

Local Government Act 1992

Statutory Performance Indicators

Direction 2014

December 2014

Foreword

The Accounts Commission has a statutory responsibility to define the performance information that councils must publish in the following financial year. This Direction sets out the range of performance information for the 2015/16 financial year that the Commission requires councils to collect and report in public.

The Commission has retained the schedule of statutory performance indicators as set out in the Directions for 2012 and 2013. This provides continuity to support further progress with the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and councils' public performance reporting arrangements. We retain three headline indicators – in relation to corporate management characteristics, service performance and reporting through the LGBF.

The Commission welcomes the progress made by councils to develop their performance data set through the LGBF. In 2014, we have seen the LGBF start to mature as a resource, with three years of comparable information giving trend information and analysis. The Commission also acknowledges the broad progress made by councils in how they report their performance in public, including Statutory Performance Indicators, evidenced by its 2014 review of public performance reporting which we shared with councils earlier this year.

Since 2008, the Commission has taken steps to develop a more flexible approach to its statutory responsibility. The 2008 Direction reduced statutory indicators from 58 to 25 and in 2012 the Commission reduced the number of indicators to three. This shift reflected the local government community's commitment to the LGBF and the progress made towards this. The Commission recognises it is time to reflect on progress since 2008 and how its approach is taken forward. During 2015, the Commission will review its strategy in relation to statutory performance information. It will review progress and plan its approach to promote continuous improvement in the quality of performance information from, and reporting by, councils. A key requirement is that the public can compare performance across councils and over time.

As part of this review, the Commission will, in June 2015, consider a fifth report on progress by councils on their public performance reporting against the three statutory performance Indicators. Audit Scotland staff will write to you early in 2015 with more detail about the process. The Commission will provide councils with information from this review of public performance reporting to help inform improvement work. In due course, I will also write to you to outline the Commission's plans for statutory performance information and monitoring of public performance reporting.

Douglas Sinclair
Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland
December 2014

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1992
THE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION
(STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE) DIRECTION 2014

1. This Direction is given by the Accounts Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”) under section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, which requires the Commission to direct relevant bodies to publish such information relating to their activities in any financial year or other specified period as will, in the Commission’s opinion:
“facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons (by reference to the criteria of cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and of securing best value in accordance with section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) between –
 - i. the standards of performance achieved by different relevant bodies in that financial year or other period; and***
 - ii. the standards of performance achieved by such bodies in different financial years or, as the case may be, other periods”***
2. This Direction is given to all local authorities and to joint committees and joint boards, as defined by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and amended by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
3. Each of the bodies referred to in paragraph 2 shall, in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and associated regulations and guidance from Scottish Ministers:
 - a. publish the information specified in the schedule to this Direction for all those activities which are carried out by the body
 - b. ensure that publication facilitates the making of comparisons where appropriate and possible with performance for those activities which were also specified in 2014/15 (2013 Direction).
4. The period for which the information in the schedule must be published is the financial year ending 31st March 2016.
5. In the schedule, the term ‘Best Value’ shall be interpreted in accordance with the definition and requirements of Part 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Schedule

Corporate management

SPI 1: Each council will report a range of information, sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in relation to:

- responsiveness to its communities
- revenues and service costs
- employees
- assets
- procurement
- sustainable development
- equalities and diversity.

Service performance

SPI 2: Each council will report a range of information sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in providing the following services (in partnership with others where appropriate):

- benefits administration
- community care
- criminal justice social work
- cultural & community services covering at least sport & leisure, museums, the arts and libraries
- planning (both environmental and development management)
- education of children
- child protection and children's social work
- housing & homelessness
- protective services including environmental health, and trading standards
- roads and lighting
- waste management services

Local Government Benchmarking Framework

SPI 3: Each council will report its performance in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.