

## Audit & Scrutiny Committee

30 September 2015

Agenda Item	7
Report No	AS/20/15

### Public Performance Reporting – meeting Annual Audit Direction 2013/14

Report by the Head of People & Performance

#### Summary

Audit Scotland recently reviewed and reported on the Council's public performance reporting for 2013/14 and set out new criteria to support improvement activity. An action plan has been prepared following review of this report aimed at improving our future public performance reporting.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 During 2013 we reviewed Service by Service our approach to meeting the Annual Audit Direction (AAD) and this changed the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) data set for reporting from 2013/14 onwards. This also took into account the requirement to include the local government benchmarking framework (LGBF). This review addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the previous audit of our Public Performance Reporting (PPR), as best could be judged, given the assessment criteria were unknown.
- 1.2 The Accounts Commission via Audit Scotland issued a further review of Scottish Local Authorities PPR and compliance with the Annual Audit Direction for the 2013/14 in July 2015. This again covered reporting performance across a range of key activity areas covered by the AAD through statutory performance indicators and how we report our performance to the public. This review was against an extended set of criteria which are not part of the current AAD and therefore were again unknown to Councils. A summary of the overall assessment is attached as appendix 1 of this report. The report makes assessment based on a view of compliance or areas for improvement (AFI).

## 2. Audit Review of Public Performance Reporting

- 2.1 While Services were unable to prepare for this assessment as outlined at 1.2 above, this much more detailed approach by Audit Scotland will enable more targeted improvement activity around our PPR. Audit Scotland suggest that the focus of PPR improvement actions should be:
  - Making it straightforward for the public to find performance information on Council websites
  - Including commentary in plain language to explain detailed performance information
  - Providing an explanation of any plans to address under-performance
- 2.2 Summary of findings by theme:

Activity Area	Compliant	Area for Improvement
Corporate	4	3
Service	3	8
Benchmarking (LGBF)	1	0

Overall PPR aspects	3	4
	11	15

### 2.3 The Council met assessment criteria in the following areas:

- Responsiveness to communities (1.1)
- Revenues & service costs (1.2)
- Employees (1.3)
- Sustainable development (1.6)
- Cultural and community services (2.4)
- Housing & homelessness (2.8)
- Roads & lighting (2.10)
- Structured approach to reporting (4.1)
- Customer satisfaction (4.2)
- Dialogue with the public (4.6)

There is positive feedback on the above functions along with helpful suggestions to further develop our approach.

### 2.4 Areas for improvement

There were areas for improvement (AFI) identified in Corporate, Service and overall approaches to PPR. There were a number of key messages to support improvement activity across all AFI and these are:

- A broader range of indicators are needed;
- Insufficient information to judge performance;
- Further benchmarking and trend information is needed;
- More analysis and contextual information needed to support data;
- More use of graphs and charts.

### 2.5 Improvement Actions

The report has provided useful information to support improvement activity on PPR and appendix 2 provides an action plan for improvement. In addition the following action have already been taken:

- The Corporate Performance Team has refocused a Corporate Performance Officer post onto PPR. This includes SPi reporting and developing the Council's corporate performance web pages to improve accessibility including the use of graphic information.
- Benchmarking information is accessible from the Council Performance web pages.
- While across Scotland results have been mixed, the Scottish National Performance Forum, of which the Council is an active member, has and will be arranging sharing of best practice to support improvement activity.

The actions above and in appendix 2 should strengthen the Council's approach to PPR. However the approach needs to be balanced taking into account available resources and competing priorities at both Corporate and Service levels. Given the timing of the report only limited change may be achievable for 2014/15 (due by March 2016) with more significant improvement achievable for 2015/16 reporting.

## 3. **Highland identified good practice**

### 3.1 There were two areas which Audit Scotland identified and reported on good practice. There were:

- The Council's effective use of customer satisfaction information through the

citizen's panel survey of performance and attitudes. They highlighted the effective use of the panel, improvement action based on results and the use of graphics and analysis.

- Accessibility through effective use of webcasting technology. There was particular interest in the live broadcast of meetings where performance was being discussed and access offered at a later date via the webcast archive. This was seen as innovative and addressing geographical remoteness.

