

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

MEETING 15 JULY 2010

REPORT BY CONTROLLER OF AUDIT

Developing the BV2 audit process

Introduction

1. At its July meeting the Commission considered a research report by Ipsos-MORI Scotland reviewing stakeholders' experience of the Best Value 2 pathfinder audits. During discussion, the Commission considered a number of the issues highlighted by the report and its recommendations.
2. Alongside the Ipsos-MORI report the Commission considered a report by the Director of Best Value and Scrutiny Improvement on the development of the Best Value 2 approach.
3. Following discussion of the two reports, the Commission—
 - Agreed that peer involvement in the audits should continue, and that the role and selection of peers should remain flexible but be explained as fully as possible to audited bodies;
 - Agreed in principle that summary-style reports should be produced in addition to full reports;
 - Agreed that reports should seek to simplify language and use a consistent layout wherever possible;
 - Agreed that reports should include information to allow understanding of service performance, so far as possible consistent with the audits being proportionate and risk-based;
 - Considered the wording and definition of the two judgements used in the pathfinder audits, and the scale against which judgements were made, and agreed—
 - That the wording of the judgements should seek to give public assurance on an authority's improvement over the whole period since previous best value audits, and on its capacity to improve further against the characteristics of a best value authority; and
 - That consideration should be given to how the wording, definition and scale of the judgements might be aligned with those used by other local government inspectorates.

The purpose of this report

4. This report sets out proposals for consideration by the Commission:
 - On the merits and demerits of moving to a six-point scale, to give a more nuanced judgement of council performance and prospects for improvement.
 - On options for making the BV2 descriptors more meaningful to members of the public
 - On how it might provide greater transparency in how the judgements have been reached, particularly in respect of how the council is rated on each of the individual criteria that form part of the overall BV2 judgements.
5. It also sets out the next steps that the Commission might take to communicate the lessons learnt from the BV2 Pathfinder audit process and its refined BV2 audit approach to interested parties.

Background to the introduction of the two new BV2 judgements

6. This report builds on the Commission's consideration in October 2008, January 2009, October 2009 of how it might introduce clearer judgements for reporting council performance as part of BV2, covering two dimensions of performance:
 - A **direction and pace of change** judgement, based on the council's record in securing continuous improvement in its services. Inherent in that judgement will be an assessment of how well the council is currently performing.
 - A **capacity for future improvement** judgement, based on the prospect of further improvement.
7. Those deliberations led to the testing of a four-point performance descriptor, covering two performance dimensions at the five BV2 Pathfinder audits (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

The two new BV2 summary audit judgements which were tested through the Pathfinder audit process

	<i>Performance dimension</i>	
	<i>Pace and Direction of change</i>	<i>Prospect for future improvement</i>
<i>Performance descriptors</i>	<i>Improving strongly</i>	<i>Strongly placed to deliver future improvement</i>
	<i>Improving well</i>	<i>Well placed to deliver future improvement</i>
	<i>Needs to improve more quickly</i>	<i>Fair prospects of future improvement</i>
	<i>Not improving adequately</i>	<i>Poor prospects of future improvement</i>

Source: Audit Scotland

8. It was hoped that these judgements would provide the public with a clearer assessment of the overall performance of their council and the extent to which it is delivering continuous improvement, and that, when combined with more citizen-friendly forms of BV2 reporting and shorter BV2 reporting based on plain English principles, this would improve the impact of Best Value audit reports.
9. To achieve a transparent and consistent approach to arriving at the two new BV2 audit judgements the Commission adopted a set of clear assessment criteria for each key element of the evidence base which will underpin the new judgements. These criteria were developed into an assessment framework which was tested through the BV2 Pathfinder audit process and appended to each BV2 Pathfinder report. The BV2 judgements assessment framework is attached at **Appendix 1**.

What did we learn about the two new judgements from the Pathfinder process?

