Summary of Audit Scotland Recommendations	
Ref	**Recommendation**
1.1	Effective political leadership and culture are important to ensure that councils can balance strategic, corporate, operational and local objectives effectively. They are important factors to support good accountability and continuous improvement.
1.2	Although councillors behave appropriately in public meetings, behaviours outside the chamber are described as less positive and exacerbate a sense of mistrust. Some councillors will now not engage with each other because relationships have deteriorated.
1.3	Part of the lack of mutual trust is because of the amount of discussion about council issues and derogatory remarks about councillors and officers made in local press and online forums. Councillors expressed their concern that this includes contributions from other councillors and includes apparent leaking of private papers and emails.
2.1	The council's current political management arrangements are not supporting effective working.
2.2	The scrutiny of progress on strategic objectives and policy is weak with only limited progress by the PRS Committee.
2.3	The scrutiny of performance at a strategic level is weak, with little evidence of performance information being actively scrutinised by councillors over the past year at this level.
2.4	To support good leadership in any council it is important that structures and arrangements for political business meet the needs of the council and work effectively.
2.5	Councillors do not have a shared understanding of their role in scrutiny.
3.1	Councillors are not engaging well in efforts by officers to provide support on strategic issues.
3.2	It was clear from the audit work that much of the strain on relations centres on the behaviour of individuals. The behaviours described do not meet the expectations of the respective roles and responsibilities of councillors. All councillors must take responsibility for understanding their role and responsibilities, behave accordingly and respect the role of management in operational matters.
3.3	Despite the strain on capacity and the very difficult circumstances, the senior management of the council need to consider what further it can do to ensure they are effectively supporting councillors to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
3.4	The concerns described by both officers and councillors about the behaviours of some councillors, indicates that interventions from the chief executive and monitoring officer have not been successful.
3.5	Demanding expectations from some councillors need to be managed more effectively. Senior officers and councillors need to consider how they respond to this.
4.1	The political instability means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the council to progress strategic planning. This planning is important if the council is to respond to the challenges facing Argyll and Bute and deliver services within reducing budgets.
4.2	Staff morale was not raised as a specific problem during audit interviews, but was recognised as an issue for on-going management by officers. There is a risk to the council that staff morale and confidence is affected if the current difficulties at a strategic level are not improved.

Stage	Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress Update	Recommendation Ref	Current Status
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL - ACTION PLAN - AUDIT SCOTLAND STATUTORY REPORT - SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL 23 JANUARY FOR CONSIDERATION										
	This is the main heading for improvement		This is what we are going to do	This is when it will be completed	This is how we will decide if we have been successful	This is what we will use to decide if we have been successful	These are the people responsible for leading this	This is what we have achieved to date	These are the recommendations from the statutory report that are addressed by the action	
	1 Standards	1	Refresh Standards Commission training with input from Commissioners Office	Mar-14	Refresh training on standards and behaviour input from Commissioner's office	Training Programme and record of attendance	C Reppke	Members Seminar on3rd March with input from Comissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4	Complete
	1 Standards	2	Monitoring Officer revised operating protocol	Jan-14	Develop protocol for Monitoring officer / Elected Members adhere to Code of Conduct	Protocol/ related documentation approved by Council and available for use	D Hendry	Tabled at SLWG PMAs Dec 2013. Discussed at Members Seminar 3rd March	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4	Complete - Protocol approved by Council January 2014 and included in Members Seminar on 3rd March.
	1 Standards	3	Revised guidance/training to officers on responding to unacceptable behaviours	Mar-14	Successful delivery of training for officers on identifying and reporting unnacceptable behaviours	Training course materials and record of attendance	C Reppke	Meeting between Officers and Commissioner on 3rd March provided basis for scoping out seminar session. Development session presented at COSO 21st March 2014.	3.1	Complete - presentation/ guidance on COSO pages of the HUB.
	1 Standards	4	Reinforce the roles and responsibilities of Elected Members	Mar-14	Seminar to ensure all elected members understand their roles and responsibilities as a member, in line with Code of Conduct	Seminar Programme and record of attendance	C Reppke	Roles and responsibilities for Policy Leads endorsed at Council in January 2014. Code of Conduct training incorporated into Seminar on 3rd March. Attendance records kept for all seminars. Seminars held to clarify the differing roles of members/officers.	3.2	Complete
	1 Standards	5	Reinforce the processes/procedures for dealing with private and confidential correspondence	Mar-14	Seminar to ensure all elected members deal appropriately with private and confidential correspondence and do not release to the press/	Seminar Programme and record of attendance	C Reppke	Incorporated into Seminar on 3rd March.Attendance records kept for all seminars.	3.2	Complete

