



SELF ASSESSMENT - ASSET MANAGEMENT

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform the Comhairle of the completion of the Self-Assessment of Asset Management using Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkits.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Based on corporate needs going forward and in anticipation of the Comhairle's Audit of Best Value the current programme of self-assessments for 2019/20 were adapted to include Audit Scotland's Best Value toolkits whilst still following the PSIF ethos. The full programme of 18 themed self-assessments have now been rolled out across the Comhairle, some of which apply to only one service area whilst others are cross cutting.
- 2.2 The self-assessments relating to Asset Management has now been completed. Overall the evidence indicates that acceptable standards are being achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
 - (a) **notes the responsible persons and timescales in the Appendix to the Report; and**
 - (b) **approves the recommendations detailed in paragraph 8.1.**

Contact Officer: Carmen Macdonald, Organisational Development Officer
Appendix: BVAR Self-Assessment Recommendation Summary – Asset Management
Background Papers: None

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The Comhairle is under a legal duty to set a balanced budget and in doing so must plan to secure best value.
Legal	Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 , to plan to secure Best Value. The Comhairle has a statutory duty of community planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
Staffing	There are no staffing implications associated with this Report
Assets and Property	There are no asset and property implications associated with this Report
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	There are no risk implications associated with this Report
Equalities	In achieving Best Value, the Comhairle must be able to demonstrate compliance with all statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.
Corporate Strategy	By use of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) since 2015, the Internal Strategy and Organisational Change Team provide a robust approach to continuous improvement to support performance management and continuous improvement through business planning to work towards the outcome of strategic priority <i>“4.1.1 - The Comhairle has achieved a systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness that aligns strategy, people and processes and the service provided is high quality, continually improving and cost effective.”</i> Under the Corporate Strategy 2020-2022: Recovery and Renewal, the Comhairle aims <i>“to promote and support community ownership, empowerment and resilience, capitalising on our natural and cultural assets, to improve population stability and balance”</i> .
Environmental Impact	There are no environmental impact implications associated with this Report
Consultation	There are no consultation implications associated with this Report

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The statutory duty of Best Value was introduced by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Best Value is about ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. Audit Scotland developed Best Value toolkits, although primarily designed as an audit tool, they are recognised as a useful tool when carrying out organisation reviews and provide a set of questions against which an organisation can assess its Best Value arrangements.
- 5.2 Based on corporate needs going forward and in anticipation of the Comhairle’s Audit of Best Value the current programme of self-assessments for 2019/20 was adapted to include Audit Scotland’s Best Value toolkits whilst still following the PSIF ethos. The full programme of 18 themed self-assessments have now been rolled out across the Comhairle, some of which apply to only one service area whilst others are cross cutting.

- 5.3 A total of 15 self-assessments have now been completed; the Appendix to the Report provides a full summary of the resulting recommendations. A recurring corporate theme is emerging relating to the Comhairle's ability to demonstrate outcomes and impacts for service users. This area for improvement is links to several recommendations and should be a corporate priority moving forward.
- 5.4 The current programme of self-assessments supports organisational wide continuous improvements at a strategical level. Services are encouraged to continue this work by developing an operational and systematic approach to monitoring and evidencing best value out with the corporate programme of self-assessments.
- 5.5 As part of the roll out an inter-departmental Best Value Action Plan (BVAP) working group was established with the aim of supporting the identification of readily available high-level corporate evidence. Members of the BVAP working group are liaising with Directors and Heads of Service to collate information. In order to streamline the process a specific online shared drive has been created to support the storing and sharing of information. The Organisational Development Team provide support and guidance as required.

DETAIL

- 6.1 The theme of Asset Management aims to evaluate how well public bodies manage assets from planning and procurement and through the life cycle of the asset. The theme comprises of four high level questions both with seven sub questions. The key findings are detailed below under the relevant subheadings.

KEY FINDINGS

How well does the organisation plan economic, efficient and effective use of its assets?

- 7.1 The first set of questions aim to identify internal strategies, policies and plans to ascertain how economically, efficiently and effectively a public body uses its assets.
- 7.2 The Comhairle has an overarching Corporate Asset Management Plan 2013-2018 (CAMP) in place which covers the nine strands of property, burial grounds, parks, roads, marine, waste, vehicles and plant, ICT and renewables. The Comhairle operates a five-year Capital programme which aligns with the CAMP.
- 7.3 The Comhairle continues to ensure that sustainability and asset management are aligned and embedded in common principles throughout the asset life cycle such as: performance measurement, life-cycle analysis, risk assessment and project prioritisation.

How well does the structure of the organisation support effective asset management?

- 7.4 The second set of questions aims to identify how the effectively the structure of a public body supports the asset management function.
- 7.5 The roles and responsibilities of each group involved in asset management and their remits, are documented within the current Corporate Asset Management Plan. The organisational management structure ensures that asset management matters are progressed; this structure consists of 4 strands, these being; Committee Meetings, Corporate Strategy Team, Corporate Planning Team and the Investment Group. Staff are involved in the asset planning process via the Employee Forum.
- 7.6 Through the Investment Group, an option appraisal framework supports future capital investment decisions. Staff training needs are reviewed annually through the Comhairle's staff development appraisal process and identified needs form part of a corporate training plan.

How well does the organisation work with stakeholders in managing its assets?

- 7.7 The third set of questions aims to identify how well a public body works with stakeholders in managing its assets. The Comhairle collaborate with internal and external stakeholders. The Comhairle has adopted the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's model for handling complaints if they arise.
- 7.8 With regard to equalities the Comhairle's Equal Opportunities Statement & Policy sets out the statutory obligations placed on the Comhairle as a listed public authority. Equality and diversity training forms part of the corporate induction programmes for all new employees. An online Equality and diversity training course is also available to employees. In addition Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken for strategic plans and policies.

How well does the organisation manage the performance of its assets?

- 7.9 The fourth set of questions aims to identify how well a public body manages the performance of its assets. The Comhairle has a Corporate Asset Management System which holds and manages the majority of property related data. The Comhairle's property statutory compliance programme and service contracts are undertaken through a planned works programme and a prioritisation system is in place for reactive maintenance works.
- 7.10 Key Performance Indicators and targets have been set for each asset type and performance management reports are regularly submitted to Senior Management and Members. In addition the Comhairle is a member of the Scottish Benchmarking Group which includes representatives from 21 Scottish organisations and this support internal benchmarking.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Based on the information received through this self-assessment exercise and taking account of the evidenced strengths and weaknesses, it is recommended that the priority area for corporate improvement focuses on refreshing the Corporate Asset Management Plan. It is also recommended that an area for future development include reviewing methods to develop consultation and engagement practices across the service to demonstrate that internal and external stakeholders are involved in asset planning.