

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 30 March 2015	10:00	CMR 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Board Membership

Councillor Bill Brown: Councillor John Caldwell: Councillor Audrey Doig: Councillor Eddie Grady:
Provost Anne Hall: Councillor James MacLaren: Councillor Iain Nicolson:

Councillor Jim Sharkey (Convener): Councillor Cathy McEwan (Depute Convener)

Members of the Press and Public

Members of the press and public wishing to attend the meeting should report to the customer service centre where they will be met and directed to the meeting.

Further Information

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

A copy of the agenda and reports for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the Customer Service Centre, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley and online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/agendas.

For further information, contact
democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies received from members of the Board.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Audit Scotland Report - Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit 2013/14
Report by Director of Finance & Resources | 5 - 44 |
| 2 | Annual Internal Audit Plan 2015/16
Report by Chief Auditor | 45 - 60 |
| 3 | Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2014/15
Report by Director of Finance & Resources | 61 - 86 |
| 4(a) | Annual Review of Compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance
Report by Director of Finance & Resources | 87 - 138 |
| 4(b) | Compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance
Report by Chief Auditor | 139 - 142 |
| 5 | Training for Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Members
Report by Chief Auditor | 143 - 162 |
| 6 | Annual Complaints Report 2013/14
Report by Chief Executive | 163 - 178 |
| 7 | Review of Communication between Tenants, Elected Members and Development & Housing Services
Report by Lead Officer (Karen Anderson) | 179 - 228 |

- | | | |
|----------|--|------------------|
| 8 | Upkeep of Common Areas within Council Housing Stock including Garden Areas
Report by Lead Officer (Dorothy Briggs) | 229 - 232 |
|
 | | |
| 9 | Petition: Bus Stop, Renfrew Road
Report by Director of Finance & Resources | 233 - 236 |

To: Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Audit Scotland Report – Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit 2013/14

1. Summary

- 1.1 Audit Scotland published their report *“Review of auditors’ housing benefit subsidy claim reported errors 2013/14”* in February 2015 (copy attached as Appendix)

This report outlines the key messages from the Audit Scotland report and provides information as to the Renfrewshire Council position with regard to the issues raised.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the Audit Scotland report *“Review of auditors’ housing benefit subsidy claim reported errors 2013/14”*
-

3. **Background**

- 3.1 Councils have a legal obligation to administer Housing Benefit (HB) on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Councils reclaim most of the HB that they pay to claimants by submitting subsidy claims to the DWP and these are certified annually by the Council's appointed external auditor, Audit Scotland. The subsidy claim form details amounts paid in respect of total HB awarded, the value of overpayments and the amount of backdated awards.

The HB subsidy scheme has built in incentives to encourage local authorities to take appropriate action to minimise overpayment of Housing Benefit.

- 3.2 The Council's external auditor is Audit Scotland, who audited all 32 Local Authorities' subsidy claims for 2013/14. The auditor is required to conclude annually whether the subsidy claim is fairly stated and certify it accordingly. Any errors identified are reported to the DWP.

- 3.3 Renfrewshire Council received a letter from Audit Scotland on 26 November 2014 which certified the Council's subsidy claim with no errors/qualifications.

- 3.4 At the end of February 2015, Audit Scotland published its report *"Review of auditors' housing benefit subsidy claim reported errors 2013/14"* The objective of the report was to provide information regarding the extent to which auditors reported errors during the certification of the 2013/14 HB Subsidy claim process across Scotland.

Importantly the report details the type of errors which were identified that could result in a local authority losing subsidy, highlighting issues which could be common across a number of councils and ultimately could result in the DWP reclaiming subsidy from local authorities.

- 3.5 The report states that Scottish councils paid out £1.772 billion in HB during 2013/14. Of that £1.772 billion the DWP contributed £1.728 billion through subsidy payments (97.5%). With regards to Renfrewshire £65.5 Million in HB was paid out during 13/14 and £64.6 Million was claimed back from the DWP (98.5%).

- 3.6 The report also stated, through the audit certification process, that Audit Scotland had identified errors which resulted in subsidy being over claimed by £0.274 million (0.01% of expenditure) This subsidy could be reclaimed from the affected Local Authorities by the DWP.
- In addition to the errors identified by Audit Scotland, the report also confirmed that 5 local authorities were unable to claim £0.784 million in subsidy as a result of exceeding the pre agreed DWP threshold limit for HB Overpayments caused by Local authority error.
- 3.7 Overall Audit Scotland reported 60 errors following their 2013/14 review these errors occurred across 19 of the 32 local authorities. As stated in paragraph 3.3 no errors were reported for Renfrewshire Council. The areas where most errors were identified were in the calculation of claimant income and the classification of HB overpayments.
- 3.8 Renfrewshire Council's benefits service monitors the subsidy process very closely. This monitoring has resulted in no errors being identified by the 2013/14 review and a higher than average HB proportion claimed back through the Subsidy process.
- 3.9 Officers within the Service have examined the Audit Scotland report in detail and from the insights which the report provided have agreed actions to take forward. The activities planned are proactive and include additional checks being implemented to minimise the risk of future subsidy loss.
- 3.10 Regular reports with regards benefits processing performance are provided to the Finance & resources Policy Board; along with associated updates on welfare reform activities.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The amount of subsidy which the Council can claim from the DWP is maximised, where possible. Any gap between HB paid out and subsidy claimed must be funded by the Council.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *none*
3. **Community Planning** –
Community Care, Health & Well-being – *an efficient benefits processing service ensures that those who are entitled to receive benefits do so in good time*

4. **Legal** - *none*
 5. **Property/Assets** - *none*
 6. **Information Technology** - *none*
 7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** - *none*
 9. **Procurement** – *none*
 10. **Risk** - *none*
 11. **Privacy Impact** - *none*
-

Author: *Emma Shields ext 6880*

Review of auditors' housing benefit subsidy claim reported errors 2013/14



Prepared for Audit Strategy
February 2015



Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. We help the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission check that organisations spending public money use it properly, efficiently and effectively.

Contents

Introduction.....	5
Purpose of report.....	5
Summary of findings	6
Auditor testing and reporting methodology	7
2013/14 errors reported	8
Introduction	8
Income	9
Overpayment classification.....	10
Eligible rent	11
Information Technology (IT) issues	12
Local authority error and administrative delay subsidy	12
Expenditure classification	14
Reconciliations	15
Modified schemes	15
Uncashed cheques.....	15
Premiums.....	16
Disproportionate rent increase	16
Appendix 1	17
Appendix 2	19
Appendix 3	23
Appendix 4	26
Appendix 5	28
Appendix 6	30
Appendix 7	32
Appendix 8	33
Appendix 9	35

Introduction

1. Housing benefit (HB) is a means tested social security benefit, administered by local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). HB is intended to help claimants meet housing costs for rented accommodation both in the private and social rented sector.
2. HB is split into two different categories; rent rebates, where the local authority is the landlord, and rent allowances, where the landlord is for example, either a social sector organisation or a private individual.
3. Local authorities reclaim most of the HB that they pay to claimants by submitting subsidy claims to the DWP that are certified annually by each authority's appointed external auditor. The subsidy claim form details the authority's HB expenditure which is recorded in various cells on the form. These cells include total rent rebate and total rent allowance expenditure and the amounts paid in respect of the total value of overpayments, the value of backdated HB awarded, and the amount of HB paid in respect of customers in temporary accommodation.
4. The HB subsidy scheme has built in incentives to encourage local authorities to take appropriate action to minimise overpayments of HB, expenditure above DWP set limits and administrative delays.

Purpose of report

5. Each local authority's appointed external auditor is required to conclude annually whether the subsidy claim is fairly stated and certify it accordingly. Any errors identified are reported to the DWP in a covering letter that accompanies the final claim.
6. The purpose of this report is to provide insight into the extent to which auditors reported errors during the certification of the 2013/14 HB subsidy claim process, and the type of errors identified that could result in a local authority losing subsidy.
7. Audit Scotland reviewed the subsidy claim covering letters of all 32 Scottish local authorities for 2013/14. The review focused on errors reported by auditors as well as where levels of overpaid HB exceeded DWP thresholds for subsidy.

8. This report sets out the main findings from the review. As well as identifying areas where the DWP may reclaim subsidy from local authorities, it also identifies issues which may be common across a number of local authorities and therefore where attention should be focused in order to maximise subsidy claimed in the future.

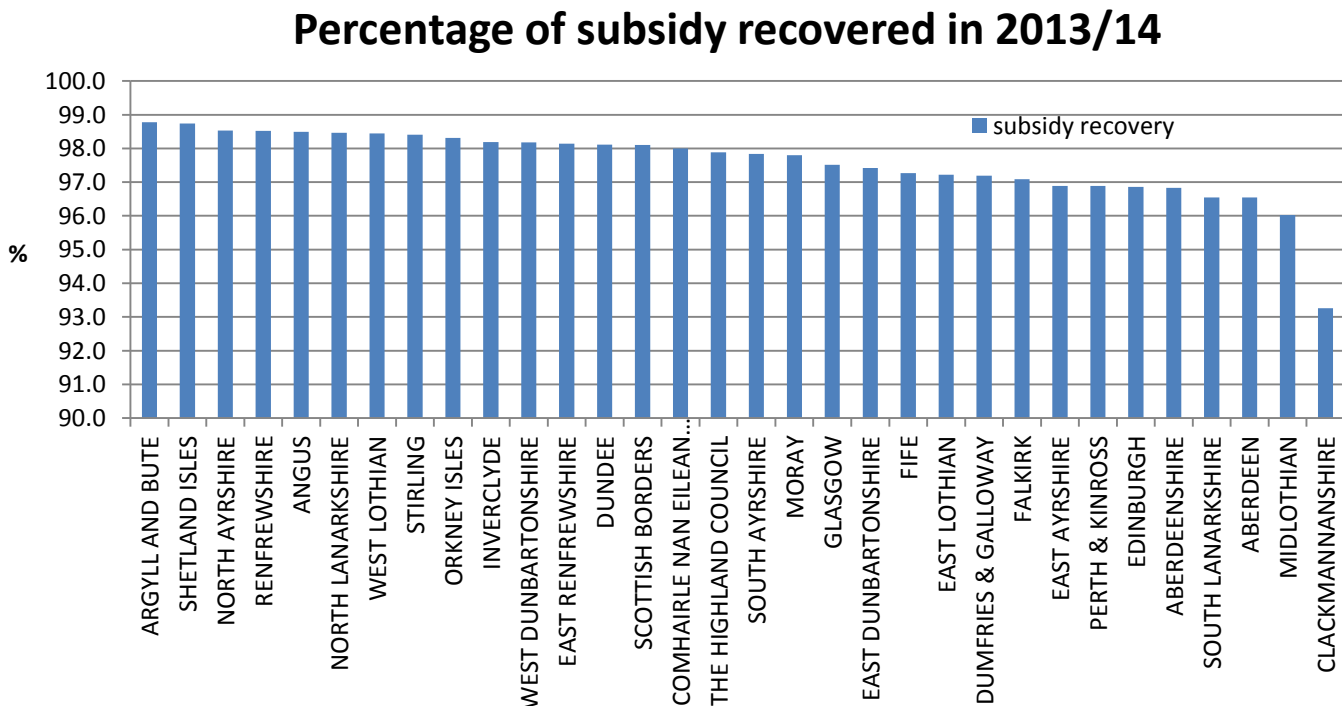
Summary of findings

9. During 2013/14, Scottish local authorities paid out £1.772 billion in HB (£1.791 billion in 2012/13). The DWP contributed £1.728 billion (£1.748 billion in 2012/13) to this expenditure through subsidy payments.
10. The certification of the 2013/14 subsidy claims by auditors identified errors which resulted in subsidy being over claimed by £0.274 million, 0.01% of expenditure (£0.149 million in 2012/13) which the DWP may decide to reclaim. In addition, five local authorities were unable to claim a total of £0.784 million (£0.809 million in 2012/13) in subsidy as a result of exceeding the pre-agreed DWP threshold limits for local authority and administrative delay HB overpayments.
11. Auditors reported 60 errors in their 2013/14 certification letters in respect of 19 of the 32 Scottish local authorities. No issues were identified in the certification of the remaining 13 local authority's subsidy claims. This is an increase in the number of errors reported from 2012/13 where auditors identified 40 errors across 20 local authorities.
12. The areas where most errors were identified were the calculation of claimant income and the classification of overpaid HB. Auditors reported that, in order to help reduce subsidy loss, effective management arrangements should be in place to ensure overpayments, processing errors and administrative delays are minimised and, where they do occur, that overpayments are correctly classified and calculated.

Auditor testing and reporting methodology

13. In 2013/14, £1.772 billion (£1.791 billion in 2012/13) was paid out in HB and £1.728 billion (£1.748 billion in 2012/13) of this expenditure was recovered from the DWP in subsidy. The DWP also pay administration subsidy of £40.8 million (£46.5 million in 2012/13) which is paid to local authorities to administer the HB scheme. As shown in Exhibit 1, the percentage of subsidy recovered (net of administration subsidy) from the DWP varies across local authorities from 93.3% to 98.8%.

Exhibit 1: percentage of HB expenditure recovered through subsidy



Note: Clackmannanshire Council's low recovery rate was partially due to not receiving subsidy on a significant amount of their expenditure on certain types of temporary homeless accommodation.

14. Local authorities should ensure that effective arrangements are in place to review subsidy claims to identify areas for potential improvement. This may include the identification of areas where staff training would be beneficial, proactive monitoring of workloads, and areas requiring additional quality review checks and/or intervention activity.

