

Director-General Economy and Chief Economic Adviser

Dr Andrew Goudie

Chief Executive, COSLA

Rory Mair



Council Chief Executives
Community Planning Partnership Chairs
Chief Executives of Health Boards
Chief Constables
Clerks to Police Boards
Chief Fire Officers
Clerks to Fire Boards
Chief Executive of Scottish Enterprise
Chief Executive of Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Lead Officers of Regional Transport Partnerships



18 August 2010

Dear Chief Executive

**SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS:
2009-10 ANNUAL REPORTS AND REVIEW OF AGREEMENTS**

This letter confirms arrangements concerning the content and submission of Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) annual reports covering 2009-10 to the Scottish Government. It also sets out general advice about the review and updating of existing agreements. These arrangements have been agreed by the Concordat Oversight Group (or COG, membership of which comprises senior representatives from Audit Scotland, COSLA, the Improvement Service, Scottish Government and SOLACE).

The key point to note is that the guidance on the scope and format of annual reports, set out in our letter of 3 March 2009¹, remains valid this year. In line with arrangements in 2009, we ask you to submit your SOA annual reports to your Scottish Government Director by **30 September 2010** (the Scottish Government will forward all information received to COSLA and the Improvement Service). In particular, you are asked to note the information being sought within or alongside the SOA annual reports, to enable COSLA and the Scottish Government to

¹ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/library/download-document/2277-single-outcome-agreements-reporting-to-the-scottish-government/>

understand, and demonstrate through evidence, progress being made by local partners in pursuing positive outcomes for their communities.

Your Director will of course be delighted to discuss further any aspect you would find helpful.

SOA Reporting for 2009-10

These will be the first reports submitted on the 2nd phase SOAs agreed in Summer 2009. Although no decisions have yet been taken, it is likely that the Scottish Government will publish an overview report on the progress achieved to date through these agreements, similar to the approach taken earlier this year in reporting on the 1st phase of SOAs.

It is essential that collectively we are able to understand and describe progress to date under the SOA approach. As well as the progress made against the specific targets in the SOA this also includes understanding the impact of the approach more generally in supporting the delivery of better services to communities. We are therefore looking for evidence of effective engagement with citizens; the targeting of activity in the light of local circumstances; the contribution made to the Government Purpose, National Outcomes and joint national priorities²; how partnership working at the local level is becoming more effective; and the impact upon resource deployment.

The SOLACE-led “Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project” will shortly be adding further information to the good practice note that accompanies the updated Menu of Local Outcome Indicators (version 4.1)³. This may assist CPPs in the reporting of the indicators contained in their SOAs.

Gathering Case Studies

The Improvement Service has invited CPPs, through councils, to provide examples of developments in taking the SOA approach forward, on behalf of COSLA and SOLACE (Colin Mair’s letter of 10 August to council Chief Executives refers). The IS is looking for evidence of the sorts outlined above and will work with CPPs to develop case studies of progress and good practice that can be shared more widely and presented alongside the SOA reports. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in this work.

² Notably towards economic recovery; and the joint frameworks which cover tackling poverty (“*Achieving Our Potential*”), giving young people a positive start in life (“*Early Years Framework*”) and addressing health inequalities (“*Equally Well*”). Scottish Government in particular is also interested in progress being made to take forward *Curriculum for Excellence*.

³ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/local-outcome-indicators/>

Review of SOAs

CPPs already review their SOAs in the light of changing circumstances, including the development of more robust indicators for the menu of Local Outcome Indicators. These reviews should apply analytical rigour to the ongoing planning and reporting of delivery and it would be helpful, where a review has led to substantive changes in priorities or targets, for these to be highlighted in your SOA report. In particular, CPPs will be considering their priorities and targets in the light of the challenging financial climate. Notwithstanding that challenge, we would encourage CPPs to ensure that SOAs continue to be ambitious strategic documents focusing on improving local outcomes.

Sources of Further Advice and Information

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact Chris Bierley or David Milne at the Scottish Government. Their contact details are:

- Chris Bierley: Christopher.bierley@scotland.gsi.gov.uk; 0131 244 7183.
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