Pye Tait Consulting

Review of Key Performance Framework Returns

June 2013
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1. Introduction

The new performance framework for local authority building standards verifiers in Scotland was introduced in May 2012 and measurable from October 2012.

The framework seeks to address a wide range of actions and behaviours which, between them, demonstrate a strong customer-focused service. It will allow the assessment of building standards performance outcomes over a range of key national objectives and has been developed to improve the quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities carried out by Scottish local authorities.

The Scottish Government Building Standards Division has been appointed to monitor Local Authorities as Verifiers.

The framework consists of 9 key performance outcomes (KPO) in 3 broad perspectives:

- Professional Expertise & Technical Processes;
- Quality Customer Experience;
- Operational & Financial Efficiency.

The index of key performance outcomes is shown below:

**Professional Expertise & Technical Processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPO1</td>
<td>Year-on-year reduction in the average time taken to grant a building warrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO2</td>
<td>Increased quality of assessment and compliance during the construction processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality Customer Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPO3</td>
<td>Increased commitment to meeting customer expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO4</td>
<td>Adherence to service commitments of a National Customer Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO5</td>
<td>Improvement of the customer experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Operational & Financial Efficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPO6</td>
<td>Financial governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO7</td>
<td>Improved partnership working underpinned by engagement with a National Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO8</td>
<td>Development of and adherence to objectives outlined in balanced scorecard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO9</td>
<td>Commitment to continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two additional cross-cutting themes of Public Interest and Continuous Improvement span all three perspectives in relation to building standards verification strategy, operational delivery and internal and external relationships.

2. Research Aims and Objectives

In March 2013 the Scottish Government commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to undertake an independent review the evidence submitted by all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland during the pilot stage\(^1\) of the new key performance framework.

The aim of the review was to determine the framework’s fitness for purpose and set out opportunities, ideas and suggestions for improving reporting arrangements in the future.

The specific objectives of the research were to provide an objective view of\(^2\):

1. The extent to which the statistical return workbook was fit for purpose in collating the datasets and auto-calculating sector and annual totals;

2. Any ways in which the statistical returns might be better presented to provide clear, meaningful and robust\(^3\) (fit for purpose) evidence for onward analysis;

3. How the analysis of the statistical returns might be best carried out;

4. The extent to which the current format/performance update reporting for the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) is fit for purpose; and

5. How CIPs might be more effectively presented and performance reported on (on a quarterly basis) for the future.

In undertaking this work, consideration was given to:

- The ways in which Local Authorities can use the quarterly information themselves to support and demonstrate a culture of continuous improvement, rather than primarily relying on the Scottish Government to monitor the data centrally and flag up any issues;

- Whether the various reporting tools should be amalgamated in some way as part of an overall business planning document, bearing in mind the Balanced

\(^1\) For the purpose of this research the pilot stage for the new key performance framework was specified as the first two quarterly reporting periods: 1) October to December 2012; and 2) January to March 2013.

\(^2\) Points 1-3 relate to the KPO 1, 2, 3 and 6 returns; points 4-5 relate to the CIPs.

\(^3\) ‘Robust’ in this context refers to the technical accuracy of existing templates (such as in-built formula), use of clear and accurate descriptions and the comprehensive capture of all necessary KPO data.
Scorecard is ‘lighter’ following the separating out of the CIP element; and

- The need for some consistency between LA’s as part of the reporting framework, whilst also allowing flexibility for creative thinking within the CIPs between LA’s.

3. KPO Workbook Review

3.1 Summary

The use of an Excel workbook to coordinate returns for KPOs 1, 2, 3 and 6 appears to be a sensible approach given the quantitative nature of the information collected and the advantageous use of formula to efficiently aggregate statistics.

A general review of the workbook content reveals that all measurement and reporting requirements set out in the Handbook relating to KPOs 1, 2, 3 and 6 appear to be covered in the template. Similarly it appears that most local authorities\(^4\) have been able to generate the data necessary to fulfil the reporting requirements during quarter 3.

