

To be Conscious of Being Publicly Funded in Everything We Do

Business Plans explicitly justify the nature and scale of work for which trading operations are required. Three year Business Plans are approved for each trading operation in April each year by the Commercial Operations Policy Board and performance against key performance indicators for each trading operation is reported on a regular basis to the Commercial Operations Policy Board.

We are responsive to the interests of stakeholders and suppliers such as the business community and the voluntary and not for profit sectors. The results and implications of decisions about the conduct of business are fed back to managers engaged in planning, to ensure that they take such factors into account. For example, the Commercial Operations senior management undertake weekly workload reviews for managers within each trading operation. Team briefings and Senior Managers Meetings are also held on a regular basis.

All former CCT services have been subject to review to ensure that they provide an effective service. **PriceWaterhouse Coopers** assessed the effectiveness of all our trading operations in 1999. More recently, as part of the preparations for housing stock transfer, **Tribal HCH** consultants carried out an operational health check of the Building Services. The consultants concluded that the service is cost effective, exceeds peer levels and is competitive with the private sector, it provides value for money with competitive schedule of rates prices and productivity exceeds peer levels. The consultants found strong evidence of accountability through Business Plans, Board reports and the reporting system within the Council. Building Services is currently subject to a Best Value service review which will be submitted to the Housing, Environment and Community Safety Policy Board early in 2006 and a wide range of efficiency measures have already been implemented. These include: the introduction of appointments for pre-inspection of repairs, creation of an on-line procedures database for staff, upgrading of hand held computers by repairs inspection staff to allow them to order works directly on site and issuing of a comprehensively revised tenants repairs reporting booklet to every tenant.

Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleaning, have been subject to Best Value reviews and all the tasks set out in the Performance Improvement Plans have been fully implemented all of which improved our Street Cleanliness Index rating from 58 in 2001 to 70 in 2004.

Contract Services (Roads) has been continually reviewed under the Business Plan process and this has resulted in changes to management structure and methods of working to ensure value for money to the Council. Works Planning and Quality officers have been appointed with quality reports on all projects being carried out and the results reported to the Commercial Operations Policy Board. The development of the Roads Integrated Management System permits reports of safety defects to be transmitted from the Customer Contact Centre to the appropriate roads inspector and subsequently, through works orders, to Contract Services (Roads) utilising computer based systems.

Some examples of improvements introduced in the **Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing** Service include the re-routing exercise to incorporate the significant increase in collections undertaken following the expansion of the kerbside recycling collection scheme, the improved town centre sweeping, purchase of specialist chewing gum removal equipment and improved litter removal along the main roads all of which improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Ongoing service efficiency improvements continue to be driven through the annual Business Plans.

The Building Cleaning and Catering services are currently subject to Best Value service reviews which will conclude early in 2006. However, in both cases a significant number of service changes and improvements have been implemented particularly in relation to services in schools, offices and Social Work establishments. These include: changes in the Cleaning and Catering operations led to the implementation of a joined up integrated facilities management housekeeping service in residential homes for children and the elderly which will deliver significant financial and operational efficiencies over a three year period and the introduction of six breakfast clubs in primary schools.

Effective financial management is critical. We ensure the transparent and fair allocation of all shared costs by allocating management overhead accounts across activities on a proper basis.

In Commercial Operations, **detailed trading accounts** are prepared every four weeks for each

Criterion 6: Competitiveness, Trading and Discharge of Authority Functions

trading and sub activity. Budget monitoring statements are provided to each cost centre manager every four weeks. Trading Performance is reported to each meeting of the Commercial Operations Policy Board. Trading accounts are prepared and disclosed for all trading operations where proper accounting practice and good management require it. These are published annually in the winter edition of Renfrewshire Magazine, along with the Council's Annual report.

Key Strengths

- Three year business planning and financial planning.
- Track record of financial stability.
- Track record of continuous improvement – Charter Mark and other awards.
- Track record of increasing efficiency across all services.

Core Evidence

- Business Plans for each trading operation.
- Trading Accounts Statements.
- Charter Mark for relevant services.
- How Are We Doing? and Renfrewshire Magazine.
- PriceWaterhouse Coopers report.
- TRIBAL HCH report

Best Practice

Housing
Repairs

(HPS BP 9)

The Repairs Service has been at the forefront in introducing electronic service delivery to offer 'real time' working and eliminating the use of paperwork. Mobile Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) were introduced to carry out pre-inspection, post-inspection, new and ad hoc repair inspection electronically in 'real time'. The key advantage of introducing this system is that it empowers operational staff to deliver an enhanced customer service. We are also making monetary savings and environmental efficiencies in a number of areas.

Plans for Continuous Improvement

- Continue to drive service improvements in all the trading operations through the annual Business Planning process.
- Agree a programme of reviews to consider service delivery options in each of the Trading Operations.