

AUDIT OF BEST VALUE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING – DEVELOPING THE DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Reason for Report

This report seeks agreement of the second draft of the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning Report Improvement Plan and provides more detail about the process for development and delivery.

2. Report Summary

2.1 The process and timetable of the development and agreement of the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning Report Improvement Plan was agreed at Full Council on 30th April 2009 and is given in **Appendix 1** as part of the overall Audit process timetable

2.2 The note from the facilitated development session with Members and Corporate Management Team held on 30th April 2009 is given in **Appendix 2**.

2.3 The second draft of the Improvement Plan has been devised drawing on the information gathered on 30th April and specific updates from the Corporate Management Team, Area and Group Management Team and individual Members and is presented in **Appendix 3**.

2.4 Increased Member involvement in the development of the Plan is also proposed following comments at development session on 30 April 2009 and Scrutiny Committee on 7 May 2009.

3. Glossary of Terms

Accountability:	The duty of a local authority to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions, also known as public performance reporting
The Act:	The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 which places the duties of Best Value, Community Planning and Accountability on local authorities. It also gave local authorities the Power to Advance Well Being
The Audit:	The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning
CMT:	Corporate Management Team – the Chief Executive and all Directors of the Council, the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.
SLA	Strategic Level Assessment – undertaken in the first half of 2008 as part of the Council's self assessment for the Audit.

4. Recommendations

Members are invited to :

4.1 endorse the second draft of the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning Report Improvement Plan at **Appendix 3**

4.2 agree the methodology for increased Elected Member involvement as outlined in section 12.2

5. Plan Links and Contribution

5.1 The Council Values, expressed in the Corporate Plan for 2007 to 2011, include Customer First, Continuous Improvement, Openness and Communication, Equality and Diversity, Teamwork and Partnership. These all relate directly to the duties of Best Value, Accountability and Community Planning, placed on councils by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

5.2 The Corporate Plan is a practical demonstration of the Council's commitment to Best Value, Accountability and Community Planning. The Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement underpin the Council's work in relation to Community Planning, Best Value, Equalities and Sustainable Development. All of these issues are important for the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

6. Resources/Value for Money Assessment

6.1 The duty of Best Value requires councils to secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. By definition, a local authority that is delivering Best Value is delivering value for money.

6.2 The resources for developing the Improvement Plan are primarily Elected Member and officer time and there will be minimal travel expenses. The implementation of the Improvement Plan may require additional resources and this will be costed as part of the development process and brought forward to Council as soon as identified.

7. Risk Assessment

7.1 The Council must be able to demonstrate that it has implemented effectively the duties placed on it by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Failure to do so will indicate that the Council has not effectively provided a best value service to its stakeholders, and will result in the Council being less able to provide modernised, improving and effective services in the immediate future until it resolves and improves its approach to best value.

7.2 The risks associated with the Improvement Plan are that it is not agreed by Full Council within the required timescale and it is not approved by the Accounts Commission.

7.3 These risks are being mitigated by involving all Members and Corporate Management Team in the development of the Improvement Plan; by ensuring the Plan has realistic timescales and is sufficiently challenging. Furthermore, the Improvement Service is providing quality assurance and facilitation.

8. Authorities and Legal Implications

8.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places the duties of Best Value, Community Planning and Accountability on local authorities. Included in the Act are provisions for auditing local authorities.

8.2 The Act and other Acts cover the Accounts Commission's role and local authorities' responses to the findings from the Audits and the Accounts Commission's findings. A principal requirement is for local authorities to consider the Accounts Commission's findings and to submit their response – the Improvement Plan – to the Commission "*within three months or such longer period as the Commission may allow*".

9. Consultations

The CMT and Area and Group Management Team were consulted on the terms of this report and are in agreement with its recommendations. The Improvement Service has also received a copy of the report.

10. Background

10.1 The Audit process has been ongoing since May 2008. **Appendix 1** shows the key dates throughout the Audit process and also the process and timetable of the development and agreement of the Improvement Plan as agreed at Full Council on 30th April 2009.

10.2 The Accounts Commission is due to meet with the Ad Hoc Sub Committee on the Best Value and Community Planning Audit on 12 May about the Council's views and experience of the audit process. They have been asked to add in a discussion on the detailed aspects of the findings of the Report and subsequent recommendations. At the time of writing no response has been received. If this date does not prove possible another opportunity will be pursued.

