

Report

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Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Empower Update
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Executive Committee with the second annual update of progress made on the roll out of the Council's approved self assessment tool 'Empower'.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that each Resource continues with its commitment to complete the roll out of Empower across all relevant services in line with the programme attached as Appendix 1
- (2) that it be noted that progress with the development of the use of Empower will be taken forward by the Empower Officers Group
- (3) that annual progress reports continue to be presented
- (4) that progress with the Action Plan from the Council wide corporate assessment continues to be monitored and reported through IMPROVe

3. Background

- 3.1. In June 2009 the Executive Committee agreed the three year programme (2010/11 – 2012/13) for self assessments across the Council using Empower software tool, based on the Public Sector Improvement Framework. It was also agreed that this should be rolled out across all Resources on a three year programme from 2010/2011 to 2012/13.
- 3.2. Since the previous annual update report further EFQM/PSIF training has taken place to reflect structure and establishment changes to ensure all Resources have trained officers. In addition, Finance and Corporate Resources are also able to provide additional training support where required.
- 3.3. The detail within this annual update report provides information on progress made with the planned programme of assessments. The report also notes developments in terms of refinements being made to the Council's approach to assessments and how the outcomes will be used to help inform the Council's improvement planning process. Also included is information on PSIF development through the Improvement Service.

4. Assessments – progress and development

- 4.1. Appendix 1 refers to the proposed programme of assessments to 2012/13 for all Resources. It shows a mix of approach in terms of the level at which the assessments will be carried out, with some being at Service level, whilst others are at lower operational level. This reflects local needs with the key emphasis being to ensure all service areas have effective self assessment in place. In May 2011, a SWIA/PSIF Framework document was prepared by the Improvement Service which details the mapping of PSIF statements to the SWIA PIM. From a South Lanarkshire Council perspective, work is ongoing with the SWIA Link Inspector to develop the level of use and reliance which can be made of PSIF in the future. Following the work completed earlier this year by Education Resources on the Validated Self Evaluation, the opportunity will be taken to consider how the results map to PSIF, which will provide an insight into potential future use. For all other areas of service delivery, Resources use the Empower tool.
- 4.2. Whilst there has been some minimal variation on scheduling of assessments, the programme remains on target for completion by 2012/13. Overall, 40% of planned assessments have been completed by October 2011, with 63% due by March 2012 and 100% by March 2013. It should be noted that this information relates to self assessment being carried out using Empower only, and that other self assessment arrangements remain in place as required.
- 4.3. When an assessment has been completed a standard template is now used to report to relevant Resource Senior Management Teams, which reflects on three key areas ie how the process worked in practice, good practice and lessons learned, and key areas for improvement. This information is important for individual Resources, but is also relevant in terms of refining the corporate approach to improvement as appropriate. In recent months these reports have confirmed the importance of effective planning and engagement with managers prior to an assessment and for the selection of the right mix and seniority of members of the assessment team.
- 4.4. As noted at 4.3 above, each assessment will result in a number of areas for improvement, with the most significant of these being reported to the Senior Management Team. At the present time improvement actions are taken forward by individual Resources and progress monitored as part of their performance management arrangements. The aim is to identify a small number of key improvement areas for each assessment and for these to be monitored through IMPROVe. This will develop as a means of benefits tracking of the impact realised as a result of these areas for improvement which contribute to the Council's commitment to continuous improvement. The remaining areas for improvement and associated actions will continue to be monitored by Resources.
- 4.5. At the end of each assessment an evaluation response is completed by participants which is followed up in due course to re-assess their views on the event and areas for improvement. Overall, these results reflect a positive approach to the self assessment process and views will continue to be monitored as the approach to the assessment process is developed.

