

The Audit of Best Value and  
Community Planning

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# Glasgow City Council

Progress report



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for the Accounts Commission  
April 2009

# The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, assists local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit, including the audit of Best Value and Community Planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national performance studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 41 joint boards (including police and fire and rescue services). Local authorities spend over £16 billion of public funds a year.

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Government and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

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# Commission Findings



**1.** In December 2005, the Accounts Commission considered the Controller of Audit's report on the Best Value audit of Glasgow City Council and required the Controller of Audit to make a further follow-up report on the council's progress. We accept this report as fulfilling that requirement. We recognise that the report gives a broad picture of the council's performance based on the work of Audit Scotland and does not attempt a comprehensive review of all service delivery. We acknowledge the co-operation and assistance given to the audit process by members and officers of the council.

**2.** When we made our findings in 2005, we said that we were encouraged by the rate of improvement that the council had made over recent years. We are now pleased to acknowledge that the council has continued to make good progress, with 12 of the 14 themes in its improvement plan either implemented or on target for implementation. We are also encouraged that the improvements being made have led to better outcomes for the people of Glasgow, particularly with increases in educational attainment levels and a reduction in unemployment.

**3.** We note, however, that some significant issues still need to be addressed in respect of the council's management and development of its employees, and that the statutory performance indicators and inspection

reports show a mixed picture of the performance of services. We also note the slippage in certain areas of the council's improvement plan. We would urge the council to address these issues, together with the other areas highlighted in the report by the Controller of Audit.

**4.** We consider that Glasgow City Council is well placed to build on its current performance and we look forward to the council maintaining its momentum and continuing to improve.



# Introduction



The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced new statutory duties relating to Best Value and Community Planning. The report on the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning undertaken at Glasgow City Council, and the Accounts Commission's findings were published in January 2006.

In its findings, the Commission said that the council demonstrated vision and strategic direction, a positive attitude and commitment to radical change and clear leadership from members and officers, which gave the council a solid foundation to build on. The Commission was encouraged by the rate of improvement that the council had made in recent years and urged the council to maintain its focus on:

- improving performance in key areas
- getting the right political and managerial structures in place
- developing Community Planning arrangements
- further developing more balanced public performance reporting.

The Commission noted that the council has a good level of self-awareness and recognised the areas in which it needed to improve. The Commission placed particular emphasis on the following areas where it noted that:

- Good mechanisms and arrangements are not an end in themselves but tools to secure optimum impact and thus improved outcomes for the people of Glasgow, whose health, educational attainment and employment levels remain low compared with the rest of Scotland. For example, educational attainment has, in general, been poor across Glasgow's schools and while there have been improvements in some areas over recent years, attainment levels remain below the Scottish

average. The council has set ambitious targets and faces a significant challenge in achieving them. It will be important for the council to sustain its focus on improved outcomes for its citizens.

- The council employs over 38,000 people, each of whom can be a key ambassador for the council's ambitions. While the modernising employment agenda has already produced some results, the council needs to place greater emphasis on corporate workforce planning, more effective human resources systems and improving how it manages and engages with its staff.
- In order to deliver the outcomes that it sets out to achieve, the council must also ensure that the full value of effective partnership working is realised.
- The council has an extensive portfolio of assets. It needs to have comprehensive asset management plans in place in order to demonstrate efficient use of its assets as well as identifying clear and risk-based priorities for future investment.

In concluding its findings, the Commission requested a progress report from the Controller of Audit on continued improvement in Glasgow City Council as at 31 December 2008.

In Glasgow, the elections in May 2007 brought about a change in the political representation across the city. The Labour Party now has 47 of the 79 members. The main opposition group is the Scottish National Party with 21 members and the council also has representation from Liberal Democrat (five), Green (five) and Conservative (one) parties.

This report provides an update on the progress that Glasgow City Council has made up to December 2008. Most of the audit work was carried out as part of the annual audit, which reported in October 2008, and the

report has been updated with key developments since then. It focuses on the implementation of the council's improvement programme and notes progress in service performance.

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided to the audit team by elected members and staff involved.

# Conclusions





The council has continued to make good progress with its best value improvement action plan and can demonstrate some positive outcomes for the people of Glasgow. The council is improving how it manages and engages with its staff and how it achieves value from effective partnership working.

