

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 – Waste strategy 2019-2023

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

The new waste strategy 2019-2023 is the new year 5-year plan for the waste service – it provides the vision and strategic direction for the service for the next 5 years, aims to improve performance by increasing recycling rates and using the waste service’s resources more efficiently and focusses on improvement and transformation of the waste service to ensure Aberdeenshire maximises the environmental, community and financial benefits from the waste it produces.

How does this link to our priorities?

The waste strategy link to the following Council priorities:

- Deliver responsible, long-term financial planning – reducing the amount non-recyclable waste will significantly reduce the cost of disposal as recycling is much cheaper.
- Have the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time – ensuring our limited resources are used where they are most required and make the biggest difference.
- Protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions – reducing waste in the first place and reusing and recycling any waste that can’t be avoided will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from waste produced by Aberdeenshire residents.

What research was undertaken to ensure best practice?

As part of the development of the waste strategy, information from other councils were used for modelling the extent of expected impacts from changes to kerbside services. Best practice guidance from Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) Recycling Centre Guide were used to plan out improvements at recycling centres. An online survey and focus groups were used to evaluate residents' response to some of the suggested service changes and to allow communications to be tested.

What was the background to the case study?

Aberdeenshire Council first introduced a kerbside recycling service to households in 2005-2006, and rolled out a more user-friendly kerbside recycling service to all households in Aberdeenshire in 2013-2015. Whilst the new service significantly increased the use of the kerbside recycling service by households, the recycling levels have now plateaued. A new approach was required to ensure Aberdeenshire maximises the environmental, community and financial benefits from the waste it produces.

What activity was undertaken?

The waste strategy is for 5 years from 2019 to 2023 and involves the following activities:

1. Increased and improved communication and engagement with residents to encourage households to treat materials as a resource and to maximise the quality and quantity of recyclates collected.
2. Changes to kerbside collection service by changing from a fortnightly collection cycle to a 3-weekly cycle to improve recycling rates.
3. Double the number of seasonal garden waste points to make it easier for households to recycle their garden waste.
4. Improve the network of recycling centres through a number of measures to maximise reuse and recycling at all centres across Aberdeenshire.
5. Recover energy from waste that cannot be prevented, reused or recycled.

How did this contribute to improved outcomes?

Increased recycling will reduce costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide more community benefits – these will be measured as part of the strategy delivery.

How did this assist in delivering value for money?

Recycling is much cheaper than sending waste to landfill, hence having the potential to reduce annual costs significantly – this will be measured as part of the strategy delivery.

What did we learn?
To be confirmed.

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