



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

Best Value Audit

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

March 2023 Update

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Background

- Audit Scotland carry out Best Value Audits approximately every 5 to 6 years
- Our last audit was in October 2019
- 7 improvement recommendations were made
- We developed a 40 point action plan
- Progress continued through Covid
- We are now ready to close off this work, and move forwards with ongoing oversight of performance



Key Audit Recommendations

- *Embed a culture of Continuous improvement by implementing a corporate approach to self evaluation and benchmarking*
- *Seek to improve partnership working with NHS Borders in order to support the strategic objectives of the Integration Joint Board*
- *Improve how the Community Planning Partnership involves communities and the third sector, through greater involvement in local decision making and by accelerating implementation of the Community empowerment act*

Examples of Action Taken

Self evaluation and benchmarking data is being embedded as a core part of the planning process

Creation of a Future Strategy Group to develop direction and oversee strategic developments

A full organisational review has been undertaken and a range of new engagement roles created working directly with communities



Key Audit Recommendations

- *Establish a structured programme of ongoing staff consultation and engagement*
- *Update its people plan for 2017 -21 and ensure longer term workforce plans are reflected in service and financial plans*
- *Support members Continuing Professional Development by tailoring training to meet their individual needs and use technology to make training more accessible*
- *Ensure performance reports to members and the public are more comprehensive balanced and that they cover service performance and the delivery of the Fit for 2024 programme*

Examples of Action Taken

Employee survey carried out

New digital people planning process introduced

Member-specific SB Learn training suite set up

New performance reporting format introduced



Progress on Identified Outstanding Actions

NO.	ACTION	NOTES	LATEST UPDATE
26	Ensure each department has a 5 year people plan which aligns with the corporate plan and Fit for 2024 principles.	New format of People Plans and the introduction of a new Succession Planning agreed with SLT, pilot took place June to July in the E&I Service. Now being rolled out across all Services and completed before the end of the year.	All services have started or completed one cycle of the new digital format of people and succession planning. This is now embedded as a quarterly activity.
30	Undertake a review of induction training with members to establish any gaps.	Phases 1 and 2 of the Members induction programme now complete and Phase 3 (final stage) will commence early September. Questionnaire to be issued to Members to establish any gaps in knowledge.	The full range of induction has now been completed. See Action 32 re questionnaire.
31	Develop a members section of SBLearn where specific materials linked to Councillor responsibilities could be housed.	Still to have meeting with HR on how best to take this forward. Pressure of other work has meant this has not been taken forward	Online Council Training for Elected Members has been set up on SB Learn and contains specific materials linked to Councillor responsibilities.
32	Survey with the members to identify skills gaps.	All Members will be surveyed following election in May 2022; survey being developed as part of induction programme. Survey to be undertaken Autumn 2022.	A questionnaire is currently being planned to establish any gaps in knowledge. This will be taken forwards before Summer recess as part of the development of the members training programme for 23/24. Newly elected members will benefit from this timing as they now have had time to understand any areas they may benefit from further awareness on.
33	Review the potential for earlier visibility of meeting / Committee content, for members.	Work underway with Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer on how best to take this forward	Wherever possible members now receive papers 10 days in advance rather than 7 days



Next Steps

- Delivering commitments in Council Plan
- Continued Implementation of Performance Management Framework
 - Indicators
 - Benchmarking
 - Self Assessment
- Internal & External Audit recommendations
- Committee Report recommendations
- Transformation Programme
- Service Planning
- Improvement Plans
- Continual Improvement