**1.** The council has continued to develop its Best Value agenda. The Glasgow community plan has been used as the foundation for a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), helping to strengthen joint working with other partner organisations and focus resources on key priorities. Changes in the political make-up of the council, and a restructuring of its committee system, have also helped to increase the level of debate and independent scrutiny from elected members.

**2.** The council has made good progress since the publication of the 2006 Best Value report. It is implementing, or is on target to implement, 12 out of the 14 themes in its improvement plan. It has:

- published a SOA in conjunction with its community planning partners
- in partnership with the NHS, established a set of Community Health and Care Partnerships (CHCPs)
- revised its political management structures, with the establishment of an executive committee
- strengthened the role of scrutiny through an audit and ethics committee and policy, development and scrutiny committees for each service area
- continued to enhance its performance management framework, with senior managers retaining a focus on service performance and improvements

- carried out a staff survey, which has led to an action plan to address identified concerns.

**3.** More importantly, the council has made progress towards long-term improvements in key outcomes for the people of Glasgow, with increases in educational attainment levels and a reduction in worklessness. These outcome levels have yet to match the national average, but the gap between Glasgow and the rest of Scotland has narrowed slightly. Future improvements are targeted in a new council plan for 2008-11 and in its SOA.

**4.** There are, however, still some areas where progress needs to be made:

- Achieving more consistent improvements in service performance, for example, by bringing SPLs in line with other councils in Scotland.
- Improving the financial management of the CHCPs.
- Implementing a corporate asset management plan by the revised target date of April 2009.
- Reversing the recent increase in sickness absence rates and achieving the target set by the council.
- Ensuring that Personal Development Plans become fully embedded for all staff throughout the council.

**5.** The ongoing challenge facing the council is to continue to improve outcomes for the people of Glasgow in line with the City Vision, particularly in key areas such as education, health and employment. In order to achieve this, the council will need to maintain a focus on improving service performance at the same time as addressing some significant resourcing issues.

# Progress in Glasgow City



## The improvement programme

Overall, the council has made good progress, implementing or on target to implement 12 out of the 14 themes in its improvement plan. There has been some slippage in significant areas.

**6.** In March 2006, the council agreed an improvement plan in response to the Best Value audit report. The plan contains 14 improvement themes and 44 associated improvement actions and these closely match the Best Value report recommendations. The council has made good progress, with 12 of the theme areas either implemented or on target for implementation.

**7.** There has been slippage in some areas of the council's Best Value improvement plan, including:

- implementation of Personal Development Plans (PDP) for employees. PDPs have been implemented in four services but have not yet been fully implemented in social work, education or direct and care services
- developing the 'Best Managed Local Authority' change agenda. The council is currently considering how to realign its improvement work in the context of its ongoing service reform programme and the Public Sector Improvement Framework
- asset management planning, where a corporate asset management plan is scheduled to be delivered by April 2009.

**8.** Although there has been slippage in some areas of the Best Value improvement plan, the council has initiated and implemented a number of other significant changes.

- A workforce pay and benefits review has been completed and the council now has a new pay and grading scheme in place. The total cost of the review was

significant but the council has managed the costs within its available resources.

- A number of services previously delivered directly by the council (including trading operations) have been established as arms length external organisations (City Building, Glasgow Community and Safety Services and Culture and Sport Glasgow). Direct and Care Services will be established as 'Cordia' in April 2009. These revised arrangements are designed to achieve cost savings and opportunities to improve partnership working or secure business from outside the council.
- The council has developed and is implementing a 'People Strategy', which includes a programme of leadership training (from executive coaching to supervisory training), a series of communication initiatives and staff recognition and reward schemes. Increased opportunities for staff training have been put in place including 'back-to-the-floor' and work-shadowing schemes and online training.
- New structures have been established at a member and officer level in order to agree and monitor major areas of service reform aimed at achieving efficiency and service improvement.
- In November 2007, Glasgow was awarded the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The council is currently fulfilling its agreed role in developing the infrastructure for the Games and a legacy plan to ensure that there are lasting benefits.

### Improving performance on key outcomes

The council has made progress towards long-term improvements in key outcomes. Increases in educational attainment levels and falls in unemployment levels have helped to narrow the gap between

Glasgow and the rest of Scotland. Future improvements are targeted in a new council plan for 2008-11 and in its SOA.

**9.** In its findings, the Accounts Commission noted that the council had good mechanisms and arrangements in place, but that the value of these would be seen through a contribution to positive outcomes for the people of Glasgow. The Commission highlighted the need to improve educational attainment, reduce worklessness and improve health.