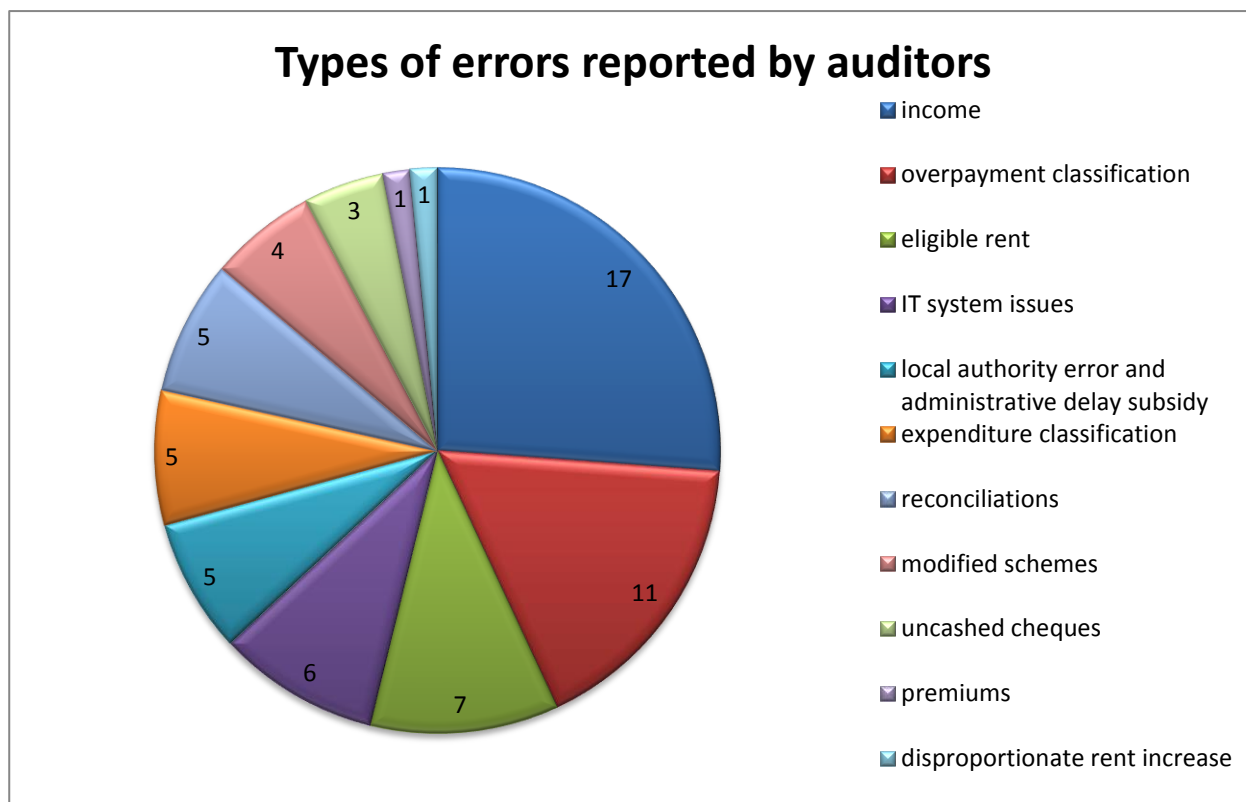
15. The DWP requires that final subsidy claims are reviewed by external auditors using the HB COUNT testing and reporting methodology.
16. Where auditors identify errors and are unable to conclude that the errors are isolated, HB COUNT methodology requires that an additional sample of cases is tested which is focused on the particular error that had been found.
17. HB COUNT methodology also requires auditors to extrapolate the results of the initial and additional testing by multiplying the subsidy cell (or sub-population) total by the proportion of the sample value that is found to be in error, and agree an amendment to the claim form with the local authority. Where an amendment cannot be agreed, the auditor includes details of the error and testing carried out in their covering letter to the DWP.

2013/14 errors reported

Introduction

18. Auditors reported 60 errors in the covering letters sent to the DWP in respect of 19 of the 32 Scottish local authorities. No issues were identified in the certification of the remaining 13 local authorities' subsidy claims. This is an increase in the number of errors from 2012/13 where auditors reported 40 errors and issues across 20 local authorities. In addition, five local authorities breached the DWP threshold limits for local authority error and administrative delay overpayments in 2013/14 (four in 2012/13).
19. The nature and number of the errors reported, along with the potential impact should the DWP decide to reclaim subsidy in respect of those errors, are discussed in the following paragraphs. Appendix 1 provides further detail of the errors in respect of the eleven local authorities where these errors resulted in overpayments of HB and where there the DWP might potentially reclaim subsidy. If the DWP do decide to reclaim subsidy, over £0.274 million (£0.149 million in 2012/13) may be reclaimed across Scotland. Although, the DWP can reclaim subsidy where overpayments are identified, no additional funding is provided where underpaid benefit is identified by auditors.
20. As shown in exhibit 2 below, the errors identified by auditors in 2013/14 were mainly due to the miscalculation of income and overpayment classification. These errors could equally apply to either rent rebates or rent allowances. In order to help reduce subsidy loss, local authorities should ensure that effective management arrangements are in place to help minimise processing errors, overpayments and administrative delays and, where overpayments have occurred, they are correctly classified and calculated.

Exhibit 2: Types of errors reported by auditors



21. The various types of error identified during the certification of the 2013/14 subsidy claims are discussed in the following paragraphs and referenced to the appropriate cells on the subsidy claim form. Where adjustments could not be made to subsidy claims, the potential impact should the DWP decide to reclaim subsidy in respect of these errors is shown.
22. The auditors' findings demonstrate that the identification of low value errors in their sample testing can result in relatively large amounts of subsidy being reclaimed as a result of the extrapolation process carried out as part of the HB COUNT methodology.
23. Errors reported in covering letters to the DWP that do not affect subsidy for 2013/14 are also discussed because they could also result in a loss of subsidy in the future.

Income

24. Claimant income is a key factor in determining whether a claimant qualifies for HB and, if they qualify, how much benefit they are entitled to received. It is vital therefore, that local authorities accurately calculate claimant income in HB assessments. This area is where auditors identified most errors.

25. A total of 17 errors were reported by auditors in eight local authorities which are detailed in appendix 2. These relate to errors in respect of claimant income, such as salaries, occupational pensions and tax credits, being incorrectly entered in HB entitlement calculations.
26. For example, in one case it was identified that HB had been underpaid by £5.84 as a result of miscalculating the claimant's salary. Additional audit testing identified a further two errors (total value £80). The effect of these errors following extrapolation using HB COUNT methodology was to overstate rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £27,030 with a corresponding understatement of local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.
27. Local authorities should ensure effective, risk based accuracy checking processes and appropriate training are in place to help minimise errors in the accurate calculation of claimant income.

Overpayment classification

28. The DWP does not fully fund overpayments of HB to encourage local authorities to take due care when processing claims to ensure that they are accurate and also to encourage local authorities to vigorously recover overpayments, where appropriate.
29. HB may be overpaid to claimants for a number of reasons. The subsidy claim form categorises overpayments as follows:
 - DWP error
 - local authority error and administrative delays
 - claimant error (eligible overpayments)
 - timing issues (technical overpayments).
30. The type of overpayment affects the amount of subsidy received. For example eligible overpayments receive 40% subsidy and local authority error and administrative delay overpayments can receive up to 100% subsidy.
31. Where local authority error and administrative delay overpayments are less than or equal to the DWP's pre-agreed lower threshold, local authorities receive 100% subsidy (see paragraph 40). Therefore misclassification of overpayments as eligible (i.e. claimant error) instead of local authority error will result, in those local authorities that are below the DWP threshold losing subsidy as only 40% subsidy would have been claimed instead of 100%.

- 32. The errors that follow relate to the detailed cells where the expenditure was recorded, including local authority error and administrative delay overpayment details which receive a zero subsidy recovery rate.
- 33. Eleven errors were reported by auditors in five local authorities. These mainly relate to errors where overpayments had been classified as eligible overpayments instead of local authority error.
- 34. For example, nine eligible overpayments (total value £768.30) were identified in one local authority which had been classified as claimant error when they should have been classified as local authority error. Following extrapolation of these errors using HB COUNT methodology, the effect of these errors was to overstate the value of rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £1,636.17 and rent rebate eligible overpayments by £40,920.25 with a corresponding understatement in local authority error and administrative delay overpayments of £42,556.42.
- 35. Local authorities should have effective accuracy checking processes in place to ensure the accuracy of overpayment calculations and classifications. In addition, as a final check, the annual subsidy claim should be reviewed prior to submission to the DWP and auditors for certification. Errors reported by auditors are detailed in appendix 3.

Eligible rent

- 36. An essential element of every HB calculation is the accurate calculation of the claimant's eligible rent. Eligible rent means the reasonable rent for a suitable property in a particular area. It can include certain service charges (e.g. lift maintenance or a communal laundry) but not charges such as heating, meals, or the provision of furniture. In addition, the introduction by the DWP of the removal of the spare room subsidy (RSRS) for working age social tenants from 2013 resulted in an element of rental payments not being eligible for HB for those claimants whose properties had more rooms than the DWP's size criteria stated that they needed.
- 37. Seven errors were reported by auditors in five local authorities. These are detailed in appendix 4 and included issues relating to the RSRS , and errors in calculating eligible rent due to, for example, not excluding ineligible service costs.
- 38. For example, three cases were identified in one local authority where HB had been underpaid (total value £88.30) as a result of incorrect eligible rent figures being used in the HB calculation. Additional testing identified one other case where HB had been overpaid by £627. The effect of these errors was to overstate total rent allowance expenditure, at or below the

rent officer's determination, by £75,788 with a corresponding understatement in local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Information Technology (IT) issues

39. HB is a complex benefit to calculate and therefore it is important that HB IT systems operate effectively and system parameters are updated appropriately to ensure that claims are accurately calculated.
40. Seven errors were reported by auditors in five local authorities. These included issues relating to system parameters being incorrectly set. Local authorities should ensure that parameters within the HB system are accurate and agree to all updating information provided by the DWP in its circulars. When parameters are updated, independent checks should be carried out to ensure that the update is accurate. Errors reported by auditors are detailed in appendix 5.

Local authority error and administrative delay subsidy

41. In April 2004, an initiative was introduced by the DWP to allow local authorities to receive additional subsidy in respect of their local authority error and administrative delay overpayments where the total value of these overpayments was within a specified percentage of the total value of all correct payments made.
42. The level of subsidy that local authorities may claim for local authority error and administrative delay overpayments is determined by these thresholds, expressed as a percentage of the value of correct payments made. The thresholds are as follows:
 - lower threshold 0.48%
 - upper threshold 0.54%.
43. Where the local authority error and administrative delay overpayments are less than or equal to the lower threshold, local authorities receive 100% subsidy. Where they are more than the lower threshold but less than the upper threshold, local authorities receive 40% subsidy on the value of overpayments above the lower threshold. No subsidy is payable on the value of overpayments that are above the upper threshold.
44. As illustrated in exhibit 3 below, five local authorities exceeded the upper threshold in 2013/14 (two local authorities were above the upper threshold with a further two between the upper and lower threshold in 2012/13), with the remaining 27 authorities below the threshold. The total value of local authority error and administrative delay overpayments in respect of these five local authorities was £1,156,048 (£1,187,179 for the four local authorities in 2012/13). As a result no subsidy was paid to these local authorities in respect of these overpayments. The

maximum amount of additional subsidy unable to be claimed was 100% of the lower threshold which equalled £783,849 (£809,042 in 2012/13). The value of subsidy unable to be reclaimed for the individual local authorities ranged from £23,281 to £243,321 (£112,297 to £308,547 in 2012/13).

45. East Ayrshire Council was unable to claim subsidy in 2012/13 due to being above the upper threshold and Falkirk Council also was unable to claim part of their local authority error and administrative delay subsidy in 2012/13 due to being above the lower threshold.

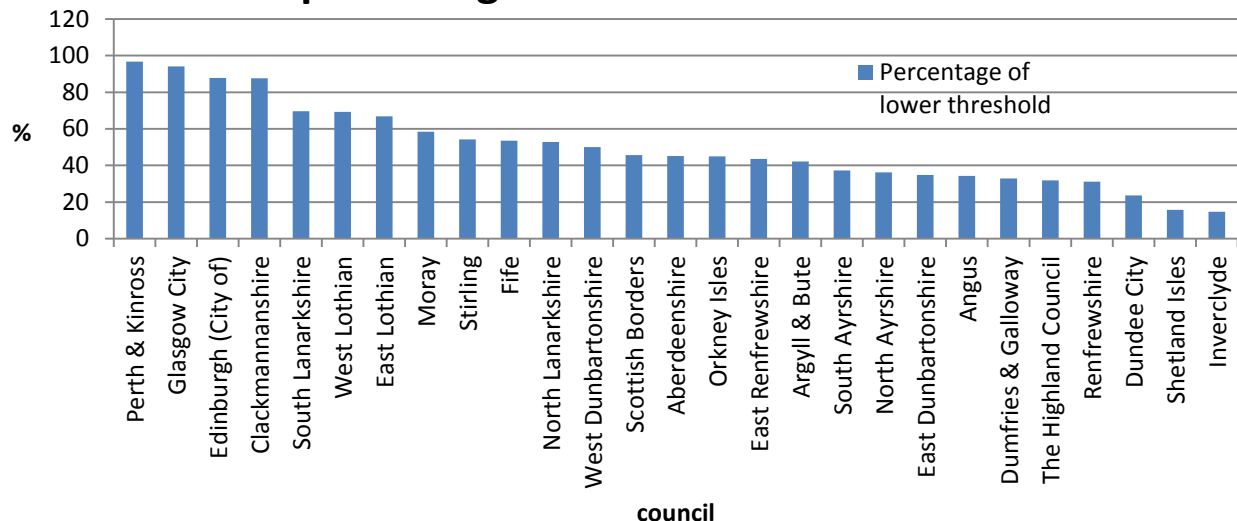
Exhibit 3: Local authority error and administrative delay overpayment subsidy

Local authority	Lower threshold	Upper threshold	Actual overpayments
Aberdeen City	£243,321	£273,739	£303,180
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£23,281	£26,191	£31,292
East Ayrshire	£202,986	£228,359	£375,812
Falkirk	£190,662	£214,495	£247,301
Midlothian	£123,599	£139,048	£198,463
TOTAL	£783,849		£1,156,048

46. As shown in Exhibit 4, a review was undertaken by Audit Scotland of the other 27 local authorities where the level of local authority error and administrative delay overpayments was below the DWPs lower threshold.
47. Local authorities should have arrangements in place to monitor overpayment levels on an on-going basis in order to avoid subsidy loss where possible. Effective accuracy checking processes should also be in place to help minimise errors.