There are, however, some apparent flaws in the formula contained within KPOs 2, 3 and 6 which have resulted in some data being aggregated and reported incorrectly.

Additional enhancements to textual descriptions and the formatting and layout of the workbook might also aid accuracy and consistency of reporting, improve general clarity, and potentially offer better ways of showing patterns and trends over time.

3.2 General points

1. The automatic aggregation of individual local authority data from the various worksheets into a Scotland Summary looks to be a particularly efficient and useful way to paint an overall picture of performance across Scotland.

2. The Received Record worksheet currently references ‘KPOs 1-6’ but should be changed to refer to ‘KPOs 1, 2, 3 and 6’ only.

3. From a consistency perspective, and to minimise the likelihood of queries arising, there may be merit in changing the titles of the KPOs used in the workbook to match those used in the Handbook. It is not presently clear why these differ.

\(^4\) Midlothian Council generated figures manually for quarter 3 due to a delay in the launch of a new data management system).
4. Contact details have not been given consistently by each local authority therefore it may be preferable to include separate fields requesting the name, telephone number, email address etc of the member of staff completing the form.

5. For ease of reading, the alignment of numerical and percentage values across all worksheets should be set consistently, e.g. ‘bottom right’.

6. The tables for KPO’s 1, 2 and 3 include rows shaded pale blue with the description ‘Full Range’. Each of these might be referred to more simply as ‘Subtotal’, particularly given that they feed into the row containing the overall table ‘Total’ (shaded green).

7. Currently, the tables for each KPO are disconnected and stacked vertically, with the data for each quarter appearing in different columns depending on the size and shape of each individual table. Alternative options for the presentation might include standardising and aligning the tables, i.e. by assigning fixed columns to each quarter, thereby making the information easier to read vertically.

8. With respect to the online publication of returns (either on quarterly or annual basis), the generation of visual charts linked to the data for each KPO might offer a clear and easily accessible means of summarising performance for public consumption. If desirable, the use of ‘clustered’ bar charts (i.e. containing multiple coloured bars to show the same data but for different reporting periods) would illustrate trends over time. Should individual local authorities have the option of publishing details of their own performance – chart templates could be built into the workbook and linked to the relevant data cells prior to being distributed to the local authorities.

3.3 Comments boxes

1. A 200-word limit is currently applied to comments although this is not easily measurable in Excel and, based on the range and depth of responses contained within the quarter 3 returns, it may not be necessary to impose such a limit.

2. The comments from the various local authority worksheets have not been copied across to the overall Scotland worksheet and it is not immediately clear how these are collated, reviewed and followed up. Clarification would be helpful from the Scottish Government relating to this point or it may be an area for further consideration, particularly where there could be overlap between the comments given here and the narrative requirements of the Continuous Improvements Plans (CIPs) and Section 4 of the Balanced Scorecard.
3.4 Reporting of KPO 1

1. KPO 1 is ultimately designed to measure year-on-year reduction in the time taken to grant building warrants and this would be achieved most easily without the need to refer back to workbooks from previous financial years. Going forward it may be useful to add in a column of fixed data from previous years and enable an automatic bar chart to be generated that clearly and visually illustrates positive or negative ‘change’.

2. Conditional formatting via automatic shading of cells could be applied to provide at-a-glance indications of the extent of performance success. For example the “average time per building warrant” cells could be shaded to denote:

   o on or above target/significant positive movement (green);
   o close to target/some positive movement (amber); or
   o below target/negative movement (red).

3. The above suggestion is not intended to impose targets where they do not exist, but rather show in a clear and visual way the general direction of travel and performance. The conditional formatting parameters could be based, for example, on percentage variations on the previous year’s overall average number of days. Consideration would also be needed as to whether local authorities set their own targets or whether these are set and keyed into the templates by the Scottish Government prior to distribution.

4. If the point on conditional formatting is taken forward then the current use of blue and orange shading to denote formula-based cells may need to be removed. These auto-completing cells could instead be denoted by use of different coloured/emboldened text, with a key that makes it clear local authorities should not enter any data into these cells or risk disturbing the formula.

