

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 June 2019

Report by Chief Executive

Proposed Guide to Scrutiny and Review

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with enhanced guidance on scrutiny, review and evaluation arrangements, within the overall context of Best Value, in East Renfrewshire Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the committee:-
- (a) considers the draft guidance on scrutiny and review, within the overall context of Best Value in East Renfrewshire Council;
 - (b) recommends to the Council that the draft *Guide to Scrutiny and Review* be approved, making it available to all Committees and Members of the Council for their use;
 - (c) considers the 2019/20 annual work plan to the extent it has been developed thus far; identifies other specific areas of work for review to be scoped further; and agrees the scope of a detailed review to be progressed over the forthcoming months; and
 - (d) notes that a further update of the work plan will be submitted to next meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. The Audit of Best Value in East Renfrewshire Council took place in 2017, and overall, was very positive. The Audit contained a recommendation that Elected Members should take a more transparent and active role in scrutiny. Progress has been made subsequently on a range of scrutiny issues including:-

- the delivery of a new programme of essential scrutiny skills training for Elected Members
- the change in arrangements at meetings of the Cabinet involving officers, where appropriate, presenting reports instead of Members, which has led to an increase in the level of questions being asked by Members
- most recently, the appointment of a Scrutiny and Evaluation Officer, whose remit includes supporting the work of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, for example in the undertaking of reviews on individual pieces of work identified by Members

4. To complement the above, a *Guide to Scrutiny and Review* has been prepared (see Appendix A). The advice provided in the *Guide* is intended primarily for Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to help them identify specific issues they wish to review and progress related work and, once approved, the *Guide* will be available to all Elected Members, and Committees of the Council.

5. As well as the *Guide* being available to assist Elected Members in their decision-making around scrutiny, review and evaluation, the development of a work plan is proposed for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, starting with one for 2019/20 (see Appendix 4 to *Guide*).

6. The *Guide* has been prepared in the overall context of Best Value in the Council. It includes advice on good practice; what could be within and outwith 'scope' for scrutiny reviews; questioning techniques; and selection and rejection criteria for reviews. It also provides links to related documents.

7. To help the committee determine what detailed scrutiny and evaluation work it wishes to include in its work plan for the current year, a list of examples of potential topics has been prepared (See Appendix 2 to *Guide*). The list includes policy areas discussed by the Cabinet, Council etc. over the past 5 years or so and reflects feedback from the Corporate Management Team. A further list has also been provided (See Appendix 3 to *Guide*), of topics which have been the subject of audit/scrutiny reviews by some selected local authorities in Scotland and England, the majority of which also have Cabinet systems.

8. These lists have been provided for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to reflect on as areas for potential review which would form part of the committee's work plan for 2019/20. The committee has both an audit and a scrutiny role, and regularly considers reports on risk management, the Internal Audit Plan, related progress reports, External Audit issues, treasury management and the Annual Accounts and Audit Report to the Council. Taking account of the appointment of the Scrutiny and Evaluation Officer referred to previously, scope now exists to complement that work by scheduling more in-depth review work to be progressed by the committee.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

9. The post of Scrutiny and Evaluation Officer has been funded on a 1 year basis on a ring fenced basis as a result of a decision of Council in March 2018. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report, but efficiencies in terms of savings, improved working practices, or service delivery may be derived from the outcomes of reviews undertaken.

CONSULTATION

10. Informal Meetings with Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee have taken place, such as on 31 May, to discuss the draft *Guide*, and help identify potential areas which the committee might wish to review. The Corporate Management Team have also had an initial conversation on the way forward.

CONCLUSION

11. This report has been prepared as part of the ongoing commitment to develop scrutiny, review and evaluation arrangements within the context of Best Value in the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. It is recommended that the committee:-

- (a) considers the draft guidance on scrutiny and review, within the overall context of Best Value in East Renfrewshire Council;
- (b) recommends to the Council that the draft *Guide to Scrutiny and Review* be approved, making it available to all Committees and Members of the Council for their use;
- (c) considers the 2019/20 annual work plan to the extent it has been developed thus far; identifies other specific areas of work for review to be scoped further; and agrees the scope of a detailed review to be progressed over the forthcoming months; and
- (d) notes that a further update of the work plan will be submitted to next meeting.

Chief Executive
6 June 2019

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Background Papers

A range of guidance on scrutiny and evaluation

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Guide to Scrutiny & Review

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INTRODUCTION

The advice provided in this *Guide to Scrutiny and Review* is primarily for members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to help them undertake robust scrutiny, but will also be useful to all Elected Members whose role as a Council, Cabinet or Committee member involves scrutiny.

Good scrutiny plays an important part in demonstrating good governance and ensuring public confidence in Scotland's councils. As highlighted by the Improvement Service (IS), "*the overall objective of scrutiny is improvement*" and it is "*less about the activities that services undertake than it is about the outcomes they deliver.*" The IS highlights the importance of this function in the face of reducing resources, considering it an investment in improvement.

