ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL	**Short Life Working Group on Political Management Arrangements**
CUSTOMER SERVICES	**24 October 2016**

SLWG – POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 At the meeting of the Short Life Working Group held on 22 September 2016, Members considered a report which provided some background information and a proposed timetable and process for the review of Political Management Arrangements. The Short Life Working Group asked that officers provide information on the Committee Structures, Area Committee arrangements and Scrutiny arrangements adopted by other Scottish Local Authorities. Officers were also requested to engage with Elected Members in relation to their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, asking for suggestions in terms of any future arrangements and asking for comments on the Scrutiny Handbook which was endorsed by the PRS Committee

1.2 Members are asked to consider the information provided in response to this request.

SLWG – POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

2.0   INTRODUCTION

2.1   Following the last meeting of the Short Life Working Group, this report provides information on the Committee Structures, Area Committee sand Scrutiny arrangements adopted by other Scottish Local Authorities for Members' consideration.

It also provides feedback on the engagement with Elected Members in relation to their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, asking for suggestions in terms of any future arrangements and asking for comments on the Scrutiny Handbook which was endorsed by the PRS Committee

3.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   Members are asked to consider the information provided.

4.0   DETAIL

4.1   At the meeting of the SLWG held on 22 September 2016, Members agreed the following:-

(a)   Determined the basic principles for the review of the Political Management Arrangements as detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the submitted report with the addition of a further two principles – Achieving Our Ambition and Future Proofing;

(b)   Agreed the timetable for the review and associated reporting arrangements, with a final report being submitted to Council in 2017 subject to the change of a meeting date from 13 October 2016 to 24 October 2016;

(c)   Agreed that officers engage with all 36 Elected Members seeking their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, asking for suggestions in terms of any future arrangements and asking for comments on the Scrutiny Handbook which was endorsed by the PRS Committee;

(d)   Requested further information on the Committee Structures strategic and local adopted by other Scottish Local Authorities of similar size, population and geographical layout as Argyll and Bute;

(e)   Requested further information on how the review of Political Management Arrangements could be affected by the Programme for Scotland Proposals, the Community Empowerment Bill and the Islands Bill, and

(f)   Requested further information on the Scrutiny arrangements adopted by other Scottish Local Authorities.

4.2   Strategic Committee Structures

4.2.1   Provisions in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 allow local authorities to devolve most decision-making to a committee, sub-committee or officers of the council. Information on the Committee Structures which are adopted across all of the other 31 Local Authorities is provided at Appendix 1 and is summarised as follows:

Council	Committee Model
Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Angus City of Edinburgh Clackmannanshire Dumfries and Galloway Dundee City East Dunbartonshire Highland Inverclyde Moray North Lanarkshire Orkney Islands Perth and Kinross Renfrewshire Shetland Islands Stirling West Dunbartonshire Western Isles	Traditional Committee Model (19)
East Ayrshire East Lothian East Renfrewshire Midlothian North Ayrshire South Ayrshire	Cabinet Model (6)
Falkirk Fife Glasgow City Scottish Borders West Lothian	Executive Model (5)
South Lanarkshire	Hybrid Model (1)

4.2.2   Councils tend to operate either a traditional Committee system or a cabinet/executive style of government. One Council has combined aspects of

the two systems to form a 'hybrid' system.

Traditional Committee system

4.2.3   A total of 19 councils in Scotland operate a traditional committee system with the majority of these also having audit/scrutiny arrangements in place. Some councils have streamlined their committee structures by reducing the number of service specific committees and instead concentrating on broader, more cross-cutting thematic areas.

Cabinet Model

4.2.4   6 councils operate a Cabinet system, which aims to improve decision making and to make it more accountable. Under this approach a small group of elected members, typically from the administration and with Portfolio/Policy remits, make all the day-to-day decisions within a policy framework set by the council as a whole. The Cabinet would meet on a regular basis with their role likely to be:

- providing strategic leadership
- taking executive decisions within a budget and policy framework approved by the full council
- leading the council's partnership activities with other bodies
- developing and making recommendations about strategy and budget to the council

In essence a lot of decisions that the council itself would have to take in terms of its corporate governance role are delegated to a small group to take on behalf of the council. In this kind of structure, it is the role of non-cabinet elected members to scrutinise the cabinet's activities through a committee or panel.

