognised but can now be addressed and corrected. eg we can recognise over- and under-capacity; we can flex workloads between teams; we can identify best practice and/or training needs where jobs are taking significantly longer for some than for others

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