Scrutiny can be undertaken as part of the ongoing operations of the Council, through meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and the Committees and Boards which have a scrutiny function e.g. scrutiny of performance, scrutiny of proposed policies, and scrutiny of the effectiveness of policies. The convention which has been followed within East Renfrewshire Council is for reports on investigations by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to be recommended for consideration and approval to the Cabinet. This helps to ensure that there is separation of roles between the two bodies and minimises the risk of any overlap in terms of scrutiny. An area of scrutiny could also include an integrated team, and as a result, may involve wider scrutiny and engagement with another body such as the Health Board.

The Council's Scheme of Administration specifies issues for which each of the Council's main bodies, including the Council itself, are responsible. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee has an audit and scrutiny role and its full remit (see Appendix 1) covers both financial and non-financial performance. In relation to financial controls, these are covered by the role of the Chief Auditor. The committee's remit includes for example: promoting internal controls; reviewing the control environment; developing an anti-fraud culture; promoting good financial practice; agreeing the internal audit strategy; reviewing internal and external audit reports; and considering some decisions made by the Cabinet that are called in for scrutiny. Its remit also includes other aspects of scrutiny i.e. "*to review the performance of the Council in terms of:-*

- *service delivery*
- *the processes by which policy decisions have been taken*
- *the substance of a particular policy and how it fits in with the overall objectives of the Council*
- *the effectiveness of a policy in terms of implementation"*

When conducting reviews, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee may refer to concerns which they have about performance in the reports that they prepare and submit to Cabinet. Scrutiny can also be undertaken externally. For Scottish councils, the work of external scrutiny bodies is coordinated and results in an annual Local Scrutiny Plan. The plan is based on a Shared Risk Assessment undertaken by the Local Area Network (LAN) of external scrutiny bodies, such as Audit Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator. The LAN brings together such bodies with the aim of improving the coordination of strategic scrutiny activity amongst them.

This new *Guide to Scrutiny and Review* has been prepared in the overall context of Best Value in the Council. It complements the wide range of guidance already available to all Members on scrutiny, including documents published by the IS. These documents are accessible on the Councillors' intranet pages but are also available through the following link ([Improvement Service Guide on Scrutiny](#)).

The *Guide* includes advice on good practice on scrutiny; what could be within and outwith 'scope' for scrutiny reviews; questioning techniques, and considers selection and rejection criteria for reviews. It also comments on critical success factors as well as providing links to other documents that already exist, such as on performance. Finally, it refers to the preparation of an annual work plan for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

1. WHY IS SCRUTINY IMPORTANT

Under the Local Government (Scotland Act) 2003, Councils have a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure Best Value, which requires them to:-

- Work with their partners to identify a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of their local communities
- Make arrangements to deliver those priorities
- Demonstrate they are meeting their community's needs
- Operate in a way that drives continuous improvement in its activities

To be successful, the approach adopted to scrutiny should take all such issues into account, and help embed the principles of Best Value and related good practice criteria set out by Audit Scotland, including, for example, Best Value 'Toolkits'.

Four principles have been developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny which it argues should underpin Councils' approaches to scrutiny. It should:-

- Provide a 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision makers
- Reflect the voice and concerns of the public
- Be carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- Drive improvement in public services

Critical success factors of effective scrutiny in the Council, such as those to be used by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, include that:-

- Reviews should be undertaken within the overall context of Best Value
- Reviews should demonstrate clear links to the strategic priority areas of the Community Plan and the Council's strategy Vision for the Future
- Reviews should be undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect

Objectives for scrutiny would include:-

- Management of risk
- Improved working practices
- Improved service delivery
- Securing financial savings and other efficiencies
- Identifying opportunities for further exploration

2. WHAT SHOULD BE SCRUTINISED

This guidance, which is meant to be advisory and not prescriptive, has been produced to help Elected Members initially identify topics, and progress related work, which could be the subject of scrutiny and review evaluations.

The selection of topics for review by the committee is an ongoing matter. Examples of the types of initial questions Elected Members may wish to ask themselves, when considering what might be useful to look at in more depth, are as follows:-

How would scrutiny benefit East Renfrewshire residents?

How would scrutiny add value (e.g. improve service delivery)?

Do performance indicators suggest an area should be reviewed?

Would scrutiny help deliver savings or efficiencies?

Has a risk or issue been highlighted in an audit report?

Would work the Council does in partnership with other organisations merit review?

