

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET26 April 2018Report by Chief ExecutiveBEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORT – ACTION PLAN UPDATE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To update Cabinet on delivery of the action plan arising from the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) which was published in November 2017 following an audit of Best Value carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet scrutinises and approves the Best Value action plan update (Annex 1), noting the good progress made to date in addressing the report's recommendations.

BACKGROUND

3. Councils' statutory duty to secure best value was introduced under requirements set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and accompanying statutory guidance. Best Value is defined as '*continuous improvement in the performance of a local authority's functions*'.

4. In 2017 East Renfrewshire was subject to its second Audit of Best Value by Audit Scotland. This covered:

- The Council's vision
- The process and results of self-evaluation
- Financial management
- Financial planning
- Workforce and asset management planning
- Community Engagement
- Plans for achieving transformation, including establishment of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust and the development of areas of shared services
- Overall assessment of outcomes/ performance and the reporting of these.

5. East Renfrewshire's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) was considered by the Accounts Commission on 12 October 2017 and published thereafter by Audit Scotland on 7 November 2017.

6. Overall the East Renfrewshire BVAR was very positive and provided assurance to residents, communities and the Accounts Commission that the Council is continuing to achieve best value. The report concluded with a set of recommendations for the Council to take forward as part of its ongoing approach to continuous improvement.

7. The Council considered the BVAR in December 2017 and approved an action plan to address the report's main recommendations.

UPDATE

8. In the short time since publication of the report, the Council has made good progress on delivering the action plan – an update is attached as Annex 1. Cabinet will note delivery on all areas of the plan, with some remaining ongoing as part of a longer-term continuous improvement journey, e.g. developing our approach to service planning.

9. Our progress will be considered by the external auditor team in May/June as part of their annual audit reporting process.

FINANCE & EFFICIENCY

10. There are no specific additional costs associated with delivery of the action plan, although officer time has been required to deliver the actions.

11. The recommendations associated with financial planning have been addressed.

CONSULTATION

12. The outcome of the audit was reported nationally and locally in the press, on our website as well as being disseminated to local community groups across East Renfrewshire. The update to the action plan will also be placed on the Council website.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

13. There has been good progress in addressing the recommendations relating to Community Planning.

CONCLUSION

14. East Renfrewshire has a strong culture of continuous improvement which was well supported by the conclusions of Best Value Assurance report. In the spirit of this continuous improvement journey, there has been good progress with delivery of the action plan arising from the audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is recommended that the Cabinet scrutinises and approves the Best Value action plan update (Annex 1), noting the good progress made to date in addressing the report's recommendations.

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive

REPORT AUTHOR: Louise Pringle, Head of Business Change and Revenues
louise.pringle@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk 0141 577 3136.

CABINET CONTACT: Cllr T Buchanan, Leader, Tel. 0141 577 3107/8

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- East Renfrewshire Council – Best Value Assurance Report, Council 13 December 2017
- Audit of Best Value – A New Approach, Cabinet 1 September 2016
- Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17, Cabinet 2 June 2016.
- Best Value Audit: Report on East Renfrewshire Council, Council 26 October 2005
- National Audit of Best Value, Cabinet 23 December 2004.

KEYWORDS

This report gives an update on East Renfrewshire Council's best value action plan. Keywords include: best value; audit; assurance; Audit Scotland; Accounts Commission; performance; risk.

April 2018

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Best Value Assurance Report Recommendations	What are our proposed actions?	What are our timescales?	Who is leading on this?	Update Status April 2018	Update April 2018
1. Councillors should take a more transparent and active role in scrutiny. They should have greater oversight of the transformation of the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver a new programme of essential scrutiny skills training for elected members 	March 2018	Director of Corporate and Community Services (with input from elected members)	Complete	Essential Scrutiny Skills Programme developed for elected members and will run over 2018/19. Effective Scrutiny Skills Training completed on 7/2/18; Risk Management on 19/2/18 & Treasury Management on 27/3/18. Further training on the Roles of Internal & External Audit planned for 18 & 23 April 2018.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate officers to present reports to Cabinet/Committees allowing opportunity for questioning by Members 	January 2018		Complete	Officers have been presenting reports to Cabinet since January 2018 with increased scrutiny by Cabinet members. All other Committees have always had reports presented by officers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at ways to increase officer support for Audit Committee 	January 2018		Complete	<p>Head of Accountancy has been attending Audit & Scrutiny Committee to act as an Advisor to the Committee since January 2018.</p> <p>0.5FTE resource secured by Chief Executive's Office as part of 2018/19 budget to support scrutiny activity on behalf of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More frequent reporting on the Council's transformation programme to allow Councillors more opportunity to scrutinise progress. 	April 2018		In progress	<p>The focus of MAP has been on Core Corporate Systems with a detailed report approved by Cabinet on 15 March 2018. A report on the rest of the MAP programme is planned for June 2018</p> <p>Work is also underway on improving the format of reporting to both the CMT and Council. There was an initial discussion at the MAP Board in Dec 2017 re: Reporting of Projects & Savings. As a first phase Directors are preparing written progress reports on their MAP programmes, to replace the previous reporting by exception. Phase 2 will involve a structured approach to presenting information at the right level for CMT and Cabinet scrutiny. External support may be engaged to support this important area, given the Council-wide implications of change to Finance & HR systems.</p>