**10.** Since 2004, improvements in performance have been recorded in education. A continued increase has been recorded in levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics from P1 to S2 and an improvement in Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) attainment. The difference between Glasgow's performance and the national performance has narrowed for a number of SQA attainment measures. However, recent educational attainment shows little improvement in S4 results but increasing staying-on rates and attainment in S5 ([Exhibit 1, overleaf](#)).

**11.** The educational achievement of looked-after children has also improved, with 39 per cent now achieving one SCQF level 3 qualification and 23 per cent achieving English and Maths at that level. This is compared to 36 per cent and 20 per cent in 2006/07.

**12.** In terms of achieving reductions in worklessness, the council has reported that the percentage of people of working age in Glasgow who are claiming state benefits has continued to fall, from 30.3 per cent in 2003 to 25.6 per cent in 2007, with the gap between Glasgow and the rest of Scotland narrowing from 11 percentage points to 8.5.

**13.** In order to improve health, the council intends to use health impact assessments to look at the effect of its policies and plans. This is to be applied to a number of plans including the ten-year economic strategy.

## Exhibit 1

### Educational attainment

		2005/06	2007/08	Improvement
English and mathematics at SCQF Level 3 (Foundation) or better	GCC	86%	87%	+1%
	Scotland	91%	91%	0%
Five or more awards at SCQF Level 3 (Foundation) or better	GCC	86%	84%	-2%
	Scotland	91%	90%	-1%
Five or more awards at SCQF Level 4 (General) or better	GCC	67%	65%	-2%
	Scotland	77%	76%	-1%
Five or more awards at SCQF level 5 (Credit) or better	GCC	24%	22%	-2%
	Scotland	35%	34%	-1%
Staying on rates to S5 (post-Christmas)	GCC	54%	59%	+5%
	Scotland	64%	65%	+1%
Three or more awards at SCQF level 6 (Higher) or better	GCC	12%	15%	+3%
	Scotland	22%	22%	0%

Source: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

**14.** The council is committed to improving outcomes for its citizens. The council plan 2008-11 contains five objectives for the council over the next three years:

- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services.
- Increasing access to lifelong learning.
- Making Glasgow a cleaner and safer city.
- Building a prosperous city.
- Improving health and wellbeing.

**15.** The council plan 2008-11 also sets out five major themes that are reflected in the work across all services. These are social renewal, equal opportunities, early intervention, sustainability, and efficiency and effectiveness. Each objective is supported by individual outcomes and targets, for example:

- increasing the percentage of young people going into higher or further education, or employment, voluntary work or training, from 84 per cent to 87 per cent

- continuing to narrow the gap between Glasgow and the rest of Scotland in the level of worklessness from 8.5 per cent to six per cent through a ten-year city economic development strategy.

**16.** Glasgow's SOA for 2008/09 was developed by the council and its community planning partners from the key partnership strategy documents already in place, including the council plan 2008-11 and the community plan 2005-10. The SOA sets out the council's contribution to the government's 15 national outcomes and contains 24 local outcomes supported by a number of performance indicators, which will be used to demonstrate the progress made. Performance management will be led by the council and although governance arrangements are still being established, a six-monthly performance management cycle is being developed to review progress against the targets. In addition, an annual performance report will be prepared across the activities of all partners within the Community Planning Partnership. The effectiveness of these reporting arrangements will be crucial in demonstrating that community outcomes are being achieved.