5. Reference to ‘days’ does not clearly state whether these should be treated as ‘working days’ or ‘calendar days’. A note of clarification may be worthwhile to ensure consistency, unless of course it is certain that all local authorities will be following the same approach.

6. Currently the “average time per building warrant” (recorded in days) is set to 2 decimal places. It may be preferable to set these cells to round the data to 1 decimal place or a whole number (East Lothian have rounded up to 1 decimal place, for example).

7. To minimise the risk of figures being entered against incorrect building types, it
may be helpful to capitalise the important variables within each description and remove them from brackets. For example, the current term ‘Domestic Existing Building (extension)’ would become ‘Domestic Existing Building – EXTENSION’.

8. It is not immediately clear whether mixed dwellings, demolitions and conversions will be appropriately and consistently reported based on the existing descriptions.

9. Consideration should be given to tweaking the KPO 1 comments box to include more focused questions, for example, explanation for any perceived shortfalls or external influencing factors.

3.5 Reporting of KPO 2

1. KPO 2 refers to the measurement of ‘CCNPs’ although the handbook refers to the measurement of ‘CCPs’. Clarification may be required here should it be likely that local authorities may raise queries and/or to ensure consistency with the Handbook.

2. There is a typo in the comments box (‘full’ should read ‘fully’).

3. There appear to be problems with the formula for KPO 2 as shown in the example below and subsequently explained.

Current (problematic) example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (by building type and value of work)</th>
<th>Quarter 3 (Oct - Dec)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Quarter 4 (Jan - Mar)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Total (Q3 + Q4)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of CCNPs for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td>% of CCNPs fully achieved for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td>Number of CCNPs for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td>% of CCNPs fully achieved for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td>Number of CCNPs for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td>% of CCNPs fully achieved for &quot;accepted&quot; completion certificates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO2(a) - DOM1 - Domestic New Build (multiplot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - £10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,001 - £50,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£50,001 - £250,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£250,001 - £1,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1,000,001 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO2(a) Full Range</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. In the example shown above, it is true that from the number of CCNPs for accepted completion certificates, 100% have been fully achieved in quarter 3. This should also read 100% year-to-date given the workbook was only launched in quarter 3. However, the current formula means the percentages are erroneously reduced to 20% across the price bandings and 10% for the year-to-date column (i.e. quarter 4 is being read as 0% when it is in fact not yet applicable). In all cases the totals should be 100%.

5. A further problematic outcome from the existing formula can be seen in the Scotland summary for KPO 2. Taking “Domestic Existing Buildings (extension)” as an example, the spreadsheet reports that 4000% of CCNPs for accepted completion certificates have been fully achieved.

6. A key risk when asking respondents to report a mixture of numbers and percentages is that human error can lead to the two becoming mixed up and numbers being given as percentages.

7. Another problem associated with reporting percentages is that local authorities may choose to round these up or down.

8. The above issues could be overcome by requesting data from local authorities on the number (quantity) of accepted CCNPs and, of these, the number (quantity) of fully achieved CCNPs. Then, a third column could be created within each quarter that automatically derives an accurate percentage of fully achieved CCNPs from the number of accepted CCNPs.

9. The table below shows how the data might be presented to provide accurate aggregated figures, assuming quarter 3 and quarter 4 have both elapsed. Here, the percentage figures in the final (annual total) column are a ‘true average’ of the quarter 3 and quarter 4 totals.
Alternative (corrected) example assuming data entered for quarter 3 and quarter 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (by building type and value of work)</th>
<th>Quarter 3 (Oct - Dec)</th>
<th>Quarter 4 (Jan - Mar)</th>
<th>Annual Total (Q3 + Q4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of CCNPs for “accepted” completion certificates</td>
<td>Number of CCNPs fully achieved for “accepted” completion certificates</td>
<td>% of CCNPs fully achieved for “accepted” completion certificates</td>
<td>Number of CCNPs for “accepted” completion certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - £10,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,001 - £50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£50,001 - £250,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£250,001 - £1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1,000,001 and above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPO2(a) Full Range</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Reporting of KPO 3

1. The reporting of KPO 3 appears to suffer from the same formula-related issues as KPO 2. This could be remedied by following a similar approach to that described under KPO 2, and by requesting local authorities to supply numerical values for all columns, with percentages subsequently derived automatically.