10.3 At its meeting on 7 May 2009, the Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed process and agreed to recommend that the Council be creative in respect of Member involvement in to the process of developing the improvement Plan to support and improve the building of trust and improved working relationships between officers and Members.

11. Development of the Improvement Plan to date

11.1 The first draft of the Improvement Plan was considered at Full Council, and then as part of the facilitated discussion with the Improvement Service on 30 April 2009. It drew primarily on the SLA Action Plan and the structure was based on other Councils' Improvement Plans that have been approved by Accounts Commission.

11.2 The issues which arose during the facilitated discussion on 30 April 2009 on the content of the emerging Improvement Plan were grouped in three broad areas: people and leadership; political management; and operational business. The theme of performance underpinned each of these three areas and it is recognised that they are all interconnected and mutually supportive. **Appendix 2** details the comments made during this session and the Improvement Service conclusions.

11.3. A second draft Improvement Plan has been developed drawing on the comments in Appendix 2. It is now structured in a way that facilitates scrutiny and tracking it through Covalent, forthcoming development by Members and officers, and the involvement of service Committees. This updated draft Plan is outlined in **Appendix 3**.

11.4. An important point to note is that the Improvement Plan has to demonstrate a realistic programme for improvement that will address the issues raised by the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland— it does not have to be complete and implemented by mid June. So while much of the content is already in progress, it is appropriate that time is taken to identify any additional activity and build on good practice elsewhere that should be embraced by this Council.

12. Next steps

Members, managers and partners' Development Session

12.1 The next stage is for a Development Session on 26 May 2009.

Arrangements are currently being made in line with the decision of Full Council on 30 April 2009. Detailed arrangements are as follows:

12.1.1 Invites are being sent requesting participation to all Key Stakeholders, Elected Members; CMT; Gavin Stevenson the new Chief Executive; Trade Unions; Community Planning Joint Board members (NHS, Scottish Enterprise; voluntary sector; and private sector) and the senior managers previously involved in the Strategic Level Assessment (SLA).

12.1.2 In advance of the date, the third draft of the Improvement Plan will be circulated. This will include the detailed current position of the draft Improvement Plan (e.g. timescales, agreed work) that are agreed by Full Council on 14 May 2009.

12.1.3 The format for the day builds on previous positive experience and will be: scene setting by the Improvement Service; break into small groups for discussion on the three areas of the Improvement Plan (about 45mins each theme); and concluding remarks from the Improvement Service. Each group will have a facilitator and a scribe. All the comments and suggestions will be included in the report to the Full Council on 15 June 2009 as part of the background information for the final Improvement Plan.

Scrutiny Panels

12.2 At the Full Council meeting on 30 April 2009 and at the Scrutiny Committee on 7 May 2009, Members expressed commitment to playing an

active role in the development of the Plan. Consideration has therefore been given to an additional opportunity to maximise Members' knowledge and expertise in developing the detail of the Improvement Plan.

12.2.1 It is therefore suggested that three time limited Scrutiny Panels be established that will have a remit to: look at the relevant detailed extracts from the Audit report and comments made at the Development Session; scrutinise the proposed section of the Plan that will form the final overall Improvement Plan to be submitted on 15 June 2009; and arrange engagement with at least two other local authorities or organisations to look at best practice (ideally event/engagement would involve all Members).

12.2.2 It is proposed that these Scrutiny Panels be comprised as follows: The Scrutiny Committee has suggested that its Members would be particularly useful as members of these Panels as they have experience and an interest in scrutiny activity. Chairs of Central Committees may also be appropriate representatives.

People and leadership

Two Members from each political grouping

Officers: HR Training and Development Manager; Service Manager Committee and Member Services; and Area Manager Stewartry

Political management

Two Members from each political grouping

Officers: Director of Support Services; Director of Chief Executive Services; Chief Constable; and Chief Fire Officer

Operational business

Two Members from each political grouping

Officers: Operations Manager Accountancy; Corporate Director of Combined Services; Human Resources Operations Manager; and Area Manager Annandale and Eskdale.

