

Meeting:	Scrutiny
Date:	12 December 2001

29. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF BUILDING CONTROL. The Committee considered the report of the Building Control Best Value Review Team regarding the outcome of the Best Value Review of Building Control.

Members were informed that the Building Control Best Value Review had been a concise review that had been carried out with no impact on the day-to-day service experienced by the customer. The review team had concentrated on improving the level of service experienced by customers, reducing the net cost to the Council of the Building Control Service and raising public awareness of the service and the benefits it provided.

As part of the review, the principal users of the service (Architects and Builders) were consulted to identify priority areas for improvement and current satisfaction levels. Staff were consulted to draw on their experience of current working practices and how they could be improved. Comparisons were drawn with other authorities to assess the cost and competitiveness of the service and to draw on their experience.

The review team recommended retaining the service in house and making significant improvements including the adoption of a risk assessment protocol and a revised Service Level Agreement with the Engineering Section of Amenities to achieve:

- A reduction in the overall cost to the Council of approximately £19,000. from 2004–5.
- A reduction in the cost of the Building Control section with effect from 2002-3. The exact amount was to be set in March as consultation with the Council's Insurers and a revision of time recording by the engineering section would need to be carried out in the interim period.
- An increase in the number of applications dealt with – additional 10% for 2002-3 this would also lead to a reduction in cost for the Council as these applications would attract fees and it was believed that there was a capacity for dealing with more applications within existing, albeit modified structures.
- An increase in those accessing the service/downloading forms/communicating electronically – e capability by 2002, year on year increase from base of 0.
- A year on year increase in the satisfaction of those who regularly use the service – qualitative survey to be undertaken annually.
- An increase in the number of partners for whom Building Control provides services nationally - an additional partner by 2003.
- Independent accreditation (ISO 9002) by 2004.
- A more professionally qualified workforce - two additional members of staff members of Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors by 2005.
- A faster vetting time for applications – 95% within 14 days.
- A more customer focussed and flexible inspection regime – out of hours, early morning, short notice inspections to be trialled 2002.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be recommended to approve the Improvement Plan as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

Democratic Services, Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG

Tel (01323) 415022/415023 Minicom (01323) 415111 Fax (01323) 410322

E Mail: councillors@eastbourne.gov.uk

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