2. It should be noted that Midlothian Council has already taken the approach of providing numerical returns with automatic percentage creation as part of their non-standard return for quarter 3, indicating that this may even be favourable by local authorities.

3. In the table sub-titled “Applications without customer agreements” – there are some instances where the word ‘issued’ in the column titles is incorrectly capitalised.

### 3.7 Reporting of KPO 6

1. The formula for KPO 6 appear to be fit for purpose, however, in the case of the row titled “% of staff time spent on verification” the quarter 4 fields are incorrectly set to record percentages as numerical values. If not remedied
this will lead to erroneous calculations and subsequent aggregations as illustrated below.

Current (problematic) example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Quarter 3 (Oct - Dec)</th>
<th>Quarter 4 (Jan - Mar)</th>
<th>Annual Total (Q3 + Q4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPO6(a) Verification Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Staff Costs (£)</td>
<td>£348,666</td>
<td>100000</td>
<td>£448,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Staff Time spent on Verification</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1858%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Verification (Staff) Costs (£)</td>
<td>£334,719</td>
<td>£8,000,000</td>
<td>£8,334,719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Quarter 3 cell correctly set as a percentage
2) Quarter 4 cell is incorrectly set as a number and not a percentage
3) Will result in incorrect calculations for the remainder of the table

4. Review of the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs)

4.1 Main considerations

As a starting point of the review it is important to consider the vision and purpose of the Balanced Scorecard and Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) documents, including what each of these seeks to achieve and the intentions for their use.

Based on the 2012/2013 templates the Balanced Scorecard is a strategic document and refreshed annually. The CIP, by contrast, appears to be more of an on-going operational document and is designed to be refreshed quarterly in the spirit of continuous and on-going improvement.

The concept of continuous improvement requires local authorities to take ownership of the CIP and take responsibility for their own progress. This concept needs to be clear to local authorities so they do not perceive the CIP to be a reporting and ‘box ticking exercise’ to meet the requirements of the Scottish Government.
4.2 Coverage of the CIP

A key objective of the new national KPOs is to ensure consistency of measurement and reporting between local authorities.

Four of the nine KPOs (1, 2, 3 and 6) are subject to performance returns using the Excel workbook and the remaining five KPOs currently rely on the CIP for performance to be demonstrated. On that basis the CIP needs to clearly enable progress against these six KPOs to be determined.

There are three possible ways progress could be reported (1-3 below from 'most structured' to 'least structured'):

1. Against each individual KPO with specific and detailed sub-headings;

2. Against each KPO without specific and detailed sub-headings;

3. Against the three broad KPO ‘themes’ (either with or without sub-headings).

Whichever option is chosen, it is important to maintain a common and consistent reporting framework that delivers specific and meaningful information, whilst at the same time ensuring local authorities are given sufficient flexibility to be able to consider, reflect and report upon all aspects of continuous improvement.

A consistent framework will also enable the Scottish Government to easily identify and report to Ministers on key examples of continuous improvement and actions being taken.

4.3 Differentiating between the Balanced Scorecard and the CIP

Verifiers have been working with Balanced Scorecards since 2006 and updating them as necessary. The scorecards are submitted annually to the Scottish Government which, in turn, publishes them on its website. Individual scorecards are also published on the respective local authority websites.

Section 4 of the Balanced Scorecard template requires local authorities to include a narrative covering a series of prescribed bullet points. It is not clear whether this narrative needs to be structured to comply with the three main KPO themes or whether each of the 19 sub-headings (sub-bullets) needs to be addressed discretely.