To avoid poor topic selection, an objective and structured approach to determining which potential topics should be subject to detailed scrutiny and review can help. Potential selection and rejection criteria are provided in the following table. The selection criteria is not a check-list requiring all of the selection criteria having to be met for a single investigation:-


Selection Criteria	Rejection Criteria
Policy to be reviewed has been implemented for at least one year	Policy to be reviewed has been implemented within the last year
A policy gap has been identified	Policy is in place or is planned for a service
To help focus on all areas of service, preferably the area concerned has not been the subject of a scrutiny review in the past year	The area of service concerned has been the subject of a scrutiny review in the past year, or scrutiny has been carried out by another committee
Area of review would add value to one or more of the 5 strategic outcomes of the Community Plan	Review would not meet the Community Plan outcomes
The review will benefit residents of East Renfrewshire, customers & service users	The review will impact upon too few residents, customers & service users
Performance data suggests the need for a review	Performance data suggests that the service is being delivered well
Scrutiny could add value to how the Council conducts its operations	The subject has too narrow a focus and would have limited impact
Scrutiny could deliver savings/efficiencies	Anticipated savings/efficiencies are not of a sufficient level to justify selection
There is scope for a revised service delivery model	The topic is already under review
The review is in response to concerns of residents or stakeholders (e.g. through public consultations, representative groups and forums, Council surgeries and the complaints process)	The issue has already been responded to in the recent past
It would be a valid topic for detailed review by Elected Members	It would be more appropriate for scrutiny of the issue to be done by another body aligned to the Council
The issue is in response to an identified risk (e.g. from the Strategic Risk Register, or the Local Scrutiny Plan)	The risk is already being addressed, or is programmed for attention
The selection of the area of review has been made on a non-partisan basis	The area of review selected may be regarded as overtly political

Potential Topics

To help the committee determine what detailed scrutiny and evaluation work it wishes to include in its annual work plan, a list of examples of potential topics has been prepared (See Appendix 2). The list includes policy areas discussed previously by the Cabinet, Council etc. over the past 5 years or so. A further list has also been provided (See Appendix 3) of topics which have been the subject of audit/scrutiny reviews by some selected local authorities in Scotland and England, the majority of which also have Cabinet systems.

Performance Information

When topics for detailed scrutiny and evaluation reviews are being selected and carried out, a review of performance information can be valuable. In general terms though, performance information is provided as one of a number of ways to assess how well, or how efficiently, a service is being delivered. Comparing performance or financial information about a service from one period or year to another can then be used as a basis for asking further questions.

The Annual Public Performance Report provides a summary of Council and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Performance, and is closely linked to the *Council's Strategy – Vision for the Future*, which sets out the vision to be “a modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future with all”. Key activities covered include Early years; Learning health and wellbeing; Employment and training; Economy and environment; Living in East Renfrewshire; Safe supportive communities; Older years; Customer efficiency; People; and Looking ahead to the future. The performance reports can be viewed by year, and by service area, through the following link:  [Annual Public Performance Report 2017-18](#)

The Cabinet also receives strategic mid-year and end of year performance reports, which provide a summary of CPP and Council performance as set out in the Outcome Delivery Plan 2019-22 (ODP), highlighting performance that is both good and off-target. Access to a wide range of performance data available is accessible through the following link: www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/performance

The performance of the Council can be compared to that of other similar councils (our family group) using the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. Further information on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework can be found on the Improvement Service website: www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/

The Citizens Panel is another way in which the Council listens to the views of local residents to help make decisions on how best to improve services and to inform policies. Self-awareness of the Council's performance is an important part of scrutiny and evaluation.

Developing the Committee's Work Plan

To help the Audit and Scrutiny Committee schedule and prioritise its scrutiny and evaluation review work over the course of each year, it is proposed that an annual work plan should be developed and agreed. This will help to provide transparency, openness and evidence of the Council's ongoing commitment to demonstrating Best Value, and continuous improvement, in the interests of local residents, customers and service users in accordance with the strategic priorities and outcomes of the Community Plan; Vision for the Future (Corporate Plan); and ODP 2019-22.

A draft work plan for 2019-2020 is attached as Appendix 4, and includes recurring cyclical reports on, for example, Treasury Management, Internal Audit, Workforce Management, Housing Benefits, and Risk, and anticipated National External Audit reports on a range of different subjects.

The work plan would effectively be a 'live' document, as items could be moved, or added as appropriate. It is intended that the work plan will be extended to include specific areas identified by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for a scrutiny and evaluation investigation. The format of the committee's work plan, and related updates on progress, should follow the same model adopted for the Cabinet work plan, a template for which is provided below:-

Audit and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny and Evaluation Work Plan

Planned Report Date (Month)	Report Subject	Report by	Date Considered by Audit & Scrutiny Committee

4. HOW DO WE CARRY OUT SCRUTINY

General Comments

A scrutiny and review evaluation might assess a Council policy or service activity to determine how well the policy is being implemented, the effectiveness of the service being delivered, or if value for money is being achieved. Alternatively, the evaluation could focus on the delivery of a specific project.