Executive Model

4.2.5   5 councils in Scotland operate an Executive system. This approach is similar to the Cabinet model, but the Executive generally has membership from both administration and opposition councilors. The Executive would meet on a regular basis with their role being as outlined in the Cabinet model above.

Hybrid Committee system

4.2.6   South Lanarkshire Council operates a Hybrid structure with an Executive Committee and a number of Policy Committees.

Arrangements in similar Local Authorities

4.2.7   Looking at Local Authorities which have similar characteristics to Argyll and Bute with a large land area and rural population, the following models are in place:-

Council	Committee Model
Aberdeenshire Council	Traditional Committee Model

Dumfries and Galloway Council	Traditional Committee Model
Highland Council	Traditional Committee Model
Western Isles Council	Traditional Committee Model
Scottish Borders Council	Executive Model
South Ayrshire Council	Cabinet Model
South Lanarkshire	Hybrid Model

4.3   **Scrutiny**

4.3.1   Across local authorities in Scotland, there are a number of different arrangements which are used to undertake both scrutiny and audit functions and a benchmarking exercise has been carried out in this regard. It can be seen that a number of authorities have committees dedicated to scrutiny, but others link scrutiny with performance review, some with audit, and some with a range of other functions. It can further be seen that a number of local authorities allocate scrutiny of different thematic functions across more than one committee. A table detailing the different models used by other local authorities can be found at Appendix 2.

4.3.2   Many local authorities have a single body for undertaking both Audit and Scrutiny functions. This is the preferred model for 17 local authorities whereas 14 have similar arrangements to Argyll and Bute with separate committees to undertake scrutiny and audit functions.   There is also a wide variety of committee names as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Committees with Combined Audit and Scrutiny Function

Name of Committee	Number of local authorities adopted
Audit and Scrutiny	7
Audit	3
Governance and Scrutiny	1
Audit Scrutiny and Petitions	1
Audit and Performance Review	1
Governance Risk and Best Value	1
Monitoring and Audit	1
Scrutiny	1
Audit, Risk and Scrutiny	1

4.3.3   Similarly to Argyll and Bute Council, there are three Scrutiny/Audit Committees within Scotland who currently have lay members as their Chair. In addition there are a further four councils who have included lay members as part of their membership of the committee although not in the role of Chair. Table 2 details the number of committees with audit/scrutiny functions who have adopted opposition, administration and independent Chairs. This table shows the split across all of the audit/scrutiny committees, and all but one local authority have at least one of their audit/scrutiny committees chaired by either an independent councillor or a member of the opposition.

Chair	Number of Audit/Scrutiny Committees
Opposition Chair	28
Administration Chair	9
Independent Elected Member as Chair	4
Independent/lay person as Chair	3

4.3.4   Research has found that councils also have a wide range of arrangements in place for undertaking scrutiny duties in relation to their requirements under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. Current arrangements within Argyll and Bute Council, where the performance of local police and fire plans is scrutinised by the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee are replicated in 15 other local authorities. Some local authorities have different approaches; for example in Dundee City Council the responsibility for local police and fire arrangements lies with the Community Safety and Public Protection Committee which deals with a number of arrangements including the responsibility of monitoring the performance of the Integrated Joint Board. A similar arrangement is also in place in Perth and Kinross, Stirling and Falkirk who operate an internal and external scrutiny committee. The external scrutiny committee undertakes monitoring of performance of local police and fire arrangements as well as other external bodies such as the integrated joint board and community trusts. Eleven Scottish Local Authorities have put in place specific arrangements for undertaking the required role with regard to local policing and fire arrangements, either in the form of a committee, sub - committee or a board. Almost all of these meet on a quarterly basis in order to consider the quarterly performance reports provided by Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue.

4.3.4   Evidence from other local authorities suggests a wide range of membership and arrangements for leading scrutiny functions are in place across the country. Information in Appendix 2 also shows membership and arrangements for chairing meetings in other authorities, showing involvement of administration, opposition and independent members, and external or lay persons, and showing balance where appropriate. Some authorities place restrictions on who can be a member of a scrutiny committee based upon membership of cabinet or executive, and in some cases there are similar restrictions that apply to the role of Chair.