### Political and management structures

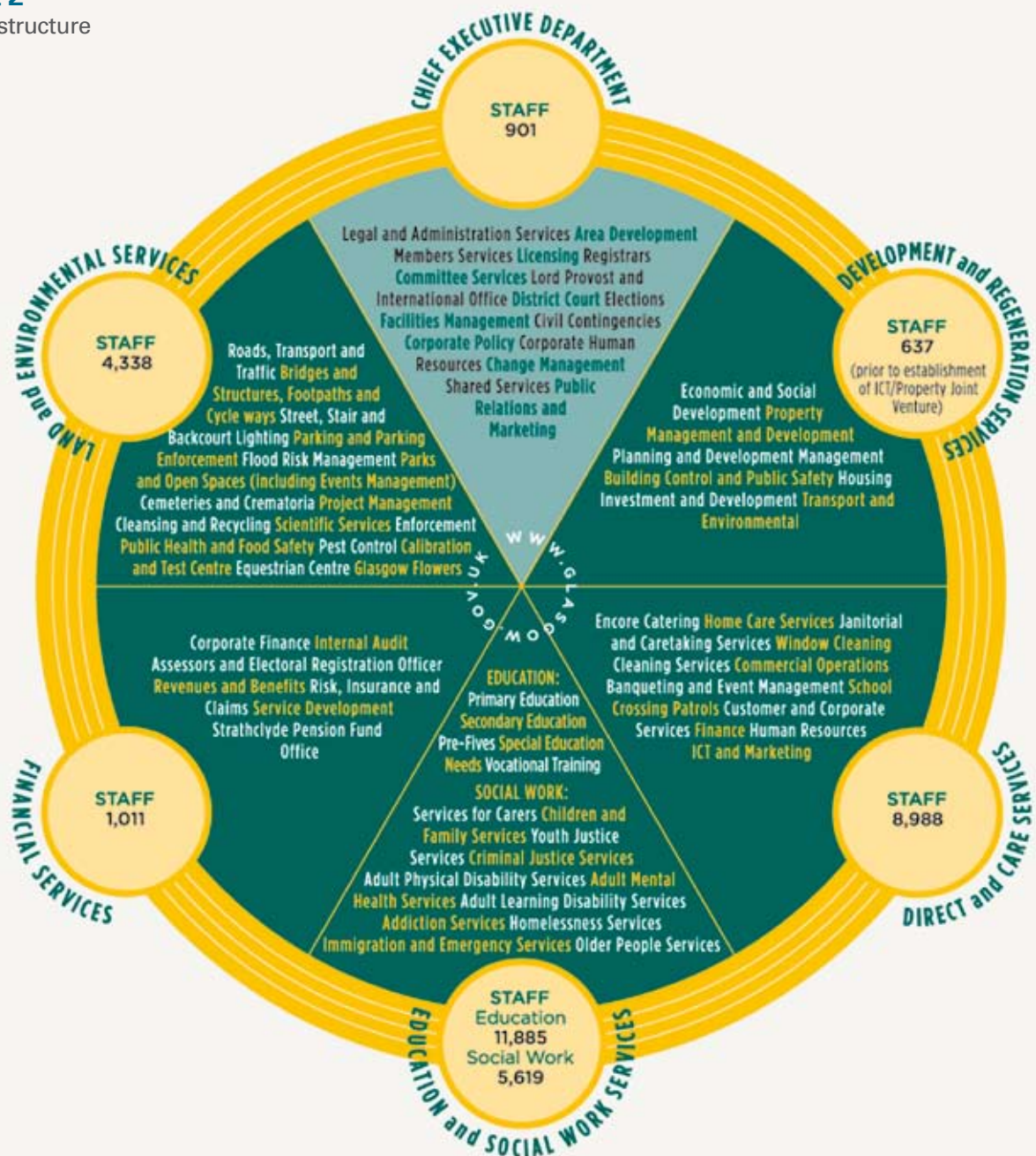
There is an increased level of scrutiny and debate within the council. The council has set up an executive committee and guidance on the roles of key postholders. In turn, the scrutiny of policy and performance has been strengthened by the introduction of an audit and ethics committee and policy, development and scrutiny committees for each service area.

**17.** The May 2007 elections brought about a change in political representation in Glasgow. While the council remains one of only two in Scotland with a majority administration, there is increased representation from other political parties. The Labour Party now has 47 of the 79 members, the main opposition group is the Scottish National Party with 21 members and there is also representation from the Liberal Democrat, Green and Conservative parties. The wider political distribution, together with the introduction of an executive committee and policy, development and scrutiny committee structure, has increased scrutiny and debate. The council has developed role profiles for the leader, lord provost, executive members, convenors and leader of the opposition and has introduced a business bureau, with



## Exhibit 2

### Council structure



Source: Glasgow City Council

representation from all parties, led by an experienced member from the Labour group. The bureau reviews and considers all proposals relating to political governance processes prior to presentation to the Executive Committee.

**18.** Effective scrutiny is central to good governance, with a significant role for councillors to scrutinise performance, hold management to account and support the reform and modernisation

agenda. The Audit and Ethics Committee was established following the May 2007 elections and has had two convenors since. The committee conforms to CiPFA guidance on Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland and provides a sound contribution to scrutiny in the council. The policy, development and scrutiny committees provide a focus for scrutiny of performance and policy within each service area, with the Audit and Ethics Committee taking

an overview of internal audit reporting and service implementation of audit action plans.

