



# **Local Government Act 1992**

**Statutory Performance Indicators**

**Direction 2008**

December 2008

## **Introduction**

*by John Baillie, Chair of the Accounts Commission*

Each December, the Accounts Commission considers what performance information it will direct local authorities to report on in the following financial year. This year, the shifting local government environment has provided a considerable challenge for Commission members in deciding how best to fulfil our responsibilities.

Before putting forward our proposals we wanted to see how things were changing and to reflect on the developing scrutiny arrangements, single outcome agreements between the Scottish Government and councils and the proposals for the next stage of the Best Value audit regime. Developments continue apace and in giving this year's Direction, the Commission has taken account of progress in each of these areas, as well as the responses to our recent consultation paper. We have also taken on board comments about some of our long standing SPIs that are no longer as relevant as they once were.

What we have decided to do, is align SPI arrangements with the responsibility authorities have under Best Value for selecting and using performance information to drive continuous improvement in services, and for reporting on those aspects of performance that are of most importance to local communities, to service users and to citizens. Since the BV legislation was introduced in 2003, local authorities have had a duty to demonstrate to their citizens that they are securing the best use of public resources and achieving a proper balance between costs and quality. The best councils have been doing this, but the Commission has long recognised the need in most local authorities for considerable improvement in both performance management and public reporting.

The SPIs allow some limited comparisons to be made over time and, where appropriate, between councils. But other information is also useful for demonstrating achievement against expectations. Reports from other scrutiny bodies for example, together with information about service costs, local concerns and priorities and user satisfaction with services, all add to the broader picture and help to demonstrate service quality and improvement.

In all that has been said about the recent concordat, and the single outcome agreements with councils and their community planning partners, it has always been absolutely clear that councils still need to report on the quality, accessibility and value for money of all their services as part of their Best Value duties. This is also true of Police and Fire & Rescue services.

## **The 2008 Direction**

This year's Direction is set out in the following pages and signals a major change from what has gone before. The Commission has significantly reduced the range of information it specifies that all councils must report, and has agreed not to introduce any new indicators relating to specific functions. Nevertheless, the Commission wants to see councils, as part of their performance management and reporting activities, using a greater range of information on:

- corporate issues, such as equalities and asset management, and how these impact on overall service delivery
- service cost and overhead management and how this drives more efficient performance
- the impact made by front line services and how this relates to the service user and local communities

In particular, the Commission wants to see a greater understanding of cost information by councils and this being used in performance management and reporting to improve services. This is reflected in our decision to undertake a national study in this area which Audit Scotland will be starting early in 2009.

The challenge for authorities now is to fully recognise and meet the responsibilities placed on them by the 2003 Best Value legislation and demonstrate publicly that they are securing Best Value, including a proper balance between quality and cost.

We expect further developments in the national performance management and reporting arrangements in future years. The Commission will continue to monitor the local government scrutiny environment and look at how best to use the responsibility it has on behalf of the public, to hold local authorities to account and help them improve.

I wish you well in your efforts during the coming year.

**John Baillie**

**Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland**

**December 2008**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1992**  
**THE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION**  
**(STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE) DIRECTION 2008**

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 in 2008/9.
4. The period for which the information must be published is the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.
5. In determining the information to be reported, authorities should consider and, where appropriate, reflect:
  - i the criteria set out in 1a) above recognising the need to balance efficiency & effectiveness information with cost and economy information
  - ii achievement against their single outcome agreements with the Scottish Government
  - iii the performance reporting requirements of any other legislation

- iv indicators/measures in relevant suites or frameworks of performance information determined by government, regulatory agencies, professional associations or others
- v national standards and targets for service delivery
- vi local service priorities and objectives
- vii service user views.

6 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

### COUNCILS

#### 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)
- the 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

The range of information to be reported in SPIs 1 & 2 above will include achievement against the following specific indicators:

- 1 The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for:
  - Teachers
  - All other local government employees.
- 2 The number and percentage of the highest paid 2% and 5% of earners among council employees that are women.
- 3 The number of council buildings from which the council delivers services to the public and the percentage of these in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to people with a disability.
- 4 The gross cost per case for benefits administration.