12.2.3 It is proposed that the operating arrangements are as follows:

- Non decision making – these groups are to scrutinise and contribute to the professional officers' emerging recommendations for Full Council. On this basis they are consistent with Member-Officer Protocol and Standing Orders
- Meeting chair appointed from within group and from the Elected Members
- First meeting arranged by Audit Team for w/c 1 June 2009 and thereafter meetings arranged by group members themselves. Meetings could be evenings and/or weekends and will be recorded in the central diary.
- The Improvement Report will follow a template issued by Audit Team to ensure consistency and completeness across the three groups
- Notes of meetings will be circulated to Panel and record any dissent or minority reports. Minutes should be disseminated within Groups/Departments as appropriate.

12.2.4 Clearly these Scrutiny Panels would be a different way of working than the Council has traditionally employed. They will work if Members and Officers engage in a compact to work positively and enter into them constructively. The Scrutiny Committee has recommended that should these panels be established, a review of their effectiveness take place and be considered by the Committee.

Detailed issues within the Audit Report

12.3 While the Improvement Plan rightly focuses on the four Accounts Commission findings and the ten Audit Scotland Areas for Improvement, it is acknowledged that the Audit Report included a number of specific comments and issues that require to be considered and addressed as appropriate. The draft Improvement Plan therefore contains within a fourth theme to capture all these individual issues and for relevant service committees to consider any necessary action. It is intended that individual managers be identified to take these issues forward as part of ongoing work and reports to Committees over the coming months.

Report to Full Council

12.4 There is to be a Full Council meeting on 15 June 2009 to formally consider the Audit Report and agree the Improvement Plan. The preparatory work on both these issues as outlined in 10.2 and 12.2.2 will ensure that Members and managers have ownership and engagement in the forthcoming programme of work

13. Project Management arrangements

As reported in the last paper to Full Council, the process is now being supported by a Project Board, following the principles of the Council's agreed project management tool PRINCE 2. The Project Board Work Programme includes a Communications Plan, risk assessment and management, and performance information and monitoring arrangements and these will be included in the report to Full Council on 15 June 2009.

14. Conclusions

14.1 The Improvement Plan is at a crucial stage and there is a relatively short time period to develop the content for submission to Accounts Commission. However there is a sound basis of work to draw on, begun through the SLA Action Plan and other ongoing activity across the Council.

14.2 The structure of the draft Plan and increased involvement of Elected Members provides a new impetus to take this forward. A positive approach, constructive engagement and a willingness to work in new ways will be crucial to the success of this programme. It is very much hoped that this process in itself makes a contribution to the Council looking forward and moving forward.

Liz Manson Operations Manager Policy and Community Planning Date of Report: 7 May 2009 File Ref:	Philip N Jones Chief Executive Council HQ English Street Dumfries DG1 2DD
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APPENDICES 3/-

Audit Report timetable	
Event, Date and Time	Purpose
Mid 2006	Initial indication from Audit Scotland of date for start of the Audit
4 September 2007	Scrutiny Committee decision not to appoint an external consultant to carry out assessment
November 2007	Second indication of start of Audit
14 November 2007	CMT commission an internal Strategic Level Assessment(SLA)
January -February 2008	Phase 1 SLA carried out – questionnaire and interviews with Elected Members, managers and partners
10 March 2008	Phase 1 SLA findings presented to CMT and Elected Members
25 March 2008	Phase 1 SLA findings and recommendations agreed by Ad Hoc Sub Committee
10 April 2008	Audit Scotland presentation to CMT and then Elected Members on Audit process
April – May 2008	Phase 2 SLA carried out
14 May 2008	Start of Audit – formal meeting with Audit Scotland, Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Corporate Services and Business Review Manager
12 June 2008	Phase 2 SLA findings and recommendations agreed by Ad Hoc Sub Committee
May – June 2008 and July – Aug 2008	Auditors on site
1 July 2008	All SLA recommendations and Action Plan for recommendations 1-14 agreed by Scrutiny Committee
September 2008	Informal feedback from Audit Scotland to Chief Executive
May – November 2008	Audit Scotland analysis of information and data gathered
September – November 2008	Draft report with Audit Scotland's Moderation Team
5 January 2009	Draft report received by Council
16 January 2009	Considered draft audit report and agreed formal response at Ad Hoc Sub Committee with invite to all Members
28 January – 24 February 2009	Amended draft report with Audit Scotland's Moderation Team
24 February 2009	Final Controller of Audit report received by Council
5 March 2009	Accounts Commission consideration

