

## SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK AND MANUAL ANNUAL REVIEW

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### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concludes the annual review to determine whether any changes are required to the Council's Scrutiny Framework and Manual.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the outcome of the annual review of the Scrutiny Framework and Manual (Appendix 1 & Appendix 2).

### 3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In March 2018 the Committee approved the Council's Scrutiny Framework which incorporated the scrutiny prioritisation process. In June 2018 the Committee endorsed a Scrutiny Manual which provided more detailed guidance on how to carry out a scrutiny review.

- 3.2 In the seven years since those two governance documents were approved, we have continued to evolve our approach to scrutiny as we have reflected on what works well, where improvements can be made and alternative ways of performing scrutiny in addition to the current Scrutiny Panel approach.

- 3.3 In March 2020 the Committee considered a 'Scrutiny- Lessons Learned' report. The 'Lessons Learned' were those identified by:

- Scrutiny Panel members
- Scrutiny Panel witnesses (both internal and external to the Council)
- the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA and scrutiny officers)

- 3.4 The Lessons learned report also reflected on discussions that had been held during Committees about whether there were different ways that the Committee could perform scrutiny that would complement the Scrutiny Panel approach. For example by inviting council officers to brief the Committees on topics of specific interest.

- 3.5 In April 2021 a development session was held to discuss potential scrutiny topics for review and consider amendments to the scrutiny process.

3.6 The scrutiny topic identification, prioritisation and overall approach adopted at that time was outlined to the Committee. The Committee were asked to consider some key questions and the responses are summarised below:

- There needs to be a degree of flexibility to change topics and to be able to react quickly to an ever changing environment.
- It is for the Committee to determine scrutiny topics
- Depending on the number of emerging topics, the Committee may need to meet more often, however these could be less formal and held virtually
- An annual Scrutiny Plan is not required, topics should be allowed to emerge
- The prioritisation process is there as a tool if needed, but there is no need to assess every scrutiny topic
- There has been value in having full panel meetings but these are resource intensive and scrutiny lite should be adopted where appropriate.

3.7 The Scrutiny Manual (Appendix 1) and Scrutiny Framework (Appendix 2) have been reviewed and a summary of minor changes have been noted within the tables below:

### 3.8 Scrutiny Manual Changes

Page	Para	Summary of Change	Reason for Change
1	n/a	Change of date from 2024 to 2025	Change of date to reflect most recent review of the Manual
6	23	Removal of dates	Removal of dates to reflect ongoing development of the Scrutiny process
9 & 11	Appendix 1 & 2	Update to meeting location sections	Update to reflect that the location of any meetings will be determined at the discretion of the Chair of the appointed Panel and will normally take place virtually
10	Appendix 2	Change to composition of Committee Membership	The number of committee members was reduced from 7 to 6 in 2022 following the Local Election

### 3.9 Scrutiny Framework Changes

Page	Para	Summary of change	Reason for Change
1	n/a	Change of date from 2024 to 2025	Change of date to reflect most recent review of the Framework
4	9	Change to composition of Committee Membership	The number of committee members was reduced from 7 to 6 in 2022 following the Local Election
4	10	Change of Appendix number 3 to number 1	Correction of error

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The CIA has updated the Scrutiny Framework and Scrutiny Manual to reflect minor changes that were identified as a result of the 2025 review.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy - None
- 5.2 Financial –None
- 5.3 Legal –None
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None
- 5.5.1 Equalities – None
- 5.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None
- 5.5.3 Islands Duty – None
- 5.6 Climate Change - None
- 5.7 Risk – None
- 5.8 Customer Service – None
- 5.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - None

For further information please contact Internal Audit (01546 604108)

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**14 March 2024**

### **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Manual**  
**Appendix 2 - Scrutiny Framework**