

2019/20 SCRUTINY PLAN

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the proposed 2019/20 Scrutiny Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are requested to:

- Agree and approve the 2019/20 Scrutiny Plan.
- Agree membership of the first two 2019/20 scrutiny panels
- Agree that membership of the third 2019/20 scrutiny panel will be agreed at the September 2019 sitting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee
- Note that a lessons learned report will be presented to committee in March 2020.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 At the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March 2018 the Committee approved the Scrutiny Framework which incorporates a section on 'Developing the Scrutiny Work Programme'. This confirmed that the Committee, on an annual basis, will seek ideas for scrutiny by inviting all members and senior officers to suggest potential topics. Topics are then assessed by the CIA using the prioritisation process set out in the framework with those assessments informing the draft scrutiny plan for the year. The framework confirms that the draft plan, with copies of the assessments, will be provided to members of the Committee for comment and feedback as part of the plan approval process.
- 3.2 Invitations were sent to all elected members and senior officers by the Council's Chief Executive on 10 March 2019 with a deadline for response set of 26 April 2019. A total of seven proposals were received in that period and each of those have been assessed using the prioritisation process. Full copies of these assessments are included as appendices to this report however a summary is included in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1 – Summarised Assessment of Proposed Scrutiny Topics

Topic	Stage 1	Stage 2 Priority	Stage 3 Score	Summary
Free School Meals and Clothing Grants	Fail	N/A	N/A	It is not likely that a scrutiny review in 2019/20 would add value. The service have already identified through preliminary research that there are approximately 109 pupils that should be in receipt of free school meals who are not currently receiving them. This

				means a process is already in place to facilitate improvements in service delivery. Scrutiny is only likely to add value by reviewing this once it has been in place for a period of two years and there can be a meaningful assessment of benefit realisation.
PVG for Volunteers (Education)	Fail	N/A	N/A	There is no evidence of any performance issues in relation to obtaining PVGs for volunteers and senior officers in Education have not raised any concerns. This topic does not relate to an area of material expenditure. The total education budget is approximately £79.3 million however only £6,361 was spent on Education PVGs in 2018/19. This figure includes PVGs for both staff and volunteers.
Economic Strategy	Pass	Medium	40	As the Economic Strategy has only recently been approved it would seem like an appropriate time to consider the process for creating the strategy and the quality of the content. A scrutiny review would examine the foundation of the strategy to assess whether the approach was appropriate and whether practice / the strategy could be improved.
Strategic Housing Fund	Pass	High	81	A review of SHF was carried out and approved by Community Services Committee in December 2018. It was agreed to continue existing funding for RSLs but extend it to community organisations in certain areas, thus reducing risk of not providing affordable homes in areas that RSLs do not wish to develop. There has also been questions raised around the appropriateness of the current blanket allocation of the SHF, and whether there is a more effective way to distribute funds. Currently a standard amount of £12k is provided for every unit built, regardless of location or needs assessment.
Out of	Pass	High	75	There is no statutory requirement

Authority Placements (Social Work)				<p>for a local authority to place clients within the area however the Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to promote integration with the NHS and work with other key partners to improve services locally. There are also national outcomes listed as part of the provisions of the 2014 Public Bodies (joint working) (Scotland) Act 2014, one of these is 'Independent Living'. Independent Living aims for people, including those with disabilities, long-term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community.</p>
Council Savings Options	Fail	N/A	N/A	<p>In February 2018, the Council agreed 28 Service Package Policy Options. These savings are recurring in nature. As per the report to P&R on the 14 February 2019 of the 28 savings options, 13 (46%) have already been delivered, 6 (21%) are on track to be delivered as per their timescale, 4 (14%) have still to be implemented, 2 (9%) have a potential shortfall and 3 (10%) are delayed until 2019/20. Updates on the service options are reported as a standing agenda item to P&R. As at 14 February, 3 of the 4 still to be implemented were not due to be delivered until later years. Of the 3 options delayed justification for the delay has been provided to P&R.</p> <p>The level of reporting and the relatively minor level of slippage against the total identified savings options does not suggest poor performance that would merit scrutiny.</p>
Council Digitalisation Projects	Fail	N/A	N/A	<p>As per the digital transformation report presented to SMT on 28 January 2019 the Scottish Local Government Digital Office (SLGDO) undertook a Digital</p>

				<p>Maturity Exercise in 2018, using an established benchmarking framework for digital leadership that has been used in other councils. In summary the analysis found that Argyll and Bute are similar to a number of other councils in rating. Following this exercise, the SLDGO set out 9 recommendations which the Council have revised into six recommendations.</p> <p>As work has already been undertaken to identify how the Council can improve on their digital transformation it is unlikely that a scrutiny review would add any further value at this point.</p>
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3.5 The table above shows that three reviews passed through stage of the process. In order of overall score these were:

1. Strategic Housing Fund (81)
2. Out of Authority Placements (Social Work) (75)
3. Economic Strategy (40)

3.6 On the basis of exhibit 1 and paragraphs 3.5 the CIA is recommending the 2019/20 scrutiny plan incorporates scrutiny of:

- Economic Strategy (provisionally to be performed in Q2)
- Strategic Housing Fund (provisionally to be performed in Q3)
- Out of Authority Placements (Social Work) (provisionally to be performed in Q4)

3.7 In order for the 2019/20 Scrutiny Plan to be progressed in a timely manner it would be beneficial to agree which three members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee will make up the panels for the first two reviews to be conducted (Economic Strategy and Strategic Housing Fund). Panel membership for the third review (Out of Authority Placements) can be agreed at the September 2019 meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

3.8 It was agreed that following the completion of the first two scrutiny reviews it would be beneficial to reflect upon the process adopted and seek feedback from officers and elected members to identify lessons learned which would lead to improvements in future scrutiny work. A lessons learned report will be presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March 2020.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 This report further formalises the Council's approach to scrutiny and provides guidance to council officers and elected members on the Council's approach to scrutiny.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy:	None
5.2	Financial:	None
5.3	Legal:	None
5.4	HR:	None
5.5	Equalities:	None
5.6	Risk	Scrutiny should contribute to overall risk assurances levels within the Council
5.7	Customer Service	None

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APPENDICES

1. Free School Meals and Clothing Grants prioritisation process
2. PVG for volunteers (Education) prioritisation process
3. Economic Strategy prioritisation process
4. Strategic Housing Fund prioritisation process
5. Out of Authority Placements (Social Work) prioritisation process
6. Council Savings Options prioritisation process
7. Council Digitalisation prioritisation process