



**SELF-ASSESSMENT - GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY,
PROCUREMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP**

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT To inform the Committee of the completion of the Self-Assessments of Governance and Accountability, Procurement and Partnership Working and Community Leadership using Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkits

COMPETENCE

1.1 There are no legal, financial, equalities or other constraints to the recommendations being implemented.

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 Governance and Accountability, Procurement and Partnership Working and Community Leadership have now been completed and are summarised in Appendix 1 through 3. On the whole evidence demonstrates that acceptable standards are being achieved with pockets of good performance.
- 2.3 A total of 10 self-assessments have now been completed; Appendix 4 provides 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.
- 2.4 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
- (a) approve the recommendations contained within Appendix 1, 2 and 3; and**
 - (b) note responsible persons and timescales in Appendix 4.**

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Appendices: Governance and Accountability – Summary of Self-Assessment
Procurement – Summary of Self-Assessment
Partnership Working and Community Leadership – Summary of Self-Assessment
BVAR Self-Assessment Recommendation Summary

Background Papers: None

1. How well do clear roles and responsibilities enable good governance and strong accountability?
Clear roles and responsibilities are essential to ensure good governance and accountability across the Comhairle. As a Local Authority the Comhairle has defined governance arrangements and structured reporting in place. Committee remits, member responsibility and officers roles are all established. Induction training is provided and additional training is provided as required.
2. How effectively does the organisation exhibit appropriate values and behaviour?
Appropriate values and behaviour are defined within the code of conduct and core and leadership values. A range of policies are in place to address inappropriate behaviour.
3. How well do arrangements support members and senior officials to be effective in their role?
Arrangements are in place to support members and senior officer. Arrangements include elections and a formal recruitment process, a transparent pay structure and programmes of annual training.
4. How effective is decision making across the organisation?
The Comhairles Committee structure support good governance and accountability. Meetings are schedule in advance and agendas and relevant papers issued in advance. Minutes are produced timeously and available publically.
5. How well do challenge, scrutiny and review processes ensure a range of informed views are sought and actively considered to aid decision making and improvement?
Through the Committee system members have the opportunity to review and scrutinise information and make informed decisions. There is an established Internal Audit function and open and on-going communication with external auditors. Organisational performance is reported regularly to Committee's and the public and is open to scrutiny.
6. How well does the engagement the organisation has with its stakeholders support real accountability?
The Comhairle, as a Local Authority, has clear functions and levels of accountability. Engagement with stakeholders takes many forms including consultations, community engagement events, FOI's, regular performance reporting, CPP and Community Participation Requests. There is regular dialogue with the Scottish Government both directly and indirectly on a range of matters.
7. How well does the organisation ensure that effective governance and accountability is maintained when the organisation delivers services through companies, trusts or other external entities?
Clear guidance and established procedures exists relating to procurement and engaging consultants. SLA are used across the organisation. Risk registers are managed by a dedicated Officer. Register of interests are maintained by HR.

Areas for Future Development

Develop a co-ordinated approach to update employees and promote good governance across the Comhairle.

Priority Recommendations

Review Constitutional Documents to ensure they are updated with the correct Department, Service and Officer following the organisational restructuring of the Comhairle.

1. Is there clear direction from the top with clear support for getting best value in procurement?
There is a dedicated procurement team in place with clear reporting lines and responsibilities. In addition there is a Procurement Steering Group which included directors and heads of service. There is a documented system of delegation and authority in place for procurement activities.
2. Is there a clear, systematic, holistic and well-researched framework to guide the organisation's purchasing decisions?
There is a recently approved Procurement strategy in place, in addition to a management action plan inclusive of a risk assessment. The strategy is aligned with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
3. Can the organisation demonstrate a clear understanding of how it can best satisfy its core supply needs?
There is a Sustainable Procurement Strategy in place and an Action Plan to support the Procurement Strategy. Sourcing strategies are often based on individual contracts. Prior Information Notices are used to gauge market interest and Community engagement events are held for key contracts.
4. Does the organisation manage its suppliers and contracts effectively?
There is a contract management template in place and each contract has a named contract manager. There are examples of structured contract management process such as works contracts. Contracts relating to Care homes are subject to National Care Home contract so have detailed provisions relating to management and performance indicators.
5. Does the organisation have efficient and robust processes and systems to support advanced procurement activity?
The Comhairle uses the electronic Civica Authority Financials system and procurement activity is conducted via the Public Contracts Scotland Portal.
6. Does the organisation have people with sufficient capability to ensure effective performance?
The procurement team is fully resourced and has no current skills gaps. Relevant training plans are in place for staff to ensure any required qualifications are gained within a set timeframe.
7. Does the organisation have a sound approach to assessing and demonstrating its procurement performance?
Internally performance is monitored and reported using Interplan and the formal committee structure. Budgets are monitored by departmental service accountants. An Annual Procurement Report is submitted to the Scottish Government.