10. The BV2 judgements arising from four Pathfinder audits centred around the two 'middle' descriptors, with all Pathfinder councils assessed as being in either 'improving well/well placed', or 'need to improve more quickly/fair prospects' (Exhibit 2).
11. This outcome, at least in part, reflected the 'aspirational' and ambitious performance level set to achieve either an 'improving strongly' or 'strongly placed' judgement, and the expectation that judgements of 'not improving adequately' or 'poor prospects of future improvement' would be used only in exceptional circumstances. Perhaps because of this, a substantial minority of the Pathfinder councils (two of the five) suggested that there should be some level of gradation within each of the four judgement categories. In their BV2 Pathfinder evaluation report ipsos-MORI suggested that this might be achieved by moving from a 4-point to a 6-point scale. The pros and cons of this are explored later in the conclusions section of this report which is followed by recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

Exhibit 2

The two new BV2 summary audit judgements arising from the five BV2 Pathfinder audits

	<i>Performance dimension</i>			
	<i>Pace and Direction of change</i>		<i>Prospect for future improvement</i>	
Performance descriptors	<i>Improving strongly</i>		<i>Strongly placed to deliver future improvement</i>	
	<i>Improving well</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Ayrshire ▪ Scottish Borders Council ▪ The Highland Council 	<i>Well placed to deliver future improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Ayrshire ▪ Scottish Borders Council ▪ The Highland Council
	<i>Needs to improve more quickly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angus Council ▪ Dundee City Council 	<i>Fair prospects of future improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angus Council ▪ Dundee City Council
	<i>Not improving adequately</i>		<i>Poor prospects of future improvement</i>	

Source: Audit Scotland

12. Further issues relating to the new BV2 judgements which arose from the Pathfinder audit process included:

- A perceived lack of transparency in how the judgements had been reached, and a suggestion that a clearer explanation of how the council had been rated against each of the individual criteria in the BV2 judgement framework (**Appendix 1**), e.g. outcomes, service quality, the views of citizens and service users, etc.
- A sense amongst the Pathfinder councils that Audit Scotland had not been clear about its reference period during the audit which had created scope for disagreement between councils and audit teams.
- A perceived mismatch between the tone of the narrative report and the BV2 judgement.

13. In relation to the concerns about lack of transparency, in future it would be relatively straightforward for audit teams to clearly identify, through shading or boldening the appropriate text in the Appendix to BV2 audit reports, how they had rated the council against each of the individual BV2 criteria and thereby arrived at their overall assessment. Such a development would:
- a) provide greater transparency
 - b) present a more sophisticated and potentially more balanced presentation of the council's overall performance, and
 - c) more clearly present where the council needs to focus its improvement agenda moving forward;

All of which would hopefully improve the BV2 audit process.

14. In relation to the perception amongst the Pathfinder councils that Audit Scotland had not been clear about its reference period during the audit, it would be very straightforward for the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland to explicitly state in any guidance material on the BV2 audit process that the BV2 audit will, in normal circumstances, use the period from the BV1 audit and the subsequent BV2 audit as the period over which performance improvement is being assessed.
15. In relation to the perceived mismatch between the tone of the narrative report and the BV2 judgement, the Commission will want to consider how refining the two BV2 judgements drawing both on the views of councils and the views expressed through the Consumer Focus Scotland research and linking these more clearly to the characteristics of a Best Value Council might mitigate against this risk.

What do the public think about the new BV2 judgements?

16. Research undertaken by Consumer Focus Scotland (CFS) on behalf of the Accounts Commission in relation to Best Value in local government¹ supported what the Accounts Commission was trying to achieve through the two new judgements, in terms of providing a clear assessment of both how well a council is performing and how likely it is to improve in the future. However, respondents did not feel that the current BV2 descriptors were meaningful to the public. Respondents also stressed the importance of capturing more clearly how well a council is performing as well as direction of travel in the current 'pace and direction of travel' descriptor.
17. The CFS research indicated a preference for one-word descriptors (strong, good, satisfactory, weak) rather than the current two to six-word descriptors tested through the BV2 Pathfinder audits.

¹ Best Value in Scottish Local Government: Consumer views on reporting mechanisms. Jennifer Wallace, Principal Policy Advocate and Gill MacGregor, Consumer Network Co-ordinator, February 2010

18. Respondents were supportive of a four category, not a five category grading model, feeling that a five-grade model would tend towards councils being placed in the 'middle' category. Their views were not sought on the benefits of a six-grade model.
19. Based on these findings the Commission may want to consider options for one-word descriptors (strong, good, satisfactory, weak) rather than the current two to six-word descriptors. Various possibilities are set out in Exhibit 3, below.