**19.** The council structure underwent some change in summer 2007, including the merger of land services and environmental and protective services and the alignment of education services and social work services. The council is structured into six service departments ([Exhibit 2](#)).



**20.** The council has recently completed a review of services. As a result, the executive director of education and social work will be renamed executive director of children and families and will have strategic and operational responsibility for education services. In addition, the service director, social work will be renamed executive director social care services and will report directly to the chief executive.

**21.** In recent years, the council's service delivery structure has seen significant change through the establishment of arm's length external organisations (ALEOs) including the:

- establishment of a social enterprise company with charitable status to deliver cultural and recreational services
- delivery of off-street parking through a limited liability partnership
- transfer of building services trading operations to the City Building (Glasgow) limited liability partnership
- completion of ACCESS joint venture contract for IT and property services.

**22.** In response to the number of ALEOs, a report clarifying the reporting mechanisms and scrutiny arrangements for ALEOs has been agreed by the Executive Committee and implemented. The process of reporting ALEO performance and governance arrangements to the Finance, Corporate and Trading Services Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee commenced in 2007/08. In 2008/09, this good practice has been extended with a programme established for ALEOs to report risk and business continuity planning to the Audit and Ethics Committee.

**23.** Direct and care services (DACS) will become an ALEO (Cordia) from 1 April 2009. Services provided by

DACS include; home care, cleaning, catering and school crossing patrols.

### Partnership working

The development of a SOA represents a significant development in partnership working. This builds on the vision set out in the community plan, with a set of revised targets. CHCPs have also been established, but the council is reviewing their financial management arrangements in order to address large overspends and cost pressures, which are being experienced in 2008/09.

**24.** In its findings on the Best Value audit, the Accounts Commission stated that 'the council must also ensure that the full value of effective partnership working is realised'. The development of the SOA, agreed in June 2008, demonstrates a significant step forward in working with partners. The council, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Strathclyde Police, Glasgow Housing Association and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue have taken joint ownership and responsibility for their contributions to agreed outcomes. Five thematic champions from across the partner organisations took forward the development of the outcome agreement under the headings of 'Healthy', 'Working', 'Safe', 'Learning' and 'Vibrant'.

**25.** The Glasgow Community Plan 2005-10 demonstrates the links between local, city-wide and national priorities and was the starting point for the development of the SOA. The council recognises that some of the targets contained in the plan will need to be revised in the light of the SOA.

**26.** Community reference groups have been established in each of the ten local community planning partnership areas. These groups consist of nominated or elected individuals from a wide range of community-based organisations.

**27.** As part of the drive to improve services through partnership working,

CHCPs were set up by the council and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde in April 2006 to reduce bureaucracy and devolve responsibility and decision-making to the front line for healthcare and social services. The council and the health board are now considering improvements to the management of the CHCPs as they are experiencing large overspends and cost pressures during 2008/09. The internal audit service within Glasgow City Council is completing a joint exercise with internal auditors of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to review financial management control arrangements within two of the community health and care partnerships, and the service director is currently completing a review of the CHCPs.

### Managing and reporting performance

The council has a sound performance management framework. A series of performance reports are regularly provided to managers and members, allowing them to monitor progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the council plan 2008-11. Regular meetings between the chief executive and the executive directors, and twice-yearly meetings with other senior managers, are used to help sustain a strong focus on service performance.

**28.** The council has a sound and integrated performance management framework which is linked to the objectives and outcomes contained within the council plan 2008-11. The arrangements in place include:

- three-monthly reports on each service's 'measures of improved performance' to the corporate management team
- regular reports to the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee
- yearly service and performance reports

- new local performance reports which will report performance locally to the ten community planning areas.

**29.** One method the council adopts to identify performance issues is the performance working group. The chief executive meets with executive directors to consider performance levels and to identify and discuss areas of improvement. The council also raises staff awareness of performance issues through a twice-yearly seminar called 'Delivering for Glasgow' for around 80 senior council staff.

**30.** To ensure that council services are informed by the needs of Glasgow residents, a household survey is undertaken every spring and autumn, covering 1,000 households. The outcomes are compiled and reported via newsletters and feature within service and council performance reports. In the survey in spring 2008, the council interviewed an extra 200 people from black and minority ethnic communities to gain a better understanding of the issues within these communities. The three areas identified as being 'very important' for the council are:

- making sure services are good value for money
- making sure services are good quality
- telling residents how council tax is spent.

