



**SELF-ASSESSMENT - VISION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Report by Chief Executive

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To inform the Committee of the completion of the Self-Assessments of Vision and Strategic Direction 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 Vision and Strategic Direction has now been completed. On the whole evidence demonstrates that acceptable standards are being achieved with pockets of good performance.
- 2.3 A total of 11 self-assessments have now been completed; Appendix 1 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.
- 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) **note the responsible persons and timescales in the Appendix; and**
  - (b) **approve the recommendations detailed in paragraph 6.1.**

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Appendix: BVAR Self-Assessment Recommendation Summary  
Background Papers: None

## BACKGROUND

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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

- 5.1 The theme of vision and strategic direction aims to evaluate how well leadership works together to deliver priorities set out in by a public body. The theme comprises of two high level questions both with seven sub question. The key findings are detailed below under the relevant subheadings.

### Has the Comhairle established a clear vision and sense of purpose?

- 5.2 The first set of questions aim to identify levels of practice in relation to how effectively a public body establishes a clear vision and sense of purpose which reflect local needs, the views of local people, national priorities, and will secure improved outcomes.
- 5.3 The Comhairle has established a clear vision and sense of purpose by linking its corporate strategy to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). By continually working to improve communication and consultation methods the Comhairle actively seeks the views of stakeholders in a coordinated manner. Local data is collated on a regular basis and the Comhairle regularly reviews and benchmarks against national data which supports continuous improvement.
- 5.4 The corporate strategy feeds through to service business plans which take account of the increasingly challenging public sector fiscal environment. The internal performance management system Interplan evidences performance and outcomes at a corporate level. This information is reported to committee on a regular basis and is available to the public.

### Can the Comhairle demonstrate performance, partnership working, and outcomes for citizens?

- 5.5 The second set of questions aims to identify how well a public body can demonstrate open and inclusive performance, partnership working, and outcomes for citizens.
- 5.6 The Comhairle has clear political and managerial leadership structures in place. Formal committees support a transparent, fair and inclusive decision-making process and allow activities, plans and strategies to be scrutinised.

- 5.7 The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) act as the vehicle for partnership working and Community Councils provide a further link directly with communities.
- 5.8 A robust electronic performance management system allows the Comhairle assign responsibility to individuals and services hence supporting a coordinated approach to the delivery of agreed actions and priorities.
- 5.9 Through the employee appraisal and development process employees can contribute to the achievement of actions within service business plans. An employee forum has also been established and allows employees to actively contribute across on a range of areas.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 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 around the development of corporate consultation standards. It is also recommended that an area for future development include an increased focus on outcomes rather than inputs and output.

## Appendix – BVAR Self-Assessment Recommendation Summary

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

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

<p><b>23</b> (2019/20)</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider addressing sustainability in the competence section of reports</li> <li>2. Procurement can make a real difference when cutting carbon emissions as carbon is associated with the assembly, packaging, transport, storage and handling of products and materials which account for a significant proportion of an organisations carbon footprint.</li> <li>3. In accordance with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 which sets out that, where appropriate, commodities and suppliers should be identified to reap the maximum sustainability impact and benefit it is recommended that additional procurement related actions/projects should be included within the Carbon management Plan. Procurement practices should be designed around reducing harmful environmental impacts and promoting climate friendly solutions where feasible.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In light of the current changes to working environments, particularly an increase in home working, remote and on-line training and virtual Committee meeting, there are potential long-term benefits relating to a continued reduction in the corporate carbon footprint. It is therefore recommended that the area of travel be reassessed and additional actions be considered to reduce travel on a more permanent basis.</li> </ol>	<p>Derek Mackay  Tim Langley  Corporate Planning Team</p>	<p>April 2021</p>
<p><b>24</b> (2019/20)</p>	<p>Community engagement</p>					
<p><b>25</b> (2019/20)</p>	<p>Vision and strategic direction</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased focus on outcomes rather than inputs and output</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop Corporate Consultation Standards</li> </ol>	<p>Organisational Development</p>	<p>April 2021</p>
<p><b>25</b> (2019/20)</p>	<p>Performance management</p>					
<p><b>26</b> (2019/20)</p>	<p>Public performance reporting</p>					