#### **4. Future Direction**

4.1 Audit Scotland has recognised that the current Audit Direction needs review as it doesn't currently provide detailed guidance on PPR when compared to the assessment criteria applied. They have indicated this is underway and likely to result in changes to the current requirements on statutory performance information. This is expected to be published in December 2015 and may require further adaptation of the Council's approach and the improvement actions outlined in Appendix 2 and at 2.5 above.

#### **5. Implications: Resources; Legal; Equalities; Climate Change/Carbon Clever; Rural and Risk**

5.1 While the external audit process has no implications, the audit of some indicators ensures that there are SPis in place as evidence for some duties and commitments and also focus on the accessibility of data to the public. These are:

- Equalities: SPis on Women in Management, Disabled Access to Buildings and accessibility of PPR to the public.
- Climate Change/Carbon Clever: Refuse recycling, energy cost and consumption
- Rural: a range of services which relate to rural areas including roads maintenance, recycling and waste and specifically the cost of delivering these and other services impact on Council performance and benchmark positions.
- Risk: the audit of PPR provides the Council with opportunities to improve PPR and thereby meet statutory duties on PPR.

#### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the assessment in appendix 1 of the report;
- Approve the action plan detailed in Appendix 2 and the actions in paragraph 2.5 above.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Corporate Performance Manager

Date: 25.08.14

Appendix 1 – Highland Council, Assessment of Public Performance Reporting 2013/14

Appendix 2 – Highland Council, Action Plan, Public Performance Reporting 2013/14

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

### ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING FOR 2013/14

Organisation	Roles	Name, title	Email	Telephone	Mobile
PABV Group	Audit Scotland	Douglas Black, Audit Manager	<a href="mailto:SPquery@audit-scotland.gov.uk">SPquery@audit-scotland.gov.uk</a>	0131 625 1856	07599 996 898
Audit Scotland	Auditor	Stephen Boyle, Assistant Director	<a href="mailto:SBoyle@audit-scotland.gov.uk">SBoyle@audit-scotland.gov.uk</a>	0131 625 1616	07786 117 238
Audit Scotland	Auditor	Maggie Bruce, Senior Audit Manager	<a href="mailto:mbruce@audit-scotland.gov.uk">mbruce@audit-scotland.gov.uk</a>	0131 625 1954	0787 963 3665

**Key links – if a link does not open the web page/document you seek, please copy and paste the link into your web browser. Links valid as at April 2015.**

<p><b>SPI 1. Corporate management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Home &gt; Council and government &gt; Council information, performance and statistics &gt; How we are performing</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Annual Corporate Performance Report 2013/14</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Statutory Performance Indicators 2013/14 (SPI report)</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Annual Performance Supplement December 2013 (newspaper supplement)</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Public performance survey</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">What you told us</a> - There are links on this page to local Service analysis of LGBF indicators. This provides narrative relevant to SPI1,2 &amp; 3 as all LGBF are used as evidence for SPI 1&amp;2</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SPI 2. Service performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Home&gt; Council and government &gt; Council information, performance and statistics &gt; How we compare to other councils &gt;</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Corporate Services, Children's Services, Culture and Leisure Services, Environmental Services, Corporate Asset, Housing Services, Economic Development</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SPI 3. LGBF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Home &gt; Council and government &gt; Council information, performance and statistics &gt; See how we compare and mylocalcouncil</a></li> </ul>
--

**Links to SPIs / summary of ratings**

SPI 1. Corporate	Rating	SPI 2. Service	Rating	SPI 3. LGBF	Rating	4. Overall aspects	Rating
<a href="#">1.1 Responsiveness to communities</a>	YES	<a href="#">2.1 Benefits administration</a>	AFI	<a href="#">3.1 LGBF</a>	Yes	<a href="#">4.1 Structured approach</a>	YES
<a href="#">1.2 Revenues &amp; service costs</a>	YES	<a href="#">2.2 Community care</a>	AFI			<a href="#">4.2 Customer satisfaction</a>	YES
<a href="#">1.3 Employees</a>	YES	<a href="#">2.3 Criminal justice social work</a>	AFI			<a href="#">4.3 Balanced picture</a>	AFI
<a href="#">1.4 Assets</a>	AFI	<a href="#">2.4 Cultural &amp; community services</a>	YES			<a href="#">4.4 Comparators</a>	AFI
<a href="#">1.5 Procurement</a>	AFI	<a href="#">2.5 Planning</a>	AFI			<a href="#">4.5 Financial &amp; cost information</a>	AFI
<a href="#">1.6 Sustainable development</a>	YES	<a href="#">2.6 Education of children</a>	AFI			<a href="#">4.6 Dialogue with the public</a>	YES
<a href="#">1.7 Equalities &amp; diversity</a>	AFI	<a href="#">2.7 Child protection/social work</a>	AFI			<a href="#">4.7 Accessibility</a>	AFI
		<a href="#">2.8 Housing &amp; homelessness</a>	YES				
		<a href="#">2.9 Protective services</a>	AFI				
		<a href="#">2.10 Roads &amp; lighting</a>	YES				
		<a href="#">2.11 Waste management</a>	AFI				
<b>Number of Yes</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Number of AFI</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>-</b>		<b>4</b>

