

# Solace/IS Transformation Work

## **National Self Evaluation Framework**

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### **Resources**

#### **Self evaluation areas:**

- 8.1: Delivering services in partnership**
- 8.2: Financial management**
- 8.3: Resource management**
- 8.4: Information systems**



# Resources

## Self-evaluation area 8.1: Delivering services in partnership

### Explainer

Delivering services in partnership is a core function of Scottish local authorities. Whether through formal Community Planning Partnerships, integrated services (e.g. Health and Social Care Partnerships), or collaboration with the third and private sectors, effective partnership working can improve outcomes, reduce duplication, and enhance service responsiveness.

### Potential sources of evidence

- Service-level agreements or contracts
- Joint service delivery strategies
- IJB plans
- LOIP
- Service transformation or integration plans
- Evaluation reports from shared services
- Audit Scotland reports
- Feedback from partner organisations
- Examples of co-located or partnership teams
- Information sharing protocols
- Joint training and development activities
- Award submissions or recognition
- Shared budgets or poled funding arrangements
- Joint procurement or commissioning strategies
- Cost-benefit or value for money analysis
- Results and impact of any relevant internal self-evaluation or improvement activity e.g. PSIF and Peer Collaborative Improvement

## Reflective questions

### Strategic Purpose and Shared Outcomes

- Do our partnerships have a clearly defined purpose and shared objectives that align with local and national priorities?
- Are we jointly focused on improving outcomes for service users, not just organisational efficiency?
- How well are our partnerships aligned with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Community Planning priorities?

### Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

- Are roles, responsibilities, and expectations clearly defined and agreed across partner organisations?
- Do staff understand where their own remit ends and a partners begins — particularly in integrated services?
- How are decisions made and accountabilities shared within partnership structures?

### Governance and Risk Management

- Do we have robust governance arrangements to oversee joint service delivery (e.g. reporting, scrutiny, risk management)?
- How do we identify and manage risks associated with partnership delivery (e.g. safeguarding, funding, data sharing)?
- Are all partners held accountable for their contributions and performance?

### Communication and Trust

- Are communication channels between partners open, transparent, and timely?
- Is there a culture of mutual trust, respect, and problem-solving across partner agencies?
- How do we handle disagreements or conflicts when they arise?

### Resource Sharing and Efficiency

- Are resources (e.g. staff, premises, budgets, systems) shared efficiently to support joint delivery?
- Do we work together to reduce duplication and make best use of each partner's strengths?

- How do we ensure equitable contributions from each partner?

## **Co-design and Service Integration**

- Are services co-designed with partners and, where appropriate, with communities or service users?
- Do staff work in truly integrated or co-located teams where needed (e.g. health and social care, community justice)?
- How well do we blend organisational cultures to support seamless delivery?

## **Staff Capability and Support**

- Are staff working in partnership roles trained and supported to collaborate effectively?
- Do line managers and leaders model strong collaborative behaviours?
- How are joint teams supervised, developed, and managed across organisational boundaries?

## **Impact on Service Users**

- Do service users experience joined-up, consistent support from multiple agencies?
- How do we gather feedback from users about their experiences of partnership-delivered services?
- Are improvements made in response to service user insight?

## **Performance and Evaluation**

- Do we have shared performance frameworks and indicators to monitor the success of joint delivery?
- Are we regularly reviewing the impact, quality, and value for money of partnership-delivered services?
- How do we act on performance data to drive improvement?

## **Innovation, Learning and Sustainability**

- Are partnerships enabling innovation in service design and delivery?
- Do we learn from joint initiatives and share best practice across partnerships?
- How sustainable are our partnership models — in terms of funding, workforce, and community support?

## Self-evaluation area 8.2: Financial Management

### Explainer

Effective financial management is fundamental to the performance, accountability, and sustainability of any local authority. In the Scottish context, it also includes demonstrating best value, ensuring alignment with priorities in the LOIP and council plan, and meeting statutory duties under financial governance frameworks.

### Potential sources of evidence

- Annual budget reports
- Mid-term financial plans
- Capital investment plans
- Revenue and capital monitoring reports
- Audit Scotland annual assurance reports
- Internal audit reports
- Service cost benchmarking
- Efficiency savings reports
- Quality of business cases
- Risk registers linked to financial risks
- Financial regulations and standing orders
- Public budget consultation reports
- Engagement with elected members, senior staff and the public
- Financial training records
- Use of financial management tools and systems
- In-year budget monitoring reports
- Forecasting models and scenario planning
- Grants and external funding reports
- Impact assessment of funding changes

- Results and impact of any relevant internal self-evaluation or improvement activity e.g. PSIF and Peer Collaborative Improvement
- Reviews against Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework – Principle F

## Reflective questions

### Strategic Financial Planning

- Are our financial plans aligned with the council's strategic priorities and service delivery objectives?
- Do we take a medium-to-long-term approach to financial planning (e.g. multi-year budgets, scenario planning)?
- How well are financial plans integrated with workforce planning, capital strategies, and risk management?