- 4.6. The high level structure of the criteria and statements used within Empower reflect those identified by the Improvement Service/Quality Scotland in respect of the Public Service Improvement Framework. However, it is important that the Council is able to make use of the tool in a manner which best suits its structure and day to day operational arrangements. Therefore, lead officers and facilitators will continue to take every opportunity to refine the way in which assessments are planned and managed. Having now completed a number of assessments some of the key areas for consideration include ensuring the most appropriate level and mix of participants; opportunity to identify areas of particular relevance with managers in advance; targeted use of tool where appropriate, eg within IT Services, and within Procurement Services linked to Procurement Capability Assessment.
- 4.7. A formal process for benefits tracking was considered previously in terms of corporate improvement activity linked to service reviews and national diagnostic projects. However, the most significant areas of impact from these strands of improvement activity are being reported at a corporate level in terms of the contribution towards savings and efficiency targets. Therefore, moving forward, and to avoid duplication, the opportunity will be taken to develop benefits tracking information relating to self assessment. This reflects the long term aim for self assessment to inform the Council's future efficiency agenda. Appendix 2 provides an illustration of how the results from assessments will be managed at a Resource and Council wide level, both for monitoring areas for improvement and more strategic outcomes.
- 4.8. At the conclusion of each assessment the EMPOWER software tool provides a 'DNA' analysis of scores for each of the nine criteria. This gives an overview of the scores for each criteria and, as a consequence, links to those which are likely to have the most significant areas for improvement. This analysis is important at an individual assessment level and for each Resource. However, it is also of interest at a Council level, as an accumulation of the results of all completed assessments. Moving forward the aim is to review this 'DNA' information and to consider how the impact of individual assessments should inform corporate or cross Resource improvements. The DNA assessment summary (as at October 2011) shows a number of assessments scoring lower in statements linked to Service Process, Customer Results and People Results. Therefore, work will now be taken forward to analyse the detail behind these results and identify common/corporate areas for improvement.
- 4.9. An article was included in the February 2011 edition of The Works highlighting the work of the assessment teams within Finance and IT and Housing and Technical Resources. This commitment to communication will continue with a further article early in 2012.
- 4.10. The Improvement Service continues to work with the scrutiny agencies, Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland, to strengthen their commitment to using PSIF as evidence of a structured approach to self evaluation. South Lanarkshire Council continues to use the models used by SWIA and HMle, supplemented by the selective use of Empower to address areas of need or areas where no external scrutiny occurs.

- 4.11 A key area of work for the Improvement Service is the development of PSIF for use by Community Planning Partnerships. Earlier this year pilot work was carried out to consider the use of a modified version of the PSIF Framework both at CPP Board and Thematic levels. South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership participated as a pilot at Board level which resulted in the identification of a number of improvement actions which have now been agreed by the Board. The feedback from the participating pilots is being considered by the Improvement Service to inform the final version of Framework for CPPs.
- 4.12 The ongoing developments noted above will be taken forward by the Empower Officer Working Group and progress reported in the next annual update.

5. Corporate assessment

- 5.1. The Committee will recall previous reference to the corporate assessment carried out by members of the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service in May 2010, which resulted in a small number (11) of strategic improvement actions. The first annual progress report on these actions was prepared in June 2011, based on IMPROVe and additional contextual information. Progress continues to be monitored through IMPROVe and a second annual update will be available as at 31 March 2012. Interim updates from IMPROVe indicate progress as appropriate at the present time.

6. PSIF developments

- 6.1. As noted in the previous annual update, PSIF continues to develop to ensure it meets the specific needs of the public sector and related scrutiny bodies, as well as those organisations which bring more specific employee and customer perspectives ie Investors in People and Customer Service Excellence. Developments recently completed/underway include:
- Publication of an updated PSIF Framework document which provides for a reduced number of statements from 129 to 97
 - SWIA/PSIF Framework document detailing the mapping of PSIF statements to the SWIA PIM.
 - PSIF Framework – 2011 Economic Development Framework
 - Benchmarking – identification of a number of benchmarking measures which councils may use as evidence when populating the assessment tool and at the same time be used by participating councils to compare results.
- 6.2. In recent months the Improvement Service has also been reviewing the importance of PSIF in response to BV2. A Learning Event was held in June 2011 and attended by participating councils and Audit Scotland. Feedback from the event confirmed a number of key points, including that Audit Scotland accept that different organisations use PSIF appropriately for their own needs and the importance of risk based prioritisation of assessment activity. From a South Lanarkshire Council perspective, the programme of assessments across Resources currently adopts a prioritisation approach to identifying improvements and we are continuing to develop our approach in terms of targeted use of the model and analysis of DNA results. Also, it is important to note that the assessment carried out in May 2010 with CMT and Heads of Service ensured that the corporate assessment element of BV2 was included in the question set.
- 6.3. Self assessment remains important in terms of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement and Best Value. The opportunity will be taken as part of the 2011 Shared Risk Assessment process to note progress to date and influence SRA to inform improvement trends and actions.