How do other audit and inspection bodies currently report their performance judgements?

20. The Commission has agreed that consideration should be given to how the wording, definition and scale of the judgements might be aligned with those used by other local government inspectorates. Exhibit 3 summarises the wide variety of approaches that are currently in use by a range of English and Scottish scrutiny bodies for reporting performance judgements.

Exhibit 3

Performance descriptors currently in use by a range of English and Scottish scrutiny bodies

BV2	SHR	Health Care Commission	WAO	OfSted	Audit Commission CPA	Care Commission	HMIE	SWIA
Improving strongly	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Outstanding	Performing strongly	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
						Very good	Very good	Very good
Improving well	Good	Good	Mainly good	Good	Performing well	Good	Good	Good
						Adequate	Satisfactory	Adequate
Needs to improve more quickly	Fair	Fair	Inconsistent	Satisfactory	Adequate performance	Weak	Weak	Weak
Not improving adequately	Poor	Weak	Poor	Inadequate	Inadequate performance	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Source: Audit Scotland

Simplifying and clarifying the BV2 descriptors

21. Given the CFS feedback on the preference amongst consumers for one-word descriptors (strong, good, satisfactory, weak) rather than the current two to six-word descriptors applied through the BV2 Pathfinder audit process the Commission may want to consider whether any of the one-word descriptors contained in Exhibit 3 might usefully be applied to the current 'pace and direction of change' judgement.
22. The Commission may also want to consider whether the descriptors for the current 'prospects for future improvement' judgement can each be shortened to two-words from the current five. However, to achieve this the wording of the judgement would itself also need to change.
23. Options for consideration are set out in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4

Options for revising the BV2 descriptors

	<i>Performance dimension</i>	
	<i>How good is my council's...</i>	
	<i>Achievement of Best Value/Overall performance</i>	<i>What are my council's prospect for future improvement/How well placed is my council to continue to improve?</i>
Performance descriptors	<i>Excellent/Outstanding</i>	<i>Excellent prospects/Strongly placed</i>
	<i>Good/Sound/Solid</i>	<i>Good prospects/Well placed</i>
	<i>Fair/Satisfactory/Adequate/Inconsistent</i>	<i>Fair or reasonable prospects/Uncertainly placed</i>
	<i>Poor/Weak/Inadequate/Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Poor prospects/Badly placed</i>

Source: Audit Scotland

Making the BV2 judgements more meaningful to the public

24. The CFS feedback on the current 'pace and direction of change' and 'prospects for future improvement' judgements was that the public found both of these descriptors difficult to grasp without additional explanation.
25. The Commission could make the current 'pace and direction of change' judgement clearer to the public by adopting a form of words such as:
 - How good is my council's overall performance?
 - How good is my council's achievement of Best Value?
26. Of these two options, the former allows for the coverage of the assessment to more clearly include service performance, the 'hidden' assessment in the current 'pace and direction of

change' judgement. The alternative option of 'how good is my council's achievement of Best Value?' provides a clearer link between the Best Value legislation underpinning the audit process, but is less likely to be understandable to the general public.

27. Making the 'prospects for future improvement' judgement more user-friendly to the public is less straightforward. Option include:

- A variant on the Wales Audit Office judgement: '*How well placed is the council to sustain and improve services?*' (badly placed, uncertainly placed, well placed, strongly placed)
- A variation on the current BV2 Pathfinder descriptor: '*What are my council's prospect for future improvement?*' (poor, fair/reasonable, good, excellent)
- A simpler descriptor such as '*How likely is it that my council will continue to improve?*' (very unlikely, unlikely, likely, very likely).

28. In considering these options the Commission will want to balance simplicity of language against the risks of offering a false level of assurance on a future event which is by definition uncertain.

