

**South Ayrshire Council**  
**Report by Director - People**  
**to Audit and Governance Panel**  
**of 21 March 2018**

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**Subject: Best Value Follow Up**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a further update on progress against the Best Value Action Plan agreed by Council on 30 August 2016.

**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:**

**2.1.1 scrutinises the progress being made against the current Best Value Action Plan as outlined in [Appendix 1](#); and**

**2.1.2 agrees to receive a new Best Value Action Plan following the meeting detailed in 4.4 of this report.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 In June 2016, Audit Scotland published their most recent [Best Value Audit Report](#) on the Council. Within the report the Accounts Commission identified that:

It is imperative for the Council to sustain its momentum, so that it can meet its duty of Best Value and in particular, address difficult decisions that lie ahead in reshaping Council services in response to reducing resources. The momentum will be helped by:

- continuity in the stability of its leadership arrangements;
- embedding its improvement culture further, at all levels in the Council;
- continuing with the full appraisal of options for the future delivery of services; and
- further improving its approach to engaging service users and communities.

- 3.2 The Best Value Working Group developed an [18 month action plan](#) to address both the findings of the Accounts Commission and matters raised by Audit Scotland. [Appendix 1](#) to this report sets out the third [6 monthly update on progress](#) against this action plan.

- 3.3 The Panel is asked to scrutinise the progress that this shows, to assess whether the momentum of the Council in meeting its duty of Best Value is continuing and whether appropriate progress is being made.

## **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 [Appendix 1](#) shows that 6 of the 8 improvement actions are complete, with one still in progress, the other now having been deleted.
- 4.2 The action in progress relates to embedding the Council's improvement culture (BV3). This is being informed by the work of the Service and Performance Panel in terms of assessing variations in reporting styles, and will now take account of the revised planning and management structures. The intention remains to bring forward recommendations by 5 June 2018.
- 4.3 The deleted action (BV5) covered the Service Review and Transform South Ayrshire Programmes. This whole approach is being fundamentally recast following the Chief Executive's report 'Review of Management Structure' that went to Council on 14 December 2017. An outline of the new programme, led by the Council's new Executive Managers, will be agreed as part of the new People and Places Directorate Plans for 2018-22, which are due for approval by 28 June 2018.
- 4.4 In terms of the Council's longer term approach to delivering Best Value, then the Best Value Working Group is scheduled to review the Council's current position against the Accounts Commission's Strategic Audit priorities. The intention is to identify next steps to ensure that the pace, depth and continuity of improvement delivered by the Council matches both its ambition and the resources available.
- 4.5 This is the last report on the current action plan and any outstanding actions will be carried forward and included in the new action plan that will be presented to the next meeting of this Panel.

## **5. Legal and Procurement Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. Human Resources Implications**

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

## **8. Risk**

### **8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations***

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

### **8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations***

- 8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are that the Council will be prevented from being able to provide assurance that it is delivering Best Value and may result in further action by the Accounts Commission.

## **9. Equalities**

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

## **10. Sustainable Development Implications**

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## **11. Options Appraisal**

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

## **12. Link to Council Plan**

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to delivery of the Council's strategic objective 'Effective Leadership that Promotes Fairness' and the commitment that 'Councillors will provide effective governance and leadership'.

## **13. Results of Consultation**

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Douglas Campbell, Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Strategic and Community Planning, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

**Background Papers**     **Audit Scotland – June 2016 - [South Ayrshire Council: Best Value audit report](#)**

**Report to South Ayrshire Council of 30 August 2016 - [Response to the June 2016 Best Value Audit Report](#)**

**Report to Audit and Governance Panel of 29 August 2017 - [Best Value Follow Up](#)**





**Report to South Ayrshire Council of 14 December 2017 – [Review of Management Structure](#)**



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## Appendix 1 – Progress against Action Plan in response to Best Value Audit Recommendations



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Best Value Audit Recommendations	Action	Original Due Date	Managed By	Latest Note	SAC Status	Progress	Current Due Date
AC1 - Continuity in the stability of its leadership arrangements.	BV1 Council to agree to continue the tenure of the BVWG and confirm its membership and remit	30-Sep-2016	South Ayrshire Council	This action was agreed by Council at <a href="#">meeting</a> on 30th August 2016		100%	30-Sep-2016
AS1 - Maintaining strong political and senior officer leadership, including the commitment to cross-party working through, for example, the Best Value Working Group.	BV2 Refresh the BVWG remit and action plan, to focus on the recommendations identified by the Accounts Commission (AC2-AC4) to ensure that appropriate momentum continues and relevant outcomes are achieved.	30-Sep-2016	Best Value Working Group	Actions completed and data contained within a report to Council on 30 August 2016.		100%	30-Sep-2016
AC2 - Embedding its improvement culture further, at all levels in the Council.	BV3 Continue to further develop the performance management (including self-evaluation) and business planning cycles of the Council to ensure staff at all levels across the Council are engaged in the improvement of the quality of services.	31-Jan-2018	Best Value Working Group; Corporate Management Team	In the latest round of 6 monthly reporting to 30 Sept 17, the opportunity was taken to introduce case studies to provide an illustration of the impact that each service has had, either in terms of an individual, family or community, or in the case of a largely internal facing service, another service or partner organisation. These examples were well received by the <a href="#">Service &amp; Performance Panel on 21 Nov 17</a> and were then replicated in the Council Plan reporting to <a href="#">Council on 14 Dec 17</a> . This approach will now be built upon as part of the development of the new Council Plan and associated Service and Improvement Plans., ensuring both qualitative as well as quantitative information is utilised		75%	05-Jun-2018
AS2 - Ensuring that all improvement activity is integrated and prioritised effectively. This applies particularly to the service review programme and the Business Improvement Team, which are important catalysts for improving outcomes for the citizens of South Ayrshire.	BV4 Examine the interdependencies across the various programmes to ensure resources and projects are in alignment and to ensure Best Value is being delivered.	31-Dec-2016	Executive Officer Group	Review has been undertaken and further proposals will be developed and considered as part of the budget process		100%	31-Dec-2016