Exhibit 4: local authority error and administrative delay overpayments

Local authority error and administrative delay overpayments as a percentage of the lower threshold



Expenditure classification

48. The DWP subsidy claim requires that HB expenditure is correctly classified across the various cells contained in the form. This is particularly important as different types of expenditure attract different rates of subsidy.
49. Five errors were reported by auditors in four local authorities. These are detailed in appendix 6 and include issues relating to rent rebates being classified as rent allowances and vice versa.
50. For example, in one local authority, sample testing of rent rebate cases identified two claims in relation to properties that had been transferred to the control of a local housing association. These claims should have been recorded within the rent allowance cells. Further testing identified that 7.8% of the total value of rent rebates claimed under expenditure in respect of leased or self-contained licensed accommodation should have been recorded in the rent allowances cells resulting in adjustments of £86,374.63 and £7,626.84 being agreed with the local authority.
51. Local authorities should ensure that effective accuracy checking processes are in place to ensure that HB entitlement is accurately calculated and the expenditure is correctly recorded. In addition, local authorities should ensure checks are carried out on subsidy claims prior to being submitted to the DWP and for certification by auditors.

Reconciliations

- 52. Reconciliations are an important part of the subsidy claim and as part of the certification process, auditors are required to check that benefits granted per the subsidy claim form agree with the reconciliation figures within the HB IT system for the amount of benefit granted and paid. In addition, the subsidy claim form contains an in-year reconciliation cell which is calculated automatically and seeks to confirm that the figure in each total expenditure cell is supported by an analysis of expenditure.
- 53. Five errors were reported by auditors in four local authorities where there were anomalies in the reconciliation data. Local authorities should ensure that regular reconciliations are carried according to the software suppliers' guidance, and ensure that any issues identified are investigated and rectified. Errors reported by auditors are detailed in appendix 7.

Modified schemes

- 54. Modified schemes are where a local authority operates a discretionary local scheme to disregard any war pension over and above the statutory disregards. This discretionary expenditure receives subsidy of 0.2% of the total subsidy claimed before any local scheme expenditure and is capped at 75% of the total cost of the discretionary scheme.
- 55. Four errors were reported by auditors in four local authorities. These included errors regarding the assessment of the claimants' income and software issues. Local authorities again should ensure effective accuracy checking processes are in place to try to minimise errors. In addition, local authorities should ensure checks are carried out on subsidy claims prior to being submitted to the DWP and for certification, and that any issues identified are investigated and rectified. Errors reported by auditors are detailed in appendix 8.

Uncashed cheques

- 56. Local authorities may pay HB by cheque to claimants and/or landlords. At the year end, an adjustment is required in the subsidy claim form to account for cheques which were issued prior to 1 April 2013 that have not been cashed.
- 57. Errors were reported by auditors in three local authorities. These relate to uncashed cheques being not included on the subsidy claim form in error as well as the treatment of cheques included on the subsidy claim form. Local authorities should ensure DWP guidance on the completion of subsidy claim forms is reviewed annually and action taken to ensure subsidy claims are completed in accordance with the guidance. Errors reported by auditors are detailed in appendix 9.

Premiums

- 58. Where a claimant has a special need, there are a number of premiums which can be awarded when entitlement to HB is calculated.
- 59. Testing in North Lanarkshire Council identified one claim where a carer's premium had been applied in error when calculating the HB award.
- 60. Additional testing identified one further case (value £220.32) where a carer's premium had been applied in error. The result of this error was to overstate cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £2,297 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026 local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Disproportionate rent increase

- 61. Disproportionate rent increase is where deductions are made in calculating qualifying expenditure for subsidy purposes where a local authority has increased the average rent of local authority tenants receiving rent rebates by a higher percentage increase than the percentage increase in the averages rents of tenants who are not receiving rebates.
- 62. Local authorities receive exemption from this deduction where it can be demonstrated that the authority has set its rent charges to reflect the characteristics of the individual properties and services rather than the HB status of the tenants.
- 63. In Angus Council, cell 181b on the subsidy claim form had been completed to reflect that the local authority was seeking exemption from the disproportionate rent increase on the basis of a rent increase by a common percentage. For completeness, cell 180a should also have been completed to reflect that the local authority has open and transparent rent setting policies. This error did not affect subsidy claimed.

Appendix 1

Potential recovery of subsidy by DWP for those local authorities where errors resulted in overpaid HB

Local authority	Error	Rent rebate	Rent allowance	Total potential recovery of subsidy by DWP
Aberdeen	- Earned income errors - Misclassification of overpayments - Occupational pension income errors - Tax credit errors	£22,886 £18,004 £1,147 £838	£8,497 £4,561 £477	£56,410
Aberdeenshire	Calculation over a 52 week period instead of a 53 week period	£15,488		£15,488
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	- Income errors - Incorrect eligible rent	£127 £81		£208
Dumfries & Galloway	- Earned income error - Misclassification of overpayments	£55 £8		£63
East Renfrewshire	In year reconciliation	£316	£316	£632
Fife	- In year reconciliation - Prior year uncashed payments		£2,971 £5,985	£8,956
Highland	- Incorrect eligible rent figures - Earned income errors - Prior year uncashed payments	£27,030	£75,788 £5,006	£107,824

Local authority	Error	Rent rebate	Rent allowance	Total potential recovery of subsidy by DWP
Midlothian	- Misclassification of overpayments - Earned income errors	£615 £68	£342 £15	£1,040
North Lanarkshire	- Incorrect eligible rent-under occupancy deduction errors - Error with a carer's premium - Misclassification of overpayments	£69,926 £2,297 £505	£116	£72,844
Perth & Kinross	Child benefit income error	£212		£212
Stirling	Earned income errors	£10,385		£10,385
TOTAL				£274,062

Appendix 2

Details of reported errors relating to income

Aberdeen City Council

Three rent rebate cases (total value £262.31) were identified where HB had been overpaid due to the miscalculation of the claimant's wages.

Additional testing identified a further four cases (total value £789.64) where HB had been overpaid, a further two cases where benefit had been underpaid and two cases where the miscalculation of employed earnings did not result in a monetary error.

The effect of the error was to overstate cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £22,886.31 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Testing was carried out on rent rebate claimants with occupational pension due to errors identified in previous years. This identified seven rent rebate cases (total value £88.61) where HB had been overpaid.

The effect of this error was to overstate cell 023 by £1,147.33 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026.

Testing carried out on rent rebate claims containing Working Tax Credits due to errors identified in previous years, identified two cases (total value £43.54) where HB had been overpaid and a further two cases where HB had been underpaid.

The effect of these errors was to overstate cell 023 by £838.12 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026.

Testing identified one rent allowance case where there was a miscalculation of the claimant's wages.

Testing of an additional sample of cases identified a further five cases (total value £607.85) where HB had been overpaid, six cases where benefit had been underpaid, and a further case where an error had no impact on the level of benefit paid.

The effect of this error was to overstate cell 102, rent allowance expenditure not requiring referral to the rent officer, by £3,799.14 and cell 103, expenditure administered under local housing allowance rules by £4,698.46 with a corresponding understatement of £8,497.60 in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Testing identified ten rent allowance cases (total value £168.03) where HB had been overpaid as a result of the miscalculation of the claimant's earnings from an occupational pension. Additional

Details of reported errors relating to income

testing identified a further four cases where HB had been underpaid and two cases where errors did not result in a monetary error.

The effect of this error was to overstate cell 099, rent allowance expenditure administered under rent officer arrangements up to the maximum rent by £8.10 and cell 102, expenditure not requiring referral to the rent officer by £469.66 with a corresponding understatement of £477.76 in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Testing identified two cases where an error was made when calculating Employment Support Allowance (ESA). There was no impact on the level of benefit paid.

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Testing identified one case where an incorrect salary was used in the HB calculation. This error however did not impact on the claimant's benefit entitlement.

Additional testing identified one case where HB had been underpaid as a result of the authority miscalculating weekly earned income.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, these errors have not been classified as errors for subsidy purposes.

Testing identified one rent allowance case (£2.91) where HB had been overpaid as a result of applying an incorrect ESA component in the HB calculation, and one case (£0.68) where HB had been overpaid as a result of using an incorrect savings credit amount. Testing of an additional sample of cases identified no further errors.

The effect of these errors was to overstate cell 102, rent allowance expenditure not requiring referral to the rent officer, by £127 with a corresponding understatement of cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Testing identified one case where the average weekly income for the claimant had been calculated incorrectly. The claimant's average income had been calculated based on 2 four-weekly payslips which had been provided. However, the claimant worked on a 4/4/5 week basis and therefore his average income had not been calculated correctly.

As testing of an additional sample of cases identified no further errors, the error was deemed to be an isolated incident.

The effect of the error was to overstate cell 014, leased or self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord by £55.45 with a corresponding understatement of cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Details of reported errors relating to income

The Highland Council

Testing identified one case where HB had been underpaid by £5.84 as a result of miscalculating the claimant's salary.

Testing of an additional sample of cases identified two cases where HB had been overpaid benefit (total value £80).

The effect of these errors was to overstate cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £27,030 with a corresponding understatement of cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Midlothian Council

Testing identified one rent rebate case (total value £4.67) where HB was overpaid due to an error in the calculation of the claimant's salary.

Additional testing identified one case (total value £2.52) where benefit was overpaid and four cases (total value £58.80) where benefit was underpaid.

The combined effect resulted in an understatement of £68.83 in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments, with corresponding overstatements of £44.70 in cell 012, board and lodging or non-self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord, and £24.13 in cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy.

Testing identified one rent allowance case (total value £0.12) where HB had been overpaid due to an error in the calculation of a claimant's salary.

Additional testing identified one case (total value £0.75) where benefit was overpaid and one case (total value £0.26) where benefit was overpaid.

The effect is an overstatement in cell 102, rent allowance expenditure not requiring referral to the rent officer of £10.44, an overstatement in cell 103, rent allowance expenditure administered under local housing allowance rules, of £5.29, with a corresponding understatement of £15.73 in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Testing identified one case (total value £0.56) where HB had been underpaid due to the wrong tax credit amount being applied.

Additional testing identified one case (total value £0.13) which again resulted in an underpayment of benefit.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit that has not been paid, the above underpayment does not affect subsidy.

Details of reported errors relating to income

Perth & Kinross Council

Testing identified one case where HB had been overpaid (value £212) due to mistakenly removing child benefit from a claim. This had reduced the claimant's income for a subsidy period (2008/09) when child benefit was not disregarded as income.

The auditor reviewed the other two cases where adjustments were made to HB relating to 2008/09. For these two cases child benefit was not applicable.

It was concluded that this error is isolated and that cell 031, prior year rent rebate local authority error and administrative delay overpayments is understated by £212 with a corresponding overstatement in cell 034, rent rebate subsidy claimed at full rate.

Stirling Council

Testing carried out in a local authority on rent rebate claimants' earned income due to errors identified in previous years, identified three errors resulting in two cases (total value £2192.19) where benefit was overpaid, and one case (total value £0.01) where benefit was underpaid.

The effect of these errors is to overstate cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy by £10,385.66 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Testing identified one rent allowance case (total value £1.31) where HB had been underpaid as a result of the authority miscalculating the claimant's income.

Additional testing identified one additional error which resulted in an underpayment (total value £2.07).

As there is no eligibility for subsidy for benefit that has not been paid, the underpayment does not affect subsidy.

Inverclyde Council

Testing identified one case (total value £1,435.94), where HB had been underpaid as a result of the authority miscalculating the earned income of the claimant's non-dependent resulting in the wrong non-dependent deduction amount being applied to the HB award.

No further underpayments or overpayments were identified.

As there is no eligibility for subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment identified does not affect subsidy.

Appendix 3

Details of reported errors relating to overpayment classification

Aberdeenshire Council

One authority informed their auditor that an error had been identified where the weekly rent rebate had been calculated on a 52 week period instead of a 53 week period, resulting in overpayments being made throughout the year.

The affected claims were re-assessed via a mass calculation in March 2014 which resulted in the overpayments being automatically classified as claimant error when the classification should have been local authority error. The local authority manually carried out a re-classification exercise in subsidy year 2014/15 and the change of overpayment classification will be reflected in the 2014/15 subsidy claim.

A total of 2,519 claims were affected, resulting in overpayments totalling £38,721.67. The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 028, rent rebate eligible overpayments (40% subsidy recover rate) by £38,721.67 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments (zero subsidy recovery rate).

Aberdeen City Council

Testing of rent rebate eligible overpayments identified nine cases (total value £768.30) where the overpayment had been wrongly classified as an eligible error when it should have been classified as a local authority error.

The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full- rate subsidy (100% subsidy recovery rate) by £1,636.17 and cell 028, rent rebate eligible overpayments by £40,920.25 (40% subsidy recovery rate) with a corresponding understatement in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments of £42,556.42 (zero subsidy recovery rate).

Three rent allowance eligible overpayment cases (total value £307.71) were identified where the overpayments had been wrongly classified as an eligible error when they should have been classified as a local authority error. Additional testing identified a further two cases where the overpayment was correctly classified, but had been overstated.