Moving from a 4 to 6-point scale

29. There is an understandable appetite for greater consistency to be achieved in the way in which individual local government scrutiny bodies assess and report on the performance of councils. Exhibit 3 shows that HMIE, SWIA and the Care Commission currently use a six-point grading scale, rather than a four-point scale as adopted for the BV2 Pathfinder process. However, when one looks more widely across the UK, four-point scales are the most common model.

30. It is important to recognise too that as HMIE move from their first round of Child Protection inspections and into the follow-through and cycle 2 inspections their assessments are focused on progress made against the 'main points for actions' rather than a comprehensive performance assessment against their inspection framework. This means that the language used in their reports is often couched in terms of the effectiveness of action taken and the significance of progress, rather than the overall quality of the service being inspected. SWIA too are moving away from their six-point scale, with their Initial Scrutiny Level Assessment process (ISLA), which is used to determining the scale and focus SWIA activity, being based on a three colour (green, amber, red) risk assessment, not their previous six-point scale.

31. The third Scottish scrutiny body to use a six-point scale is the Care Commission. The early evidence from the introduction by the Care Commission of its six-point scale was that over 80% of gradings were either: good (45.7%), very good (33.3%), or excellent (1.8%). The lowest three grades of unsatisfactory, weak, or adequate were awarded to only 20% of inspected bodies (0.5%, 3.8% and 14.9% of inspected bodies respectively). This very positively skewed distribution will, at least in part reflect the nature of the services being inspected but does not reflect the performance profile of councils identified through the BV1 audit process and BV2 pathfinders.

32. It does not follow from all of this that consideration should not be given to closer alignment of approaches. However, the Commission will want to be alive to the direction of travel which other scrutiny bodies are taking, and/or the different performance characteristics of sectors (e.g. social care) compared to the corporate performance of a council as assessed through BV2.
33. Notwithstanding these points there are also technical challenges associated with developing a local government assessment framework based on a six-point scale because of potential difficulties in achieving 'discernible difference' between aspects of performance, with a strong likelihood of there being many overlapping categories which will make it difficult to distinguish between the performance of different councils in any meaningful way.
34. Perhaps most importantly, moving to a six point scale might make it more difficult, rather than easier, to explain clearly to the public how well their council is performing, a key test of the new arrangements.

Summary conclusions

35. The Pathfinder experience has clearly demonstrated that:
- There is a real opportunity for the Commission to make the BV2 judgements clearer to the public through the retaining a 4-point scale but using simpler and clearer language, both for the BV2 judgements and performance descriptors.
 - Whilst there is an appetite for greater sensitivity in our presentation of our assessment of council performance amongst councils this may not best be achieved through the introduction of 6-point scale which presents technical challenges in terms of potentially overlapping performance characteristics and also presents difficulties in reporting clearly to the public how well their local council is performing.
 - The greater transparency of reporting which councils are seeking can be achieved in a relatively straightforward manner by shading the individual performance assessments which are found at the Appendix of BV2 audit reports
 - The Commission can easily clarify to Council that its assessment reference period during the audit which had created scope for disagreement between councils and audit teams is the period between the council's BV1 and BV2 audit
 - There is a strong appetite amongst the local government community for clearer information on what to expect from the BV2 audit process (self evaluation, the BV2 audit judgements, peer involvement, quality assurance arrangements, the role of the Accounts Commission) which can be addressed through the development of a BV2 audit guide for councils and other interested parties.

What happens next?

36. Once the Commission has considered this paper and arrived at final decisions on how it would like to see the BV2 audit process further developed Audit Scotland will prepare a short BV2 audit guide which can be shared with councils to assist them in preparing for the Best Value 2 audit. This document will set out what they can expect from the process, including their engagement with the Commission.
37. This material will be shared informally with key stakeholders (e.g. COSLA, SOLACE, Scottish Government, IS) and any feedback from this process will be reported to the chair and deputy chair of the Commission prior to it being reflected in the BV2 audit guide which will be published on the Accounts Commission's website in September or October, alongside the ipsos-MORI BV2 BV2 Pathfinder evaluation report.

