

Appendix 3

Summary of Best Value Performance Indicator Audits Carried out in 2006/07

Over the course of the last year there have been numerous audits carried out. The objective of these audits was to gain assurance from a sample of BVPIs that the submitted data was valid, accurate and calculated in accordance with the guidance. There were a total of 25 audits carried out over the course of the year (See list attached). These were broken down as follows:

7 from Corporate Health
6 from Housing & Council Tax Benefits
5 from Housing
6 from Environmental Waste & Cleanliness
1 from Planning.

The majority of these audits were found to be compliant and the data and formula were being followed as stipulated by the guidance. There were only 6 of the audits found to have a non compliance/queries raised.

Findings uncovered during these audits were as follows:

BV76b – The number of fraud investigators employed by the Local Authority, per 1000 caseload.

There was a discrepancy found which was raised during the audit, when it emerged that there were only 3 investigating officers & 1 administration officer, whose job it is to support the 3 investigating officers and therefore should not be included in the calculation as per the guidance. However after further investigation it was found that the administration officer does actually carry out duties which are part of the fraud investigating process and it had been agreed at a previous inspection carried out by the audit commission that the calculation based on 4 investigating officers was acceptable.

BV78a – Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax)

BV78b – Speed of processing: change in circumstances for Housing

During the audit it was highlighted that there is nothing in the IBS system used in the Benefits service to double check for human error. All figures are checked manually before they are sent to the DWP and any mistakes are taken out of the calculation manually. The Benefits Manager advised me that this was a major problem with the IBS system which is used across numerous authorities and who have all encountered the same problem. It was agreed that the Benefits Manager would contact the software company to see if this problem can be rectified and this PI will be revisited and included in next years audit schedule (2007/08).

BV64 – Vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished

During the audit it was noted that the Empty Properties Officer, which was a temporary post, had left the authority. The Private Sector Initiatives Officer was undertaking part of the work he had been carrying out on a temporary basis. The post was due to go to committee to be mainstreamed. It was agreed that as soon as this went ahead the auditor would be informed and that procedures/guidelines in relation to this post, be made available for inspection at the next audit.

BV212 – Average time taken to re-let local authority housing

It was identified that properties which EDH use as temporary/emergency housing for homeless people, who weren't provided with a tenancy, were not previously included in the calculation of

this PI. There are 11 of these properties in total. The guidance specifically states that *“All types of letting by the authority, including lets under licence to homeless households should be included...”*

The corrective actions agreed were that the homeless units be included in the total amount of properties and the figures for the last three quarters be recalculated to ensure that the final year end figure is correct. There has also been a working group established which is made up of officers involved in re-lets. Their aim is to highlight any blockages found within the re-lets system and produce an action plan to ensure problems are addressed and rectified.

Follow up recommendations agreed were that the Business Performance Officer was to keep the auditor informed of any progress made & also of any outcomes/actions agreed at the working party meetings.

BV205 – Quality of Planning Services Checklist

Non compliance identified during this audit was the Pendleton Report Survey which is used to assess how the authority can score points to show if they provide the capability for an Electronic Planning Service. This scored the authority 21 which equals 100%. It has since been discovered that we were scored incorrectly as we did not provide the facility for customers to pay for planning applications online.

Planning have had discussions regarding this with the IT section who have advised them that there is the possibility of a Corporate Payment Engine being set up which would give customers the facility to pay online for various services including planning.

Follow up recommendations were that the situation be monitored and any developments reported back. However I can now report that the facility has been put into place for customers to pay for planning applications online.

Next years Internal Audit Schedule for Performance Indicators will revisit the areas where actions have been put into place to ensure that findings have been addressed and data is calculated as stipulated in the guidance.

Audits will also be carried out for PI's for Homelessness. There has been a new unit formed since the last Audits in this area were carried out in 2005/06. The unit now has more staff and a new Homelessness Manager.

Audits will also be carried out for PI's which we are aiming to get into the top quartile position over the next 3 years.

A list of the indicators examined during the audits for 2006/07

Corporate Health

BV2a – The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability

BV2b – The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application

BV11a – Top 5% of Earners: Women

BV12 – Working days lost due to sickness absence

BV14 – Percentage of early retirements

BV15 – Percentage of ill health retirements

BV16a – Percentage of employees with a disability

Housing & Council Tax Benefit

BV76a – The number of housing benefit claimants in the local authority area visited, per 1,000 caseload

BV76b – The number of fraud investigators employed by the Local Authority, per 1,000 caseload

BV76c – The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) fraud investigations carried out by the Local Authority per year, per 1,000 caseload

BV76d – The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) prosecutions and sanctions, per year, per 1,000 caseload, in the Local Authority area

BV78a – Average time for processing new claims (Housing and council Tax benefit)

BV78b – Speed of processing: change in circumstances for Housing and Council Tax benefit claims

Housing

BV64 – Vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished

BV66a – Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery

BV66b – Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery: tenants in arrears

BV66c – Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery: possessions sought

BV212 – Average time to re-let Local Authority Housing

Environmental Waste & Cleanliness

BV82a(i) – Household waste management: recycling
(Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for recycling)

BV82a(ii) - Household waste management: recycling
(Total tonnage of household waste arisings sent by the Authority for recycling)

BV82b(i) – Household waste management (composting)
(The percentage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion)

BV82b(ii) – Household waste management (composting)
(The tonnage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion)

BV82d(i) – Household waste management (landfilled)
(Percentage of household waste that has been landfilled)

BV86 – Cost of household waste collection per household

Planning

BV205 – Quality of Planning Services Checklist

ACTIVITY	APRIL	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUGUST	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
grounds of ill health												
BV14 - % of early retirements												22/03/07
BV66a – Rent collected by the Local Authority as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings												27/03/07
BV66b – Number of local authority tenants with more than 7 weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a % of total number of council tenants												27/03/07
BV66c – Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery: possessions sought												27/03/07
BV82a - d - % of household waste that is composted												08/03/07 & 13/03/07
BV86 – Cost of waste collection per household												21/03/07
BV205 – Planning quality of service											28/02/07	

ACTIVITY	APRIL	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUGUST	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
checklist												
BV64 – Number of private sector vacant dwellings returned into occupation or demolished during the year through council action											22/02/07	