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1 Standards		6	Group discipline and leadership	Ongoing	Group leaders and groups collectively ensure proper conduct of their respective group members	Regular review at Group Leaders meetings	Group Leaders/All members		3.4, 3.5	TALIG have adopted a protocol for group behaviour.SNP has a protocol in place and there are ongoing dicussions in other groups in furtherance of this action. Arrangements are underway to develop a set of principles/ protocol for the administration.
1 Standards		7	Reinforce the role of officers as professional advisors	Mar-14	Seminar to ensure members recognise and understand the role of officers as professional advisors	Seminar Programme and record of attendance	C Reppke	Incorporated into Seminar on 3rd March.	3.2	Complete
1 Standards		8	Revised guidance from Monitoring Officer for Senior Officers on managing expectations	Apr-14	Senior Officers are better informed and clearly understand their role and responsibilities	Guidance note prepared and issued	D Hendry		3.5	Development session for officers at COSO on 21st March 2014 and information hosted on the COSO pages of the Hub.
1 Standards		9	Review progress, assess impact and identify further improvements	Dec-14	Review completed	Report summarising outcome of review and setting out impact and further improvements	S Loudon		All	scheduled for December 2014
2 Governance structures & process		10	Revise Political Management Arrangements to Improve scrutiny and decision making	Apr -14 -	Committee structure set out by SLWG	Council approve new Political Management Arrangements	D Hendry	Revised Political Management Arrangements approved at Council in January 2014 to come into effect in April 2014.	2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1	Complete
2 Governance structures & process		11	Clarity on roles of area committees and central committees and clear statement on terms of reference for each	Apr-14	Successful implementation of new Political Management Arrangements	Copy of terms of reference for each committee as approved by Council	C Reppke		2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1	Complete. Terms of reference incorporated into Standing Orders/Constitution. Development Days scheduled for each Committee to embed new arrangements.
2 Governance structures & process		12	Align members knowledge, experience, and interests with senior members roles	Oct/Dec -13	Develop criteria and introduce process for nominations to senior roles and committees	Audit trail of returns from councillors	Leader of Council	All members invited to express interest in key committees and highlight experience and knowledge. Returns were tabled at Council in January 2014.	1.3	Complete

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2	Governance structures & process	13	Establish staffing resources and operating procedures to support new PMA	Apr-14	New staffing structure operational	New structure implemented	D Hendry		2.1, 2.4	Partially Complete. Budget for new staffing structure agreed at Council in February 2014. Phase 1 implemention complete and Phase 2 underway. 4 additional posts appointed to support the new PMA agreed by Council.
2	Governance structures & process	14	Development day for membership of each committee	Jun-14	Shared understanding of the key issues to be considered by each committee over the next year	Development day held and plan in place	C Reppke/ Policy Leads	All development days have taken place and work ongoing in respect of actions arising.	2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1	Complete - Development days scheduled for new committees to be completed by end of August 2014 .The Audit Committee held a development day on 30th May and agreed an action plan. PRS Development day held on 26th August.
2	Governance structures & process	15	Develop work plan / forward agenda planning to try and identify key issues to be dealt with by each committee	Jun-14	Work plan and forward agenda planner agreed	Copy of work plan and forward agenda planner	C Reppke/ Policy Leads		2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1	Report to be prepared by end of October 2014 for all committees.
2	Governance structures & process	16	Development day for PRS Committee members	Jun-14	Shared understanding of the key issues to be considered by PRS Committee over the next year	Development day held and plan in place	C Reppke, J Fowler & PRSC Chair		2.2, 2.3	Complete - PRS Development day held on 26th August.
2	Governance structures & process	17	PRS Committee Work plan agreed	Jun-14	Work plan and forward agenda planner agreed	Committee minutes	PRS Committee/C Reppke/J Fowler		2.2, 2.3	Draft workplan agreed by PRS Committee on 29 May 2014. Work plan and forward agenda will be put in place after Development day.
2	Governance structures & process	18	Revise report format to address Members feedback (e.g. including justification for recommendations)	Mar-14	Extend executive summary in report to assist Members understanding	New report template and sample of reports	D Hendry		2.1, 2.4	Complete. Revised report format developed and issued to senior managers/members. Guidance posted on HUB. A Sounding Board will be established to review operation of new reporting format.
2	Governance structures & process	19	Chief Executive Appraisal process annualised	Dec-13	Appraisal completed annually	Sign off by Leader/ Depute Leader / Leader of Opposition	D Walsh/S Loudon	Complete	1.1	Complete

