

Report

Report to:	Corporate Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 July 2008
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) Executive Director (Corporate Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Information Technology Resources)

Subject:	Auditing and Improving Public Access to Council Premises: Calculation of SPI 2007/2008
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee of the outcome of the review of the 2007/2008 audit of Council buildings and the calculation of the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) for 2007/2008 prior to the information on the SPI being sent to Audit Scotland
- ◆ update the Committee on arrangements to verify audit results

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the outcome of the audits of Council buildings be noted and that the information contained in Appendix 1 be forwarded to Audit Scotland; and
- (2) that the arrangements to verify audit results be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. The statutory performance indicator (SPI) introduced in May 2005, requires an assessment of the number of Council buildings from which services to the public are delivered, and the percentage of these in which all public areas are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people.
- 3.2. In 2005, Council approved the approach to be adopted which enabled over 600 properties to be assessed within the timescale for the SPI. This involved training operational managers to undertake stage 1 access audits using a standard checklist, with a programme of "follow up" technical audits, which involved a more detailed assessment, undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources. By 31 March 2007, all of the properties included in the SPI calculation had been subject to a technical audit.
- 3.3. As previously reported, properties were assessed as "compliant" either because they met the physical access standard, or, a reasonable alternative could be provided. In practice, that largely meant that an alternative accessible property or means of delivering the service had been identified. However, the alternative must stand up to scrutiny as being "reasonable", especially where suggested as a long term alternative, and be re-evaluated each year as local circumstances will change.

- 3.4. To improve the quality of the verification exercise, the CMT previously agreed that information on access issues be obtained from feedback /complaints received by the Council. Current systems for collecting and analysing complaints have been reviewed. No formal complaint relating to “discrimination” or access was received during the period April 2007 to March 2008.
- 3.5. In addition, as part of the process of monitoring corporate standards, participants on the front line manager and management development programmes undertake a “mystery shopper” exercise to survey front line offices, facilities and reception points for compliance. As the survey includes questions on accessibility, the results will be fed back to the Property Investment Managers Group.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. The table below gives a comparison between the position in May 2007 when the SPI calculation for 2006/2007 was reported and the position for 2007/2008.

No of Properties	May 2007 SPI Calculation	May 2008 SPI Calculation
Total no of properties included	591	595
No. meeting physical access standard	295 (50%)	319 (54%)
No. with “service re-engineering” solution (i.e. reasonable alternative available)	169 (29%)	151 (25%)
Total no of properties meeting SPI standard	464 (78.5%)	470 (79%)
No of properties not meeting SPI standard	127 (21%)	125 (21%)

- 4.2. Details of all the properties included in the calculation are available in the background papers. As can be seen from the table above, the total number of properties meeting the SPI standard has increased by 6 compared with last year. This is attributable to the capital investment being made by the Council which includes improvements to accessibility. It should be noted that the properties included for Enterprise Resources, are non operational properties, where the Resource retains a responsibility for common areas.
- 4.3. There are 125 properties which are neither accessible nor could a reasonable service alternative be identified. The situation with this group is as follows:-
- ◆ 93 of these are Education Resources properties included for completion in the schools modernisation programme for 2010 and beyond
 - ◆ 4 are other Education properties such as libraries and Universal Connections facilities which are part of a separate development programme
 - ◆ 10 properties are the responsibility of Housing and Technical Resources and this group includes a number of sheltered housing properties which are being design assessed for adaptation in 2008/2009, with works programmed for future years
 - ◆ 18 properties form part of the portfolio for Community Resources. Many of these are smaller halls in rural areas which do not have high levels of use, however, a programme is currently in place which, subject to funding, will allow compliance in future years

A full list of these properties is available as part of the background papers.

- 4.4. Improvements to access are increasingly included in capital work and as part of routine maintenance. To ensure that access issues are identified on all projects, quality systems have been revised and the contract administrator is required to implement, wherever practical, opportunities to improve accessibility as part of routine work.
- 4.5. Raising awareness about the impact of disability is another part of this process and in addition to attending disability awareness training, services have taken the opportunity to make a presentation to members of the local access panel to clarify the role of the service and how it operates. Officers from Building Standards Services in Enterprise Resources worked with the access panel to develop a guide to accessible buildings and this has been very well received. Housing and Technical Resources have also met with the group and undertaken a workshop which was well received by all parties.
- 5. Employee Implications**
- 5.1. Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act applies to public access to goods, facilities, services and premises. Under Part II of the Act, the Council makes specific “reasonable adjustments” tailored to the needs of individual employees.
- 6. Financial Implications**
- 6.1. The programme of work to improve accessibility is overseen by the Property Investment Management Group. Each Resource is required to include provision for this on an ongoing basis within their capital and revenue budget estimates.
- 7. Other Implications**
- 7.1. Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act provides rights for disabled people with regard to physical access to buildings and to the provision of goods, services and premises. Further amendment to the Act in 2005 introduced a duty on public sector bodies to “promote equality of opportunity” for disabled people and to publish arrangements for this in a disability equality scheme. The Council’s first Disability Equality Scheme was published in December 2006 and an annual report on progress is required each December thereafter.
- 8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**
- 8.1. Disability issues are a standing item on the agenda for the Corporate Working Group on Equal Opportunities which has Joint Trade Union Council representatives as members. There is also ongoing consultation with local voluntary groups on disability issues through arrangements such as the Disability Partnership.

Jim Hayton
Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Robert McIlwain
Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

Linda Hardie
Executive Director (Finance and Information Technology Resources)

18 June 2008

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values

- ◆ Fair and open
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ People focused

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

Equal Opportunities Policy

Statutory Performance Indicators Guide 2007/2008

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

John Gordon, Property Performance Manager

Ext: 6613 (Tel: 01698 456613)

E-mail: john.gordon@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Simon Cameron, Diversity Adviser

Ext: 3886 (Tel: 01698 453886)

E-mail: simon.cameron@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Cecilia McGhee, Assistant Finance Manager

Ext: 5244 (Tel: 01698 455244)

E-mail: john.gordon@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

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Compliance with SPI Standard

Resource	Total No. of Properties Covered				Meeting Physical Access Standard				Service can be provided in alternative way / location				Total		% of Properties Meeting SPI	
	May-07		May-08		Number May 07	%	Number May 08	%	Number May 07	%	Number May 08	%	May 07	May 08	May 07	May 08
Community Resources	106	173	100	184	51	48%	56	56%	40	38%	29	29%	91	85	86%	85%
Leisure Trust	67		84		23	34%	34	40%	40	60%	47	56%	63	81	94%	96%
Corporate Resources	17		15		16	94%	14	93%	1	6%	1	7%	17	15	100%	100%
Education Resources - Schools	216	249	216	248	72	33%	81	38%	50	23%	42	19%	122	123	56%	57%
Education Resources - Other	33		32		20	61%	20	63%	9	27%	8	25%	29	28	88%	88%
Enterprise Resources	7		7		5	71%	6	86%	2	29%	1	14%	7	7	100%	100%
Finance & IT Resources	N/A		N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing & Technical Resources	91		91		61	67%	61	67%	20	22%	20	22%	81	81	89%	89%
Social Work Resources	54		50		47	87%	47	94%	7	13%	3	6%	54	50	100%	100%
Totals	591		595		295	50%	319	54%	169	29%	151	25%	464	470	79%	79%