

Auditor's Statutory Report on the Best Value Performance Plan

Auditor's Report to Leeds City Council on its Best Value Performance Plan for the 2004/05 Financial Year

Certificate

We certify that we have audited Leeds City Council's Best Value Performance Plan ("the Plan") in accordance with section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999 and the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*. We also had regard to supplementary guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

This report is made solely to Leeds City Council, in accordance with Section 7 of the Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Council, to the Audit Commission and (where necessary) to the Secretary of State those matters we are required to state to them in such an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than (i) the Council, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed, (ii) the Audit Commission, for our recommendation under section 7(4)(e) and (iii) the Secretary of State, for our recommendation (if positive) under section 7(4)(f) of the Act.

Respective Responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor

Under the Local Government Act 1999 ("the Act"), the Council is required to prepare and publish a Best Value Performance Plan summarising the Council's assessments of its performance and position in relation to its statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement to the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the Plan and for the information and assessments set out within it. The Council is also responsible for establishing appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in its plan are derived. The form and content of the Best Value Performance Plan are prescribed in section 6 of the Act and statutory guidance issued by the Government.

As the Council's auditors, we are required, under section 7 of the Act, to carry out an audit of the Best Value Performance Plan, to certify that we have done so, and:

- to report whether we believe that the Plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 6 of the Act and statutory guidance and, where appropriate, recommending how the Plan should be amended so as to accord with statutory requirements;
- to recommend:
 - where appropriate, procedures to be followed in relation to the Plan;
 - whether the Audit Commission should carry out a best value inspection of the Council under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999;
 - whether the Secretary of State should give a direction under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Opinion

Basis of this opinion

For the purpose of forming our opinion as to whether the Plan was prepared and published in accordance with the legislation and with regard to statutory guidance, we conducted our audit in accordance with the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*. In carrying out our audit work, we also had regard to supplementary guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

We planned and performed our work so as to obtain all the information and explanations, which we considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether the Plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements.

In giving our opinion, we are not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of the information or the realism and achievability of the assessments published by the Council. Our work therefore comprised a review and assessment of the Plan and, where appropriate, examination on a test basis of relevant evidence, sufficient to satisfy ourselves that the plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation and statutory guidance and that the arrangements for publishing the Plan complied with the requirements of the legislation and statutory guidance.

Unqualified opinion

In our opinion, Leeds City Council has prepared and published its Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 and statutory guidance issued by the Government.

Recommendations on procedures followed in relation to the plan

Where appropriate, we are required to recommend the procedures to be followed by the Council in relation to the Plan.

Recommendations on referral to the Audit Commission/Secretary of State

We are required each year to recommend whether, on the basis of our audit work, the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection of the Council or whether the Secretary of State should give a direction.

On the basis of our work:

- We do not recommend that the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection of Leeds City Council under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999;
- We do not recommend that the Secretary of State should give a direction under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Signature

KPMG LLP

Date

9 December 2004