### Budgeting and Resource Allocation

- Is our budgeting process transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based?
- How are financial decisions informed by performance data, needs analysis, and community priorities?
- Are we making best use of available resources and aligning them with areas of highest impact?

### Financial Sustainability and Risk

- Are we identifying and managing financial risks effectively (e.g. inflation, demographic pressures, policy change)?
- What strategies are in place to maintain financial sustainability in the face of funding constraints?
- Do we have adequate reserves and contingency plans?

### Governance and Accountability

- Are our financial governance arrangements robust, clear, and regularly reviewed?
- How are elected members supported to make informed decisions on budgets and financial performance?
- Are there effective checks, balances, and independent scrutiny mechanisms?

## Financial Monitoring and Reporting

- Do we have accurate, timely, and transparent financial reporting at all levels of the organisation?
- How regularly are variances and emerging pressures reviewed — and how quickly is action taken?
- Are financial reports clearly linked to service performance and outcomes?

## Value for Money and Efficiency

- How do we assess and demonstrate value for money in our services and investments?
- Are we identifying opportunities for savings through innovation, partnership, or redesign?
- Do we regularly benchmark costs and productivity against other authorities or standards?

## Staff Capacity and Capability

- Do staff with budget responsibilities have the skills, support, and tools they need?
- Are finance teams and service leads working together effectively on planning, monitoring, and improvement?
- How are financial competencies developed across the organisation?

## Community Engagement and Transparency

- Are financial decisions and trade-offs communicated clearly to communities and stakeholders?
- How do we engage citizens in budget setting, participatory budgeting, or investment decisions?
- Are our financial reports and accounts accessible and understandable to the public?

## Use of Technology and Systems

- Are our financial systems efficient, secure, and fit for purpose?
- Do we make effective use of digital tools and automation in budgeting, forecasting, and reporting?
- Is there good integration between financial systems and performance or HR systems?

## Continuous Improvement and Audit

- How do we learn from internal and external audit findings, and turn them into improvements?
- Do we regularly review financial processes and controls for efficiency and effectiveness?
- Are we responsive to national best practice, regulatory changes, and financial management frameworks?

## Self-evaluation area 8.3: Resource management

### Explainer

Resource management in a Scottish local authority context extends beyond finances and includes the effective and sustainable use of people, assets, technology, infrastructure, and time. Good resource management ensures that these assets are aligned to priorities, well-maintained, efficiently used, and continuously improved.

### Potential sources of evidence

- Corporate asset management strategy
- Workforce plans
- Capital investment strategy
- Digital transformation or ICT strategy
- Asset condition reports
- Space utilisation studies
- Fleet utilisation and lifecycle data
- ICT system performance and uptime logs
- Audit Scotland and internal audit reports
- Procurement audits
- Environmental and sustainability audits
- Capital project business cases
- Alignment between workforce, financial and asset plans
- Use of shared resources with partners
- Asset lifecycle cost analysis
- Capital replacement programmes
- Consultations on building use or digital services
- Results and impact of any relevant internal self-evaluation or improvement activity e.g. PSIF and Peer Collaborative Improvement

## Reflective questions

### Strategic Alignment and Planning

- Are our resource management strategies aligned with our organisational priorities and service plans?
- Do we take a long-term view in planning for resource needs, including population change, climate targets, and digital transformation?
- Are we using integrated resource planning across services (e.g. combining staffing, assets, and tech planning)?

### Asset Management (Buildings, Land, Fleet, Equipment)

- Do we have an up-to-date and accurate register of council assets, including usage, condition, and value?
- Are our buildings and facilities being used efficiently and in line with strategic goals?
- How do we prioritise investment, maintenance, and disposal of assets?

### Digital and Technological Resources

- Are our digital tools and infrastructure reliable, secure, and supporting modern service delivery?
- Do we invest strategically in technology to drive efficiency, accessibility, and innovation?
- How do we ensure staff and citizens are able to use digital resources effectively?

### Human Resources

- Are staff time and capacity used effectively across services and priorities?
- Do we have the right balance of permanent, temporary, and agency staff — and are they deployed well?
- Are we identifying and addressing inefficiencies in how staff are scheduled, supported, and allocated?

### Energy and Sustainability

- Are we managing energy and resource consumption in line with net-zero targets and climate duties?
- How do we track and reduce our carbon footprint across buildings, fleet, and operations?

- Are we optimising use of natural resources and reducing waste?