The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement to cell 103, claims administered under local housing allowance rules, by £2,115.27 (100% subsidy recovery rate) and cell 114, eligible rent allowance overpayment, by £4,298.29 (40% subsidy recovery rate) with a corresponding understatement in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments of £6,413.56 (zero recovery rate).

Details of reported errors relating to overpayment classification

Testing identified one rent allowance case (total value £71.11) where a prior year overpayment had been wrongly classified as an eligible error when it should have been classified as a local authority error.

Additional testing identified a further three cases (total value £171.91) where the eligible overpayment had been overstated and two cases where the overpayment was correctly classified, but had been overstated.

The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement to cell 114, current year eligible overpayments, by £193.01 (40% subsidy recovery rate) and cell 121 by £1,625.29 (40% subsidy recovery rate) with a corresponding understatement in cell 113, current year local authority error and administrative delay overpayments, of £193.01 (zero subsidy recovery rate) and cell 120, prior year local authority error and administrative delay overpayments, by £1,625.29 (zero subsidy recovery rate).

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Testing identified one case where the local authority's homeless service provided an incorrect date when reporting the date a tenant moved out.

No other instances were noted during testing and it was concluded that this was an isolated incident.

The error resulted in an overpayment of £21.69 which should have been detailed in cell 026, rent rebate local authority error and administrative delay overpayments (zero subsidy recovery rate) but was instead included in cell 028, rent rebate eligible overpayments (40% subsidy recovery rate).

Testing identified one claim (£50) which had been included as an eligible rent allowance overpayment for the prior year instead of expenditure under the rent officer arrangements for cases excluded from the requirement to refer to the rent officer. This error did not affect the subsidy claimed as the error resulted in an under claim and there is no eligibility for subsidy which has not been claimed.

Midlothian Council

Testing identified one case (total value £19.76) where an overpayment had been recorded as claimant error, when it should have been classified as a local authority error. Additional testing identified one other case (£24.08) where the overpayment had been wrongly classified as claimant error.

The errors resulted in the overstatement of £1,537 in cell 028, rent rebate eligible overpayments, (40% subsidy recovery rate) and a corresponding understatement in cell 026 rent rebate local

Details of reported errors relating to overpayment classification

authority error and administrative delay overpayments (zero subsidy recovery rate).

Testing identified one case (total value £53.54) where an overpayment had been recorded as rent allowance claimant error when it should have been classed as local authority error. Additional testing identified no further errors. The error resulted in an overstatement in cell 114, rent allowance eligible overpayments, (40% subsidy recovery rate) of £856.95 with a corresponding understatement of cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments (zero recovery rate).

North Lanarkshire Council

Testing identified one case (value £311.55) which had been incorrectly included as an overpayment in the claim form due to a housing officer incorrectly classifying it on the HB IT system. The local authority amended and rectified the claim for this error and therefore there was no effect on the amount of subsidy claimed.

Testing identified one case (value £1.96) where a change of circumstances had been processed from the incorrect date, resulting in an overpayment of HB.

Testing of an additional sample of cases identified no further errors. The extrapolation of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full subsidy, (100% subsidy recovery rate) by £505 with a corresponding understatement of cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments (zero subsidy recovery rate).

One case (value of error £1) was identified where an overpayment should have been classified as local authority error and administrative delay overpayments, and not as an eligible overpayment. Additional testing identified one further case (value £1.40) that had been incorrectly classified. The effect of these errors resulted in an overstatement in cell 114, eligible overpayments (40% subsidy recovery rate) by £289 with a corresponding understatement in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay (zero subsidy recovery rate).

Appendix 4

Details of reported errors relating to eligible rent

North Lanarkshire Council

Testing identified one case (value £706) where benefit had been overpaid due to the local authority's failure to correctly apply an under-occupancy deduction.

Additional testing identified a further 14 cases (value £6,558) where the under-occupancy charge had not been correctly applied. This resulted in cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full rate subsidy being overstated by £69,926 with a corresponding understatement in cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

The auditor commented on their audited body's approach to applying the size criteria rules. The auditor pointed out that the HB size criteria rules do not apply to claimants, inter alia, that fall within paragraph 4(1)(a) of Schedule 3 of the Consequential Provisions Regulations.

While the DWP recognised that it may be difficult for local authorities to ensure compliance, it was noted that local authorities should not revise awards unless they were satisfied on the basis of evidence that the claimant met the required criteria.

During 2013/14, the auditor's audited body identified all claimants where the exemption criteria applied. Unfortunately the local authority's records for HB dated back to 1 January 1998 and not 1 January 1996. On the balance of probabilities, however, this was taken to be sufficient for the exemption to be applied. This had no impact on subsidy.

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Testing identified one case (value £50.91) where HB had been overpaid as the authority did not exclude contributions paid by the claimant towards TV licence costs. Additional testing of the remainder of the population identified one further case (value £30.39) where HB had been overpaid. The overall impact on the claim was that cell 023, rent rebate expenditure attracting full rate subsidy was overstated by £81 and cell 026, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments was understated by £81.

Testing identified one case where HB had been underpaid as a result of the local authority applying an incorrect rent override.

Additional testing identified a further ten cases where HB had been underpaid as a result of the authority applying an incorrect rent override. As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment identified did not affect subsidy.

Details of reported errors relating to eligible rent

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Testing identified one case where the claimant's rent had increased. However this information had not been updated within the HB IT system. No other such instances were noted. The error had no effect on the subsidy claim as the correct Local Housing Allowance cap of £106.13 had been applied to the claimant's benefit paid.

The Highland Council

Testing identified three cases where HB had been underpaid (total value £88.30) as a result of incorrect eligible rent figures being used in the HB calculation.

Additional testing identified one other case where benefit had been overpaid by £627. The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 098, total rent allowance expenditure at or below the rent officer's determination by £75,788 with a corresponding understatement in cell 113, local authority error and administrative delay overpayments.

Midlothian Council

Testing identified one case (total value £7.80) where benefit had been underpaid due to the wrong weekly rent being applied. Additional testing identified no other errors. As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit that had not been paid, the underpayment does not affect subsidy.

Appendix 5

Details of reported errors relating to IT system issues

Midlothian Council

Testing identified that the HB IT system had not reported the correct amount of benefit awarded, in some cases, resulting in an incorrect amount of subsidy being claimed. Due to the complexity of the issue, and the fact that this had only recently been identified, the auditor was not in a position to quantify the value or the number of cases affected. The software provider is currently working on a solution to correct this issue and will release a correction patch for 2014 once they have identified the cause of the software error.

Initial testing identified three cases (total value £39.76) where the local housing allowance rate was incorrect. This resulted in an underpayment of HB.

Subsequent investigation established that the error had been caused by a system parameter within the HB IT system being incorrectly set during system uprating for the start of the 2013/14 financial year. The error was not found during system testing. This resulted in 317 HB cases being affected resulting in an underpayment of benefit totalling £4,962.25. This error does not affect subsidy as the error resulted in an underpayment being made in each case and there is no eligibility for subsidy which has not been paid.

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Testing identified one underpayment in relation to the calculation of the upper and lower allowance limits within expenditure on board and lodging or non-self-contained licenses accommodation where the local authority is the landlord. This was due to the HB IT system applying the weekly cap pro-rata instead of cumulatively applying the cap for the week. Additional testing identified one further underpayment. As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the two underpayments identified do not affect the subsidy claimed.

It was noted that Industrial Injuries Payments made by the local authority to claimants rose 2.51% on the prior year as opposed to 2.2% as per the DWP's guidance. Further investigation showed that this error related to the whole population of claimants receiving Industrial Injuries Disablement Payments. This error does not affect subsidy claimed as the error resulted in an underpayment being made in each case.

Details of reported errors relating to IT system issues

City of Edinburgh Council

Testing identified that the HB IT system parameter for an Armed Forces Independence Payment was incorrect. The correct weekly amount should have been £134.40; however a figure of £134.30 was input to the benefit system. There is no impact on subsidy as these payments are fully disregarded for the purposes of the HB calculation.

Dundee City Council and The Scottish Borders Council

It was noted during testing in two other local authority's that the HB rates for polygamous marriages had not been entered into the HB IT system during the annual uprating exercise. No instances of such marriages were identified and, therefore, there was no effect on the subsidy claimed.

Appendix 6

Details of reported errors relating to expenditure classification

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Testing identified claims recorded as rent allowance expenditure on board and lodging or non-self-contained licensed accommodation provided as temporary or short term accommodation where a registered housing association is the landlord, which should have been recorded as rent rebates where board and lodging or non-self-contained licensed accommodation provided as temporary or short term accommodation where the local authority is the landlord. However, as the authority had amended and recertified the claim for this misclassification. There is therefore no impact on subsidy claimed.

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Although the local authority had transferred its housing stock to a local housing association, testing of rent rebates identified two claims in relation to properties transferred to the housing association. These claims should have instead been recorded within the rent allowance cells which relate to accommodation on board and lodging and non-self-contained licensed accommodation where a registered housing association is the landlord.

Further testing identified that 7.8% of the total rent rebates claimed under expenditure on leased or self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord should have instead been claimed under rent allowances. £86,374.63 in cell 014 and £7,626.84 in cell 015 rent rebate expenditure on leased or self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord, was reclassified in cells 104 and 105 accommodation on board and lodging and non-self-contained licensed accommodation where a registered housing association is the landlord. The total subsidy claim is not affected as cells 014 and 104 both receive 100% subsidy and cells 015 and 105 do not receive any subsidy.

East Lothian Council

Testing identified one case (total value £961.75) where rent allowance expenditure had been misclassified between cases excluded from the requirement to refer to the rent officer, and expenditure in claims administered under local housing allowance rules.

The claim related to a two homes payment. Additional testing of two homes payment cases did not identify any other errors. There is no effect on subsidy claimed as both types of expenditure qualify for 100% subsidy.

Details of reported errors relating to expenditure classification

North Lanarkshire Council

Prior to submission of the original subsidy claim form, the local authority identified one claim which was incorrectly classified as a rent rebate instead of a rent allowance. The local authority amended this misclassification prior to the submission of the original subsidy claim with the exception of the backdated expenditure. The local authority has amended and rectified the claim in respect of this omission and therefore there is no impact on subsidy claimed.

Testing identified two cases where expenditure where the landlord is a women's' refuge had been misclassified. Expenditure was classified in cell 102, cases not requiring referral to the rent officer, instead of cells 096 to 098, cases referred to the rent officer and administered under the pre-1996 rules. The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 102 with a corresponding understatement in cells 096 to 098.

All relevant cases were identified for this landlord (value £351,074). All were found to be assessed as below or at a reasonable market rent and therefore should have been recorded in cell 098, cases referred to the rent officer and eligible rent was found to be at or below the rent officer's determination. There is no impact on subsidy as cells 102 and 098 both receive a 100% recovery rate.

Appendix 7

Details of reported errors relating to reconciliations

Clackmannanshire Council

A difference of £37,218.87 was noted between rent allowance payment summaries from the local authority's ledger system and the amount of HB claimed per the subsidy form. The difference indicated that the local authority had paid out more in the period than it had claimed. This was due to the local authority's decision to disregard income through the local scheme for war widows' and disablement pensions in excess of that disregarded by DWP. The local authority performed reconciliations between the amount of HB claimed per the HB IT system to the finance departments' figures of amounts paid. As there was only a 1.3% explainable difference in payments the local authority did not adjust the claim.

East Renfrewshire Council

In-year reconciliation highlighted a discrepancy of £316 between the HB IT system for rent rebates and rent allowances and the underlying local authority systems.

Fife Council

The local authority uses an HB IT system only used by a small number of other local authorities. The software provider had not provided instructions on the process for reconciling benefit granted, as recorded on the benefit system, to benefit paid. The authority used its own methodology to carry out the reconciliation. Overall the reconciliation showed that the HB paid was £18,638 more than benefit granted. The authority used the lower amount as the basis of its subsidy claim.

Cells 037, in year reconciliation of rent rebate expenditure and 130, in year reconciliation of rent allowance expenditure, on the subsidy claim form should agree to the entries in cells 011 total rent rebate and 094, total rent allowance expenditure respectively. Differences of £2 in rent rebate cells 011 and 037 and £2,971 in rent allowance cells 094 and 130 were noted.

North Lanarkshire Council

A difference of £1 was noted between rent allowance cells 094, total rent allowance expenditure and 130, in year reconciliation of rent allowance expenditure.

Appendix 8

Details of reported errors relating to modified schemes

City of Edinburgh Council

The analysis of modified subsidy across rent rebates and rent allowances, did not agree to the total expenditure due to the voluntary disregarding of war disablement pensions or war widows pensions. The difference of £2,442 was due to a local authority error when compiling expenditure analysis. A rent allowance adjustment for £1,221 was added in error when it should have been deducted. The figures on the subsidy claim have subsequently been updated to reflect the correct analysis and therefore there is no impact on the level of subsidy claimed.

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Initial testing identified one case (£92) which had been included in the modified scheme cell in error as a result of the authority overstating the claimant's income. The effect of this error resulted in an overstatement in cell 214, total expenditure due to the voluntary disregarding of war disablement pensions or war widows pensions by £92 with a corresponding understatement of cell 102, rent allowance expenditure excluded from the requirement to refer to the rent officer resulting in an under claim of subsidy.

Perth & Kinross Council

Testing identified one case where the authority had not disregarded a pre-1973 war widow's pension when calculating the expenditure incurred as a result of the modified scheme subsidy. The value of the error was £819. This case was the only active claim which included a pre-1973 war widow's pension. It was concluded that this error was isolated and that cells 225 and 214, total expenditure due to the voluntary disregarding of war disablement pensions or war widows pensions were overstated by £819. Correspondingly cells 094 total rent allowance expenditure and 103, expenditure administered under local housing allowance rules were understated by the equivalent amount. As this resulted in an under payment of HB there is no impact on subsidy.