Recommendations

38. The Commission is asked to consider the contents of this paper and:
 - (i) Determine which options for reporting performance contained within Exhibit 4 it would like to adopt to make the BV2 judgements clearer to the public
 - (ii) Endorse the proposal that a 4-grade performance scale be retained
 - (iii) Endorse the proposal that the greater transparency of reporting which councils are seeking be achieved by shading the individual performance assessments which are found at the Appendix of BV2 audit reports
 - (iv) Approve the proposal that Audit Scotland will prepare a short BV2 audit guide which can be shared with councils, the content of which be 'signed off' by the chair and deputy chair of the Commission

Appendix 1

The two new BV2 judgements

This table sets out the framework for constructing the two new BV2 judgements. It is expected that councils will not display all aspects of any given performance level (eg improving outcomes, or the quality of local services). Councils are more likely to demonstrate a mixture of performance levels across the various dimensions of performance that are being assessed. The BV2 judgement will be arrived at by determining an overall summary performance of these different aspects of performance.

PACE AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	<i>Not improving adequately</i>	<i>Needs to improve more quickly</i>	<i>Improving well</i>	<i>Improving strongly</i>
<i>Improving outcomes and addressing complex cross-cutting issues with partners</i>	The council has a poor track record in delivering improved outcomes for the area with its partners, and addressing key cross-cutting issues such as community safety, health improvement, equalities, and sustainability.	Progress towards key strategic outcomes is mixed, with improved progress required in a number of important outcome areas. Systematic evidence of the impact of partnership working is not available.	Consistent progress is being made towards the majority of key strategic outcomes. However, some improvements are still required in a number of outcome areas and there is scope to further align partnership working with key strategic priorities.	The council is able to consistently demonstrate considerable success in delivering complex cross-cutting strategic local issues and improving outcomes with partners. Consistent progress is being made towards almost all key strategic outcomes. Limited improvements are required.
<i>The quality of local service.</i>	The overall quality of council services is consistently below the national average. Many services, including one or more key services (education, social work, or housing) require significant or urgent improvement.	Overall service performance is mixed. Whilst some services are performing well several services, or significant aspects of services, require important improvements to be achieved.	Many council services are performing consistently well and demonstrating continuous improvement. Whilst some further improvements are required, all key services are performing well.	Most of the council services are recognised as performing at the highest level. All key services can demonstrate strong and consistent improvement.
<i>The views of citizens and service users</i>	Overall satisfaction with the council and its services is consistently below the national average. Overall satisfaction trends are static or falling. Arrangements for consulting with local people and users of services are patchy and underdeveloped and the council cannot demonstrate that consultation is influencing decision-making and service improvement.	Overall satisfaction with the council and its services is mixed, with a significant number of services, or important aspects of services, below the national average. Overall satisfaction trends are improving slowly. The council has introduced arrangements for consulting with local people and users of services but these are not applied consistently throughout the organisation. Whilst there are some examples of this 'making a difference' within departments systematic evidence of impact is not yet available.	Overall satisfaction with the council and its services is generally above the national average, with overall satisfaction trends that are improving well. Arrangements for consulting with local people and users of services are well developed. There is good evidence that consultation and engagement is taken seriously across the organisation with good systematic evidence available of its impact.	Overall satisfaction with the council and its services is consistently above the national average for most aspects of performance, with overall satisfaction trends that are improving quickly. The council has comprehensive and well coordinated arrangements for consulting with local people and users of services and is able to demonstrate that their views are influencing strategic priorities and shaping service improvements