27 March 2009	Report published with Commission findings
9 April 2009	SLA Action Plan progress report agreed by Ad Hoc Sub Committee
30 April 2009	Timetable and process for consideration of the Audit Report and the development of the Improvement Plan agreed by Full Council.
12 May 2009	Meeting of Ad Hoc Sub Committee with Accounts Commission to discuss the <i>process and content</i>
15 June 2009	Full Council consideration of Audit Report and agreement of the Improvement Plan
25 June 2009	Final date for return of agreed Council Improvement Plan as the response to the Accounts Commission Findings and Audit Scotland Areas for Improvement

Improvement Plan timetable

9 April 2009	Mapping of SLA Action Plan into Audit Scotland Areas of Improvement and Accounts Commission findings to create first draft of the Improvement Plan agreed by Scrutiny Committee
30 April 2009	Full Council meeting to agree the process and timetable
30 April 2009	A facilitated development session with all Members and Corporate Management Team based on the first draft of the Improvement Plan
7 May 2009	Scrutiny Committee agreed enhancements to the process for developing the Improvement Plan to recommend to Council at its meeting on 14 May 2009.
14 May 2009	Second draft of Improvement Plan for consideration by Full Council and updated process
26 May 2009	A facilitated development session with all Members, Corporate Management Team, new Chief Executive, SLA Managers and partners based on the third draft of the Improvement Plan
w/c 1 June 2009	Scrutiny Groups meet with Lead Officers to develop Improvement Plan programmes for the three sections: People. Political business management; and Operational business management
15 June 2009	Consideration of the findings of the Audit Report and approval of the final (fourth draft) Improvement plan
9 July 2009	Full Council to receive final Programmes of activity for People, Political Business Management and Operational Business Management

APPENDIX 1

9 July 2009	Scrutiny Committee to review the process for the development of the Improvement Plan including a review of the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Panels
date tbc	Accounts Commission to confirm approval of the Improvement Plan
17 September 2009	Full Council to monitor progress of implementation of the Improvement Plan

Feedback from facilitated development session on 30 April 2009 led by Improvement Service with Elected Members and Corporate Management Team.

'This is a record of comments made by individual Members and Officers during this session'

Section 1

Accounts Commission Finding 1- Improving the education and development of Councillors to provide them with the tools to carry out their corporate and strategic responsibilities

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 1 – provide effective strategic direction to the organisation at political and managerial levels in particular provide corporate focus to drive modernisation and to instil the culture and practice of best value

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 4 - introduce an effective change management programme, which is broadly based, to support the achievement of the improvements... and as part of this carry out a council-wide staff survey to ascertain staff views and implement an action plan to address issues raised by staff

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 5 - Clarify how scrutiny is to be carried out and ensure that members are provided with up to date, reliable and accessible information to enable them to challenge performance

SLA Action – Joint meeting between Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Political Group Leaders (PGLs)

Comments

- PGLs and CMT meetings are not the sole answer
- Tick box exercise not the answer
- Need to have a cultural change and take on the views of other Members – 30% are isolated
- Need to build trust and relationships across Members and also between officers and Members
- Changing committee dates and poor administration leads to confusion and missed opportunities to contribute/disenfranchisement
- Not been outward looking – too involved in our internal wrangles
- Manner in which decisions are made, consensus is not nurtured, whipped into line

SLA Action – Programme of 'Challenge Day' events focussing on discrete high level strategic issues

Comments

- Members like them but need to build content and develop ownership of content
- Allows input even if not on a particular committee

- No significant buy in - demonstrated by low attendance
- Not democratic – not open to the public
- Dates often clash or are changed
- A feeling of going through the motions and a tick box exercise, need to be more focused and better organised

SLA Action – The Personal Development Plan process as supported by Human Resources (HR) Service is identifying leadership development issues as they arise. Any required programmes of necessary Members support will be taken forward for action jointly by Corporate Support and Governance and HR Service

Comments

- Certain areas need to be improved – start on the basics
- Help with training on specifics e.g. chairing skills
- Individual Members responsibility to keep up to date with developments
- Awaiting feedback months after completing process.
- Will only work if properly resourced
- Support needed for Political Groups as well as individuals

