

**Note to:** Improvement Board

060209

Item 8

**From:** Neil White / Hilary Mitchell

**Date:** 6 February 09

### **Searching for Best Value Update**

**Purpose:** To update Improvement Board of progress on Searching for Best Value.

**Update:** Searching for Best Value Officer/Member group

The Officer/Member group met on 8 January 2009.

The Group agreed that:

- A pilot of the model should be undertaken with the Elections and Electoral Registration; Licensing; Land Charges and Parks Gardens and Open Spaces being chosen as the pilot services
- A range of information should be put into the Self Assessment Form for these pilot services to complete so that the model can be tested for its robustness
- Whilst the model would look at individual services, efficiencies across departments, which could be quite substantial, would need a corporate approach. This was being done through the T-Enabling Project Group who were developing a programme of work. A short presentation should be made to the group on how the two groups could work together most effectively
- The message that the council's use of reserves would end after 2010/11 and that the council would have to have a balanced budget needed to be made clear to members and officers. This would mean that a £1.6million shortfall would need to be made up. To achieve this efficiency would need to be considered by all as part of the "day job".

#### Current Progress

- The self assessment form has been drawn up and discussions held with the relevant service managers. It became clear that due to the introduction of the new software in land charges that it would not be appropriate at this time to use land charges as one of the pilot services and it was removed from the list.
- It has also become clear that some of the financial information required for this form would need the assistance of an accountant. As the time pressures of accountancy services are so demanding at the moment the meeting of the officer/member group will not held until early March.
- At that meeting the group will consider the initial responses to the form and decide what further information will be required to test the model sufficiently.