POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY – 21ST APRIL 2009

SUBJECT: **SELF-ASSESSMENT (C-DRIVER)**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   The following risk was discussed at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee's risk workshop in October 2008. "Monitoring the effectiveness of service self-assessment under the new flexible approach is a lot more difficult, but we need to look at new ways to make it happen. Service self assessment is not as robust as it should be". From discussion of this risk members requested a report on the weakness of self- assessment process.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1   This links into the Wales Programme for Improvement

4. THE REPORT

4.1.1   In 2003 the Council chose a model of self-assessment called the C-driver and CMT gave a commitment to run the C-driver for 5 years. The purpose of the model was to give staff a way to be involved in planning service improvements for their service in a routine and structured way. It was also to ensure that staff's ideas for improvement were captured and acted upon.

4.1.2   The intention was that managers would send different staff each year to give all staff an opportunity to input their views although in smaller areas it was likely some of the same people would attend year-on-year.

4.1.3   The Performance Management Unit (PMU) managed this by arranging the process, training facilitators, booking rooms, getting staff opinion on how they felt the process went and so on.

4.1.4   Managers were to take suggestions made by the group and put actions into their action plans to address these areas for improvement, or if an idea could not be adopted to explain why. PMU monitored action plans to follow up on progress of those actions. As PMU organised C-driver they were able to keep central records for a variety of information such as the types of areas for improvement that people identified, levels of attendance, levels of satisfaction and so forth. The figures below show the level of activity and how this has dropped over the 5 years:

	No workshops	No of attendees	No of questionnaires used (usually replacing workshops and used for reaching large groups of staff)
2003/04	111	1046	823
2004/2005	93	802	802
2005/2006	95	984	401

2006/2007	57	528	211
2007/2008	19	179	229
2008/2009	Not known –	E-mail to services to request data	

4.1.5   As the figures show, the number of workshops dropped considerably in 06/07 and there were a number of reasons for this, some practical but mostly cultural:

4.1.6   Some staff became disillusioned with the process because they felt their ideas were not being acted upon, hence they did not want to continue giving their opinion when they felt nothing occurred as a result of their input.

4.1.6   Staff often felt they were not communicated with as to why ideas could not be progressed nor kept up to date with those that were.

4.1.7   Some services felt the model had come to the end of its natural life, especially those who send the same staff on a yearly basis and therefore found it repetitive.

4.1.8   Following the drop in numbers in 2006/2007 it was decided to review the C-driver and as part of that review PMU spoke with managers and Heads of Service to get their opinion. We found other models of assessment existed, for example Social Services used a yearly 'performance evaluation' and whilst it is unclear how many staff it reaches it is a similar model to the C-driver and therefore could be duplication of effort.

4.1.9   Corporate Management Team agreed that whilst C-driver continued they supported some form of flexibility in how services carried out their self-assessment in that there would be no need to duplicate current practises such as the Social Services example.

4.1.10 It was agreed and communicated by them that there could now be flexibility in how services carried out their self-assessment but there was still a need to continue with a yearly self-assessment that involved staff and that to do nothing was not an option. Any alternative arrangement proposed by a service was to be with the prior agreement of the PMU.

4.1.11 However moving from a more structured requirement to a system with flexibility came a significant drop in any form of self-assessment at all with only 19 C-driver workshops being held. Other forms of self-assessment did take place such as manager's own topic specific meetings but these and the C-driver sessions still collectively came to approx 33 self-assessments 07/08.

4.1.12 The weakness is mainly a cultural issue about what people value and without PMU consciously influencing people to see the value in self-assessment it is a mixed picture as to whether they take place or not and if they do take place whether they are productive.

4.1.13 A requirement of the Wales Programme for improvement 2006 is to ensure staff are involved in service planning and the C-driver self-assessment was CCBC's way to ensure this happened.

4.1.14 We need to make a decision on the future of self-assessment and communicate that decision so that all staff are clear about how they can be involved in service improvement.

4.1.15 We will be seeking continued support and commitment for continuing a self-assessment process whether by C-driver or other methods.

4.1.16 This commitment will need to be communicated to all services and PMU will want to monitor that it is occurring in which ever is the format of choice.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are minor implications if C-driver continues as the cost of ordering self-assessment books is £1000 + vat for approx 600 books which would cover up to 2 years worth of self-assessments.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No personnel issues identified.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 All responses have been reflected in this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are asked to note that the whole principle of service self assessment will be re-evaluated by the PMU and, in particular, a focus of that re-evaluation will be whether or not it adds value and a further report will be provided to this committee on the outcome.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 To re-assess the value of self assessment and the value it brings to improving services.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 Local Government Act 1999.

Author: Ros Roberts. Performance Management Manager
Consultees: Nigel Barnett; Director of Corporate Services
                 Colin Jones; Head of Performance & Policy
                 Cllr John Taylor; Chair, Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
                 Cllr M Sargent; Vice Chair, Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
                 Cllr C Hobbs Cabinet Member for Performance Management