Arguably the more information sources that are used and reviewed the better equipped Members will be to form a more rounded picture of the issue under scrutiny. Irrespective of the extent to which that is pursued, a well-planned and structured approach is essential.

Timescale of Reviews

An individual review is likely to involve a number of stages. After the topic is selected and the scope of the work is determined, evidence requirements will need to be identified and related discussions will be required to allow conclusions to be drawn, and a related report and recommendations to be prepared on the committee's behalf such as for the Cabinet.

Ideally, reviews should be conducted over a set timescale, which would usually be 2 to 3 formal meetings of the committee to allow detailed discussions to take place and information to be requested and provided. However to ensure this timescale is met, a lot of the detailed work is likely to take place between formal meetings. A flowchart diagram is provided as Appendix 5 to the Guide, showing the different stages of a scrutiny and review investigation.

Gathering Information

In terms of the detailed work progressed and the gathering of evidence, techniques for gathering information that could form part of the scrutiny and review evaluation could include:-

- Discussion with partner organisations, other stakeholders and customers
- Visits to facilities to gain 'first hand' experience of the policy or service under review
- Interviews with officers and others and taking of evidence from them
- Gathering information from other sources external to the authority, such as from other local authorities directly, or through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, the Improvement Service, or the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) for example

Detailed Framework for Review

Initially a topic may be quite loosely defined and to enable it to be prioritised appropriately, it may need to be defined more tightly. However, if it is selected for detailed review, further clarification is likely to be needed on a range of issues, not least of all what is within and outwith scope. Appendix 6 to this Guide suggests a framework that could be followed for agreeing the precise scope and terms of reference for a scrutiny and evaluation review, and how it could be carried out, which Elected Members may like to consider following.

It includes:-

- Considering the background to a review
- Setting objectives
- Defining the scope of work
- Outlining the precise approach to be adopted
- Considering evidence requirements
- Determining with whom discussions should take place
- Confirming the timescale for the whole review and related aspects of work

Conduct at Scrutiny Meetings

Following on from comments at the start of this guide on the principles of effective scrutiny, it is considered essential that all parties involved in reviews approach them from a standpoint of mutual respect and on a non-partisan basis from the outset. This has been highlighted by the committee itself on more than one occasion since its establishment since 1999. Key points which the Audit and Scrutiny Committee itself has highlighted as important before, are summarised below:-

- Conduct at meetings, including when detailed investigations are being progressed, is governed by the Council's Standing Orders
- Members and officers attending meetings are always expected to ensure that they are adhering to their Code of Conduct
- Everyone attending a meeting is expected to respect the Chair's direction and to act in a proper and reasonable manner
- It is considered important that the committee establishes as informal an atmosphere as possible, pursuing questioning which is fair and impersonal
- Before attending any meetings, whether formal or informal, those invited to attend will be advised of the subject, purpose and direction of any enquiry in progress and how they may be expected to assist
- The committee has no powers to censure or discipline; the committee's primary interest is not to apportion blame but, through its endeavours, to seek improvement in the Council's quest for Best Value, minimisation of risk and demonstration of continuous improvement
- The committee will be happy for those attending meetings to ask appropriate questions if they feel that any matter needs to be expanded on or explained further
- Where appropriate, any individual invited to attend a meeting (such as when a detailed investigation is being progressed) may be accompanied by an adviser or supporter to assist them with their responses to questions
- Those attending meetings may bring with them any reference materials, overheads or printed information they consider necessary to present, subject to discussion with the Clerk beforehand

The Chair has a key role in ensuring that the above principles are adhered to; that the committee undertakes its role as fairly as possible; that evidence and everyone's contributions are heard, considered and respected; that all meetings operate in a courteous and constructive manner; and ensuring that the committee operates on a non-partisan basis.

Getting Value from Questions

It is almost inevitable that at least some of those who engage with the Audit and Scrutiny Committee during a detailed review, or more generally, may be doing so for the first time. Some could find that prospect daunting, even if that is not intended to be the case.

The IS guidance emphasises the importance, not only of putting people at ease who are engaging with such committees and ensuring their views are fully understood, but also of approaching questioning in a way that is sensitive and enables information to be drawn out as intended.

As well as emphasising the importance of balancing good rapport with the need to discuss issues and receive required answers, the IS guide on scrutiny also suggests that it is prudent, before any questions are asked, to do some research to help ensure questions are targeted effectively and then gauge if answers provided are sufficiently informative.

It also highlights that, if there is a wish to secure useful information, it is counterproductive for questions to be confrontational.

Whatever approach is adopted, it would be good practice to ensure that all those who interface with the committee are made aware of the scope of the review, why it is considered important to speak to them, and to ensure that they are given sufficient notice of the date and time of any meeting they are invited to attend.

Examples and guidance are provided below.