## **Procurement and Contracts**

- Are goods and services procured in a way that delivers best value and aligns with ethical and sustainability goals?
- How well do we manage contracts and monitor supplier performance?
- Do we engage local suppliers, SMEs, and the third sector where appropriate?

## **Facilities and Space Management**

- Are workspaces safe, accessible, and fit for hybrid working and service user needs?
- How do we assess and adapt to changes in demand for physical space (e.g. office downsizing, community hubs)?
- Are we making best use of shared or co-located facilities with partners?

## **Transport and Fleet**

- Is our vehicle fleet right-sized, well-maintained, and aligned with sustainability objectives?
- Are transport resources being used efficiently and fairly across services?
- Are we transitioning to low-emission or electric vehicles where feasible?

## **Time and Process Efficiency**

- Are we managing time as a critical resource — reducing duplication, delay, and unnecessary tasks?
- Have we streamlined processes through automation or lean methods?
- How do we identify and act on opportunities to improve productivity?

## **Performance, Monitoring, and Improvement**

- Do we monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of our resource use across all categories?
- Are resource management decisions driven by real-time data, risk assessments, and cost-benefit analysis?
- How do we continuously improve our approach to resource management?

## Self-evaluation area 8.4: Information Systems

### Explainer

Effective information systems are essential for modern local authorities to deliver efficient, responsive, and accountable public services. In the Scottish context, strong digital and information governance also underpins national priorities such as digital transformation, cyber resilience, and improved service access.

### Potential sources of evidence

- Digital or ICT strategy
- Information management policies
- Alignment with Digital Strategy for Scotland
- Information systems register
- System integration and inter-operability documentation
- Legacy systems risk assessment
- Cyber resilience assessments
- Internal audits of IT security
- Data protection impact assessments
- Training records for cyber security and GDPR awareness
- User analytics
- Helpdesk and IT support data
- Business intelligence dashboards and reporting tools
- Evidence of data-driven decision making
- Data quality audits
- Staff feedback
- Post improvement implementation reviews (PIRs)
- Agile or digital innovation project documentation
- Procurement and vendor management documentation
- Accessibility audits
- The use of artificial intelligence
- Results and impact of any relevant internal self-evaluation or improvement activity e.g. PSIF and Peer Collaborative Improvement

## Reflective questions

### Strategic Alignment

- Are our information systems aligned with organisational priorities and service delivery needs?
- Do we have a clear digital or ICT strategy that supports transformation, inclusion, and efficiency?
- How do we ensure that technology investment decisions are guided by service and community outcomes?
- What is our attitude to artificial intelligence, and how does this impact service delivery?

### Reliability and Performance

- Are our systems consistently reliable, available, and fit for purpose?
- How do we monitor and respond to system downtime, errors, or inefficiencies?
- Are staff and partners confident in using core systems to perform their duties effectively?

### Integration and Interoperability

- Do our information systems work well together across departments and services?
- Are there barriers to data sharing or system integration that impact service delivery?
- How well are we progressing toward a 'single view' of service users or joined-up case management?

### Data Management and Quality

- Is the data held in our systems accurate, consistent, up to date, and well maintained?
- Do we have clear ownership and stewardship of key data sets across services?
- How do we ensure that data informs decision-making, planning, and performance management?

### Cybersecurity and Information Governance

- Are our systems protected by up-to-date, proportionate cyber security controls?
- Do we meet all relevant legal and regulatory standards for data protection and information security (e.g. GDPR, FOISA)?
- How regularly do we test, review, and improve our cyber resilience?

## User Access and Experience

- Are systems intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to staff at all levels?
- How do we gather feedback from system users to identify problems or development needs?
- Are there barriers to access for hybrid, remote, or field-based staff?

## Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

- Do our public-facing digital systems meet accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.2)?
- Are digital services designed to include all service users, regardless of digital confidence or connectivity?
- How do we support digital literacy in the community and among our staff?

## Training and Support

- Do staff receive effective training and support to use digital systems confidently and securely?
- Is there an accessible helpdesk or support service for technical issues?
- How do we build digital skills and capabilities across the workforce?

## Innovation and Future-readiness

- Are we using data and digital tools to innovate or redesign services?
- How well do we stay informed of emerging technologies (e.g. AI, automation, IoT) that could improve outcomes?
- Do we have partnerships in place to support digital innovation (e.g. with NHS, universities, tech providers)?

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- How do we evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of our digital and information systems?
- Are we continuously reviewing and improving our systems based on performance, feedback, and user needs?
- Do we benchmark our digital maturity against other authorities or national standards?
- Do all business areas have access to Power BI dashboards as appropriate?
- Are all business areas using Power BI dashboards effectively to review performance?