North Lanarkshire Council

During 2013/14 the authority upgraded its HB IT system. This created two issues:

- the war pension disregard was not recorded for those claims, within modified schemes that have not been subject to a benefit recalculation after the new system went live.

Details of reported errors relating to modified schemes

- an issue has been identified with retrospective change of circumstances on rent allowance modified schemes.

The local authority had been in discussion with the software provider and had been advised that the issue cannot be corrected via the system. There is no impact on subsidy as the local authority amended and rectified the 2013/14 subsidy claim for these issues.

Appendix 9

Details of reported errors relating to uncashed cheques

Falkirk Council

The local authority's treatment of uncashed cheques for rent allowances did not comply with the DWP's guidance. The local authority showed the adjusted figure (£10,283) in the rent allowance cells 004, subsidy claimed for rent allowances and 129S, total subsidy for rent allowances and left cells 007, reduction for prior year uncashed payments, and 179S, uncashed payments blank. This treatment does not affect subsidy but does not provide visibility of the prior year uncashed cheques element in line with other authorities for comparative purposes.

Fife Council

Cell 007, reduction for prior year uncashed payments, had been left blank in the subsidy claim. Testing identified that 33 prior year uncashed cheques to the value of £5,985.37 had been omitted. This resulted in the subsidy claim being overstated by £5,985.37.

The Highland Council

Prior year uncashed cheque payments had been excluded in cells 007, and 179S, uncashed payments for the six months to 31 March 2014 as the information was not available at the time the claim was prepared. This resulted in the subsidy claim being overstated by £5,006.

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Annual Internal Audit Plan 2015/2016

1. Summary

- 1.1 In line with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, a risk based internal audit plan for 2015/16 has been developed. The audit plan takes into account the outcomes of the internal corporate and service risk identification and evaluation processes, and the current business environment. In addition to undertaking work which will provide assurance on the robustness on key internal controls, the plan seeks to reflect the key priorities and challenges for the council.
- 1.2 A number of methods have been employed to facilitate production of the risk based audit plan for 2015/16:
- Consultation with all Directors and their Senior Management Teams, Senior management from the associate bodies, Renfrewshire Leisure Ltd and Audit Scotland;
 - Benchmarking with other Local Authorities;
 - Review of corporate and service risk registers;
 - Cumulative audit knowledge and experience;
 - Review of key external audit and inspection reports.
- 1.3 The following influencing factors have been considered in our assessment of the current business environment and the priority areas of audit:
- Financial stability;
 - Transformational Change – Better Council Programme
 - Regeneration and Investment
 - Public protection;

- Organisational development and workforce planning;
- Governance and control;
- Communications.

- 1.4 The total available resource is 1609 days, the operational audit time available for 2015/16 has been identified as 1238 days (77%). The remaining 371 days relates to training, service development, administration and management. Coverage of the plan is achieved through the use of in-house staff and the private sector. A copy of the plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Operational and non-operational time has been calculated in accordance with CIPFA benchmarking criteria. Non-operational time includes provision for training, performance management and service development. In addition to the internal audit assurance function the Chief Auditor has managerial responsibility for risk management, insurance and benefit investigation which are excluded from the calculation of available operational audit resources.
- 1.6 Delivery of the risk based annual audit plan supports effective member scrutiny of the council's internal financial and other control mechanisms.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the content of the risk based audit plan for 2015/16.
- 2.2 Members are asked to note that the progress of the 2015/16 annual audit plan and summaries of the findings from each audit assignment will be reported to the Board on a quarterly basis.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community Planning – Safer and Stronger** - effective internal audit is an important element of good corporate governance.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None

7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety – None**
9. **Procurement - None**
10. **Risk** - The subject matter of this report is the risk based Audit Plan for 2014 – 2015.
11. **Privacy Impact – None**

Author: Andrea McMahon – 01416187017



Annual Internal Audit Plan 2015/16



Finance & Resources Internal Audit

Date	March 2015	

Renfrewshire Council

Annual Internal Audit Plan 2015/16

Index

	Page
Audit Plan Overview	1 - 9
 Supporting Appendices	
1 Annual Internal Audit Plan 2015/16	10 - 11
2 Analysis of plan by service	12

Audit Plan Overview

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In line with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, a risk based internal audit plan for 2015/16 has been developed. In formulating the audit plan a risk assessment has been undertaken giving consideration to the following sources of information:

Risk assessment	(1) Risk assessment and prioritisation of all auditable activities (audit universe).
	(2) Corporate Risk Register.
	(3) Service Risk Registers.
Consultation	(4) The Chief Auditor has met with each member of the CMT and their senior management teams to ascertain any changes to operational practice and national policy and to determine their priorities and risks.
	(5) Senior Management from the associate bodies and Renfrewshire Leisure Limited have been consulted to ascertain their priorities and risks.
	(6) The Chief Executive has been consulted on what she sees as the council's priority and risk areas for the forthcoming year.
	(7) Feedback from, and the expectations of, the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board are identified through the regular meetings with the members of the board.
	(8) The Chief Auditor has met with Audit Scotland to ascertain where assurance on key internal controls is required and the arrangements for review of statutory performance indicators.
Benchmarking	(9) Other Local Authority internal audit plans.
	(10) Discussion with other Chief Auditors through the Scottish Local Authority Chief Auditors Group.
Review of key internal reports	(11) A Better Future, A Better Council - Renfrewshire Council's plan for action, 2014-17
	(12) The results of internal audit work in 2014/15 and in previous years.
Review of key external reports	(13) Audit Scotland: Renfrewshire Council - Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2013/14 Audit (September 2014).
	(14) Audit Scotland: Best Value reports issued during 2014/15.

- 1.2 On the basis of the above, the audit engagements planned for 2015/16 is set out in Appendix 1 and shows the planned engagements in the following categories of audit activity:

- Assurance,
- Governance,
- Contingency and,
- Planning and Reporting

- 1.3 It is the responsibility of management to ensure that they have good governance, risk management and internal control arrangements over the functions they are responsible for. It is internal audit's role to provide an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity. The scope of the internal audit plan encompasses, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, and internal control processes; as well as the quality of

performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the organisation's stated goals and objectives. Delivery of the internal audit plan supports the requirement for the Chief Auditor to provide an annual opinion which is used to inform the annual governance statement.

- 1.4 The Chief Auditor shares information and coordinates activities with other internal and external providers of assurance and consulting services, as appropriate, to ensure proper coverage and minimise duplication of effort. Internal audit may place reliance on the work of other providers of assurance and the ability to do so will be considered during each audit engagement.
- 1.5 The plan also includes provision for managing and developing the internal audit activity including audit planning, reporting, periodic quality assessments and for following up on previous recommendations and reactive investigative work. The plan includes contingency time to allow for completion of work carried forward from 2014/15 and provides for consultancy engagements to be undertaken where these can improve the council's operations, add value and improve the management of risks. Contingency time also provides for sufficient flexibility to accommodate changing risks and priorities during the course of the year. More detail on each of these elements is set out in sections 4 to 7 of this plan.

2. The current business environment and key risk areas

- 2.1 To ensure that the audit activity supports the achievement of the council's objectives, the audit plan, detailed in Appendix 1, has been aligned with the themes contained in the council plan and the community plan.
- 2.2 There are a number of significant risks, arising from the external and internal environment, which could impact on the council's ability to achieve its objectives. The most significant risks and the risk control measures to manage these risks, have been identified through the council's corporate risk management process. The key corporate risks taken into account in formulating this audit plan are detailed below:

(1) Financial stability

Due to effective financial planning, the council is well placed to address the financial challenges forecast over the shorter term, however there are significant and rising pressures forecast from 2014/15 onwards over the course of the next spending review period. Consequently the risk remains very high and continues to be subject to significant and regular scrutiny. Internal audit will test the risk control measures in place over a number of key financial systems to provide assurance over the financial management arrangements. The 2015/16 audit plan includes:

- reviews of key financial systems, including capital accounting, payroll, council tax and debt management;

(2) Transformational Change – Better Council Programme

The current strategic and transformational change agenda makes for a highly complex and challenging environment. The Better Council change programme has been designed to deliver significant financial savings, which, if not co-ordinated and managed effectively across all aspects of the council's business, could result in benefits not being delivered and impact significantly on future service delivery and the longer term effectiveness of the organisation. Therefore, the 2015/16 audit plan includes:

- a review of the implementation of strategic council decisions, focusing on the arrangements in place to deliver, monitor and track the expected outcomes arising from the better council change programme;
- a review of programme management arrangements, focusing on options appraisal processes;

- contingency time to participate in internal project work which supports the better council change programme, as required.

(3) Regeneration and Investment

Supporting and growing businesses and creating jobs are vital to both the economic and social well-being of Renfrewshire. Getting the right infrastructure and investment in place for the economic development of our towns and villages is vital to promote sustainable growth in our economy. The 2015/16 audit plan includes:

- a review of the arrangements for compliance with the conditions of external funding agreements supporting the delivery of the Heritage Strategy;
- a review of the arrangements for roads maintenance.

(4) Public protection

The Council has a public protection role relating to child and adult protection and offending behaviour. Effective partnership working with key agencies such as the police is critical to ensuring risk to and from individuals is effectively managed. The audit plan for 2015/16 includes:

- a review of community payback orders.

(5) Organisational Development and Workforce Planning

Workforce planning and organisation development are complex activities. Restructuring arising from the better council change programme and other governance and organisational developments will change the shape and size of the organisations workforce. Supporting and developing people through a period of change and innovation is a major priority. A number of Audit Scotland best value reviews have highlighted that workforce planning is underdeveloped in some councils. The 2015/16 audit plan, therefore includes:

- a review of workforce planning arrangements;
- a review of supporting attendance arrangements.

(6) Governance and control

Governance arrangements are important and provide an essential framework for decision-making. Elected members and officers have a role to play promoting a culture of good governance. The council has in place a local code of corporate governance based on the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. The internal audit function needs to deliver assurance over the council's key controls, risk management and corporate governance framework in order to be in a position to provide those charged with governance with the annual assurance statement. The audit plan for 2015/16 suitably reflects these priorities and challenges and specifically includes:

- support for members with the provision of training on good governance, internal control and risk management;
- an examination of a number of the council's key financial controls;
- an annual review of the local code of corporate governance;
- an examination of compliance with elements of the local code of corporate governance.

(7) Communications

Effective information flow, across services and with our employees, provided through well timed communications can result in increased employee commitment, good crisis response management, better service delivery, more engaged consultation, better policy development and improve the organisation's reputation. The 2015/16 audit plan includes:

- a review of internal corporate communication arrangements.

3. Allocation of Resources

- 3.1 In addition to the internal audit assurance function the Chief Auditor has managerial responsibility for risk management, insurance and counter fraud investigations which are excluded from the calculation of available operational audit resources.
- 3.2 Operational and non-operational time has been calculated in accordance with CIPFA benchmarking criteria. The calculation of operational staff time has been based on 8 full time equivalent employees. Non-operational time includes provision for training, performance management and service development.
- 3.3 Resources from any unfilled elements of posts and other available audit resource will be used flexibly to ensure that the audit plan commitments are met, through the engagement of temporary staff and the private sector where appropriate. Where engagements are undertaken by the private sector these can provide an opportunity for benchmarking and training and development. Sufficient resources are available to engage specialist contractors where necessary to address the additional risks faced by the council as dependency on ICT systems increases.
- 3.4 The total available resource is 1609 days; the operational audit time available for 2015/16 has been identified as 1238 days (77%). The remaining 371 days relates to training, service development, administration and management.
- 3.5 The following paragraphs provide an overview of how audit time has been allocated to audit categories. A summary of the operational time by audit category is detailed in table 1 below. The analysis of non-operational audit activity is detailed in the table 2 below. The planned operational/non-operational time for 2014/15 is given for comparative purposes.

	2014/15		2015/16	
Category of audit	Planned Days	% of Operational Time	Planned Days	% of Operational Time
GOVERNANCE	107	9%	145	12%
ASSURANCE	721	58%	680	55%
CONTINGENCY ^{note 1}	294	24%	306	24%
AUDIT PLANNING / REPORTING	106	9%	107	9%
TOTAL OPERATIONAL TIME	1228	100%	1238	100%

Table 1

Notes

1. This category includes time for the finalisation of the previous year's audits, corporate exercises, investigations, significant project consultancy activities and emerging priorities.

	2014/15		2015/16	
Activity	Planned Days	% of Non - operational Time	Planned Days	% of Non - operational Time
TRAINING	108	27%	103	28%
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	50	13%	62	17%
TEAM ADMINISTRATION	127	32%	123	33%
DEVELOPMENT ^{note 1}	109	28%	83	22%
TOTAL NON-OPERATIONAL TIME	394	100%	371	100%

Table 2

Notes

1. This category includes time allocated to development activities to support the implementation of the upgrade to the audit management system.

4. Governance (12% of operational time)

- 4.1 Internal Audit must evaluate the risk exposures relating to the council's governance arrangements including the arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. The engagements within this category form the basis for the Chief Auditor's annual opinion and support the annual governance statement.
- 4.2 The results of the risk assessment are detailed at Appendix 1, Part A in respect of the current year, with a total of 145 days being allocated to systems audit for 2015/16.

5. Assurance (55% of operational time)

- 5.1 A risk based assessment has been undertaken of all auditable areas taking into account the risk management framework and the expectation of senior management and the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board. The engagements within this category also form the basis for the Chief Auditor's annual opinion and support the annual governance statement. Time is also allocated to following up on the implementation of prior year audit recommendations.
- 5.2 The results of the risk assessment are detailed at Appendix 1, Part B in respect of the current year, with a total of 680 days being allocated to systems audit for 2015/16.