**31.** The council's annual performance report was published in September 2008, providing information on performance against the five main aims contained within the council plan 2008-11. The annual performance report provides a balanced view of the council's achievements for the period. The council is continuing to investigate other mechanisms for reporting performance to stakeholders in a more digestible form. The council's performance report 2007-08 notes:

- More efficient working practices allowed the council to save 9.9 million kW hours of electricity and 6.2 million kW hours of gas. The council also produced 1,500 fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide, although this was less than the council target of 3,600 tonnes.
- From 2006 to 2007, there was a small improvement in the number of school leavers going on to further education, training or a job. Forty-eight per cent of school leavers went on to higher or further education and 11 per cent began some form of training (the national average is five per cent). The number of school leavers who found jobs increased (23 per cent to 25 per cent), but this is below the national level of 28 per cent.
- The council recycled 18 per cent of household and business waste, exceeding the council target of 17 per cent. However, this is still below the national average recycling rate of 25 per cent.
- The number of households assessed as homeless/potentially homeless fell from 8,049 to 6,367.

### Managing people

The council has made progress in its arrangements for managing its employees but some significant issues still need to be addressed. A staff survey was carried out in 2007 and action is being taken to address the concerns it highlighted. The council has made good progress on delivering its People Strategy and on implementing equal pay and single status agreements, with only a small number of outstanding cases to be resolved. There have been delays in establishing a staff appraisal system in all parts of the council. Despite the efforts of management, sickness absence rates have increased.

**32.** In the Best Value report, the Accounts Commission highlighted the need for the council to improve how it manages and engages with its staff. A staff survey was undertaken in spring 2007. The survey response rate was 27 per cent. Overall, 55 per cent of staff were satisfied in their present job, but had a relatively low sense of pride in working for the council (33 per cent). The council recognises that there are variations in satisfaction across services and grades. Most staff expressed satisfaction with working hours, sense of accomplishment and job security, but not with the extent of training and career development. The number of employees who felt they were treated fairly was relatively low (37 per cent) and almost a third of respondents said they have experienced bullying in the workplace over the last two years, mainly by their line manager or service users. One of the main messages to emerge was that communication with staff needs to improve across the council. The staff survey provides a benchmark against which efforts to improve staff management can be assessed in future. The council is committed to undertaking a second staff survey in 2009/10.

**33.** Using the results from the survey and the subsequent staff focus groups, the council drew up an action plan and prepared a People Strategy. The strategy and the detailed action plan are supported by a change programme and a cross-service working group. In November 2008, the council reported that 53 per cent of the 102 actions in the plan had been completed, the remaining 47 per cent were ongoing and there had been only minor slippage on the plan overall.

**34.** There has been slippage in the implementation of Personal Development Plans (PDP). PDPs have been implemented in the chief executive's department, financial services, development and regeneration services and land and environmental services. However, the planned roll-out of PDPs was

delayed in social work services where 52 per cent have been implemented, education services (66 per cent implemented) and direct and care services (62 per cent implemented). A deadline for full implementation within education services is yet to be confirmed, but the other remaining departments are due to be implemented by June 2009 or earlier. Training sessions are being arranged to aid senior managers in delivering PDP briefing sessions and progress will continue to be reported to the corporate management team. The council has developed its business software (SAP) to allow PDP discussions and reviews to be recorded.

**35.** The council has a corporate policy on absence management and indicators are reported to the Policy Development and Scrutiny Committees throughout the year. The council expects that a new software module will further improve monitoring arrangements. In 2006/07, the average absence rate per council employee was 11.8 days. The council has targeted a reduction to nine days per employee by 2009, however, during 2007/08, absence rates within the council rose to 12.9 days. The corporate absence management team are sharing best practice with services to help achieve the identified reduction.

**36.** The council has agreed an equalities framework for the monitoring and reporting of equality in employment areas through the equality working group: an officer group with responsibility for progressing equality issues across the council.

**37.** In dealing with the equal pay issue, the council made a settlement offer to 11,000 staff in December 2005 and this was accepted by 90 per cent. At 31 March 2007, when around 2,100 cases were being pursued through Employment Tribunals, the council agreed to seek negotiated

settlements. Settlements have now been reached with a significant number of the outstanding claims and around 100 claims remain unresolved.