7. Next steps

7.1. The Council's commitment to continuous improvement is supported by a robust approach to self assessment and as relevant through the use of Empower. This remains a focus of Best Value. Therefore, Committee is asked to approve the following:

- Self assessment evidence is included within the Council's 2011 Shared Risk Assessment response
- Resources continue with assessments based on the roll out noted at Appendix 1.
- The Empower Implementation/Facilitators Group continue to refine best practice options to develop the Council's approach to assessments to best meet the needs of individual Resources and Services
- Officers leading on assessments progressively develop their facilitation skills through hands on experience and sharing of best practice.
- Benefits tracking and management of strategic outcomes from Empower is developed to inform future improvements

8. Employee Implications

8.1. There are no specific employee implications beyond the time commitment to plan, facilitate and participate in assessments. Executive Directors are asked to continue to support the necessary time and effort to ensure a worthwhile result in terms of an effective assessment and a useful and robust improvement plan.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. There are no financial implications.

10. Other Implications

10.1. There are no other implications.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Paul Manning

Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources

24 November 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes

- Performance Management and Improvement

Previous References

- Executive Committee Report (1 December 2010) Empower Update

List of Background Papers

- None

Contact for Further Information

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

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Empower – Programme of assessments

	Council level	Corporate	Finance and IT	Social Work	Housing and Technical	Enterprise	Community
Phase 1 (pilots) March 2010		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection (selected elements of Empower used) 			
Phase 1 2010/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMT and Heads of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services • Consultation and continuous improvement • Equality, diversity and Seniors Together • Personnel operations • Recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non Housing property/Asset management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Building Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Services/CATS
Phase 2 2011/12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported employment • Shared Services • Licensing and registration Services • Printing • Graphics • Learning and development and trainer support • New media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Services • Procurement • IT Technical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted use as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Property and Asset management • Q and A and Customer Contact • Housing management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounds maintenance and street cleaning • Building Cleaning
Phase 3 2012/13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety • Employee Assistance Team • Vocational Development • Emergency planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Business Systems • Accounting and Budgeting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness • Benefits and Revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel, management support • Finance, information management • Facilities management • Fleet services • Waste management
2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMT and Heads of Service 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Services

Note Education Resources Information:-

Education Resources continues to engage in a wide range of robust self evaluation activity across all aspects of services, ensuring the identification of areas strength in service delivery and that appropriate improvements in performance continue to be taken forward. Examples of self evaluation activity include:

- ◆ Validated Self Evaluation (July 2011) in partnership with HMIE on the key themes of ‘Closing the Gap’, ‘Stakeholder Engagement’, ‘Quality Assurance’, and ‘Transitions’;

- ◆ Engagement of psychological services in a robust self evaluation programme leading to the successful inspection findings of HMIE who noted “*the strong and effective approach to self-evaluation embedded in the work of the service. Psychologists were encouraged to reflect on their own practice and the service had looked closely at aspects of its work to inform improvements*”;
- ◆ Annual programme of self evaluation, linked to the improvement planning processes in all schools, establishments and services and an annual programme of Quality Management Seminars;
- ◆ Educational establishments continue to engage in self evaluation as an integral aspect of the revised approach to inspection, as well as further engagement with Education Scotland (formerly HMIE) in supporting practice visits to establishments and services – part of the national programme.

Empower Benefits Tracking Framework

Resource Assessments

Report to SMT

- Process
- Lessons learned
- Key areas of improvement and outcomes

Resource Action Plan (detail)

IMPROVe

Council wide

Monitor key outcomes and actions

Benefits tracking via IMPROVe

Analysis of scoring/ DNA data

Benefits tracking via IMPROVe

Council wide assessment (use BV toolkit)

Benefits tracking via IMPROVe