- Some forms of questions (e.g. open questions) can be more useful to use than others which are better avoided
- Repeating key words can encourage fuller replies
- Allow respondents time to consider their reply
- Use plain language rather than jargon whenever possible
- Considering what questions are to be asked before meetings, what order they should be asked in, and who should ask them, is useful
- Letting people know in advance the main questions to be posed (it is acknowledged that this may not necessarily be a restrictive list) and the outline of the issues the review is intended to cover, helps ensure they can both prepare for and answer them

Useful Types of Questions

Open and Probing Questions

Such questions:-

- Start with what, how, why, when etc.,
- Encourage people to provide more detail
- Are useful for seeking detailed feedback
- Can be useful to seek verifiable data

Examples

What impact has the new legislation had?

How are you intending to?

Can you explain what happens when.....?

You said that your service had not done (A) in the past, could you tell me more about that?

Behavioural Questions

Such questions:-

- Can be useful when seeking evidence on how a task might be done in future using examples of what has been done in the past
- Can be useful to seek verifiable data

Examples

What have you done in the past that worked well?

How do you know that worked well before?

Hypothetical Questions

Such questions:-

- Are useful for testing ideas
- Can be useful for seeking evidence

Examples

If it was possible to (A), how would that impact on the way the service is delivered?

If you had another type of vehicle, could you.....?

Less Useful Types of Questions

Closed Questions

Such questions:-

- May be useful when a short, factual answer is required
- Are not good to use when more detail is being sought

Examples

When did the service end?

How long has the policy been in place?

When was the (A) policy last reviewed?

Leading Questions

Such questions:-

- Suggest that a question is expected to be answered a particular way
- Are unlikely to yield genuine answers
- Make it harder for a respondent to answer candidly and honestly

Examples

It is already known that (A) is the most successful approach, what do you think?

It is obvious that there is only one option going forward, do you agree?

I support Option A, as it seem the only sensible thing to do, what are your thoughts?

Double Headed Questions

Such questions:-

- Ask more than one question at a time
- Can be confusing
- May result in only one part of a question being answered, when all parts of it are valid

Examples

If your service was given responsibility for (A), how many staff would be required and what would it cost?

Could (A) be done through Customer First, what impact would that have, would there be any problems with that and are there any reasons why that cannot be done?

Multiple Choice Questions

Such questions:-

- Suggest a number of answers are possible
- Do not really ask for any real explanation

Examples

Do you think A, B or C is the best approach in future?

7. CONCLUSION

This guide is intended to be a helpful aid to Elected Members, particularly members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee who are involved in reviewing aspects of policy or service. As a matter of good practice, it also comments that it would be useful for the committee to consider and agree an annual work plan. The guide can be updated as required, including in the light of practical experience of review work, such as that progressed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and any other relevant developments, including the publication of any new advice on scrutiny.

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Audit and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

- (a) to promote internal controls, financial and otherwise, in order to provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations and compliance with laws and regulations;
- (b) to review the control environment and make an annual statement to the Council on its evaluation of internal controls;
- (c) to develop an anti-fraud culture within the Council to ensure the highest standards of probity and public accountability;
- (d) to promote good financial practice within the Council;
- (e) to agree the internal audit strategy and plan;
- (f) to receive internal audit progress reports;
- (g) to oversee and review action taken on internal audit recommendations and assist in responding to any criticisms made;
- (h) to review the internal audit annual report;
- (i) to be consulted on the external audit strategy and plan;
- (j) to review all external audit material, in particular the annual report and management letters relative to the audit opinion of the Council's financial statements;
- (k) to oversee and review action on external audit recommendations;
- (l) to review financial procedures including the effective operation of financial regulations;
- (m) to review the Council's financial performance as contained in the Annual Accounts;
- (n) to examine the activities and accounts of the Council in order to ensure that (a) the expenditure approved by the Council has been incurred for the purposes intended, (b) services are being provided efficiently and effectively and (c) value for money is being obtained;
- (o) to consider those decisions of the Cabinet "called in" in terms of agreed procedure;
- (p) to make recommendations to the Cabinet on the introduction and development of appropriate risk management arrangements across the Council;
- (q) to review the performance of the Council in terms of:-
 - service delivery
 - the processes by which policy decisions have been taken
 - the substance of a particular policy and how it fits in with the overall objectives of the Council
 - the effectiveness of a policy in terms of implementation
- (r) to undertake whatever research and consultation is required in support of the analysis being undertaken on any particular issue.

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Examples of Policies/Strategies Discussed in Past 5 Years by Cabinet/Council etc.