8

Best Value Assurance Report Recommendations	What are our proposed actions?	What are our timescales?	Who is leading on this?	Update Status April 2018	Update April 2018
2. The council should adopt a more strategic and coordinated approach to planning and managing corporate resources and transformation programmes, to encompass financial strategies and plans; workforce plans; asset management; procurement; and three-year budget planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Financial Plan 2018-2022 will be brought to Council in February 2018 and will ensure that the links between the key corporate plans and strategies are clearer. 	February 2018	Corporate Management Team	Complete	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate our approach to the development of key corporate plans on the use and management of our finances, resources, assets and workforce and incorporate this into our future strategic planning and budgeting arrangements. 	December 2018 (<i>for plans for 2019 onwards</i>)		In progress	<p>Ongoing. Chief Executive chairing regular strategic policy meetings to oversee development of Community Plan, (incorporating the LOIP and locality plans) and links to Outcome Delivery Plan, service plans and performance management.</p> <p>CMT to consider Community Plan and Outcome Delivery Plan on 17 April 2018 with onward submission to Cabinet.</p> <p>3-year Workforce Plan to be considered by the CMT in May 18 and is based on the implications of the Plans mentioned above.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review our approach to service planning 	As above		In progress	<p>CMT considered a new approach to service planning on 18 March 2018. Agreed to transition to a new model for service planning with a small number of pilots in 2018/19 and full implementation in 2019/20. The new approach will involve service plans covering all aspects of the services' operations such as workforce planning, asset management, risk management etc.</p>

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3. The council should identify why its revenue budget is consistently underspent, and introduce more realistic budgeting policies and practices which reflect actual spending levels and patterns more closely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have carried out a detailed analysis of underspends on expenditure and levels of income recovery and this has already been factored into the 2017/18 and 2018/19 budget setting exercises. 	August 2017 and December 2017	Head of Accountancy	Complete	<p>Review of Budgeting paper considered by Council on 13 December 2017. Paper explained main reasons for historic underspends and actions to align budgeted and actual spend.</p> <p>The 3 year budget approved by Council in March 2018 completed the implementation of the proposed actions.</p>
4. The council should continue to enhance its engagement with its communities and partners; progress the City Deal; and work with the CPP to implement the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to progress our programme of community engagement jointly with our communities and partners with oversight by the Community Planning Board and the Performance and Accountability Review (PAR) members 	On-going through Community Planning Board, PAR and locality steering groups. April 2018	Community Planning Partners through the PAR	Complete	<p>£100k Participatory Budgeting scheme took place over 2017/18 in Barrhead culminating in March 2018 with over 100 local people allocating money to over 30 local groups Watch the videolink Better Barrhead – You Decide here - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWE5Jaqhz7U&feature=youtu.be</p> <p>Completed roads participatory budgeting exercise to apportion £600k of roads revenue budget allocation involving over 1200 residents in a voting exercise.</p> <p>Council recently considered progress in implementing early years strategy including evidence of substantially increased engagement by families and parents increasing confidence and involvement with results indicating positive impact on improving outcomes for children</p> <p>Our Champions Board, for corporate parenting, is jointly chaired by the Chief Executive and a care experienced young person and also includes elected members. Two young people have been recruited to support young people's participation alongside a third sector partner. Young people also have the chance to apply for Small Grants to achieve their own ambitions.</p>

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<p>4. Continued....</p> <p>The council should continue to enhance its engagement with its communities and partners; progress the City Deal; and work with the CPP to implement the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.</p>	Continued from above...				<p>Care experienced young people continue to develop ongoing engagement events including holiday activity programmes, voluntary/award schemes and a variety of creative workshops.</p> <p>CPP Information & Consultation Session for all Elected Members and Partners held on 28 March 2018 review progress around Community Empowerment, Co-Production & PB.</p> <p>Forthcoming May 2018 CPP Performance & Accountability Review (PAR) to discuss extending Locality Plans to Neilston & Thornliebank.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring forward a report on participatory budgeting to Cabinet with proposals to further develop our approach in line with Scottish Government and CoSLAs' agreed Framework. 			In progress	<p>Cabinet Papers on the Council's approach to Participatory Budgeting to-date, lessons learned and next steps considered in December 2017 (Roads PB) and planned for April 2018.</p> <p>Of the 9 successful projects identified through the roads participatory budgeting vote, 4 projects have been completed and the rest are underway.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive forward our City Deal projects, highlighting the significant economic and community benefits. 	Annual reporting to Cabinet on progress with City Deal projects & benefits.	Director of Environment	In progress	<p>An update report will be submitted to Cabinet in 2018 following the elected members' briefing (see below).</p> <p>Thereafter an annual update will be submitted to Cabinet at the beginning of each financial year.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange an elected Member briefing on City Deal projects in the new year. 	April 2018		In progress	Information and Consultation Session for Elected Members on City Deal to take place over the next few months.

Best Value Assurance Report Recommendations	What are our proposed actions?	What are our timescales?	Who is leading on this?	Update Status April 2018	Update April 2018
5. To ensure Best Value, the council should include a wider variety of options appraisals as part of its approach to business transformation and service review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental Change Boards will ensure, where applicable, service redesigns will consider all suitable options for future service delivery as part of the redesign process. 	Ongoing.	Corporate Management Team and PMO	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing as part of service redesigns.</p> <p>Option appraisal on Core Corporate Systems programme considered by Cabinet on 15 March 2018.</p> <p>Option appraisal on future leisure provision within the Eastwood area considered by Cabinet 7 December 2017. Options out to public consultation in April 2018.</p>

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