# Action plan – PPR 2013/14

No	Para	Area for Improvement	Management response & proposed action	Responsible officer	Action date
1	1.4	<b>Corporate - Assets</b> Audit view is there is insufficient information provided for the public. More indicators supported by contextual information are suggested to provide a more comprehensive picture of performance.	Service to develop performance pages in relation to its SPIs and develop narratives and graphic content.  Service to propose supplementary SPIs.	Director of Development & Infrastructure  Director of Development & Infrastructure	February 2016  November 2015
2	1.5	<b>Corporate - Procurement</b> Audit view is there is insufficient information provided for the public to enable them to understand Council performance. More indicators supported by contextual information are suggested to provide a more comprehensive picture of performance.	Develop Finance performance web pages to provide the public with access to more detailed narrative, graphics, benchmark positions and improvement actions on procurement.  Review procurement SPIs identify weaknesses and agree supplementary SPIs.	Director of Finance  Director of Finance	December 2015  November 2015
3	1.7	<b>Corporate – Equalities</b> Audit recognised the comprehensive reporting on equalities, but felt there needed to be a more comprehensive set of SPIs with trend analysis.	Equalities Working Group to identify supplementary indicators to be adopted as SPIs and reported against the Fairer Highland Plan.  Publish reports on Fairer Highland performance on the Equalities web pages	Head of Policy & Reform  Head of Policy & Reform	October 2015  October 2015 & ongoing
4	2.1 2.2 2.3  2.5 2.6 2.7  2.9 2.11	<b>Service Delivery:</b> <b>Benefits Administration</b> <b>Community Care</b> <b>Criminal Justice Social Work</b> <b>Planning</b> <b>Education of Children</b> <b>Child protection &amp; children' social work</b> <b>Protective Services</b> <b>Waste Management</b>  Audit's view for the services/ functions above was on	Develop Service performance web pages to provide the public with access to more detailed narrative, graphics, benchmark positions and improvement actions.  Review Service SPIs identify weaknesses and agree KPIs and supplementary SPIs	All Service Directors/ Service Performance Leads  All Service Directors/ Corporate Performance	February 2016  December 2015

No	Para	Area for Improvement	Management response & proposed action	Responsible officer	Action date
		balance a broader set of indicators were needed, more analysis and contextual information to enable a judgement to be made. More use of graphs and charts along with trends and benchmark information and its implications. Detail of improvement activity.		Manager	
5	4.3	<b>Overall aspects – balances picture of performance</b> Audit's view was there was not clear from corporate reports what the Council decided its priorities for improvement were.	Services to submit to strategic committees SPI reports which provide more contextual information including improvement activity priorities. This was agreed at Council in March 2015	All Service Directors	December 2015
6	4.4	<b>Overall aspects – good use of comparators</b> Audit's view is PPR could benefit from more comparisons of performance against trend and other councils along with appropriate analysis.	Action outlined at 4 above.		
7	4.5	<b>Overall aspects – good use of financial and cost information</b>	Develop further the resource and budget pages on the Council's web site to provide more detail on how we spend our budget making use of infographics.	Director of Finance	December 2015
8	4.7	<b>Overall aspects – accessibility</b> Audit's view is that more signposting is needed between pages on the Council web site	Develop a Performance 'home page' and review and strengthen links between pages including Service performance pages as at action 4 above.	Corporate Performance Manager	December 2015