- 5 The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax.
- 6 The income due from Council Tax for the year, net of reliefs and rebates, and the percentage of that which was received during the year
- 7 The number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid.
- 8 The proportion of operational accommodation that is:
  - in a satisfactory condition
  - suitable for its current use.
- 9 Home Care
  - a) The number of people age 65+ receiving homecare
  - b) The number of homecare hours per 1,000 population age 65+
  - c) As a proportion of home care clients age 65+, the number receiving:
    - personal care
    - a service during evenings/overnight
    - a service at weekends.
- 10 The number of attendances per 1,000 population for:
  - pools
  - other indoor sports and leisure facilities, excluding pools in a combined complex.
- 11 The number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums per 1,000 population and the number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population.
- 12 The number of visits to council libraries per 1,000 population
- 13 The number of householder and non-householder planning applications determined during the year and the proportion of each that were dealt with within two months.
- 14 Response repairs to council houses:
  - The number of response repairs completed during the year
  - The overall % of repairs completed within the target times
  - The repairs categories used by the council and the target times for each
- 15 The number and proportion of the council's housing stock meeting to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by criteria.

Criteria	Number	Percentage
Tolerable standard		
Free from serious disrepair		
Energy efficient		
Modern facilities and services		
Healthy, safe and secure		
Total dwellings meeting SHQS		
Total number of dwellings owned by the council		

- 16 The total annual rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due in the year.

17 Managing tenancy change

a) Stock which is **not low demand** - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 wks	
2 – 4 wks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
More than 16 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

b) **Low demand stock** - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 weeks	
2 – 4 weeks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
17 – 32 weeks	
33 – 52 weeks	
more than 52 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

- c) For low demand stock,
- i) the number remaining un-let at the year end
  - ii) the average period these dwellings had been un-let at the year end
- d) The number of dwellings considered to be low demand at the year end?  
(includes both void and occupied properties)
- e) The number at d) above considered to be low demand at the start of the year?  
(includes both void and occupied properties)
- f) The number at d) above that were not actively being re-let because they were subject to a disposal strategy.

18 Housing Rent arrears

- Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year
- The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250
- The proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year that were in rent arrears
- The average debt owed by tenants leaving in arrears, as a proportion of the average weekly rent
- The percentage of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected during the year.



19 Homelessness

Council duty to:		
	secure permanent accommodation for household	secure temporary accommodation, provide advice and guidance or take reasonable measures to retain accommodation
a i) Number of households assessed during year		
a ii) % of decision notifications issued within 28 days of date of initial presentation		
a iii) the % who are housed		
a iv) % of cases reassessed within 12 months of completion of duty		
b) The proportion of those provided with permanent accommodation in council stock who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months.		

20 Domestic noise complaints

- a) The number of complaints of domestic noise received during the year:
- i) settled without the need for attendance on site
  - ii) requiring attendance on site and not dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004
  - iii) dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004.
- b) For those in a)ii and a)iii above, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site.

21 The number of trading standards complaints and advice requests received, and the proportion completed within 14 days:

	Number received	% completed within in 14 days
Consumer complaints		
Business advice requests		

22 The percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment.

23 The net cost per premises for:

- refuse collection
- refuse disposal.

24 The percentage of municipal waste collected during the year that was recycled or composted

25 The cleanliness index achieved following inspection of a sample of streets and other relevant land.

## **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**

SPI 3 Each Fire & Rescue service will report a range of information on its performance sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in relation to:

- community fire safety
- intervention in response to emergency incidents
- staff
- equalities & diversity

The range of information to be reported will include the following specific information:

- a) Fire casualties
  - the number of incidents resulting in casualties per 10,000 population
  - the number of fatal and non-fatal casualties per 10,000 population.
- b) The number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population.
- c) The average number of:
  - rider shifts lost due to sickness and light duties per fire officer
  - working days lost to sickness absence per employee for all other staff.

## **POLICE SERVICES**

SPI 4 Each police service will report its performance in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Policing Performance Framework.