4.4   Area Committee Structures

4.4.1   Information on the Area Committee Structures is provided at Appendix 3. Of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, 10 operate a system of Area Committees, these are:-

Aberdeenshire, Argyll & Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Highland, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

4.4.2 These committees meet in the local areas, many of them involve and consult local people. Some undertake the scrutiny role for all services delivered in the area. Normally only Ward members for each area sit on their area committee, although some area committees have representation from local communities in their areas. Some area committees have delegated budgets to fund work in their local area.

4.5 Community Planning

4.5.1 The Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is a partnership of agencies and organisations from the public, voluntary , private and community sectors that have an interest in working together to reach the agreed overall outcome for Argyll and Bute: Argyll and Bute's Economic Success is Built on a Growing Population.

4.5.2 Currently, elected members have links to/responsibilities within the partnership in that the Leader of the Council chairs the full partnership (which meets once per year), with the Depute leader undertaking the role of Vice -Chair. Additionally, local elected members are involved in local community planning groups in that the Chair and Vice Chair from the Area Committee and one other Elected Member from an Area Committee Ward not already represented by the Chair or Vice Chair sit as members of the group.

4.5.3 New guidance is expected imminently from Scottish Government in respect of required changes for Community Planning Partnerships contained within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which will be informed by the findings of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services. This guidance is expected to direct CPPs to be organised to provide a strong platform which supports and encourages vibrant strategic decision making and action locally, and to be transparent in demonstrating to its communities the progress it is making to improve outcomes. Partners will be expected to demonstrate collective ownership, leadership and strategic direction of community planning; shared leadership will be a corporate responsibility for each partner body, including the body's senior management, board members and political leaders.

4.5.4 The full implications of the Community Empowerment Bill relating to localism and the development of Locality Plans are also still awaited, but will require CPPs to undertake locality planning to set clear priorities for improving local outcomes and tackling inequalities, agreed by the CPP and community, and identifying what will be different for communities as long term outcomes in 10 years.

4.5.5 It is expected that the Scottish Government guidance will also highlight opportunities for CPPs to gain community perspective by using Participatory Budgeting as a tool for enhanced community engagement and as a development of participatory democracy. Participatory Budgeting gives local people a direct say in how and where public funds can be used to address locally identified requirements by providing the opportunity to identify

preferences and allocate spend within defined parameters.

4.6   Elected Member Engagement

All Elected Members were invited to give their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, make suggestions in terms of any future arrangements and provide comments on the Scrutiny Handbook which was endorsed by the PRS Committee. A small number responded and comments included:

- No real issue with current arrangements
- Area committees are valuable as local presence within communities - as many decisions as possible should be taken at this level so that communities know it is their own representatives for their local area who are responsible for what happens locally.
- Perhaps local committees could consider planning matter however generally accepted the requirement for specialist knowledge supported by current approach
- Potential for significant change to Community Services Committee with various functions removed from it as a consequence of health and social care integration, and with the potential for a Culture and Leisure trust and national Education proposals potentially removing most of the rest.
- Could examine potential for Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee items to be put to local area committees but would have to still be some way of looking at Argyll and Bute wide issues.
- Key decision making committees should contain as wide a representation of all political groupings as possible
- Opportunity for more policy decisions to go to Area Committees should be explored
- Government policy is to devolve more authority to communities, which would not sit comfortably with the removal of the Area Committees
- Potential to replace area committees/ business days with quarterly locality forums alternatively ward meetings which should/ could be conducted using lync or VC to save on members and staff traveling costs, subject to a suitable protocol when decisions are required
- Consideration of amalgamating of Audit and PS committee

5.0   CONCLUSION

5.1   At the last meeting, Members of the SLWG asked officers to provide information on the Committee Structures operated in all of Scotland's Local Authorities, information on the scrutiny arrangements in place across Scotland and Area Committee information and to engage with Elected Members on their views and suggestions in relation to the Political Management Arrangements and the Scrutiny Handbook. This report provides that information for Members' consideration.

6.0   IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Policy – none at this stage.

6.2   Financial - none at present, but may be financial implications dependent on the outcome of the review.

6.3   Legal – none at this stage.

6.4   HR – none at present, but may have HR implications dependent on the outcome of the review.

6.5   Equalities - none

6.6   Risk -

6.7   Customer Service - none

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
11 October 2016

For further information contact: Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law, Tel: 01546 604192

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 –Other Local Authority Committee Structures
Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Arrangements in other Local Authorities
Appendix 3 –Area Committee Arrangements in other Local Authorities