<p><i>Policy/Strategy Areas (General)</i> Anti-fraud and Bribery Strategy Community Choices Budgeting Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Community Plan (including Fairer East Ren) Community Transport Corporate Debt and Rent Arrears Policies Framework for Participation Requests Funding for Community & Voluntary Groups Procurement Strategy and Improvement Plan Unacceptable Actions by Customers Policy Vision for the Future</p>
<p><i>Operational</i> Anti-Money Laundering Plan Benchmarking Charging for Services Data Protection Policy Mobile Device Policy</p>
<p><i>Partnerships</i> City Deal Review East Renfrewshire Renewable Energy Fund SPT/Bus Deregulation</p>
<p><i>Asset Management</i> Corporate Asset Management & Planning Environment Asset Management Fleet Asset Management Plan Housing Asset Management ICT Asset Management Plan Open Space Asset Management Plan Property Asset Management</p>
<p><i>Workforce Management</i> Equality Mainstreaming, Human Rights & Fulfilling Equality Duties Modern Apprenticeships (Council Employees) Workforce Planning</p>
<p><i>Environmental/Energy Efficiency</i> Employability Strategy & Action Plan Environment Sustainability Strategy & Action Plan Local Transport Strategy & Active Travel Plan for East Renfrewshire Energy Efficiency Measures – Capital Investment Kerbside Recycling Service Roads Revenue Works Programme Winter Maintenance Arrangements</p>

Education

Advancing Excellence & Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire
 Anti-bullying Policy
 Community Learning and Development
 Devolved School Management Carry Forward Arrangements
 Developing Young Workforce in East Renfrewshire
 Early Learning and Childcare Strategy
 Language Learning Policy in East Renfrewshire based on A 1+2 Approach
 Literacy Strategy
 Vocational Education in East Renfrewshire Schools
 Young Persons Services

Housing

Discretionary Housing Payments
 Homeless Households (e.g. Leasing Temporary Accommodation in Private Sector,
 Elimination of Use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation & Rough Sleeping)
 Housing Allocation Policy & Implementation of Choice Based Letting
 Housing - Delivering Improvement to East Renfrewshire
 Housing - Local Strategy & Investment
 Housing Services - Customer Engagement Strategy
 Rent Arrears and Write-off Policy
 Sheltered Housing Issues

Health and Social Care

Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report on social work issues are now delegated to the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board

Sample List of Audit and Scrutiny Review Areas Conducted by Other Local Authorities in Scotland and England

<p><i>Policy/Strategy Areas (General)</i> Brexit Digital Strategy Effectiveness of Fair Trade Income Generation and Commercialisation</p>
<p><i>Operational</i> Benchmarking Corporate Fraud Customer Experience Disaster Recovery Information Governance</p>
<p><i>Partnerships</i> Bus Deregulation and its Impact on Transport Services Scrutiny of External Organisations Shared Digital Services</p>
<p><i>Asset Management</i> Accommodation Strategy Data Security registers</p>
<p><i>Environmental/Energy Efficiency</i> Conversion of Grassed Areas to Parking Flood Risks Fly-tipping in the Countryside Japanese Knotweed Newly Introduced Speed Limits Waste Strategy</p>
<p><i>Education</i> Children with High Needs Early Years Provision Effective Home Education School Meals Youth Employment/Youth Services</p>
<p><i>Housing</i> Homelessness Housing repairs by Council and outside contractors Maintenance of Multi-occupancy Accommodation</p>
<p><i>Health and Social Care</i> Child poverty Homecare Occupational Therapy Safeguarding of Children</p>

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Audit and Scrutiny Committee
Draft Forward Work Plan 2019-2020

Planned Report Date	Report Subject	Report by
20 June 2019	Guide to Scrutiny and Review, including Audit and Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2019/20	Chief Executive
	Code of Corporate Governance	Deputy Chief Executive
	Arboricultural Framework	Director of Environment
	Unaudited Annual Accounts 2019/20	Head of Accountancy
	Local External Audit Report – East Renfrewshire Council Management Report 2018/19	External Auditor
	National External Audit Report - Local Government in Scotland: Challenges and Performance 2019	Clerk in liaison with Deputy Chief Executive
	National External Audit Report - Health and Social Care Integration – Update on Progress	Clerk in liaison with Director, HSCP
	Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) Internal Self-Assessment	Chief Auditor
	Audit Charter	
	Internal Audit Plan 2018/19 - Implementation Progress – January to March 2019	
	Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19	
	Committee's Specialisation Arrangements for Dealing with Internal and External Audit Reports & Inspection Reports	Clerk
27 June 2019	<i>Cancelled as no longer required</i>	