**38.** On single status, the council carried out a workforce pay and benefits review, with the council approving its implementation in October 2006. Two thousand individual or collective requests for outcome reviews were submitted, affecting over 9,000 staff, with 75 per cent of these resulting in review hearings. This process was completed in January 2008 and was followed by a hearings appeal process, which is almost now complete. The council has made significant progress and the process would appear to be nearing completion, with the remaining workforce pay and benefits review provision of £4.5 million expected to be paid out in 2008/09.

### Managing assets

There have been significant delays in implementing a corporate asset management plan. This is now due to be completed in April 2009.

**39.** The council's original Best Value action plan targeted a completion date of December 2006 for the development of a corporate asset management plan, but it now expects that this will be completed in March 2009. This will help the council to ensure assets are used effectively and to realise potential efficiencies. A joint venture contract has been in place since April 2008 and this has been examining property condition and IT provision and the corporate asset management plan.

**40.** As at 31 March 2008, the council held almost £134 million of surplus assets. In December 2007, the Executive Committee approved the commencement of a procurement process to identify a suitable joint venture commercial partner to manage surplus property. Due to the current market, where property prices are falling and the market has slowed down, medium-term financial planning

estimates for capital receipts have been reduced significantly and the council has halted the procurement process.

### Service performance

The Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) continue to show a mixed picture of performance for Glasgow City Council. There has been improvement overall since 2005/06, which has broadly kept pace with the level of improvement nationally. The council has received inspection reports from the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission. Overall, these provide a mixed picture of the quality of services but do not identify any major concerns.

**41.** The audit reviewed service performance as measured by SPIs. These do not give a comprehensive picture of performance across all services, but they allow some comparisons to be made between councils and over time.

**42.** The SPIs continue to show a mixed picture of performance. In 2007/08, the proportion of SPI indicators in the upper quartile was 26.7 per cent (compared to 24.3 per cent in 2005/06) and in the bottom quartile, 28.2 per cent (compared to 27.1 per cent in 2005/06) ([Exhibit 3](#)).

**43.** Overall, there has been a slight improvement between 2005/06 and 2007/08 when the council's performance improved by five per cent or more on 26 SPI measures and worsened by five per cent or more on 16 ([Exhibit 4](#)). This gives the council an improvement-to-decline ratio of 1.6, which is broadly in line with the national average of 1.7.

**44.** Six SPIs that were in the bottom quartile in 2005/06 had still not improved by at least five per cent by 2007/08.

**Exhibit 3**

SPI Profiles: Proportion of indicators in Quartiles 1 and 4

	Quartile 1		Quartile 4	
	Number of indicators	Per cent	Number of indicators	Per cent
2005/06	17 of 70	24.3	19 of 70	27.1
2007/08	19 of 71	26.7	20 of 71	28.2

Source: Audit Scotland

**Exhibit 4**

SPI Profiles: Performance change between 2005/06-2007/08

	Measures that worsened by			Measures that improved by		
	> 15 %	10 14 %	5 9 %	5 9 %	10 14 %	>15 %
Scotland	10	3	4	6	5	18
Glasgow	11	3	2	4	9	13

Source: Audit Scotland

**Exhibit 5**

SWIA Performance Inspection report 2007 - Ratings for the ten areas for evaluation

Outcomes for people who use services	Good
Impact on adults, carers, children and young people who use services	Adequate
Impact on staff	Weak
Impact on the community	Good
Delivery of key processes	Adequate
Policy and service development, planning and performance management	Good
Management and support of staff	Adequate
Resources and capacity building	Good
Leadership	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Good

Source: SWIA Performance Inspection Report 2007

**Inspections**

**45.** The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) published a performance inspection report on the council in June 2007. The report shows a mixed picture; five evaluation areas are assessed as 'good', four as 'adequate' and 'impact on staff' is judged as 'weak' (Exhibit 5).

**46.** The report noted that 'the city has higher levels of poverty, deprivation and substance misuse than all other authorities in Scotland. This has led to high levels of demand for social work services. People who used the services generally thought that they were of good quality and the inspection found that the services were improving the lives of many.'

**47.** The report also states that 'there was strong corporate and political support for social work and the council contributed considerable additional funding for social work services. Social work services managed their budget well.'

**48.** SWIA highlighted a number of areas for improvement in the report, including:

- widening the opportunities available to people with learning disabilities
- improving the poor condition of many social work premises
- addressing the low morale of staff
- establishing a consistent approach to determining which non-statutory childcare work to allocate
- developing a change in management programme to involve staff more, whenever possible, in driving through changes to the organisation
- ensuring a strong strategic core to ensure city-wide consistency of practice.