SLA Action – New Management arrangements implemented and then period of stability

Comments

- Single status may have impact on ability to implement Management of Change decisions
- Appraisals and evaluations must take place within set timescales
- Workforce Strategy to be implemented

Discussion Section 2

Accounts Commission Finding 2 – Improving Elected Members scrutiny of performance

Accounts Commission Finding 3 - Making performance management effective and establishing a culture of continuous improvement

Accounts Commission Finding 4 – Increasing the pace of change in services and making them more efficient

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 2 – address the weaknesses in performance and resource management, ensuring that these are led by the council's priorities and provide councillors and officers with sufficient understanding to be able to manage performance and resources within the council's frameworks. In doing so prepare longer term financial plans to provide for the future cost pressures facing the council, in particular the maintenance of the council's infrastructure and assets and increasing demands for services.

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 6 – clarify the links between local area and region wide community planning and the relationship between corporate and local service delivery

SLA Action – Revise the Strategic Management Framework and the annual planning guidance to ensure it is effective and applied consistently by services. Reference to the status and role of the four area plans must be included within the Strategic Management Framework.

Comments:

- Agenda Management Tracking system has been repeatedly requested to track the decisions made at meet at Committees but no results
- Scrutiny should not be seen as something only for Scrutiny Committee – all 47 Members should be doing it
- Lack of clarity on scrutiny responsibility for Members
- Members should be involved early on in the process
- Officers' scarce time needs to be put into things that matter
- Officer/Member working groups strongly supported and frustration that not taking place here
- Scrutiny would be aided if Members received good reports with the information they needed – no quality control being exercised
- Committee papers are late and too detailed/poor quality of writing and presentation
- Reports should be analysed and conclusions made with some amount of scrutiny done by Officers
- Quality of reports needs to be improved
- benchmarking should be done and more use of outside agencies
- Specify who has been consulted i.e. specific member of CMT and what were their views – hold CMT to account
- Issues around business practice – Members ask for a report to the next meeting but is a report necessary or could it be done another route?
- Need to be a more outward looking council/sharing of best practice
- Lost faith in Covalent – might need to retrain
- Not making use of Covalent – e.g. no progress on Social Work Improvement Agency Improvement Plan updated on the Covalent system
- Need to analyse if there is a breakdown in the current process – map the process and identify any gaps – clarify Officer and Members roles – if wrong where has it gone wrong?
- Agendas are too big and there is little or no meeting management
- Briefcase – does it work?
- Perhaps include on Committee agendas a summary of previous decisions made and the progress made on them

Discussion Section 3

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 3 – Develop and agree the commissioning model for the council and ensure that this is implemented across the council's functions with clarity, consistency and effectiveness

SLA Action - none

Comments

- Already agreed and therefore this information will populate the Improvement Plan
- Need to confirm who is in charge
- Different progress is being made in different Departments
- Education required for Members
- Interpret commissioning strategy to ensure consistency

Discussion section 4

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 7 – Improve Public Performance Reporting to provide a complete and balanced picture of performance

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 8 – Improve the coordination and consistency of consultation and engagement with local communities

SLA Action – Develop meaningful measures about impact of community planning with national partners

Comments

- Need to find out what the public want to know
- Identify what interests the public
- Members need to engage with the public more to find out what they want
- recognise the role of Members as local information source
- officers give too much information because if any gaps get a difficult time at committee

SLA Action – Implement the Council's Public Involvement Action Plan including corporate activities of: staff training in the National Standards for Community Engagement; Database of consultation and engagement activity; expert advice and assistance to staff and members; corporate research activity

Comments

- Communications Unit only deal with outgoing communication, not two way
- The Council should deal with consultations in the same manner, no matter where they come from in the Council

- Questionnaire could be devised for inclusion in Broadcast – get an email address per household?
- There is a lack of consistency on consultations
- Ward member consultation is also important and often overlooked
- Recognise we're doing a lot of work – but it's not co-ordinated so we can't share/piggy back different consultations
- Members are representative of the communities and so public involvement activity needs to recognise that
- Need to improve the skills of officers in getting information
- Need to use different mechanisms to get different groups e.g. use survey monkey
- We need to be careful what level of consultation needs to be carried out and whether people are interested.
- The Council works hard to involve partners but sometimes they withdraw – the public need to know that sometimes this is the reason for not doing joint working