15 August 2019	Update on Audit and Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2019/20 (TBC)	Chief Executive
	National External Audit Report - How Councils Work - Safeguarding Public Money: Are You Getting it Right?	Clerk in liaison with Head of Accountancy
	Annual Treasury Management Report 2018/19	Head of Accountancy
	Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 - Implementation Progress – March to June 2019	Chief Auditor
26 September 2019	Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management Progress – Biannual Report	Chief Executive
	National External Audit Report: National Fraud Initiative (TBC)	Clerk in liaison with Head of Communities, Revenues and Change, and External Auditor
	2018/19 Annual Accounts for Council's Charitable Trusts and External Audit International Standard on Auditing 260 Report	Head of Accountancy
	2018/19 Annual Accounts and Draft Annual Audit Report for East Renfrewshire Council	
	Managing Absence - Annual Report 2018/19	Deputy Chief Executive
	Summary of Early Retirement/ Redundancy Costs to 31 March 2019	
21 November 2019	Interim Treasury Management Report 2019/20	Head of Accountancy
	Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 – Implementation Progress – July to September 2019	Chief Auditor
	Housing Benefit Performance Audit: Annual Update (TBC)	Clerk in liaison with Head of Communities, Revenues and Change
	National External Audit Report: Revenue Financing of Assets (Non-Profit Distributing and Hub Models) (TBC) <i>(Anticipated Publication Date: August 2019)</i>	Clerk in liaison with Head of Accountancy

23 January 2020	National External Audit Report: NHS in Scotland (TBC) <i>(Anticipated Publication Date: October 2019)</i>	Clerk in liaison with Director, HSCP
	Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 – Implementation Progress – October to December 2019	Chief Auditor
20 February 2020	Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21	Head of Accountancy
12 March 2020	Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management Progress - Biannual Report	Chief Executive
	Audit and Scrutiny Work Plan 2019-20 Progress, and 2020/21 Work Plan (TBC)	
	Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25	Chief Auditor
	East Renfrewshire Council - Annual Audit Plan 2019/20	External Auditor
	National External Audit Report: Scotland's City Region and Growth Deals (TBC) <i>(Anticipated Publication Date: November 2019)</i>	Clerk in liaison with Director of Environment
	National External Audit Report: Local Government in Scotland – Financial Overview <i>(Anticipated Publication Date: October - December 2019)</i>	Clerk in liaison with Head of Accountancy

Note 1

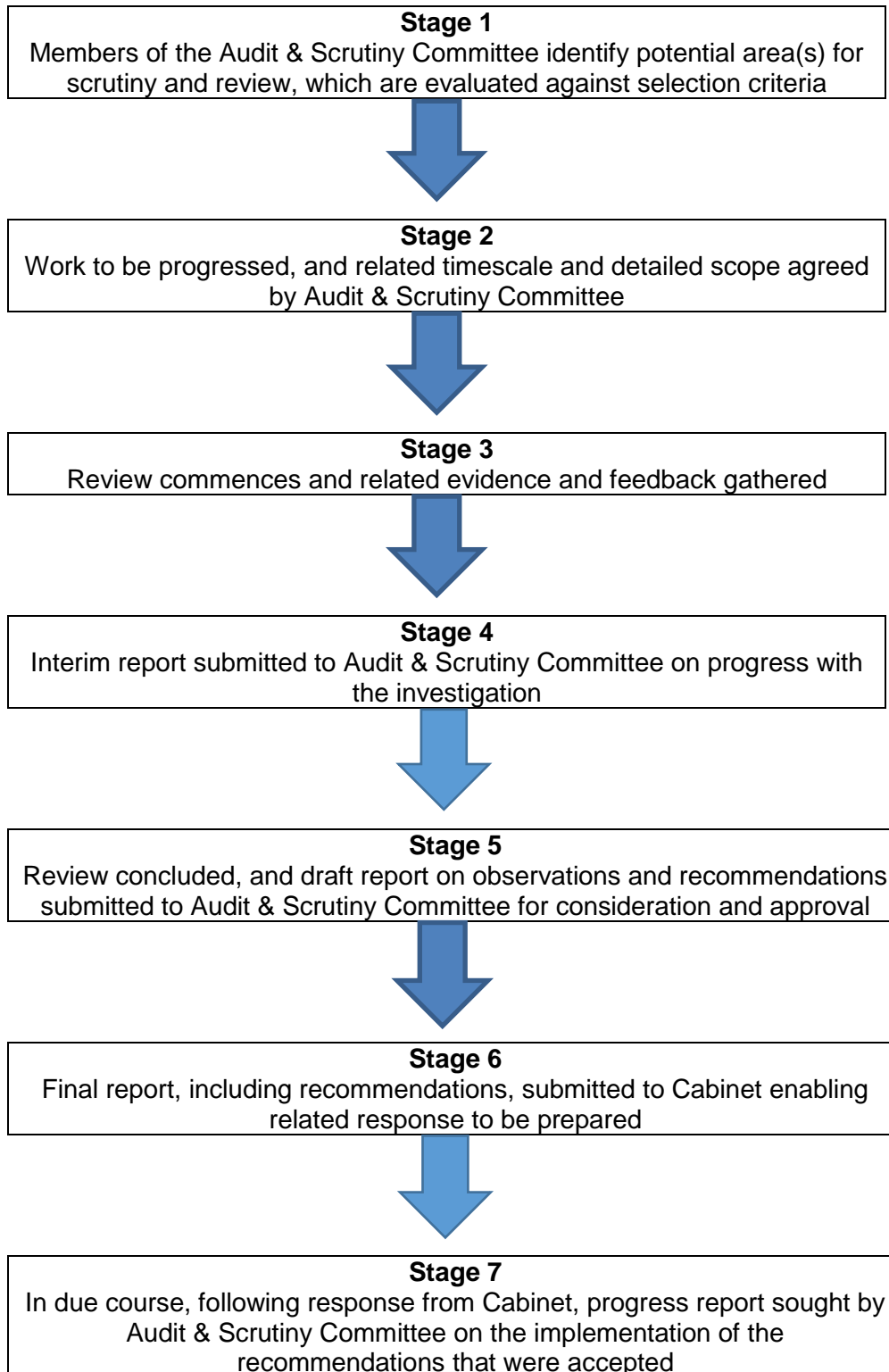
Audit Scotland has indicated that the following reports will be published in 2019/20, but their publication date remains to be confirmed:-