**49.** SWIA carried out follow-up work in 2008 and will be publishing a report in the first quarter of 2009.

**50.** A report on services for children of asylum seekers in the Glasgow City Council area was published in June 2007. The joint inspection was led by HMIE, and the report gives an overall positive picture of the quality of the service, with six aspects judged as 'very good' or 'good' and with four judged as 'adequate' (Exhibit 6).

**51.** The inspection team concluded that 'overall, staff worked very well to provide services to meet the needs of children of asylum seekers and their parents. Education services, Strathclyde Police and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde had improved existing services and provided additional resources to supplement them. Specialist services had been developed with the voluntary sector and many of these provided good quality support to children of asylum

seekers and their parents. Social work services provided a range of effective support to vulnerable children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Senior managers and staff worked well together across services and had a high level of commitment to meeting the needs of children of asylum seekers. Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde Police, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board and voluntary sector organisations were well placed to take forward improvements in services.'

**52.** The Care Commission has produced a number of reports about specific service areas since the publication of the 2006 Best Value report:

- Homelessness Support Service – inspected in October 2007. The report was generally positive and indicated no requirements or recommendations for the service.

- Assessment & Resettlement Service – inspected in July 2008. A very positive report grading the service 'very good' for the quality of care and support, 'excellent' for the quality of staffing and 'very good' for the quality of management and leadership. No requirements or recommendations were made.
- Adoption service – completed in February 2008. A generally positive report that made two statutory requirements for implementation by the council and eight recommendations.
- Fostering service – inspected in February 2008. A mixed report that identified a range of strengths and also identified six statutory requirements for implementation and made 13 recommendations.

## Exhibit 6

### Quality indicator judgements

<b>How well do services in Glasgow meet the needs of children of asylum seekers?</b>	
Impact on children and young people	Good
Impact on parents and carers	Very good
<b>How good is the delivery of services for children of asylum seekers?</b>	
Knowing and communicating the needs of children and young people	Good
Delivering services that ensure children and young people are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected and responsible, and included	Good
Improving services for children and young people	Adequate
<b>How good is the management of services for children of asylum seekers?</b>	
Participation of children, young people, their families and others	Adequate
Staff deployment	Good
Training and development of staff	Adequate
Information systems	Adequate
<b>How good is the leadership of services for children of asylum seekers?</b>	
Leading people and developing partnerships	Very good



## Outlook

The council has made good progress with its improvement programme and has demonstrated that it has made a positive impact on outcomes for the people of Glasgow. At the same time as managing some significant financial challenges, the council now needs to build on this progress, managing and renewing its improvement agenda on a continuing basis and addressing the issues raised in the staff survey.

**53.** There is some evidence to show that the council has achieved a positive impact on outcome levels for the people of Glasgow, in key areas such as education and employment. However, while the gap has narrowed significantly, long-term improvements will be needed in service performance before these outcome levels match the Scottish average. At the same time, the council has identified that it faces some significant financial challenges in coming years and needs to address the issues highlighted in the staff survey. This highlights the continuing importance of the council's best value agenda.

**54.** The council plans to undertake a 'shadow audit of Best Value' during 2008/09 to review improvement requirements in the context of local and national developments, and to build an agenda for further improvement prior to the next Best Value audit.

**55.** The shadow audit will be based on principles of self-assessment and external challenge, and will be a catalyst for reviewing and, where necessary, refocusing the council's improvement activities in line with service reform objectives. The outputs will include an assessment of the effectiveness of the council in driving improvement, the rate of improvement and the likelihood that improvement will continue. It is anticipated that the Finance,

Corporate and Trading Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee will oversee and scrutinise the outputs of this exercise.

**56.** The council has identified a range of financial pressures including energy costs, income shortfalls and pressures on CHCP and social work budgets. The council is looking at how to deal with the financial challenges ahead and all finance staff in departments now report to the executive director of finance to ensure that they are consistent in their approach and to clarify budget responsibilities.

**57.** In December 2008, the council held a senior management summit to discuss the management of financial and personnel resources. The financial management steering group has created an action plan to address the financial situation that includes:

- a communications strategy to deliver a consistent message regarding over-spend
- identification of areas of under and over-spend
- ensuring budget holders are aware of their responsibilities and accountable for over-spends
- identification of non-essential expenditure and activities
- restrictions on paying grants to third parties that have sufficient reserves.

# Glasgow City Council

## Progress report

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