

National Park Authority Audit Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 13 – Appendix 1

Response to Best Value in Public Services Guidance



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Scottish Ministers expect all Accountable Officers to comply with the duty of Best Value placed upon them and compliance with the duty of Best Value is an auditable requirement.
- 1.2 The Best Value guidance has been considered in full by the Financial Performance Manager and the Research & Performance Officer, in consultation with the senior management team (Heads of Service, Corporate Services Director and Chief Executive).
- 1.3 This paper presents our formal response to the Best Value guidance.

2. Best Value Self-Assessment

2.1 Self-Assessment Process

Detailed self-assessments have been carried out by the Financial Performance Manager and the Research & Performance Officer, in consultation with a number of key employees throughout the organisation.

The self-assessments have been reviewed and agreed by the senior management team (Heads of Service, Corporate Services Director and Chief Executive).

The mechanism used to carry out the detailed self-assessments was:

- to list each best value theme with the evidence suggested by the guidance;
- to discuss and understand our own processes with key members of staff and list our own evidence beside the best value suggested evidence;
- to self-assess our performance in each area and list any gaps or weaknesses as well as any suggestions for improvements;
- the development of an internal self-assessment scoring system to assist in the evaluation as shown.

Scoring Matrix	
0	No evidence available
1	Gaps or weaknesses in evidence
2	Meets Best Value requirements
3	Fully achieves Best Value requirements

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2.2 Self-Assessment Results Explained

Once we had established our assessment in each area the results were summarised to show the % of maximum achievement, the actual score, the minimum score required to be compliant with Best Value and the maximum score possible.

E.g. the best value guidance list 13 types of evidence, strategic and operational, that a “Best Value” organisation would be able to demonstrate in relation to Vision & Leadership.

% of maximum	92% i.e. 36/39 x 100%
Actual score	36
Minimum score for compliance	26 i.e. 13 x 2
Maximum score possible	39 i.e. 13 x 3

2.3 Self-Assessment Results

The table below shows our self-assessment of our performance against each best value theme.

Theme	% of Max	Actual Score	“Compliant” Score	Max Score	Comment
Vision and Leadership	92%	36	26	39	Fully compliant, minor improvements
Effective Partnerships	96%	26	18	27	Fully compliant, very minor improvements
Governance and Accountability	80%	29	24	36	Mainly compliant, one area to highlight as a gap, improvement actions identified
Use of Resources	79%	38	32	48	Compliant and generally performing well, number of minor improvements
Performance Management	91%	33	24	36	Fully compliant, minor improvements

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Theme	% of Max	Actual Score	“Compliant” Score	Max Score	Comment
Sustainability	91%	30	22	33	Compliant and generally performing well. Considered a ‘major player’ in relation to sustainability so reporting improvements are recommended
Equality	66%	16	16	24	Compliant – area to be strengthened

2.4 Self-Assessment Summary

The table at 2.4 demonstrates that we are a Best Value Organisation and we have a wide variety of evidence to support this conclusion.

We are particularly strong in relation to Vision & Leadership, Effective Partnerships and Performance Management. This has been achieved through our focus on partnership working highlighted by the successes of the NPPP, a clear vision linking our Corporate Plan with Scottish Government Outcomes, a robust operational planning process which has full employee engagement and effective performance reporting mechanisms. There is further improvement possible in these areas and these will be progressed in line with the underlying purpose of best value.

The results show solid good performance in relation to Governance & Accountability, Use of Resources and Sustainability. There are a number of actions we can take to improve in these areas and these are, in the main, already planned as improvements as part of our operational plan for 2015/16.

An important point to highlight is that we are considered a ‘major player’ in relation to Sustainability therefore we will take action to clearly report upon our strong performance in this area. Resource may be an issue in relation to the achievement of additional reporting.

There is one area in relation to Governance & Accountability that requires attention:
“that where delivery is through others, a robust framework of corporate governance is in place to manage that delivery which sets out roles and responsibilities, objectives and outcomes and a process for performance and risk management and reporting.”

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Given the significance of partnership working to the organisation this is an important area to develop. However it is worth noting that our partnership working is effective as each partnership is managed well on an individual basis, as evidenced by the Effective Partnership theme self-assessment. As the organisation matures we recognise that more robust processes are required and therefore this area will be addressed over the next year.

Our performance in relation to Equalities is not as strong as we would like. We are compliant in this area but we do have further work to do to embed the equalities outcomes throughout the organisation. The Equalities group are aiming to make more progress over 2015/16. Resource may be an issue in relation to the achievement of this.

2.5 Action Plan arising from self-assessment

An action plan identifying the top priority actions that we will address over 2015/16 and 2016/17 in order to maintain focus on 'Best Value' is included at Appendix 2. This action plan will be used to monitor our success over the next two years in making further progress with 'Best Value'.

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