Discussion section 5

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 9 – Ensure that the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee takes a more proactive and strategic role, delivers its best value responsibilities and provides robust challenge and scrutiny to the police and fire and rescue services

SLA Action – Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary should encourage the active involvement of the elected members in the Best Value agenda, and should ensure that its senior officers play an integral part in planning and monitoring Best Value

Comments

- Capital and revenue spend reports to be submitted in detail
- Police Fire and Rescue Committee should take complete ownership of the Best Value process
- Best Value already well underway for Fire and Rescue Service, six reviews this year, one covering finance, evidence can be given
- Numbers on the committee is not an issue – engagement is what is important
- Needs to be asked to do more than note reports– need to agree things

Discussion section 6

Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda 10 – Ensure that the new community plan is developed without delay so that it is able to act as the key strategic driver for the council and its partners

SLA Action – Single Outcome Agreement for Dumfries and Galloway developed through Community Planning

- Done!

Concluding remarks from Improvement Service

- three broad themes have emerged, all inter-linked:

need to develop people and leadership – especially about leadership and relationships between members and between members and officers. Some things easily addressed like dates of meetings and events but others will need some work and perhaps external support to take forward. Perhaps seek clarity from Audit Scotland about their detailed evidence and analysis of leadership issues. Member officer working groups seem to exist happily elsewhere and would seem to offer a way of getting people together here for constructive work

political management – much confusion and lack of clarity here. Some basic procedures not being followed and that leads to distrust and confusion. Need to think about what kind of council we are – is consensus always important/possible? How do we want to undertake scrutiny?

operational business – need to accelerate the work. Frustration being expressed by Members about the basic building blocks not in place or not being implemented – performance management information not available for members to see. Most of this sounds straightforward but needs to be addressed asap.

- important to look at good practice from other areas. Improvement Service can help with this, knowledge managers have good info about activity across Scotland.



**LOOKING FORWARD
MOVING FORWARD**

**THE DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL
IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2009-11**

Introduction

The Dumfries and Galloway Council Improvement Plan is being developed to address the Improvement Agenda in the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning undertaken by Audit Scotland and the Findings of the Accounts Commission published on 27 March 2009.

Structure

The Plan is structured around three main themes, although their interdependency is clearly recognised. It builds on work undertaken in a Strategic Level Assessment (SLA) by the Council in preparation for the Audit and the self awareness demonstrated through this analysis was commended in the Audit Report.

Development process

The process for developing the Plan has been designed to build ownership and ensure the engagement of Elected Members; staff, particularly senior managers; and local partners and also to find and embrace best practice across Scotland. A mixture of formal consideration at Full Council, informal discussion sessions and Scrutiny Groups are being employed.

The development of the Plan and its implementation is being managed as a project following the principles of PRINCE 2, again building on a strength identified in the Audit Report.

Quality assurance

Advice on the process of developing the Plan and quality assurance of its content is being provided by the Improvement Service.

Our starting point

We have a sound foundation on which to build this work:

- the recent agreement of the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement gives a clear strategic vision for the region and sound performance management for the Objectives within it;
- the imminent conclusion of the Management of Change programme provides for stability and clarity in the management arrangements
- Strategic and Operational Plans are currently being submitted to strategic service Committees for agreement;

- Innovative approaches such as Delivering Excellence and Integrated Children's Services and key strategies for example Customer First, Human Resources are being progressed.

Perhaps most importantly though, there is a commitment and a willingness across Members and officers to do things better, and to do things differently. So this Council is indeed *looking forward and moving forward*.

Table 1
Showing the four key themes of the Plan and the contribution to the Audit Scotland Improvement Agenda and Accounts Commission Findings

Dumfries and Galloway Improvement Areas	Account Commission Findings				Audit Scotland - Improvement Agenda									
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. People and Leadership														
2. Political business processes														
3. Operational business processes														
4. Detailed issues and recommendations in the Audit														

Accounts Commission Findings

1. Improving the education and development of Councillors to provide them with the tools to carry out their corporate and strategic responsibilities
2. Improving Elected Members' scrutiny of performance
3. Making performance management effective and establishing a culture of continuous improvement
4. Increasing the pace of change in services and making them more efficient