6. Contingency (24% of operational time)

- 6.1 This category includes time allocations for finalisation of the 2014/15 audit plan, undertaking reactive investigations of theft, fraud or other malpractice and provides for post-report work which includes attending disciplinary or appeal hearings, employment tribunals and court, as required.
- 6.2 The council is also undergoing a significant period of change and although these changes represent significant priorities and risks for the council, the arrangements may not be sufficiently well established to be suitable for evidence based audit reviews. In recognition of this, the 2015/16 audit plan includes provision for the on-going and anticipated involvement in significant project consultancy activities, including the better council change programme, development of the Renfrewshire Leisure Trust, City Deal, welfare reform, tackling poverty, and integrated health and social care, as well as smaller scale internal control reassessment by services.
- 6.3 The allocation of time for this category is an estimate based on prior experience and available resources. However this will be monitored during the course of the year to ensure that internal audit continue to be in a position to respond to other priority areas which emerge during the course of the year, and, if necessary, revise the audit plan accordingly. Appendix 1, Part C details the indicative time of 306 days allocated across the contingency heading.

7. Audit Planning / Reporting (9% of operational time)

- 7.1 This category includes annual planning activity and reporting arrangements to the Audit Panel and the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board and the Boards of the other bodies we provide internal audit services to under a service level agreement. Appendix 1, Part D details the time of 107 days allocated to planning and reporting activities.

8. Analysis of Plan by Service

- 8.1 Appendix 2 shows the amount of operational audit time allocated to individual services in 2015/16 and compares it to the planned days for 2014/15.
- 8.2 The planned days allocated to all services relates to work which is cross-cutting rather than service specific as well as time which is allocated out to services as the year progresses, such as contingency and investigations.
- 8.3 The high level of coverage in Finance and Resources compared to other services continues to reflect the annual areas of reliance agreed with Audit Scotland and that the majority of the ICT audits are focused on the ICT service.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The annual internal audit plan for 2015/16, based on the strategic risk assessment reflects the current priorities and challenges for the council, and demonstrates that the internal audit service continues to deliver added value while continuing to improve the service in line with best practice.
- 9.2 The allocation of internal audit resources are sufficient to allow for flexibility to deal with emerging priorities and provide adequate coverage of governance, risk management and internal control to inform the annual assurance statement.
- 9.3 The plan may be subject to amendment during the course of the year due to the emergence of issues of greater priority, or other unforeseen circumstances. We will report changes to the Audit Panel and the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board.

Chief Auditor
March 2015

Appendix 1

Internal Audit Annual Plan 2015/16

Entity	Engagement Title	Service	Council Plan Theme ¹	Community Plan Theme Ref ²	Days allocated	Corp risk
Part A – Governance						
CJA - Governance Arrangements	Performance management	NSCJA	N/A	N/A	145	
Corporate Policy and Planning	Implementation of strategic council decisions	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	15	✓
Performance Management Framework	Review of LGBF indications	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	25	
Information Governance	Freedom of Information	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	15	
Corporate Governance Framework	Corporate Governance Framework	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	20	✓
Prevention and detection of fraud and corruption	Prevention and detection of fraud and corruption	Corporate - All Services	BF	4	20	✓
Part B – Assurance						
					680	
Corporate Communications	Corporate Communications	Chief Executive's	BC	5	25	✓
Financial Compliance	Financial Compliance	Corporate	BC	7	15	
Review of internal controls and compliance	Cash income and expenditure - outlying locations	Corporate - All Services	BC	7	20	
Follow up	Follow up	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	60	
Business Continuity	Schools	Corporate - CS	BF	1	20	✓
Regeneration and Investment	Heritage Asset Strategy	Corporate - D&H	BF	2	25	✓
Supporting Attendance	Supporting Attendance	Corporate - D&H	BC	3	20	✓
External Funding Applications	Leader Programme	Corporate - D&H	BF	2	20	
Roads Operations	Roads Maintenance	CR	BC	2	20	✓
Building Services Operations	Repairs	CR	BF	3	20	
CRSA – Schools	Nurseries	CS	BC	1	20	
Criminal Justice Service	Community Payback Orders	CS	BF	4	20	✓
Renfrewshire Leisure Trust - Other Systems	Museums - Control of artefacts - follow up	Renfrewshire Leisure Trust	N/A	N/A	10	

¹ BF: Better Future, BC: Better Council, HPC: A High Performing Council

² 1: Children and Young People; 2: Jobs and the Economy; 3: Community Care, Health and Wellbeing; 4: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire; 5: Empowering our Communities; 6: Greener Renfrewshire; 7: Corporate

Entity	Engagement Title	Service	Council Plan Theme ¹	Community Plan Theme Ref ²	Days allocated	Corp risk
Renfrewshire Leisure Trust - Other Systems	Income Collection and Banking	Renfrewshire Leisure Trust	N/A	N/A	20	
Planning Services	Planning and Building control income	D&H	BF	6	20	
Organisational Development & Workforce Planning	Workforce planning	FAR	BC	7	30	✓
Programme management	Option Appraisal	FAR	BC	7	25	✓
Capital Accounting	Capital Accounting	FAR	BF	2	15	✓
ICT Delivery and support	ICT Service Desk	FAR	BC	7	20	
ICT Delivery and support	New Start Deployment of Assets	FAR	BC	7	30	
ICT Acquisition and Implementation	Business Continuity – Cloud Services	FAR	BC	7	20	✓
Insurance Services	Insurance Services	FAR	BC	7	15	
Cash collection and banking	Cash collection and banking	FAR	BC	7	20	
Debt Management	Debt Management	FAR	BC	7	20	✓
Council Tax	Council Tax	FAR	BC	7	20	✓
Non Domestic Rates	Non Domestic Rates	FAR	BC	7	15	
Procurement	Tendering Arrangements	FAR	BC	7	15	
Payroll	Payroll	FAR	BC	7	15	✓
GCVSDPA - Other Systems	Business Continuity Arrangements	GCVSDPA	N/A	N/A	15	
Self Directed Support	Self Directed Support	H&SC	BF	3	15	
HSC – IJB Other Systems	Due Diligence Review	H&SC	BF	3	15	✓
RVJB - Valuation System	Valuation System	RVJB	N/A	N/A	15	
SE - Contract Monitoring	Contract Monitoring	Scot Excel	N/A	N/A	25	
Part C – Contingency					306	
Contingency	Contingency	Associate Bodies	N/A	N/A	14	
Contingency	Contingency	Corporate - All Services	N/A	N/A	117	
Contingency	Corporate Groups	Corporate - All Services	N/A	N/A	75	
Contingency	Investigations	Corporate - All Services	N/A	N/A	100	
Part D – Planning & Reporting					107	
Planning & Reporting	Planning & Reporting	Associate Bodies	N/A	N/A	7	
Planning & Reporting	Planning & Reporting	Corporate - All Services	HPC	7	100	

Appendix 2

Analysis by Service

Service	2014/15		2015/16	
	Planned Days	% of Operational Time	Planned Days	% of Operational Time
All Services ^{note 1}	567	46%	602	49%
Chief Executive's Service	27	2%	25	2%
Finance & Resources	262	21%	275	22%
Childrens Services	N/A	N/A	60	5%
Education & Leisure Services	63	5%	N/A	N/A
Community Resources	67	6%	40	3%
Development & Housing	83	7%	85	7%
Social Work Services	62	5%	N/A	N/A
COUNCIL TOTAL	1131	92%	1087	88%
Scotland Excel	28	2%	28	2.5%
North Strathclyde Criminal Justice Authority	3	0.5%	18	1%
Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority	24	2%	3	0.5%
GCVJSPA	3	0.5%	18	1%
Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board	13	1%	18	1%
Health & Integrated Social Care Joint Board	N/A	N/A	33	3%
ASSOCIATE BODIES TOTAL	71	6%	118	9%
Renfrewshire Leisure Trust	26	2%	33	3%
TRUST TOTAL	26	2%	33	3%
TOTAL	1228	100%	1238	100%

Notes

- 1 Planned time includes Follow up Audit, Performance, Contingency, Planning and Reporting and an element of Cross cutting Assurance and Governance Audits and is allocated against services during the course of the year

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2014/15

1. Summary

- 1.1 Based on their analysis of the risks facing the Council, Audit Scotland have submitted an audit plan which outlines their approach to the audit of the 2014/15 financial statements in order to assess whether they provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the council, and also whether they have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice i.e. the 2014 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK.
- 1.2 The Plan outlines the responsibilities of Audit Scotland and the council; their assessment of key challenges and risks and the approach and timetable for completion of the audit.
-

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of the attached report.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – An unqualified audit opinion demonstrates the council has effective systems of internal control in place.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community Planning** – None
4. **Legal** - an audit opinion free from qualification demonstrates compliance with the statutory accounting requirements set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** - the audit plan highlights audit issues and risks, and the approach Audit Scotland will adopt in seeking assurance that these risks are being managed.
11. **Privacy Impact** - None

List of Background Papers

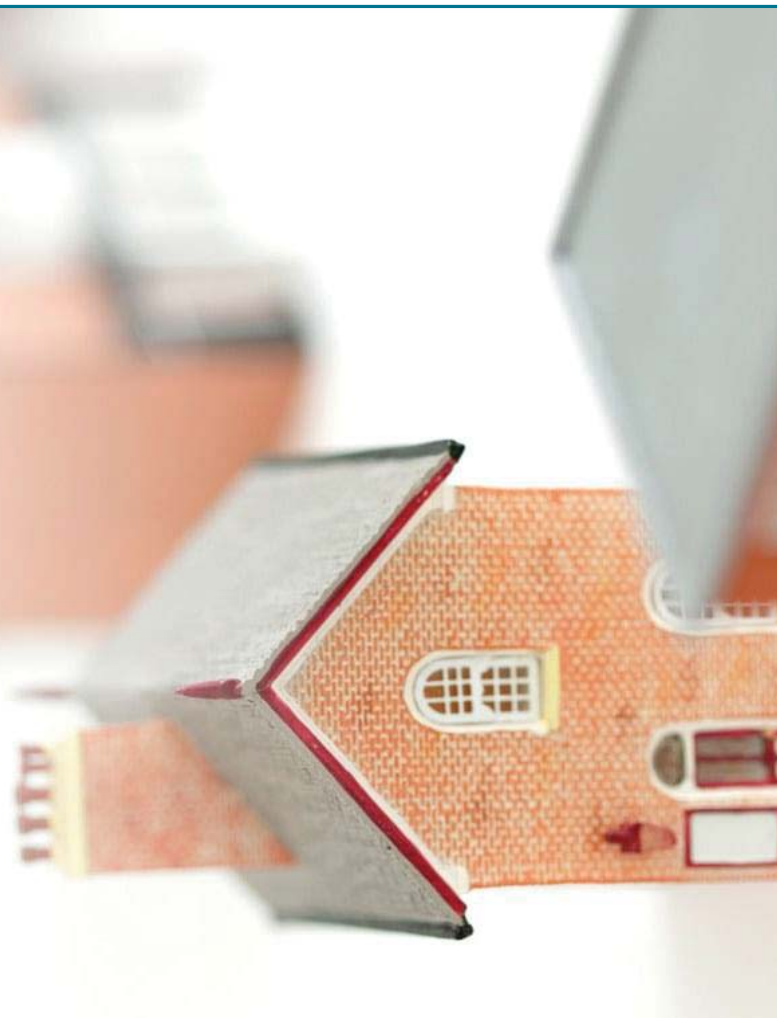
- (a) None

Author: Alastair MacArthur Ext 7378



Renfrewshire Council Annual Audit Plan 2014/15

March 2015



Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. We help the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission check that organisations spending public money use it properly, efficiently and effectively.

Contents

Summary	2
Introduction	2
Summary of planned audit activity	3
Responsibilities	4
Responsibility of the appointed auditor	4
Responsibility of the Director of Finance and Resources	4
Format of the accounts	4
Audit Approach	5
Our approach	5
Materiality	6
Reporting arrangements	7
Quality control	8
Independence and objectivity	9
Audit issues and risks	10
Financial statement audit issues and risks	10
Wider dimension audit issues and risks	12
Summary assurance plan	12
National performance audit studies	13
Fees and resources	14
Audit fee	14
Audit team	14
Appendix I: Planned audit outputs	17
Appendix II: Significant audit risks	18

Key contacts

Brian Howarth, Assistant Director
bhowarth@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Anne McGregor, Senior Audit Manager
amgregor@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Kenny McFall, Senior Auditor
kmcfall@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Audit Scotland
4th floor (South Suite)
8 Nelson Mandela Place
Glasgow
G2 1BT

Switchboard: 0131 625 1500

Summary

Introduction

1. Our audit is focused on the identification and assessment of the risks of material misstatement in Renfrewshire Council's financial statements.
2. This report summarises the key challenges and risks facing Renfrewshire Council and sets out the audit work that we propose to undertake in 2014/15. Our plan reflects:
 - the risks and priorities facing Renfrewshire Council
 - current national risks that are relevant to local circumstances
 - the impact of changing international auditing and accounting standards
 - our responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice as approved by the Auditor General for Scotland
 - issues brought forward from previous audit reports.
3. The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 specifies the accounting and auditing rules for Scottish registered charities. Irrespective of the size of the charity, as a consequence of the interaction of section 106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 with the regulations, a full audit is required of all registered charities where the local

authority is the sole trustee. Renfrewshire Council presents two sets of financial statements: one contains three common good funds and the other four charitable trusts, with total net assets of £30m and £0.7m. We audit these financial statements in parallel with the audit of Renfrewshire Council's financial statements.

