

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny & Overview Committee 1 October 2009  
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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Simon Edwards

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### VALUE FOR MONEY

#### Purpose

1. This is the first of two reports to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee regarding value for money provided by South Cambridgeshire District Council. This report aims to support the committee in planning how to examine the Council's vfm record. The second, in December, will present the evidence and recommend the next steps.

#### Options

2. The committee is recommended to agree that the existing Finance task and finish group be tasked to examine the evidence regarding the Council's value for money record and to report their findings to the December meeting.

#### Background

3. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee set up a cross-party task and finish group in June 2008 to "investigate and make recommendations for improving the Council's financial management, and budget setting processes, and to recommend improvements to future scrutiny of the budget and integrated business reports".
4. As part of its work, the task and finish group found that the 2008 Place Survey showed that only 33% of South Cambridgeshire respondents were satisfied with the value for money that they received from their District Council. This was despite the fact that the Council has the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of council tax amongst all District Councils and over one quarter of our services are in the top quartile of performance nationally.
5. The task and finish group made an interim report in March 2009, stating that it would resume work as soon as a lead officer was available to support further work. The officer will be in post from 1 October 2009.

#### Value for money at South Cambridgeshire District Council

6. There are several tools available to the Council to measure costs, performance and value for money, all of which will be available in the coming two months.
7. Amended Place Survey results were published on 23 September.
8. The medium term financial strategy will be examined by the Cabinet on 8 October.
9. The Council's new performance management software, Corvu, will supply performance data for the first two quarters by mid-October.

10. The Audit Commission's assessment of the Council's Use of Resources score has been delayed but is now expected in November.
11. Officers are currently drafting the 2010/11 service plans. These will include a wealth of up-to-date benchmarking data.
12. Communication of the Council's value for money record is currently being examined by the Council's senior management team and a report is expected by November.
13. Once the above data is available, the task and finish group will be in a position to make a judgement about the Council's value for money record, and recommend actions for the future.

14. **Implications**

Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing/ capacity	A lead officer to support the Finance task and finish group takes up the post on 1 October 2009
Risk Management	Failing to establish and publicise the Council's vfm record presents a reputational risk.
Equal Opportunities	None

**Consultation**

15. None.

**Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives**

16. Improvements to the Council's financial planning, scrutiny and consultation will help to "deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community".

**Options**

17. The committee is recommended to agree that the existing Finance task and finish group be tasked to examine the evidence regarding the Council's value for money record and to report their findings to the December meeting.

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