Whichever is the case, this section of the Balanced Scorecard template potentially
overlaps with the CIP so there needs to be consideration to one or more of the following:

1. Minimising duplication;

2. Combining the Balanced Scorecard and CIP;

3. Maintaining separate documents, albeit a clear distinction in terms of the vision, purpose and intended uses of the Balanced Scorecard and CIP.

Under option 2, if the CIP is combined into the Balanced Scorecard then this would need to be published on a quarterly basis with updates to the continuous improvement section. We recommend this option as this offers the following advantages:

- Reduces duplication of effort by negating the need to update a separate standalone CIP document in addition to the narrative section of the Balanced Scorecard;

- Allows aspects of the Balanced Scorecard to be refreshed and updated at the same time as the continuous improvement plan;

- Minimises the administrative burden.

4.4 Structuring the CIP Template

The current CIP template requires local authorities to report against each individual KPO in terms of actions taken, which could duplicate some of the content from the workbook returns.

We feel that crucially, the template does not consider the outcome and impact of actions taken, nor implications for the future, which may be acting as a barrier to instilling a culture on on-going continuous improvement. In addition, local authorities are not guided as to the amount of detail required and whether they should address each of the individual ‘outcome’ statements/bullets in the first column.

Furthermore the heading of ‘completed date’ within the current template does not appear to be clear to local authorities whether this represents a future ‘target date’ or a date to be filled in only when an agreed action has been fulfilled. As an example, Dundee City have included an additional ‘target date’ alongside each planned action and have left the ‘completed date’ blank, presumably pending completion. Conversely, Dumfries and Galloway have used the ‘completed date’ column to assign future target dates for each planned action.
Our suggestions for enhancements to the CIP template are designed to:

- Provide a common and consistent template;

- Encourage a culture of continuous review throughout the whole of the verifier team within local authorities through a dynamic document that is easy to update;

- Not be overly prescriptive in terms of reporting requirements;

- Offer greater transparency as well as encourage shared ownership of the actions, with the revised approach to incorporate the CIP within the Balanced Scorecard, and as such, be a) published on local authority websites and b) be refreshed every quarter;

- Provide a straightforward means for the Scottish Government to report back on progress to Ministers.

We suggest therefore that the revised template should include:

- Recording of actions in relation to continuous improvement and measurement of progress against the three broad KPO themes as per section 4 of the Balanced Scorecard template, albeit with a smaller number of sub-headings (i.e. option 3 outlined in Section 2 above);

- Reporting of progress against previously stated actions; current status (on schedule/behind schedule); impact of on-going actions to date; proposed future actions; ownership (names/positions); priority (short/medium/long term) and target date for completion;

- In addition there should be a section for reporting on impacts of the continuous improvement plan actions – focusing on outcomes and outputs, and including details of the team members that were involved in designing and/or implementing the action. We feel that the latter aspect will be a critical success factor in ensuring all members of the verification team take ownership and fully commit to a culture of continuous improvement;

- Guidance note stating that:
  - Actions developed in relation to continuous improvement should not merely be a repetition of requirements for each of the KPOs as outlined in the KPO manual. The CIP section of the Balanced
Scorecard should identify actions to be taken to ensure the KPO requirements are met in a way that underpins a culture of on-going continuous improvement.

- Local authorities may report on other activities that go beyond the remit of the specified KPOs where these fall within and contribute to the culture of continuous improvement.

The Highland Council example (Excel format) provides a good approach for demonstrating continuous improvement including some of the above elements – but the format is not necessarily easy to interpret by others, so there would be merit in combining some of these principles into a Word-based template, perhaps in landscape format for ease of use (see Section 1.6 below for a visual presentation of suggested content).