<p><i>The council's progress in delivering on its improvement agenda (including value for money (VFM))</i></p>	<p>There is limited evidence that the council knows where improvements are required and is able to secure improvement in service performance. It cannot demonstrate improvement in VFM.</p>	<p>Whilst some services are improving the pace of change has been slow and the council has been unable to systematically transfer service improvements from one service to another and secure systematic improvements in VFM.</p>	<p>The council knows where improvements are required and can demonstrate a systematic and effective approach to securing improvements across all services (including VFM). Improvements are implemented quickly, and with little slippage.</p>	<p>The council is able to demonstrate that it is effectively managing performance improvements in line with its strategic priorities, across services, and in partnership with others, and it can demonstrate systematic and significant improvement in VFM.</p>
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PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT	<i>Poor prospects of future improvement</i>	<i>Fair prospects of future improvement</i>	<i>Well placed to deliver future improvement</i>	<i>Strongly placed to deliver future improvement</i>
<i>Leadership capacity and organisational commitment to change</i>	The council does not have the leadership and management arrangements needed to deliver on its ambitions. Governance is weak and developing its political and managerial ability to tackle the council's problems is a key priority for the council.	The council needs to improve its leadership and managerial impact to deliver on its ambitions. There are some weaknesses in the governance arrangements and it is unable to demonstrate that it currently has the organisational commitment and capacity to secure change and improved outcomes.	The council has effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance arrangements. It is committed to continuous improvement, focused on what matters to local people, and is securing improved outcomes.	The council has highly effective political and managerial leadership supported by strong and effective governance arrangements. It has ambitious plans for the areas and a strong focus on continuous improvement. It has the organisational commitment and capacity to secure change and improved outcomes.
<i>Partnership working</i>	The council has not yet established a shared vision for the area with its partners, supported by sound governance arrangements and the resources needed to deliver key priorities.	Whilst the council has established a shared vision for the area with its partners, there is not a consistent sense of ownership from the partnership's leaders and improvements are needed in governance and resource alignment.	Leaders of the partnership articulate a clear and consistent shared vision and sense of purpose for the partnership and the improvements it is trying to achieve for the area and effective governance and resource alignment arrangements are in place.	Leaders of the partnership actively promote and communicate the shared vision and sense of purpose of the partnership and the improvements it is trying to achieve for the area. They can demonstrate – and are committed to – ensuring that the shared vision for the area impacts on their own organisation and partnership activity.
<i>Staff understanding of and commitment to improvement</i>	There is very limited staff understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement and the council's improvement agenda.	Staff understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement and the council's improvement agenda is underdeveloped.	There is widespread staff understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement and the council's improvement agenda.	There is very strong staff understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement and the council's improvement agenda.
<i>Effectiveness of resource planning and performance management (including member scrutiny)</i>	The council lacks awareness of where it needs to make improvements and is not able to secure improvement in service performance as a consequence of ineffective performance management arrangements and weak scrutiny and challenge. Resources are not used to best effect.	Whilst the council is aware of where it needs to make improvements, it lacks a systematic approach to securing improvement. Scrutiny and challenge is patchy. The council lacks a systematic process for directing resources to key priority areas and securing improved VFM.	The council is aware of where it needs to make improvements, and has a systematic approach to securing improvement. Scrutiny and challenge is well developed. It has a systematic process for directing resources to key priority areas and securing improved VFM, but cannot yet demonstrate consistently improved outcomes.	The council is aware of where it needs to make improvements, and has a systematic approach to securing improvement. Scrutiny and challenge is highly effective. The council has a systematic process for directing resources to key priority areas and can demonstrate consistently improved outcomes.

Appendix 1

Grading and performance reporting arrangements in use by UK audit and inspection organisations

	Audit Commission – Recently abolished Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)			Audit Commission – Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)	Healthcare Commission		Ofsted (school inspections)	Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)	Best Value 1	SWIA – Performance Inspections	HMIE – Children’s Services Inspections	Scottish Housing Regulator	Care Commission	Wales Audit Office – Social Services Joint Review
	Area risk assessment	Direction of travel judgement	Use of resources judgement		Pre-2005	Post 2005								
Star rating system				●	●			●						
Numerical Performance Grading			●	●			●						●	
Codified text-based performance descriptors (e.g. Poor-Excellent)			●	●		●	●	●	● ²	●		●	●	●
Codified capacity for Improvement judgement		●		●				●		●		●	●	●
Bespoke summary performance judgement	●								●					

² For service performance elements of the BV audit report which are predominantly based on the work of service inspectorates (HMIE, SWIA, SHR)

Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA): six-point evaluation scale of local authority social work services.

