

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

To: Audit Committee

For Information

9th December 2015

Performance Management

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	Innovation and Transformation
Objective	
Lead Officer	Stephen McMaw
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

1.0 Background

1.1 In line with the Improvement Duty under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (the Act), the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (the Council) is required to have in place a Corporate Strategy from which key improvement objectives are identified and a subsequent Performance Improvement Plan developed.

1.2 The Council is also required each year to agree at least one improvement objective from the prescribed list within the Act and to set appropriate improvement targets within the Council's Performance Improvement Plan. The seven prescribed objectives are as follows:

- Strategic effectiveness
- Service quality
- Service availability
- Fairness
- Sustainability
- Efficiency
- Innovation

2.0 Detail

2.1 It was agreed by the Department of the Environment that for year 1 of the new 11 Councils coming into being, the Local Government Auditor (the Auditor) would apply a “light touch” to auditing each Council’s obligations under the Improvement Duty. To meet these obligations the Council is required to:

- Identify (at least one) performance improvement objective by 31 May 2015. This could form part of the Council’s corporate plan, but must have been in accordance with the criteria specified in the Act and easily identifiable as a performance improvement objective;
- Consult upon its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 May 2015. This consultation could have been undertaken as part of the corporate planning process;
- Publish its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 July 2015. This could have been part of the publication of the Council’s Corporate Plan; and
- Put in place a timetable and plan to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective(s) by 30 September 2015.

2.2 To meet the 2015/2016 audit requirements in relation to performance improvement, a number of documents were submitted to the Local Government Auditor. These documents included:

- The Council minutes relating to the rates striking process which detailed the in-year cost reduction target of £1.2m;
- A report to Council identifying Efficiency as the primary performance objective linking directly to the prescribed list of performance objectives from within the Act;
- A project plan relating to the development of the Council Corporate Plan;
- The Corporate Plan consultation process and evidence of approval from Council;
- Evidence that the Corporate Plan has been published;
- A performance Improvement plan identifying key deliverables, staff responsible and targets; and
- A project plan for the performance improvement process.

3.0 Audit Outcome

- 3.1** Following the audit, the Chief Executive has received a Letter of Assurance from the Local Government Auditor. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 1.



Louise Mason FCA
Local Government Auditor

Northern Ireland Audit Office

106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Direct Line : (028) 9025 1048
Fax : (028) 9025 1051
E-mail : louise.mason@niauditoffice.gov.uk
webaddress : www.niauditoffice.gov.uk

Mr David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

30 October 2015

Dear David

AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT OF CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR 2015-16

1. As the Local Government Auditor, I am required to report to you on whether, in my opinion, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (the Council) has established arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions in the introductory year of the commencement of Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 Act (the Act).
2. The responsibilities of councils and the Local Government Auditor for the introductory year are set out in the Department of the Environment's (the Department) 'Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement' (the Guidance), which was published in July 2015.
3. In this introductory year, the Council was required to carry out the following arrangements in order to meet its statutory responsibilities:
 - identify (at least one) performance improvement objective by 31 May 2015. This could form part of the Council's corporate plan, but must have been in

accordance with the criteria specified in the Act and easily identifiable as a performance improvement objective;

- consult upon its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 May 2015. This consultation could have been undertaken as part of the corporate planning process;
- publish its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 July 2015. This could have been part of the publication of the Council's Corporate Plan; and
- put in place a timetable and plan to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective(s) by 30 September 2015.

4. In forming my opinion for this introductory year, I performed an assessment (as directed by the Department) to ascertain:

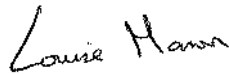
- whether the Council has at least one performance improvement objective and that it has been published;
- that each objective meets at least one of the seven relevant criteria specified in the Act;
- that a consultation process has been conducted; and
- whether a satisfactory timetable and plan is in place to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective (s).

5. For the introductory year, the Guidance allowed councils to select strategic objectives as performance improvement objectives and these objectives can be part of the Corporate Plan. Management identified one performance improvement objective and this was ratified by the Council on 30 June 2015. The performance improvement objective is linked to, but not included in the Council's 'Corporate Strategy 2015 - 2019' and was published on the Council's website in the Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, relating to its meeting held on 19 May 2015. The performance improvement

objective meets the efficiency criteria specified in the Act and was subject to internal consultation as part of the corporate planning process. The public element of the consultation process was completed on 16 October 2015. A satisfactory draft timetable and plan was in place to develop and progress the performance improvement objective in 2015-16. This was submitted to the Council for approval on 13 October 2015.

6. In my opinion Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has established arrangements to secure continuous improvement in 2015-16 in the exercise of its functions for the introductory year of the commencement of Part 12 of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LOUISE MASON
Local Government Auditor