

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

Improvement Issue	Ref	Actions	Timeline	Target/ Success measure	Evidence	Responsible Person(s)	Progress
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	Progress
Establish a more open and transparent culture and style of working	1	Undertake Benchmarking exercise with SOLAR and submit report to council in respect of any proposed alterations with results of benchmarking exercise. During benchmarking exercise, the budget setting process of other councils should also be reviewed following agreement of recommendations contained within Audit Scotland's review of the budget setting process.	Sep-16	Undertaking a benchmarking exercise with SOLAR in comparison with other similar councils across Scotland will allow us to determine if we have an unusually large amount of items taken in private and if this is the case a report will be submitted to council advising how this should be resolved.	Number of private items will be reducing/on level with similar councils throughout Scotland	C.Reppke/ K.Flanagan (budget setting process)	Complete - Report submitted to council on 24 November 2016 which noted a reduction in private items since last report in Sept 2015.
	2	Quarterly monitoring of the number of excluded items	Ongoing	Monitoring will be undertaken on a quarterly basis as to the number of items taken in private	Decrease in the number of items taken in private	C. Reppke	Complete - report being monitored via DMT/SMT. Annual trends provide a more effective measure. As detailed at 1 above there has been a reduction in items taken in private.

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

	3	Undertake review of Political Management Arrangements (PMAs)/Scheme of Delegation and implement any required improvements following the review	May-17	Review will be undertaken and any recommendations implemented	Reduction in complains about the lack of openness from within the council and an improved relationship with communities	C. Reppke	Complete - SLWG established by the Council to review PMAs. The SLWG has completed its review and will report to Council in April 2017.
Standards	4	Refresh standards training following on from new guidance which was issued in March 2016 with input from Commissioners Office	Jun-16	Refresh training on standards and behaviour in line with new guidance with input for Commissioners Office	Training programme and record of attendance	C. Reppke	Complete - Members Seminar held on 6 June 2016
	5	Group discipline and leadership	Ongoing	Group leaders and groups collectively ensure proper conduct of their respective group members	Regular review by Chief Executive when meeting with Group Leaders	Group Leaders/All members	Complete – member/group discipline and leadership is a standing item for discussion with group leaders.
Taking a more innovative approach to dealing with financial challenges	6	Development of arrangements for the Tarbert and Lochgilphhead Regeneration (TLR) Fund, the Rural Resettlement fund and the Inward Investment Fund which were agreed at the budget meeting in February which aim to help support the growth of the economy.		Arrangements are developed to support the funds which have been created in order to support the growth of the local economy	Arrangements are developed which ensure each fund is developed in order to create the greatest return which will bring the most benefit to the economy	P.Milne/ F.Murray	Complete – funds set up and operational:- <i>TLR Fund</i> – An update report to will be presented to the MAKI April Area Committee. Work is ongoing to gather relevant information on the 11 shortlisted projects before a final decision will be taken on which to progress to outline business case.

						<p><i>Rural Settlement Fund – The Rural Resettlement Fund (RRF) was successfully launched at Argyll Enterprise Week (November 2016) following criteria being finalised. A number of applications have been successful with £26k now paid out. Publicity for the RRF is ongoing and the fund’s performance will be reported to a relevant council committee in the summer.</i></p>
						<p><i>Inward Investment Fund – The first bid for this fund will be presented to the 16th of March Policy & Resources Committee. The project being considered for funding is a potential UK Spaceport at Machrihanish. The sum being requested is £40k which will be matched by £40k from HIE and £40k from DSUK a subsidiary of MACC. This money will help fund a business case to inform whether a bid will be made for £10m grant assistance from the UK Government and on the feasibility of developing Machrihanish as a UK Spaceport with potentially transformational implications for the Argyll</i></p>

