

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Assistant Director - People
to Audit and Governance Panel
of 16 March 2022**

Subject: Best Value Action Plan 2021-22 - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the progress made in delivering the actions identified in the Best Value Assurance Report - [Action Plan 2021-22](#).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel scrutinises the content of the first Best Value Action Plan 2021-22 update report .**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places statutory duties on Councils in relation to Best Value. The audit of Best Value is a continuous process that forms part of the annual audit of every Council. Findings are reported each year through the Annual Audit Report.
- 3.2 In addition, the Controller of Audit will present a Best Value Assurance Report to the Accounts Commission at least once during the five-year audit appointment for each Council. Audit Scotland published the Council's [Best Value Assurance Report published](#) in October 2021.
- 3.3 In response to the recommendations in the report, an [action plan](#) was developed by officers and agreed by Council in December 2021. Members agreed that progress on the action plan should be reported to the Audit and Governance Panel quarterly. This is the first report since the plan was agreed.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 It is proposed that members of the Audit and Governance Panel scrutinise the attached report ([Appendix 1](#)) and offer feedback to officers.

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 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

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 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The action plan was assessed using the Equalities Impact Assessment Scoping process.

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 Commitment 1 of the Council Plan: Fair and Effective Leadership/ Leadership that promotes fairness.

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 Peter Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Corporate, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Member/ Officer Best Value Working Group and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers [**Audit Scotland - Best Value Assurance Report - published on 27 October 2021**](#)

[**Best Value Assurance Report - Action Plan 2021-22**](#)

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Date: 10 March 2022

Best Value Assurance Report - Action Plan 2021-22

Recommendation 1 The Council should confirm that it has the capacity and skills required to increase its pace of improvement in key aspects of Best Value, such as community empowerment, financial and workforce planning and transformation Where appropriate external support should be sought from other Councils, or the Improvement Service, to help with focussing its areas of improvement. (paragraph 119)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Secure additional funding to add temporary resources to key areas of Best Value	Eileen Howat	10%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Following creation of Director of Education post, Chief Executive requested to bring forward further structural proposals in due course - anticipate that these will now be post May 2022
Engage the Improvement Service on aspects of Best Value	Eileen Howat	10%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Discussions took place with Improvement Service when report was published and they have identified some areas for potential support for discussion on 7 February

Recommendation 2 The Council prepare both medium and long-term financial plans. The plans should consider changes to both income and expenditure, identify both budget gaps and set out the actions necessary to address those gaps. There should also be a clear linkage to Council priorities (paragraph 62)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Develop a Long-Term Financial Outlook (LTFO) that draws together all known factors which affect the Council's financial position and its financial sustainability over the longer term (i.e., a ten-year period). The LTFO will be refreshed bi-annually	Tim Baulk	100%	31-Dec-2022	Completed	A Long-Term Financial Outlook (LTFO) and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was considered and approved by Leadership Panel in 2021.
Develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that provides a clear understanding of the anticipated resources available to the Council in the short and medium term (i.e. three years) in	Tim Baulk	100%	31-Dec-2022	Completed	Plan developed and approved

order to deliver its priorities and objectives. The MTFP will be updated annually					
Ensure clear and continued linkage between the LTFO and MTFP with other key strategic documents, including the Council Plan, Workforce Plan, Long Term Financial Linkage evidenced in future strategic developments. Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Ongoing and aligned to Council Plan and Workforce Plan Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy	Corporate Leadership Team; Executive Leadership Team	0%	31-Dec-2022	Not due to start	This work be taken forward after elections in May 2022
Develop a public-facing communication plan to publicise and explain the significant financial challenges facing the Council for the foreseeable future	Executive Leadership Team	0%	31-Mar-2022	Not due to start	A communications plan will be developed at the appropriate time.
Develop a clear understanding of public needs, preferences, and priorities through a robust and recurring engagement process, aligned with the local government electoral cycle	Corporate Leadership Team; Executive Leadership Team; South Ayrshire Council Elected Members	0%	31-Dec-2022	Not due to start	An engagement strategy will be developed and delivered through Thriving Communities teams at the appropriate time.
Develop processes to support Elected Members in setting clear, prioritised objectives based on the Council Plan and the projected needs of the public, including service redesign, reduction, and cessation where appropriate	Corporate Leadership Team; Executive Leadership Team	0%	31-Dec-2022	Not due to start	The development of these processes will be taken forward following Elected Member induction in May/June 2022
Engage with external partners (e.g. Improvement Service) to ensure that the design and delivery of community engagement improvement actions are effective and reflects best practice	Jane Bradley	10%	31-Mar-2022	On target	Meeting took place on 1 February with Improvement Service to discuss initial thoughts around engagement.