Best Value Audit Recommendations	Action	Original Due Date	Managed By	Latest Note	SAC Status	Progress	Current Due Date
<p>AC3 - Continuing with the full appraisal of options for the future delivery of services.</p> <p>AS3 - Considering the scope for more radical approaches to service redesign.</p>	<p>BV5 Continue with the service review programme whilst ensuring full options appraisals are undertaken and innovative methods of service delivery are considered during the process, and with links to the Transform South Ayrshire Programme supported by the Business Improvement Team. (links to BV4)</p>	<p>31-Jan-2018</p>	<p>Best Value Working Group; Executive Officer Group</p>	<p>A fundamental review of the approach taken to date by the Transform South Ayrshire and Service Review Programmes was agreed in the <a href="#">‘Review of Management Structure’</a> report to Council on 14 Dec 17.</p> <p>To date the TSA programme has largely focused on operational improvements rather than strategic transformation which fundamentally impacts on, and improves, the lives of our citizens. It appears that more significant progress may have been constrained by a lack of corporate buy-in and insufficient dedicated cross-service senior management resources.</p> <p>Similarly, while there have been some improvements as a result of service reviews, these have tended to be relatively operational rather than transformational. It has been suggested that this may be the result of the relatively rigid and robotic nature of the Service Review Framework, which encourages a process-driven, rather than transformational, approach.</p> <p>Accordingly 4 new posts of Executive Manager are to be created, who in addition to their strategic Directorate roles will have both an individual and collective responsibility for progressing the transformation agenda and for developing a service review process which ensures honest and constructive challenge and ambitious and creative service improvements.</p> <p>An outline of how the new programme that these new posts will take forward over the next two years will be agreed as part of the new People and Places Directorate Plans for 2018-22.</p>		<p>60%</p>	<p>31-Jan-2018</p>
<p>AC4 - Further improving its approach to engaging service users and communities.</p> <p>AS4 - Embedding approaches to community engagement and linking the outcomes to the business planning framework.</p>	<p>BV6 Best Value Working Group to evaluate progress and provide direction for community engagement and consider the potential for the Public Processes Panel to undertake a review of this area of work.</p>	<p>31-Dec-2016</p>	<p>Best Value Working Group</p>	<p>The BVWG considered the <a href="#">consultation protocol</a> that had been prepared to provide direction for community engagement at their meeting on 23 August 2017.</p> <p>They agreed that the document should be made live and will be amended where necessary through its use by Public Affairs and by all services.</p>		<p>100%</p>	<p>31-May-2017</p>

## Appendix 1 – Progress against Action Plan in response to Best Value Audit Recommendations

Generated on: 06 February 2018

Best Value Audit Recommendations	Action	Original Due Date	Managed By	Latest Note	SAC Status	Progress	Current Due Date
AS5 - Revising its medium and longer-term financial plans, and accompanying reserves strategy, to ensure they are sustainable.	BV7 Council is already committed to reviewing its medium and long term financial plans while recognising the challenge this represents when single year grant settlements are received from the Scottish Government. See FI 9.1 (SIP Action) Review and refresh a medium term financial plan annually.	31-Dec-2016	Tim Baulk	The Council on 15 December 2016 agreed a <a href="#">5 Year Financial Strategy</a> , which brings together the strategic objectives of the Council detailed in the <a href="#">2016 to 2018 Council Plan</a> along with all the relevant financial information in a clear accessible document covering the five year period, 2017 to 2022. This will be used as part of the foundation for the Council's subsequent budget setting in March 2017.		100%	31-Dec-2016
AS6 - Reviewing the work of the scrutiny panels to ensure that their workloads are manageable and thus enable members to scrutinise effectively.	BV8 Through the 2017 <a href="#">Member Officer Working Group</a> to review arrangements for various democratic and administrative issues in preparation for the next Local Government Election in May 2017, scrutiny panel workloads and panel remits will be reviewed.	31-Mar-2017	Member Officer Working Group	The Member Officer Working Group continued to meet till March and identified actions for most items in its remit. A final <a href="#">Bulletin was issued to members in April</a> with proposed future actions for new Administration after the Local Government Election to consider.		100%	31-Mar-2017