Summary of planned audit activity

4. Our planned work in Renfrewshire Council includes:
- an audit of the financial statements and provision of an opinion on whether:
 - they give a true and fair view of the financial position of Renfrewshire Council as at 31 March 2015 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended
 - the accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the 2014/15 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code)
 - an audit of the financial statements and provision of an opinion for the common good funds and charitable trusts where the local authority is the sole trustee
 - reporting the findings of the shared risk assessment process in a Local Scrutiny Plan. This will summarise identified scrutiny risks and/or any changes to the Local Area Network's (LAN's) assessment since last year
 - a review and assessment of Renfrewshire Council's governance and performance arrangements in a number of key areas including: internal control, the prevention and detection of fraud and irregularity, standards of conduct and the financial position.

- provision of an opinion on a number of grant claims and returns, including Whole of Government Accounts
- reporting of National Fraud Initiative arrangements and results.

Responsibilities

5. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or the Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board as the body charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Responsibility of the appointed auditor

6. Our responsibilities, as independent auditor, are established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Code of Audit Practice, and guided by the auditing profession's ethical guidance.
7. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements. We also review and report on the arrangements set in place by the audited body to ensure the proper conduct of its financial affairs and to manage its performance and use of resources. In doing this, we aim to support improvement and accountability.

Responsibility of the Director of Finance and Resources

8. It is the responsibility of the Director of Finance and Resources, as the appointed "proper officer", to prepare the financial statements in accordance with relevant legislation and

the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). This means:

- acting within the law and ensuring the regularity of transactions by putting in place appropriate systems of internal control
- maintaining proper accounting records
- preparing financial statements timeously which give a true and fair view of the financial position of Renfrewshire Council as at 31 March 2015 and its expenditure and income for the year then ended.

Format of the accounts

9. The financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the Code which constitutes proper accounting practice. Renfrewshire Council prepares a Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack annually for the Scottish Government. To enable summarisation common accounting principles and standard formats should be used.

Audit Approach

Our approach

10. Our audit approach is based on an understanding of the characteristics, responsibilities, principal activities, risks and governance arrangements of Renfrewshire Council. We also consider the key audit risks and challenges in the local government sector generally. This approach includes:

- understanding the business of Renfrewshire Council and the risk exposure which could impact on the financial statements
- assessing the key systems of internal control, and considering how risks in these systems could impact on the financial statements
- identifying major transaction streams, balances and areas of estimation and understanding how Renfrewshire Council will include these in the financial statements
- assessing and addressing the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements
- determining the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures necessary to provide us with sufficient audit evidence as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view.

11. We have also considered and documented the sources of assurance which will make best use of our resources and allow us to focus audit testing on higher risk areas during the audit of the financial statements. The main areas of assurance for the audit come from planned management action and reliance on systems of internal control. Management action being relied on for 2014/15 includes:

- comprehensive closedown procedures for the financial statements accompanied by a timetable issued to all relevant staff
- clear responsibilities for preparation of financial statements and the provision of supporting working papers
- delivery of unaudited financial statements to agreed timescales with a comprehensive working papers package
- completion of the internal audit programme for 2014/15.

12. Auditing standards require internal and external auditors to work closely together to make best use of available audit resources. We seek to rely on the work of internal audit wherever possible and as part of our planning process we carry out an early assessment of the internal audit function. Internal audit is provided by the internal audit section within the council. Overall, we concluded that the internal audit service operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit

Standards (PS/IAS) and has sound documentation standards and reporting procedures in place. We also note that an external assessment of compliance against PS/IAS is due to be completed in 2015/16 by another local authority.

13. We plan to place formal reliance on aspects of the work of internal audit in the following areas, to support our audit opinion on the financial statements:

- Non-domestic rates
- Treasury management
- Payroll.

14. In respect of our wider governance and performance audit work we also plan to review the findings and consider other areas of internal audit work including:

- Performance measurement framework
- Asset management
- Procurement.

15. A report taken to the February 2015 Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board noted that as at the end of December 2014, internal audit progress against their phased target was 13.6% behind target. This was attributed to a combination of a long term absence and vacancies earlier in the year, both of which have now been filled. The Chief Auditor confirmed that all the work required allowing her to provide her annual opinion on the

overall internal control, risk and corporate governance arrangements will be carried out on time.

Materiality

16. International Standard on Auditing 320 provides guidance on the concept of materiality. We consider materiality and its relationship to audit risk when planning the nature, timing and extent of our audit and conducting our audit procedures. Specifically with regard to the financial statements, we assess the materiality of uncorrected misstatements, both individually and collectively.

17. Based on our knowledge and understanding of Renfrewshire Council we have set our planning materiality at 1% of gross expenditure. For 2014/15 planning materiality is £6.3m.

18. We set a lower level, known as performance materiality, when defining our audit procedures. This level depends on professional judgement and is informed by a number of factors including:

- extent of estimation and judgement within the financial statements
- nature and extent of prior year misstatements
- extent of audit testing coverage.

19. For 2014/15 performance materiality has been set at £1.6m. We will report, to those charged with governance, all misstatements greater than £100,000.

20. In addition, an inaccuracy which would not normally be regarded as material in terms of monetary value may be important for other reasons (for example the failure to achieve a statutory requirement, or an item contrary to law). In the event of such an item arising, its materiality has to be viewed in a narrower context; such matters would normally fall to be covered in an explanatory paragraph in the independent auditor's report.

Reporting arrangements

21. The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 (the 2014 Regulations) require that the unaudited annual accounts are submitted to the appointed external auditor no later than 30 June each year. The authority is required to consider the unaudited annual accounts at a meeting by 31 August.

22. Local authorities must publish the unaudited accounts on their websites and give public notice of the inspection period. This also applies to the unaudited accounts of the common good and charitable trusts administered by Renfrewshire Council.

23. The 2014 regulations require the local authority (or a committee whose remit includes audit or governance) to meet by 30 September to consider whether to approve the audited

annual accounts for signature. Immediately after approval, the annual accounts require to be signed and dated by specified members and officers and then provided to the auditor. The Controller of Audit requires audit completion and issue of an independent auditor's report (opinion) by 30 September each year.

24. The authority is required to publish on its website its signed audited annual accounts, and the audit certificate, by 31 October. The local authority is also required to publish a copy of the accounts of its subsidiaries. The annual audit report is required to be published on the website by 31 December.

25. An agreed timetable is included at Exhibit 1 below which takes account of submission requirements and planned Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board dates:

Exhibit 1: Financial statements audit timetable

Key stage	Date (all 2015)
Testing and review of internal control systems and transactions	February
Meetings with officers to clarify expectations of working papers and financial system reports	February
Planned council approval of unaudited financial statements	25 June
Submission of unaudited council financial statements	25 June

Key stage	Date (all 2015)
with working papers package	
Submission of unaudited charitable trust and common good financial statements with working papers package	25 June
Progress meetings with lead officers on emerging issues	Weekly during July – August
Latest date for final clearance meeting with Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources	4 September
Issue of ISA260 and draft Annual Audit Report agreement of unsigned financial statements for Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board agenda	11 September
Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board	21 September
Council meeting and approval of accounts for signing	24 September
Independent auditor's report signed	25 September
Issue of Annual Audit Report	25 September
Latest date for submission of unaudited whole of government accounts to external audit	30 July
Latest date for signing of WGA return by auditor	2 October

26. Matters arising from our audit will be reported on a timely basis and will include agreed action plans. Draft management reports will be issued to the responsible head of service and relevant officers to confirm factual accuracy. A copy of all final agreed reports will be sent to the Director of Finance and Resources, relevant head of service, internal audit and Audit Scotland's Performance Audit and Best Value Group.
27. We will provide an independent auditor's report to Renfrewshire Council and the Accounts Commission that the audit of the financial statements has been completed in accordance with applicable statutory requirements. As part of streamlining our audit approach, this year the Annual Audit Report will be combined with the ISA 260 report. As a result, the Annual Audit Report will be issued by 30 September which is one month earlier than previous years.
28. All annual audit reports produced are published on Audit Scotland's website: (www.audit-scotland.gov.uk).
29. Planned outputs for 2014/15 are summarised at Appendix I.

Quality control

30. International Standard on Quality Control (UK and Ireland) 1 (ISQC1) requires that a system of quality control is established, as part of financial audit procedures, to provide reasonable assurance that professional standards and regulatory and legal requirements are being complied with and that the independent

auditor's report or opinion is appropriate in the circumstances. The foundation of our quality framework is our Audit Guide, which incorporates the application of professional auditing, quality and ethical standards and the Code of Audit Practice issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Accounts Commission. To ensure that we achieve the required quality standards, Audit Scotland conducts peer reviews and internal quality reviews and has been subject to a programme of external reviews by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS).

31. As part of our commitment to quality and continuous improvement, Audit Scotland will periodically seek your views on the quality of our service provision. We do, however, welcome feedback at any time and this may be directed to the engagement lead, Brian Howarth.

Independence and objectivity

32. Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission must comply with the Code of Audit Practice. When auditing the financial statements, auditors must also comply with professional standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board (APB) and those of the professional accountancy bodies. These standards impose stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors. Audit Scotland has in place robust arrangements to ensure compliance with these standards including an annual "fit and proper" declaration for all members

of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Assistant Auditor General, who serves as Audit Scotland's Ethics Partner.

33. Auditing and ethical standards require the appointed auditor to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of audit staff. We are not aware of any such relationships pertaining to the audit of Renfrewshire Council.

Audit issues and risks

34. Based on our discussions with staff, attendance at committee meetings and a review of supporting information, we have identified the following main financial statements risk areas for Renfrewshire Council. We have differentiated risks between those related to the financial statements risks and those related to our wider audit responsibilities. The financial statements risks, which require specific audit testing, are summarised at Appendix II.

Financial statement audit issues and risks

35. **Signing of the accounts:** The 2014 regulations require the local authority (or a committee whose remit includes audit or governance) to meet by 30 September to consider whether to approve the audited annual accounts for signature. Immediately after approval, the annual accounts require to be signed and dated by specified members and officers and then provided to the auditor. The council's scheme of delegation is still to be updated to reflect the revised Regulations and officers plan to take a revised scheme to June Council meeting for approval. We will liaise with officers to ensure that this audit is delivered within the revised timetable.

36. **Income:** Auditing standards (ISA 240 *The auditor's responsibility to consider fraud in an audit of financial statements*) requires auditors to presume a risk of fraud where income streams are significant. Renfrewshire Council receives the majority of its funding from the Scottish Government, but still receives a significant amount from other sources including council tax income, fees and charges for services and interest and investment income. The extent of income means there is an inherent risk that income could be materially misstated. We will substantively test revenue streams to ensure that income has been completely and accurately recorded.

37. **Management override of controls:** ISA 240 also requires auditors to consider, on all audits, management's ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent or biased financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We will design and perform audit procedures to address these risks within the Council.

38. **Management commentary:** The 2014 regulations require, for the first time, the inclusion of a management commentary in the financial statements. The Scottish Government is providing guidance on the content of the management commentary but these guidelines are still to be issued. The Code encourages authorities to take into account the relevant provisions of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FREM) in respect of management commentaries.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-financial-reporting-manual>). The FREM requires greater disclosures than have been included to date as part of the Explanatory Forewords. We will review the unaudited annual accounts to ensure they comply with the new accounting regulations.

39. Group Accounts: As a result of the adoption of IFRS 10 *Consolidated financial statements*, the definition of control has been revised and now focuses on an authority's ability to use its power over the entity to affect the amount of the returns from its involvement with the entity. This means that decisions made under previous accounting standards regarding the classification of entities, particularly leisure trusts (e.g. as associate, rather than subsidiary), will need to be reviewed to confirm they remain appropriate.

40. Officers are preparing an updated group boundary assessment and will review the judgements contained with this assessment and the disclosures within the group financial statements.

41. Holiday Pay: In 2014 case law developments challenged whether or not the basis on which holiday is calculated, are in line with EU law. In November 2014 the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruled that holiday pay should reflect non-guaranteed overtime. In line with external legal advice, the council calculated the impact on holiday pay costs for the 2014 annual leave year (which runs from January to December). However,

the council has now received claims for a 'back-dated' element of the costs. An assessment of potential liability will be required for the accounts. Officers are reviewing the claims but the extent of the liability is currently unknown. An unquantified contingent liability was included in the financial statements for 2013/14. This will be reviewed as part of the 2014/15 financial statements audit.

42. Severance payments There is a lot of structural change to be managed in addition to senior staff changes and over 100 staff leaving under voluntary severance in 2014/15. We will review the financial liabilities and financial statement disclosures associated with the severance scheme and review a sample of cases for evidence of proper approval and reporting processes and for evidence of a business case demonstrating best value.

43. There is a risk that the financial liabilities associated with these severances will not be completely or accurately reflected in the financial statements or the remuneration report. There is also a risk that any payment may not be fully supported by appropriate authorisation and a business case.

44. Common Good: our annual audit report for 2013/14 noted that the revaluation reserve in the common good account for Renfrew Common Good is an historic balance, which officers are unable to fully substantiate. There may be a technical accounting error in the allocation of the reserves between Unrestricted Funds and the Revaluation Reserve. Officers are

investigating this and we follow up progress as part of our financial statements audit.

Wider dimension audit issues and risks

45. Financial sustainability: Officers estimate that over the medium term to 2017/18 annual recurring savings of £30 million are required. Based on decisions taken to date £16m annual savings has been identified; included with this, the initial phase of the Better Council Change Programme (2014-2017) is anticipated to realise savings of £8.4 million over the medium term. There are additional financial risks arising from pay pressures and growing demand pressures on key service areas, principally social work.

46. Based on results to 2 January 2015, officers estimate a very small revenue underspend of £230,000 (0.1%) for 2014/15 financial year.

47. We will review the detailed budget papers and assess progress/ achievement against identified savings plans and the budgeted financial outturn.

48. Health and Social Care Integration (HSCI): Health and social care for adults will be implemented locally from 1 April 2015 with full integration arrangements due for 1 April 2016. Management have advised that they are on track to submit their integration scheme by the 1 April 2015 deadline and to implement full integration by 1 April 2016. A chief officer

designate was appointed in January 2015 and recruitment of a chief finance officer is imminent.