Level	Definition	Description
Level 6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding
Level 5	Very good	Major strengths
Level 4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Level 3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	Weak	Important weaknesses
Level 1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

SWIA use the following words to describe numbers and proportions when quoting findings from surveys or from file reading exercises:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

HMIE: Quality Indicators

New level	Description
Excellent	Outstanding, sector leading
Very Good	Major strengths
Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	Important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

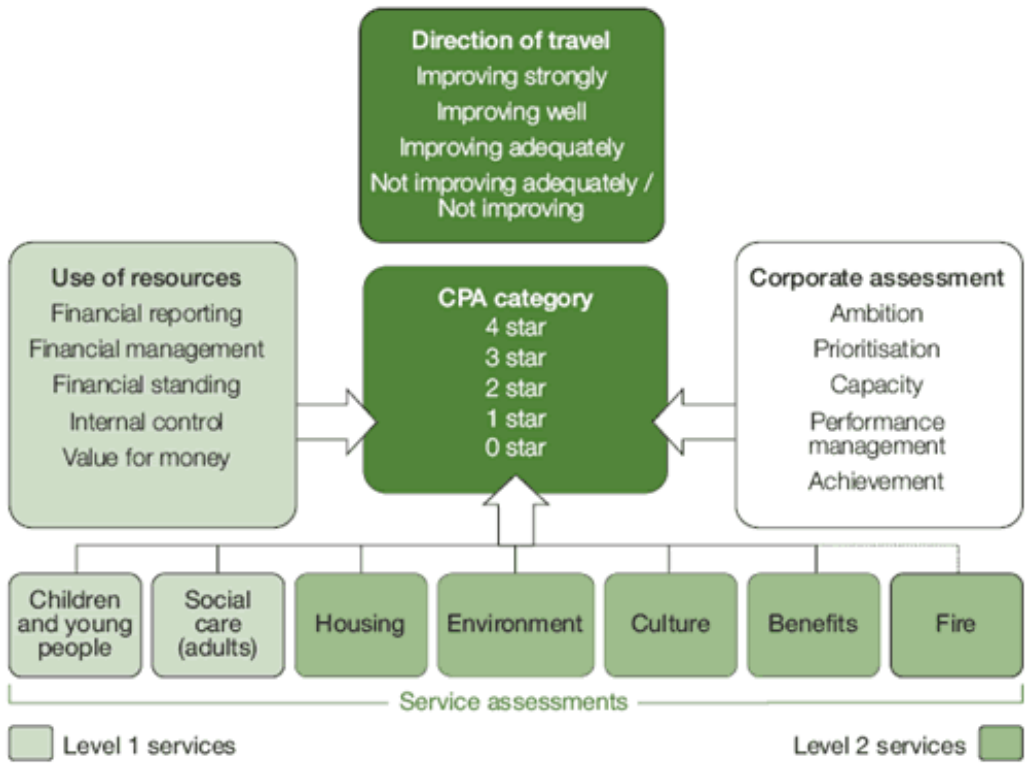
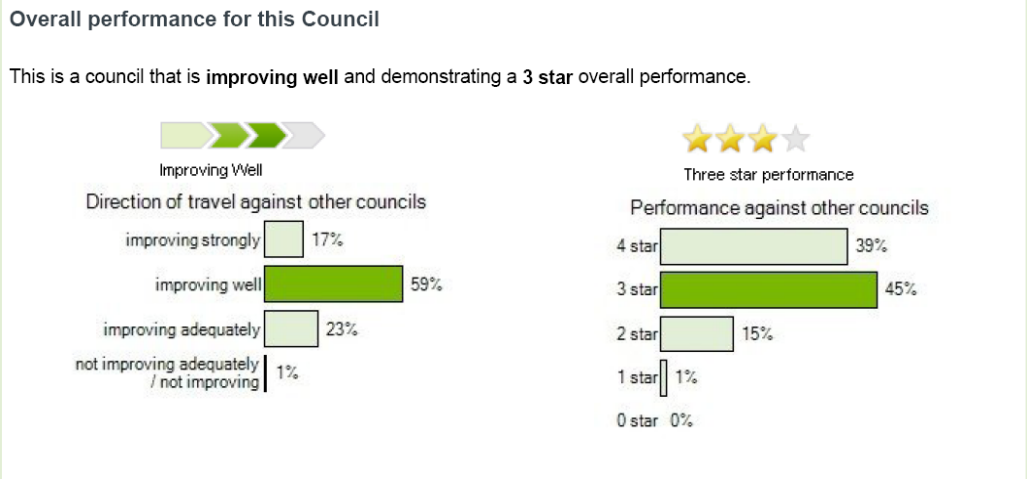
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR): Inspection Grades