Recommendation 3 The Council should improve and embed workforce planning, so that service workforce plans are developed consistently across the Council. The plans should include clear links to the Council's priorities and to its strategic change programme. (paragraph 77)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Convene a Corporate Working Group to develop a workforce plan for 2022-25 that links to the Council's strategic priorities and improvement areas in relation to Best Value	Eileen Howat	100%	31-Dec-2021	Completed	
Workforce Plan Implementation	Eileen Howat	10%	31-Mar-2022	On target	Request has been issued to all service leads to provide completed template no later than 31 March 2022.

Recommendation 4 The Council should make sure that its transformation work is fully aligned and integrated to its covid recovery planning work and improve its approach to its Strategic Change Programme by: • Adding greater detail about individual projects • Setting clear timelines for each project • Developing a benefits realisation tracker to assess whether the Council has achieved its aims. (paragraphs 123 and 124)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Update Leadership Panel on the development and delivery of the South Ayrshire Way Strategic Change Programme	Stuart MacMillan	15%	31-Dec-2022	On target	<p>The following updates are scheduled to take place this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Panel • Service and Performance Panel <p>The updates will provide detail on progress to date, how the projects are moving forward and the production of project benefit trackers. All projects have detailed project scopes and timelines in place.</p>
Development of a Communications Strategy including the roll out of key messages to staff, stakeholders, partners and the public on the launch of the Change Programme; key themes and outputs and the benefits that will be achieved	Stuart MacMillan	100%	31-Mar-2022	Completed	Communication Strategy approved and implemented, and updates provided to the Strategic Change Executive

Implementation of internal effective mechanisms for reporting programme progress and in particular tracking benefits	Stuart MacMillan	85%	31-Mar-2022	On target	<p>A Benefits Realisation Plan and Tracker has been developed and approved by the Strategic Change Executive. All projects are now developing benefit trackers to capture, record and monitor the delivery of project benefits. A link to the Benefit Realisation Plan which has the Tracker embedded is provided below.</p> <p>Options for reporting programme benefits have been considered with a preferred system identified. This will be trialled during March.</p> <p>Link to Benefit Realisation Plan</p>
Continue to progress the delivery of projects, focussing on moving projects from the scoping/exploratory phase and into delivery	Stuart MacMillan	95%	31-Mar-2022	On target	<p>There are 23 projects on the South Ayrshire Way Strategic Change Programme. Recent activity has enabled three projects to move from planning to implementation stage. This leaves two projects on the programme which are currently at planning/exploratory stage. It is expected that these projects will move to implementation stage by end March 2022.</p>
Review governance arrangements across the Council to integrate its approach to transformation and change; avoid duplication, promote recovery from covid and inform best practice	Donald Gillies	0%	31-May-2022		<p>Governance arrangements in place for the Strategic Change Programme only as managed by Place Directorate. Wider Governance arrangements will be required to identified and be adopted and integrated across whole Council by Senior Leadership.</p>

Recommendation 5 The Council needs to build on the Service Recovery and Improvement Plans and the Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that future community engagement and consultation is consistent, and fully involves communities to develop how Council services will operate in the future in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in order that real change and outcomes can be delivered. (paragraphs 25 and 112)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Establish a new Thriving Communities service has been established to lead community engagement across South Ayrshire	Jane Bradley	100%	31-Mar-2022	Completed	A new Thriving Communities service has been established and implementation of new structure and formation of community based locality teams is ongoing
An annual log of all consultations and engagement will be published	Jane Bradley	10%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Officer Group being established led by Thriving Communities Team to develop mechanisms for logging all consultations and engagement activity.