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

						economy. Other transformational projects that are being developed are the Maritime Change Project, Oban as a University Town and the Single Investment Plan as part of our potential Rural Growth Deal.
7	Ongoing work of Transformation Working Group (TWG), which was set up with a view of coordinating and driving forward innovation and transformation across the council.	Ongoing	Ongoing work by the TWG to oversee and drive forward innovation/transformation taking place across the council. By having an overview the TWG can ensure any benefits which are recognised/ lessons learnt can be adapted and delivered. Development of the Asset Management Investment Fund (AMIF) to support innovation and use of assets to deal with financial challenges facing the council.	A more structured approach to innovation and transformation is demonstrated with additional ideas and areas of focus identified to ensure all possibilities are explored. A progress report will be produced in December 2016 ahead of the 2017/18 budget.	D.Hendry	Complete – TWG has now become a Board and extended membership to ensure representation from all departments. A set of defined workstreams to be developed by June 2017. Remit and governance/ operational arrangements for AMIF agreed at P&R Aug 2017.

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

	8	Develop an updated budget outlook	Jun-16	Development of an updated budget outlook will provide a more up to date financial position of the organisation	An update of the council's financial position will be provided to elected members.	K. Flanagan	Complete – Budgetary Outlook 2017/18 to 2019/20 tabled at Policy and Resources Committee on 18 August, 27 October, 15 December 2016, Members Seminar on 16 January 2017, and further verbal update on 30 January 2017.
	9	Ongoing monitoring of service choice savings and the impact of these savings	Ongoing	Ongoing monitoring of service choice savings and a review of performance management and absence data to ensure the service choices process has been delivered through service redesign and staff and performance have not been compromised as a result.	Services have been redesigned in order to make savings. If this has been successful, the savings will have been made and the performance of services will not have been impacted as a result of the savings made.	K.Flanagan/ J.Fowler - for corporate overview. All Heads of Service	Complete - Process now established to monitor Service Choices savings options and progress will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee as part of the financial monitoring reports pack. The first of these reports was tabled at the meeting held on 18 August 2016 and at every P&R since then. Copies of the reports are also available on the Council's website.
Community Engagement	10	Undertake a review of our relationships with communities to try and build greater trust and identify further ways of working with them		Use findings of review to facilitate SMT Development Session on Redefining our relationships with Communities, with a view of establishing a framework which will provide us with	An improved working relationship with our communities which is demonstrated across the council.	C.Sneddon	Outline paper has been completed and reviewed by SMT. A Community led action planning toolkit is being developed, for launch April 2017. Communities are informing the toolkit through an interactive workshop on 11 March as part of a

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

				a greater working relationship with our communities and a greater level of trust.			<p>Community Empowerment Event.</p> <p>A Participatory Budgeting pilot project is underway (for fuller detail see relevant action 13). Members were engaged in members seminars to contribute to the project proposal.</p> <p>A group of chief officers and senior officers in the council have formed a working group to look at progressing further the ideas of working closer with communities. Recommendations from the group will come forward from its next meeting on 22 March.</p>
Local Empowerment	11	Preparation and Implementation of all relevant elements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	Dependant on legislation (anticipate Dec 2017)	Effective implementation of all relevant elements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.	Successful implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Communities are able to efficiently and effectively access all relevant elements of the Act which will strengthen local empowerment and provide local communities with a	D.Hendry/ Com Emp working group	<p>On track - Project Leads have been identified to take forward the key components of the Act.</p> <p>Asset Transfer Requests went live on 23 January 2017 as planned and preparations in hand for go live of participation requests on 1 April 2017.</p> <p>Latest meeting of the project team held on 10 March and a successful Community Empowerment Event for</p>