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2	Governance structures & process	20	Monitor impact on staff morale via staff survey	Nov-14	Assess current levels of and trend in staff morale	Survey issued in June 14 with results/ analysis available November 14	J Fowler	on track	4.2	Stress Audit issued May 2014, inlcuding specific questions on morale. Initial findings of the stress survey have been presented to the Healthy Working Lives Group, HR Board and SMT. Detailed analysis reporting currently underway. Specific morale survey issued in June and findings will be reported as per timetable for stress audit. Annual Staff survey also scheduled to be issued in September.
2	Governance structures & process	21	Explore opportunities to broaden/improve engagement with local communities via media platforms	Dec-14	Increase number of followers on Council Social Media sites by 20% / Corporate Facebook page developed to enable interactive engagement with Council (Jun-14) and Revised Social Media Policy approved (Dec-14)	Update report to Policy and Resources Committee 30/10/14	J Fowler	on track	2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1	Corporate Facebook Page launched June 2014. Revision of social media policy underway. Approval scheduled for December 2014.
2	Governance structures & process	22	Further scrutiny/review of local community planning processes and area community planning groups/ partnerships	Oct-14	Review undertaken and outcome considered by CPP and Council	Report on outcome of review and proposed changes	D MacVicar		2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1	Reports on governance review of CPP tabled at CPP management committee on 19 August and scheduled to go to Area Community Planning Groups in September. On track to finalise review at Management Committee on 31 October 2014.
2	Governance structures & process	23	Report to Council on member training undertaken and attendance	Ongoing	Implement a new format of report on elected member training	Report to Policy and Resources Committee	C Reppke/ J Fowler		3.1, 3.3	Complete - Report tabled at the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 August detailing training activity during previous year and proposals for the next years programme, taking account of the Elected Member Survey responses.
2	Governance structures & process	24	Review progress, assess impact and identify further improvements	Dec-14	Review completed	Report summarising outcome of review and setting out impact and further improvements	S Loudon		All	scheduled for December 2014.

Stage	Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress Update	Recommendation Ref	Current Status
3	Training & Development	25	Full participation/ Implementation of Elected Member Development Programme, including; Improvement Service Programme, Peer Mentoring Programme, competency based training, scrutiny role training, masterclasses on key leadership/strategic issues	Nov-14	Members engaged in Elected Member Development Programme	Training Plans signed off by all members	Group Leaders/All members		1.1, 2.5	To date 23/35 Elected Members currently signed up to CPD Framework (11 - 360/8 self assessment/4 still to confirm). PDP discussions underway - 30% complete to date and reminders issued to encourage participation..
3	Training & Development	26	Review progress, assess impact and identify further improvements	Dec-15	Review completed	Report summarising outcome of review and setting out impact and further improvements	S Loudon		All	scheduled for December 2015.
4	Policy Development Support	27	Seminar programme to address key policy areas - to be delivered centrally and at area committees where appropriate	Aug-14	Deliver seminar programme with full member participation as appropriate	Seminar Programme and record of attendance	T O'Neill		3.1, 3.3, 4.1	Programme of Seminars in place and running. Record of attendance maintained and schedule of seminar dates agreed to April 2015.
4	Policy Development Support	28	Council create working groups to examine long term challenges and strategic issues facing Argyll and Bute as and when required	Ongoing	Regular review of need for working groups by Council (or other committees)	Minute of Council (or other committees)	C Reppke	Governance arrangements to support are in place.	3.1, 3.3, 4.1	Short Life Working Group on Island Issues agreed at Council in January 2014 to to investigate and to take forward key actions and to meet with the Scottish and UK Government to present its own case in regard to our islands and their needs and to seek support and commitment.
4	Policy Development Support	29	SOA Delivery Plans to be finalised	Jun-14	Clear Strategic planning/ direction	SOA delivery plans	J Fowler / D MacVicar	Development session for Elected Members on SOA held on 17th March which included representation from key Community Planning Partners.	4.1	Complete
4	Policy Development Support	30	Align resources and services to SOA outcomes and delivery plans.	Ongoing but review March 15	Clear links drawn between SOA delivery plans and Council services and resources	Reports in relation to SOA progress, service planning and budget	J Fowler/D MacVicar/B West		4.1	Complete - SOA delivery plans signed off by Council and Scottish Government in June.

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4	Policy Development Support	31	Corporate priorities and service plans updated to reflect alignment of resources and service to SOA outcomes and delivery plans.	Ongoing but review March 15	Clear links drawn between SOA delivery plans and Council services and resources	Reports in relation to SOA progress, service planning and budget	J Fowler/D MacVicar/B West		4.1	Corporate plan has been developed to align to SOA and submitted to Policy Leads meeting held on 21 August.
4	Policy Development Support	32	Chief Executive Leaders Briefing	On going	Meeting with Leader/Depute Leader and Opposition Leader	Confirmation that meeting takes place	S Loudon	Meetings in place.	2.4, 3.3, 3.5	Complete
4	Policy Development Support	33	Review progress, assess impact and identify further improvements	Dec-15	Review completed	Report summarising outcome of review and setting out impact and further improvements	S Loudon		All	scheduled for December 2015

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF FOLLOW UP REPORT JULY 2014

