

PART B

Background

7. The Government has recently issued a Statutory Instrument which, amongst other things, amends the previous requirement to produce the annual Best Value Performance Plan by 31st March each year. The Plan must now be published by 30th June, on the basis that this will allow the inclusion of actual, or near actual, performance information on the previous year.
8. The structure of the attached draft Plan differs from those produced previously in that it is now arranged on the basis of the Administration's objectives as outlined in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy.

Current Position

9. The later timetable has allowed the opportunity to include references in the Plan to issues addressed in the recently agreed budget for 2002/03. The opportunity has also been taken to expand the financial information contained in Chapter 4 of the Plan so that it describes in more detail the budget position of the Council. However, the requirement to include actual, or near actual, performance information for 2001/02 means that it will be necessary to amend some of the information in the current draft as more up to date information becomes available. There may also be other information which can usefully be included in the Plan before it is finally published. It is therefore proposed that any further amendments to the current version of the draft plan should be made with the agreement of the Leader and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment / Best Value Reviews

10. Members will be aware that the Government has announced its intention of carrying out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment, (CPA), of all "top tier" authorities in 2002. This is expected to result in an action plan for each authority aimed at the areas in which it needs to improve its performance. In view of this it is proposed that no new areas are identified for Best Value reviews at this stage. Once the outcome of the CPA is known members will need to consider how best to address the issues raised, which may be through future Best Value reviews.
11. The recent Statutory Instrument also removed the requirement on authorities to review all of their functions over a five year cycle. This also therefore allows us the flexibility to concentrate resources in future on addressing those areas of service which the Administration considers as priorities, and also on any major issues arising from the CPA which require a fundamental review to be undertaken. Chapter 13 of the attached draft Plan therefore includes a commentary on the

current ongoing programme of reviews, but does not include any proposals for future reviews at this stage.

Best Value Audit / Inspection

12. Members should also be aware that the Audit Commission wish to co-ordinate the work of their two arms of audit and inspection more closely in the future. Therefore this year the District Auditor and the Best Value Inspectorate will be working together to deliver a combined audit and inspection plan for the Council. This will be led by Mike White as our "Relationship Manager." The proposed audit/inspection plan includes several inspections of services during 2002. The inspection of the recently completed Public Transport review will begin in April, and the major work on the Corporate Performance Assessment referred to above is also scheduled to take place from April to July. This will involve "fieldwork", in particular inspections of libraries and highways services as these are significant service areas in which they do not currently have other sources of published evidence of performance.

Publication of the BVPP

13. It is intended to publish the BVPP following approval by Council in May and distribute a limited number of copies to libraries, service shops etc, as well as putting it on the Council's website. We are still required to produce, by 31st March each year, a summary of performance information related to our budget requirements. Whereas previously this could be extracted from the BVPP before it was published in March this can obviously no longer be the case now that publication has been moved back to June. It is expected that further guidance on how this requirement is to be met in future will be issued by the DTLR later this year. In the meantime the March edition of "Leicestershire Matters" includes a summary of some of the issues that will be included in the BVPP arranged under the headings of the new Administration's objectives in its Medium Term Corporate Strategy.