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

				platform to play a greater role.		communities to find out more about the elements of the Act and how they can get involved was held on 11 March 2017, ran by the Council and its community planning partners.
12	Development of a council procedure which reflects the council's position on Community Engagement		A procedure is created which ensures the same position is demonstrated across the council which will provide a consistent approach to community engagement.	A procedure is produced which will allow decisions to be made on Community Engagement which will reflect the position of the council.	C.Sneddon/ Executive Director - Community Services	<p>Outline paper has been completed and reviewed by SMT.</p> <p>A Community led action planning toolkit is being developed, for launch April 2017. Communities are informing the toolkit through an interactive workshop on 11 March as part of a Community Empowerment Event.</p> <p>A Participatory Budgeting pilot project is underway (for fuller detail see relevant action 13). Members were engaged in members seminars to contribute to the project proposal.</p> <p>A group of chief officers and senior officers in the council have formed a working group to look at progressing further the ideas of working closer with communities. Recommendations from the</p>

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

						group will come forward from its next meeting on 22 March.
13	Promote and Develop a participatory budgeting scheme for area committees		Develop a participatory budgeting scheme for area committees. Once established promote the scheme so that communities are able to play a part in decisions that affect them.	Participatory budgeting schemes are successfully implemented for area committees	C.Sneddon/ Executive Director - Community Services	<p>Outline paper has been completed and reviewed by SMT.</p> <p>Successful application to the Scottish Government to run a Participatory Budgeting project. Established a project group in order to monitor the project closely and consider its applicability for future. Project features digital platform to capture ideas from communities in Argyll and Bute, and then a voting stage open to all aged over 16 years in Argyll and Bute. The ideas stage closed on 6 March and the voting stage will open on 5 April. 21 ideas were submitted online, with over 100 comments shaping discussion on these.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

<p>Accessible training and development for elected members</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>Revise induction programme and content of in house training/seminar arrangements both face to face and online. Including transferring training content onto members casebook system. Content of the induction programme should be revised and consideration should be given to enhancing the content related to multi member ward working/political management arrangement/standards conduct.</p>	<p>May-17</p>	<p>Induction programme and content of in house training/seminars are reviewed and updated for both online and face to face training. Ensuring where possible content can be transferred onto the members casebook system where they are able to view it when required.</p>	<p>Training programme materials, increased online training opportunities and access to previous training content by members when required and a Revised induction programme which is fit for purpose and has enhanced content relating to multi member ward working/political management arrangements/ Standards Commission</p>	<p>C.Reppke</p>	<p>On track - Workplan developed to deliver updated induction programme for inception of new Council. Draft programme submitted to SMT January 2017. Supporting materials from all services collated by 17 March.</p>
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RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW OF THE 2016-17 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

Ref	Recommendation	Management Response	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)	Progress
<p>1.</p>	<p>To facilitate more transparent scrutiny of budget, members should consider circulating proposals for significant changes to the Budgeting Pack in advance of the Council meeting, ideally in agenda papers.</p>	<p>Whilst noting that the recommendation relates to political processes, officers will draw this recommendation to Members attention for consideration prior to the 2017 budget setting process.</p>	<p>Feb 2017</p>	<p>K. Flanagan</p>	<p>Complete - Email issued to Group Leaders from Head of Strategic Finance on 11 January 2017 to advise them of the recommendations and to consider them in developing the budget.</p> <p>The Budget presentation to members on 16 January 2017 included a slide on these recommendations to remind all</p>

APPENDIX 1 – AUDIT SCOTLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AS AT MARCH 2017

					members of the actions.
2.	Future budget proposals should include a clear breakdown of how a balanced budget is made up.	Officers will ensure that advice is given to members in order that budget proposals clearly demonstrate that they represent a balanced budget.	Feb 2017	K. Flanagan	<p>Complete - Email issued to Group Leaders from Head of Strategic Finance on 11 January 2017 to advise them of the recommendations and to consider them in developing the budget.</p> <p>The Budget presentation to members on 16 January 2017 included a slide on these recommendations to remind all members of the actions.</p>
3.	The process for minuting officer advice and council decisions on significant items such as setting the budget should be reviewed to ensure minutes are comprehensive and transparent.	The process for minuting the council's budget meeting will be considered, taking into consideration best practice from other Councils.	Feb 2017	C Reppke	<p>Complete -The Council undertook a benchmarking exercise to ensure compliance with best practice.</p>