Stage	Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress Update	Improvement Ref	Current Status
	This is the main heading for improvement		**This is what we are going to do**	**This is when it will be completed**	**This is how we will decide if we have been successful**	**This is what we will use to decide if we have been successful**	**These are the people responsible for leading this**	**This is what we have achieved to date**		
	Political Management Arrangements	34	Evalutate effectiveness of PMAs and identify any changes or improvements required.	Sep-15	Evaluation completed, report and action plan prepared and considered by Council	Report to Council and minute of meeting	C Reppke			
	Political Management Arrangements	35	Ensure that the new PMAs are fully implemented and Councillors/Officers have a clear and common understanding in practice of the roles and responsibilities of each committee, sub group and individual role	Oct-14	Delivery of training events, seminars and development days for each committee	Record of training events, seminars and development days	C Reppke			Complete - with conclusion of the development day process. Ongoing monitoring of effectiveness will continue as normal business.

Stage	Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress Update	Recommendation Ref	Current Status
	Roles/ relationships	36	Ensure there is good communication and information flows across committees, groups and those with lead roles in the political management and goverance framework.	ongoing	Delivery of political briefings / review of agendae / adherence to group protocols /	Regular review at policy leads meetings				
	Roles/ relationships	37	Support and encourage councillors to increase their engagement in training and development opportunities and the overall business of the Council.	Jun-15	Review of current training programme and uptake of Councillor Development Plans then prepare plans for further training/ development.	Report on outcome of review and report setting out further proposals for training and development	C Reppke/J Fowler	Sounding Board to be established to support review		Regular updates from Gov and Law to IHR in regard to members training needs and provision aligned with officer training as appropriate.
	Scrutiny	38	Ensure that scrutiny arrangements are strengthened through the new committees and by improving the contribution of councillors to effective governance and accountability through the Audit and PRS Committees	Aug-15	Delivery of development days/ arrange for PRS Committee to visit another Local Authority	Regular meetings with PRS independent chair. Review the effectiveness of addtional scrutiny at Strategic committees and at Area committees. Scorecards scrutinised at all strategic committees.	C Reppke	Performance scorecards are now reviewed at all strategic committees from Aug 2014. All strategic committee development days included discussion on performance review and scrutiny, including the performance management system, reporting structure/ presentation of information and roles/responsibilities. This was a core element of the discussions at the PRS Committee development day in terms of relationships with other committees/roles and responsibiliites.		

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	Scrutiny	39		Oct-15	Review of Planning and Peformance Management Framework (PPMF) to clarify scrutiny role of members	approval of revised PPMF	J Fowler			PPMF review paper to SMT 14 July 2014, A session with Heads of Service was held on 22 August 2014 and a further report is being prepared for DMT/SMT. All committee development days included a session on the roles of elected members in performance review and scrutiny. PRS Committee development day was held on 26 Aug and further developed the scrutiny role for members involved in the PRS. The Chair of the Audit Committee attended as did the Chief Internal Auditor to inform the discussion and clarify roles and responsibilities between the two committees. All feedback will be collated and fed into the revised PPMF and will inform further member development. A specific action plan for the PRS is being developed.
	Leadership and staff development	40	Ensure the SMT makes progress with its leadership and team development arrangements.	Mar-15	Delivery of Chief Officer Leadership Development Programme	Progress with delivery of programme and feedback on quality of programme. Delivery of outcomes of sessions with Roger Paine.	J Fowler	Presentation to SMT by range of suitable providers - 14 August 2014.		
	Leadership and staff development	41	Ensure SMT has a shared understanding of the key strategic and leadership issues facing the Council	Jul-15	Facilitated sessions on key challenges and shared understanding of future shape of organisation.	SMT Sessions with Roger Paine held on 6 and 7 July 2014.	SMT	Complete		Complete

Stage	Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress Update	Recommendation Ref	Current Status
	Leadership and staff development	42	Ensure SMT has arrangements in place for individualised support and challenge	Dec-14	Facilitated sessions scheduled on a regualr basis for each member of the SMT.	Record of meetings held with external support	SMT	Arrangements currently in place and operational for the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Customer Services.		
	Leadership and staff development	42	Ensure operational leadership of the Council is as well equipped as possible for the challenges ahead	ongoing	Delivery of Argyll and Bute Manager Programme	Progress with Argyll and Bute Manager Training and feedback on training	J Fowler			Argyll and Bute Manager is progressing with 150 managers now enrolled and undertaking the course. Feedback on the course is consistently high and continues to be monitored. The programme was designed as a result of consultation with managers, COG and SMT, and on the basis of management information. This resulted in the current programme which is structured to to meet the identified needs. The programme is subject to annual review and iwll be adjusted as necessary to ensure that it aligns with current and future challenges and to take into account evaluation feedback.