### 4.5 Summary of proposed revisions to the CIP

1. Incorporate the CIP within the existing Balanced Scorecard (replacing the current Section 4) with a requirement that this be refreshed on a quarterly basis – this will:
   a. Underpin greater transparency, as the Balanced Scorecard is published on local authority websites, and therefore progress (or lack of it) will be readily apparent in relation to continuous improvement. This also offers all local authorities the opportunity to see what their peers are doing and potentially learn from this;
   
   b. Encourage greater ownership and commitment towards continuous improvement, as the template will evidence team members taking ownership of actions and achievements;
   
   c. Avoid the need for reporting in two separate documents which may be more straightforward for local authorities and the Scottish Government;

2. Focus the CIP section of the Balanced Scorecard more closely upon embedding a culture of on-going continuous improvement by:
   
   a. Requiring CIP actions to be designed to align with the three core KPO themes but not merely repeat or summarise actions to be taken simply to meet each of the KPO requirements – actions should instead be designed to enable these requirements to be met within a manner than ensures continuous improvement;
b. Including a separate section on impacts of CIP actions, which should inform the next quarter’s actions as well as provide a useful summary for the Scottish Government, which could be used to disseminate achievements to Ministers and/or be published on the Scottish Government’s website (e.g. using a header such as ‘What have we achieved this quarter?’); again this could help to encourage greater ownership for continuous improvement if local authorities are named as exemplars of good practice;

c. Including guidance to indicate to local authorities that they should also report on other activities that go beyond the remit of the specified KPOs where these fall within and contribute to the culture of continuous improvement.
### 4.6 Suggested template for the CIP (would replace Section 4 of within the existing Balanced Scorecard)

**Quarterly continuous improvement plan for period ending XX**

**Professional expertise and technical processes**

Coverage of continuous improvement relating to: appropriate levels of competent plan assessment; quality and consistency of compliance assessment; streamlined and transparent technical processes; effective performance management; commitment to training and development; partnership working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous quarter actions:</th>
<th>Target completion date(s):</th>
<th>Status:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions should reference the KPOs they are linked to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions should be numbered and/or recorded in separate rows for ease of reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasons if behind schedule/not yet started:**

Reasons should be clearly linked to relevant action(s) by number(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned actions next three quarters:</th>
<th>Target completion date(s):</th>
<th>Priority (short/medium/long term):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions should reference the KPOs they are linked to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions should be numbered and/or recorded in separate rows for ease of reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions should also clearly indicate which team member(s) have responsibility for delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plan ownership for this quarter (overall lead):**
# Quarterly continuous improvement plan for period ending XX

## Quality customer experience

Coverage of continuous improvement relating to: providing high quality customer service; understanding and meeting customer needs; delivering clear and transparent communications; adhering to the national customer charter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous quarter actions:</th>
<th>Target completion date(s):</th>
<th>Status:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions should reference the KPOs they are linked to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions should be numbered and/or recorded in separate rows for ease of reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>On-going (on schedule)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-going (behind schedule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Not yet started</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Reasons if behind schedule/not yet started:**

Reasons should be clearly linked to relevant action(s) by number(s)

**Impacts following previous quarter actions (progress, outcomes and outputs):**

Actions should reference the KPOs they are linked to

Impacts should be clearly linked to relevant action(s) by number(s)

Team member(s) should be clearly linked to relevant action(s) by number(s) to demonstrate ownership of delivery

**Planned actions next three quarters:**

Actions should reference the KPOs they are linked to

Actions should be numbered and/or recorded in separate rows for ease of reading

Actions should also clearly indicate which team member(s) have responsibility for delivery

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Quarterly continuous improvement plan for period ending XX

Operational and financial efficiency

Coverage of continuous improvement relating to: Efficient utilisation of funds and resources (including people); high levels of productivity; fit-for-purpose infrastructure (including IT); effective partnership working with key stakeholders.

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Plan ownership for this quarter (overall lead):
5. Next Steps

As an outcome of this report, the Scottish Government intends to consider changes that would simplify and improve reporting arrangements under the new key performance framework, specifically in relation to:

- KPO Workbook Returns; and
- Continuous Improvement.

It is intended that the proposed changes will be communicated to, and discussed with, local authority verifiers so that changes to reporting arrangements can be implemented following the pilot stage.