Grade A	Excellent
Grade B	Good
Grade C	Fair
Grade D	Poor

OfSted: the inspection judgements and what they mean:

Grade 1	Outstanding	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2	Good	this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3	Satisfactory	this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4	Inadequate	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Audit Commission (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) – predecessor to recently abolished CAA



Corporate assessment scores:

- 1 – below minimum requirements – **inadequate performance**
- 2 – at only minimum requirements – **adequate performance**
- 3 – consistently above minimum requirements – **performing well**
- 4 – well above minimum requirements – **performing strongly**

Wales Audit Office: Performance Summary

Exhibit 1: Neath Port Talbot's position in the joint review performance matrix

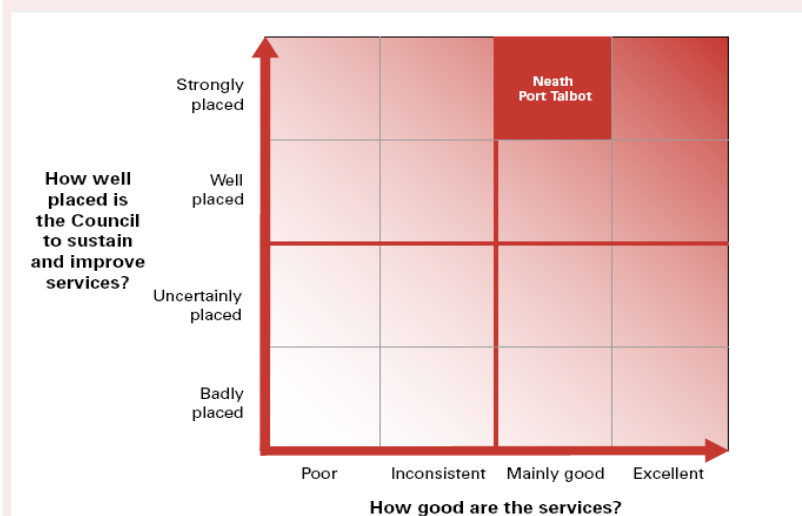


Exhibit 2: How good are the services?

The Review Team's Judgements				
	Poor	Inconsistent	Mainly good	Excellent
Access to services			•	
Assessment		•		
Care management and review			•	
Range of services provided			•	
Quality of services provided				•
Arrangements to protect vulnerable people			•	
Success in promoting independence and social inclusion			•	
Strengths		Areas for development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases mainly allocated quickly Clear eligibility criteria and application Good progress in implementing Unified Assessments 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the timeliness and quality of assessments Ensuring costed care plans which are outcome focussed Addressing known service pressures and gaps in services 		

Exhibit 3: How well placed is the Council to sustain and improve services?

The Review Team's Judgements				
	Badly Placed	Uncertainly placed	Well placed	Strongly placed
Resources			•	
Planning and partnerships				•
Commissioning and contracting			•	
Workforce				•
Performance management			•	
Leadership and culture				•
Corporate and political support and scrutiny.			•	

Healthcare Commission

The quality of services part of the annual performance rating will score trusts on a scale of: • excellent • good • fair • weak

Core standards Existing national targets	New national targets
Fully met	Excellent
Almost met	Good
Partly met	Fair
Not met	Weak

Monitor's annual financial risk rating	Use of resources score
5	Excellent
4	Excellent
3	Good
2	Fair
1	Weak

Rules for overall performance rating:

- **Excellent:** No score below 3. Scores of 4 for at least two of financial management, financial standing and value for money.
- **Good:** No score below 2. Scores of at least 3 for financial management, financial standing and value for money.
- **Fair:** Scores of at least 2 for financial management, financial standing and value for money.
- **Weak:** If the score for any of financial management, financial standing or value for money is 1.