Audit Scotland - Improvement Agenda

1. Provide effective strategic direction to the organisation at political and managerial levels, in particular to provide corporate focus, to drive modernisation and to instil the culture and practice of best value
2. Address the weaknesses in performance and resource management, ensuring that these are led by the council's priorities and provide councillors and officers with sufficient understanding to be able to manage performance and resources within the council's framework. In doing so, prepare longer term financial plans to provide for the future cost pressures facing the council, in particular the maintenance of the council's infrastructure assets and increasing demands for services

3. Develop and agree the commissioning model for the council and ensure that this is implemented across the council's functions with clarity, consistency and effectiveness
4. Introduce an effective change management programme which is broadly based, to support the achievement of the improvements listed above, and as part of this carry out a council-wide staff survey to ascertain staff views and needs and implement an action plan to address issues raised by staff
5. Clarify how scrutiny is to be carried out and ensure that members are provided with up to date, reliable and accessible information to enable them to challenge performance
6. Clarify the links between local area and region-wide community planning and the relationship between corporate and local area service delivery
7. Improve Public Performance Reporting to provide a complete and balanced picture of performance
8. Improve the co-ordination and consistency of consultation and engagement with local communities
9. Ensure that the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee takes a more proactive and strategic role, delivers its best value responsibilities and provides robust challenge and scrutiny to the police and fire and rescue services
10. Ensure that the new community plan is developed without delay so that it is able to act as the key strategic driver for the council and its partner

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

No.	Theme	Date
1	People and Leadership	
	Outcome	
	Elected members and officers of the Council are clear about their roles and activities and are developed and supported to fulfil their responsibilities.	
	Project	
	Update programme of personal and team development for Elected Members and officers	9 July 2009 – Full Council
	Process	
	Implementation of the programme	May 2011
	<p>Content (detailed timescales; processes, resources required and lead officers to be specified)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviours and attitudes (based on agreed leadership qualities) • Personal skills – based on job descriptions/responsibilities and identified through Personal Development Plans. Some generic training and development including performance management, Covalent training and Challenge Days; some individual activity • Team working including Corporate Management Team and Political Group Leaders meetings • Peer engagement • Information flows • Support for political groups and Members services • Workforce Strategy - includes staff consultation and survey activity and Senior Management Appraisal Scheme 	

2	Political Business Processes	
	Outcome	
	The Council's political management processes are effective and efficient	
	Project	
	Develop improvement programme for political management arrangements	9 July 2009 – Full Council
	Process	
	Implement the programme	May 2011
	<p>Content of programme(detailed timescales; processes, resources required and lead officers to be specified)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and communicate Standing Orders/Committee roles and functions especially Scrutiny and Police Fire and Rescue • Agenda management tracking system implemented • Improved Central diary management • Establishment of Member/Officer working groups • Clarify and communicate Elected Members role in scrutiny (e.g. of Strategic Plans) • Improved Committee administration - especially Committee report writing and consultation; • Improved management of meetings • Consider political style of the Council/ consensus requirements 	

No.	Theme	Date
3	Operational business	
	Outcome	
	To have efficient, responsive and effective operational arrangements across the Council	
	Project	
	Develop improvement programme for business processes	9 July 2009 – Full Council
	Process	
	Implement the programme	May 2011
	<p data-bbox="316 857 1050 969">Content (detailed timescales; processes, resources required and lead officers to be specified)</p> <ul data-bbox="363 1014 1050 1697" style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Management Framework Review • Service Planning Guidance Review • Covalent implementation and training • Performance reporting arrangements • Local/central links and arrangements • Financial Planning including full life costing system for capital projects • Asset Planning • Implementation of Strategic Commissioning model • Resourcing protocol for Single Outcome Agreement • Develop local Statutory Performance Indicators • Project Management methodology – post project review • Improved consistency and co-ordination of public involvement activity 	

No	Theme	
4..	Other improvement issues from the Audit report not specified within the Improvement Agenda or Findings	
	Outcome	
	All specific issues raised in the Audit have been considered and addressed appropriately	
	Project	
	Detailed record of all the comments and specific recommendations within the Audit Report and lead officers identified	end June 2009
	Process	
	Service Committees receive reports on the issue raised and proposed action, if any, as part of ongoing work in the relevant subject matter.	By end 2009