- National External Audit Report: Self-directed Support
- National External Audit Report: Equal Pay in Scottish Councils

Note 2

Audit Scotland has indicated that the scope, timing and any performance audit work on the proposed 'National External Audit Report: Withdrawal from the European Union' will be dependent upon developments. Once the national report has been published, the Clerk, in liaison with the Chief Executive, will prepare a report for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

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Stages for Conducting a Scrutiny Review and Evaluation Investigation

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Scoping and Progressing a Scrutiny and Evaluation Review

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the background to the review • Confirm that the topic has been prioritised against the agreed selection criteria
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm what the main aim of the review is • Propose objectives covering the various aspects to be examined as part of the review
Scope & Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define in detail what areas will be covered <i>For example, is the focus a whole service or part of it; is a particular timeframe to be looked at; is there to be a focus on a particular geographical area</i> • Highlight any aspects that will not be covered by the review <i>For example, are some things excluded due to time or resource constraints; or because they have recently been or to be examined such as by internal or external audit</i> <p><u>Note</u></p> <p><i>It is already considered good practice to advise the Chair and Director with responsibility for a service/policy under review that work is progressing on a matter relating to them and what is within the scope of the review</i></p>
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the approach to be taken to the review <p><i>Depending on what is being reviewed, there may be a range of approaches that are appropriate to complete the work. Determining what lines of enquiry are appropriate from the outset is useful as this informs timescales, resources, involvement of various key stakeholders etc.</i></p> <p><i>Approaches may include:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Reviewing local performance data and trends</i> ○ <i>Reviewing financial data and trends</i> ○ <i>Benchmarking and determining what is good practice</i> ○ <i>Discussions with appropriate council officers</i> ○ <i>Local site visits</i> ○ <i>Visits to other service providers or partners, such as other local authorities</i> ○ <i>Meeting with external partners (e.g. representatives of community groups)</i> ○ <i>Inviting internal and external stakeholders to provide evidence</i> ○ <i>Determining which members of the committee may be involved in any of the above</i>

<p>Consider Evidence Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what evidence (both written and oral) would be useful to gather and review and the preferred format of it <p><i>Depending on the nature of the review, this may include:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Reports, plans and strategies</i> ○ <i>Identifying background reading (e.g. research articles)</i> ○ <i>Recording interviews</i> ○ <i>Seeking written evidence</i> ○ <i>Collecting benchmarking data</i> ○ <i>Preparing a survey/questionnaire</i> ○ <i>Writing up comments from site visits</i> ○ <i>Research and analysis</i> ○ <i>Equalities Impact Assessments</i> ○ <i>Options Appraisals</i>
<p>Interviews etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider who needs to be spoken to <p><i>Depending on the nature of the review, this may include:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Other Elected Members</i> ○ <i>Members of CMT</i> ○ <i>Other Officers</i> ○ <i>Service Users</i> ○ <i>Trade Unions</i> ○ <i>Professional Experts</i> ○ <i>Community Groups</i> ○ <i>External Partners</i> ○ <i>Deciding what advance correspondence is required with any or all of the above</i>
<p>Anticipated Outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering from the outset what you expect the review to deliver can be useful <p><i>Depending on the nature of the review, this may include:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Making recommendations to Cabinet on how a policy or service delivery could be improved</i> ○ <i>Improved understanding of the challenges faced by the service concerned</i> ○ <i>Suggesting a different approach to delivery of a service</i>
<p>Timescales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help ensure the review progresses as intended, consider setting timescales for various aspects of the review <p><i>This may include:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>When the review is scheduled to start and finish</i> ○ <i>When any updates are to be provided to the committee</i> ○ <i>When a draft report is shown to officers for comments</i> ○ <i>When the final version of a report and related executive summary, prepared on the committee's behalf, are to be submitted to the committee and then the Cabinet</i> ○ <i>When progress on implementation of recommendations accepted by the Cabinet may be reviewed</i>