Thriving Communities will be responsible for engaging with local communities to help develop local place plans – November – March 2022 already underway and planned	Jane Bradley	75%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Place plans are being developed across the villages and towns within South Ayrshire. The majority of these will be completed by March with the exception of a few areas which will be picked up prior to summer.
A new online platform will be launched in January 2022 and will provide an opportunity for residents to let public services and community groups know what is important to the people of South Ayrshire	Jane Bradley	75%	31-Jan-2022	On target	The tool is being tailored to a South Ayrshire Council design and will be launched in Wallacetown over the next few weeks.
A new officers group will be established to support and improve consultation across the organisation. We will continue to work alongside the Consultation Institute to improve our consultation processes	Jane Bradley	10%	31-Jan-2022	On target	Meetings have taken place with the Consultation Institute and discussions have taken place around the proposed model and content of delivery. We are awaiting dates for training for 12 officers from across the Council which should take place before the end of March.

Recommendation 6 The Council should improve performance reporting, by: • Setting targets for its KPIs • Including a summary of performance against KPIs in its performance reports to Members • Increasing the frequency of reports to Elected Members • Making performance reports more accessible to the public (paragraphs 32, 47 and 51)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Explore options for the future iterations of the Council Plan with Members and community planning partners and consider how reporting could be improved	Mike Newall	10%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Research by Performance team underway and discussion has taken place with the Improvement Service to explore options.
As part of the development of the new Council Plan a greater emphasis will be on measuring outcomes	Mike Newall	5%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Webinar on measuring outcomes attended by Service Lead and CP Lead Officer
Review the performance monitoring framework to improve public performance reporting	Mike Newall	100%	28-Feb-2022	Completed	The review of the Performance Monitoring Framework was approved at the Service and Performance Panel that took place on Tuesday 8th February 2022.

Recommendation 7 To help them carry out their roles, including their responsibilities under Best Value, Elected Members should take advantage of the learning and development opportunities provided by the Council. The Council should continue to work with Elected Members to understand and address reasons for variable uptake of training (paragraph 30)

Action	Managed By	Progress	Current Due Date	Assessment of Progress	Latest Note
Conversion of all training to on-line Coast training courses and production of online Member's pack	Catriona Caves	55%	30-Apr-2022 (amended from original date of 28-Feb-2022)	On target	Legal, HR , Health and Safety and Risk and committee services have all identified and uploaded new Coast Training Courses . The Chief Executive services are now considering at the point of any new training for members whether it can or should form a Coast Course. Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services has written to Organisational Development to ask them to consider how best to make that request of the wider Council Services. Material is being considered for an on-line Members Induction Pack – this can be concluded once the induction programme is finalised by the group co-ordinating this training.
Consideration of medium for delivery of training – ie by Hybrid training where Members can be both present in person and attending on-line	Catriona Caves	50%	31-May-2022	On target	Questionnaire sent to members to request their views of best mediums for training. Response awaited. Once feedback received then a proposal for how training could be delivered will be discussed with the Chief Executive. A request has been made to ICT to consider what options would be available for training to be provided in person and online at the same time. Once received this will be filtered into the proposal on training for members after the election.
Return to Personal Development Plan (PDP) and personalisation of training needs with new Members intake	Catriona Caves	30%	30-Apr-2022	On target	Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services has asked Organisational Development to provide the process they followed in the past for PDP when they trained new members. This will be considered and a process developed to provide PDPs.
Further develop new Member induction training	Catriona Caves	45%	30-Apr-2022	On target	Chief Executive has convened a group that is considering the timetable of meetings and training that will be delivered for new members. The training to deliver this programme is being developed by officers responsible for that training. Group is meeting regularly.
Report to Service and Performance Panel on training that is delivered with details of Member attendance	Catriona Caves	10%	31-Dec-2022	On target	Consideration is being made of how the different training attended by members could be captured and how that could be presented in a report to Service and Performance.