Areas for Future Development

Review options for internal training around contracts management practices

Priority Recommendation

Procurement review its procedures so as to improve the robustness of contract management throughout the term of a contract

1. How committed are senior management/board members/political leaders to partnership working or community planning?
There is a clear shared vision for the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). There are regular formal meetings held which are attended by senior management and political leaders.
2. How effective its governance arrangements for partnership working – specifically scrutiny and accountability arrangements?
Actions are documented and named leads appointed to achieving outcomes. Progress is reported at the Executive Group and Board Levels where oversight is provided. Complaints are referred through individual partners and managed through relevant internal procedures.
3. How effective is it working with partners in the involvement of communities in the partnership process and how well is it helping to deliver partnership community capacity building and empowerment?
Community Consultation and Public Engagement Guide was drafted in December 2019. Engagement with the public is on-going. Individual partners feed organisational-wide consultation results and evidence through the CPP.
4. Has the organisation agreed a set of measures and targets to track progress and demonstrate impact of partnership working, and how good are its arrangements with partners for managing and reporting performance?
The CPP produces an Annual Report to evidence progress and impacts across a range of actions. The Comhairles independently reports progress against relating actions on a quarterly basis through its internal performance management system Interplan.
5. How well are the organisation's partnership outcomes and actions evidence-based (on shared contextual analysis and information) and how well do they reflect the needs of the area/communities/service users?
The CPP have gathered evidence as a partnership and individual organisations also feed in data as required.
6. Has the organisation along with its partners set and agreed priorities? How committed are they to delivering them?
The CPP has agreed priorities which are aligned with the Comhairles corporate strategy. The CPP meet on a regular basis to ensure the delivery of a range of agreed objectives.
7. How well does the organisation understand the resources needed to deliver its partnership priorities and how well has it worked with partners to align its funding, assets and staffing in a sustainable framework?
The CPP has clear priorities cascading through several local plans with named leads. There are limited resources available to the partnership and it has no associated budget. The Comhairle provide 1.5 FTE to support the needs of the CPP. The CPP has a dedicated web page.
8. How effective has the organisation with its partners been at delivering real outcomes and impact for people and communities?
Outcomes are linked to the LOIP. An annual report is published which shows progress across several indicators. Examples of joint working are available.

Areas for Future Development

More detailed annual progress reviews and the adoption of the "We Asked, You Said, We Did" consultation format and undertake more regular on line surveys

Priority Recommendation

Undertake a full self-assessment for Community Planning Partnerships

BVAR SELF-ASSESSMENT RECCOMENDATIONS SUMMARY
Appendix 4

	Audit Scotland Toolkits	CPT	A&S	Areas for Future Development	Priority Recommendations	Responsible	Timescale
10 (2019/20)	Asset management	-	-	-	-	-	pending
11 (2019/20)	Customer-focus and responsiveness	20/02/20	23/06/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review taking a streamlined and corporate approach to engaging with external customer to improve levels of consistence 2. Increase level of information relating to accessing services to promote assistance available for example Language Line and Contact Scotland 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of the Digital Strategy 2. Amending our council signature to include directing BSL users to Contact SCOTLAND 	IT	April 2021
12 (2019/20)	Procurement	01/07/20		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review options for internal training around contracts management practices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procurement review its procedures so as to improve the robustness of contract management throughout the term of a contract 	Tim Langley	April 2021
13 (2019/20)	Equalities	19/03/20	23/06/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve ability to demonstrate outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move to a more outcomes focused reporting method within the Equalities Mainstream Report 	Organisational Development	April 2021
14 (2019/20)	Governance and accountability	01/07/20		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a co-ordinated approach to update employees and promote good governance across the Comhairle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Constitutional Documents to ensure they are updated with the correct Department, Service and Officer following the organisational restructuring of the Comhairle 	Derek Mackay	April 2021
15 (2019/20)	Information management	-	-	-	-	-	pending
16 (2019/20)	People management	23/01/20	03/03/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased use of external benchmarking 2. Continue to develop ways to build stronger evidence bases in relation to demonstrating outcomes 3. Review options to corporately record and training, professional registrations and CPD activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create corporate or departmental Policy Registers including responsible persons and review dates 2. Increase the pace of change relating to a final solution for web based employee information 	Angus Murray Organisational Development and IT	April 2021

17 (2019/20)	Risk management	20/02/20	23/06/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalise and roll out Risk Management Training on LearnPro 2. Strengthen ability to capture Risk Managements contributions towards the achievement of corporate objectives 	1. Complete up-to-date Business Continuity Plans	Corporate Planning Team	April 2021
18 (2019/20)	Challenge and improvement	19/03/20	23/06/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage services to compile case studies following improvement initiatives 	1. Develop means to better demonstrate resulting impacts, following change, on service users	Organisational Development	April 2021
19 (2019/20)	Efficiency	19/03/20	23/06/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued monitoring of the pace of change and resulting improvements in relation to the current programme of Transformational Change 	1. Review options to enhance the measurement of outcomes corporately	Corporate Planning Team	April 2021
20 (2019/20)	Financial management	-	-	-	-	-	pending
21 (2019/20)	Partnership working and community leadership (Organisational level)	01/07/20		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More detailed annual progress reviews 2. Adopt the We Asked, You Said, We Did" consultation format an undertake more regular on line surveys 	1. Undertake a full self-assessment for Community Planning Partnerships	Angus Murray	April 2021
22 (2019/20)	Planning and resource alignment	23/01/20	03/03/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to build on levels of citizen and customer engagement 2. Review developing consultations to reflect government consultation principles 3. Increased focus on measurable outcomes 	1. Finalise Business Continuity Plans	Corporate Planning Team	April 2021
23 (2019/20)	Sustainability	-	-	-	-	-	pending
24 (2019/20)	Community engagement	-	-	-	-	-	pending

25 (2019/20)	Vision and strategic direction	Pending		1. Increased focus on outcomes rather than inputs and output	1. Develop Corporate Consultation Standards	Organisational Development	April 2021
25 (2019/20)	Performance management	,	,	-	-	-	pending
26 (2019/20)	Public performance reporting	,	,	-	-	-	pending