49. Changes in senior management: A number of structural changes were approved over the past six months and following the appointment of a new Chief Executive in December 2014, a review of existing management structures was carried out. This has resulted in fewer directors and various corporate support functions being consolidated under new heads of service. The revised management structure will be implemented in 2015/16.

50. Performance management: In our annual audit report on the audit 2013/14 published in October 2014, we reported that the new council plan 2014-2017, *A Better Future, A Better Council* describes what the council will do to deliver community plan objectives, but that a suite of performance measures was still to be developed. A council plan scorecard is currently being incorporated into the corporate management team quarterly scorecard and will be reported to the Leadership Board in spring 2015. We will review the scorecard and assess whether it represents a fair and balanced reflection of performance.

Summary assurance plan

51. Details of the sources of assurance that we have received for each of these risks and any audit work we plan to undertake is also set out in Appendix II. In the period prior to the

submission of the unaudited financial statements, we will liaise with senior officers on any new or emerging issues.

55. Details are being clarified as to the extent of the work and we will liaise with the Director of Finance and Resources on audit work to be carried out at Renfrewshire Council.

National performance audit studies

52. Audit Scotland's Performance Audit and Best Value(PABV) Group undertake a programme of studies on behalf of the Auditor General and Accounts Commission.

53. In line with Audit Scotland's strategy to support improvement through the audit process PABV Group is currently scoping a piece of work to collect baseline information about finance departments and the control environment across the public sector. Audit feedback indicates that overall reductions in staff numbers in public bodies may be affecting the capacity of back-office functions, including finance and other related activities. The information will be used to identify a number of common and emerging issues and may be reported in sector specific overview reports or within individual annual audit reports. The information would also support the development of the future performance audit programme.

54. The Accounts Commission is aware of the financial difficulties facing councils over the next few years and has asked Audit Scotland to provide it with an update paper setting out the funding gaps facing all councils in the next few years.

Fees and resources

Audit fee

56. Over the past four years, Audit Scotland has reduced audit fees by 23.5% in real terms, exceeding our 20% target. Due to further refinement of our audit approach we have been able to restrict the increase in audit fees for 2014/15 to 1% which, in real terms, represents a 0.6% reduction at 2014 price levels.
57. In determining the audit fee we have taken account of the risk exposure of Renfrewshire Council, the management assurances in place, and the level of reliance we plan to take from the work of internal audit. We have assumed receipt of a complete set of unaudited financial statements and comprehensive working papers package by 25 June 2015.
58. The agreed audit fee for the 2014/15 audit of Renfrewshire Council is £354,610. This includes £4,550 and £1,000 for our work on the common good and charitable trust accounts, respectively. Our fee covers:

- the costs of planning, delivering and reporting the annual audit including auditor's attendance at committees
- Renfrewshire Council's allocation of the cost of national performance audits and statutory reports by the Accounts Commission

- a contribution towards functions that support the local audit process (e.g. technical support and coordination of the National Fraud Initiative), support costs and auditors' travel and subsistence expenses.

59. Where our audit cannot proceed as planned through, for example, late receipt of unaudited financial statements or being unable to take planned reliance from the work of internal audit, a supplementary fee may be levied. An additional fee may also be required in relation to any work or other significant exercises outwith our planned audit activity.

Audit team

60. Brian Howarth, Assistant Director, Audit Services is your appointed auditor. The local audit team will be led by Anne McGregor, who will be responsible for day to day management of the audit and who will be your primary contact. Details of the experience and skills of our team are provided in Exhibit 2. The core team will call on other specialist and support staff as necessary.

Exhibit 2: Audit team

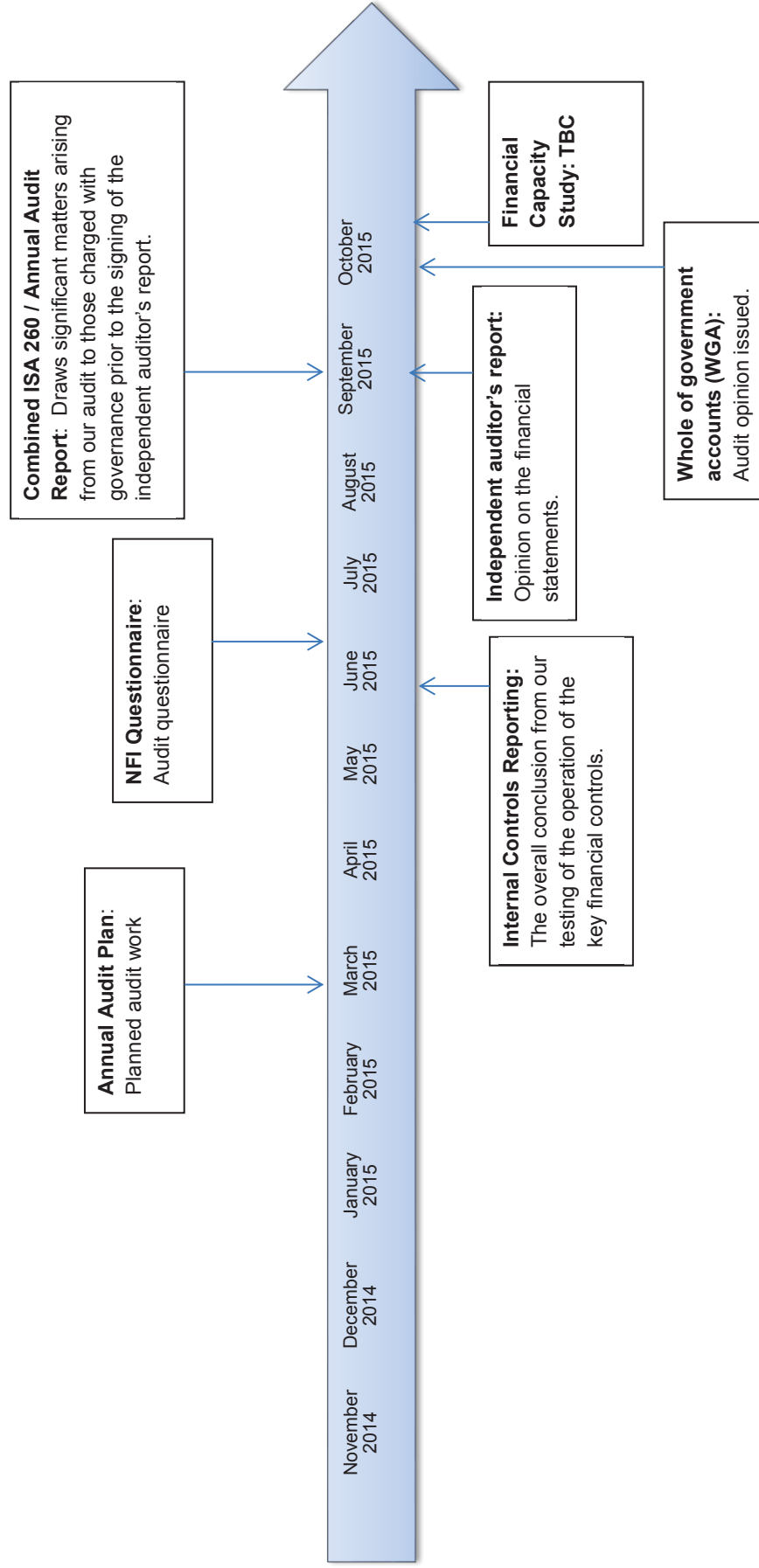
Name	Experience
B Howarth, ACMA CGMA, Assistant Director	Brian has over 20 years experience of public sector audit across central government, local government, health and the further education sectors. Prior to joining Audit Scotland, Brian worked in the Scottish Office and an NDPB for 7 years. Brian also manages Audit Scotland's Business Improvement Unit and its Professional Standards & Quality Improvement Group.
Anne McGregor, CA, Senior Audit Manager	Anne has over 15 years experience of public sector audit after working in the private sector for 7 years. Her public sector audit experience includes central and government and she has been involved in a number of business improvement projects within Audit Scotland.
Kenny McFall, CPFA, Senior Auditor	Kenny has 13 years experience of public sector audit with Audit Scotland, covering local government, central government and health sectors.

Name	Experience
Stephen Mors, CPFA, Senior Auditor	Stephen has worked for Audit Scotland for 7 years having originally joined and progressed through the graduate trainee programme. His experience is mainly within local and central government sector. He has also worked on Audit Scotland business improvement projects.
Jim Cumming, Senior Auditor ICT	Jim has 13 years experience of public sector ICT audit with Audit Scotland, covering local government, health, central government sectors. Prior to working for Audit Scotland, Jim spent 15 years in various IT roles including development, project management, operational and system administration roles in the engineering industry.
Gordon McAllister, CPFA, Auditor	Gordon joined Audit Scotland in 2009 as a graduate trainee and qualified in 2013. Gordon has a BA (Hons) degree in Finance and Marketing. He has worked on the audits of a wide range of local and central government bodies.
Andrew Kerr, Trainee Auditor	Andrew joined Audit Scotland in October 2013 and has been involved in local

Name	Experience
	government and central government audits. He is currently studying towards his ICAS qualification.
Andrew Wallace, Trainee Auditor	Andrew joined Audit Scotland in October 2014 and is currently studying towards his ICAS qualification.

Appendix I: Planned audit outputs

The diagram below shows the key outputs planned for Renfrewshire Council in 2014/15.



Appendix II: Significant audit risks

We undertake a risk-based audit whereby we focus on those areas where we have identified a risk of material misstatement in the accounts. This section shows how our audit approach focuses on the risks we have identified through our planning procedures. ISA 315 *Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement through understanding the entity and its environment* defines a significant risk as “an identified and assessed risk of material misstatement that, in the auditor’s judgement, requires special audit consideration.”

Here we identify a range of risks, the related source of assurance received and the audit work we propose to undertake to secure additional assurance. The management of risk is the responsibility of Renfrewshire Council and its officers, with the auditor’s role being to review the arrangements put in place by management. Planned audit work, therefore, will not necessarily address all residual risks.

Audit Risk		Source of assurance	Assurance procedure
<i>Audit risk of material misstatement in financial statements</i>			
Requirements of the new accounting regulations: The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 require the local authority to meet by 30 September to consider whether to approve the audited annual accounts for signature. These new regulations include a requirement for a management commentary in the financial statements.	- A timetable to ensure new requirements are met has been agreed with elected members. - The scheme of delegation will be amended for approval at the June 2015 Council meeting and specify the Council will formally approve the audited annual accounts.		- Review the revised scheme of delegation to ensure changes due to the 2014 Regulations are included - Continue to liaise with officers to deliver the audit to the revised timetable - Our audit of the 2014/15 financial statements will review compliance with the new accounting regulations and management commentary disclosures

Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Assurance procedure
Income Renfrewshire Council receives a significant amount of income in addition to SG funding. The extent and complexity of income means there is an inherent risk of fraud in accordance with ISA240.	- Closedown procedures clearly explain work to be done on identifying all transactions for relevant accounting period. - Revenue monitoring reports are presented to relevant policy boards during the year with explanations provided on large or unusual movements.	We will substantively test revenue streams to ensure that income has been completely and accurately recorded
Management override of controls As stated in ISA 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of management's ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.	N/A	- Detailed testing of journal entries - Review of accounting estimates for bias - Evaluating significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business.
Management commentary The 2014 Regulations require that the accounts include a management commentary but Scottish Government guidelines on format and content are still to be issued. Officers may have to refer to wider Government Financial Reporting Manual guidance in order to construct a fully compliant commentary.	- Officers regularly liaise with Scottish Government and other local authority finance staff to ensure they quickly identify any changes or developments - Significant changes to that previously disclosed in the foreword will be discussed with Audit Scotland	Our audit of the 2014/15 financial statements will review in detail compliance with the new accounting regulations and management commentary disclosures.

Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Assurance procedure
Group Accounts: As a result of the adoption of IFRS 10, the definition of control has been revised. This is used to determine treatment of interests in other entities. There is a risk that the financial statements for 2014/15 do not correctly account for, or disclose, the group arrangements.	Officers are preparing a boundary assessment to ensure group entities are correctly defined and accounted for	- Review of group boundary assessment for group entities - Review completeness and accuracy of disclosures within the group financial statements.
Holiday pay: Councils may be liable for 'back-dated' element of holiday pay costs, however there is uncertainty over the potential liability and there is a risk that this may be understated in the financial statements or not adequately disclosed.	- The council has received claims - Finance staff will liaise with legal services as part of the accounts preparation process for potential progress in legal cases during the year.	- Discussions to be held with Legal services during the financial statements audit. - Assessment of judgements and evaluations made by officers and of the financial liability at 31 March 2015 to ensure completeness and accuracy

Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Assurance procedure
Severance payments There is a lot of structural change to be managed in addition to senior staff changes and over 100 staff leaving under voluntary severance in 2014/15. There is a risk that the financial liabilities associated with these severances will not be completely or accurately reflected in the financial statements or the remuneration report. There is also a risk that any payment may not be fully supported by appropriate authorisation and a business case.	• Business Cases • Council papers	• Substantive testing of a sample of severance payments to ensure that they are appropriately authorised and reported to committee and represent best value • Review of the classification, completeness and accuracy of liabilities, within the financial statements, associated with the severance scheme. • Review of the associated disclosures within the financial statements including the remuneration report
Common Good: The revaluation reserve in the Common Good accounts is an historic balance, which council officers are unable to fully substantiate. There may be a technical accounting error in the allocation of the reserves between Unrestricted Funds and the Revaluation Reserve.	• Officers are reviewing the basis of the reserve and tracing back movements to prior years	• Ongoing discussion with finance staff during planning and controls work • Detailed review of the allocation of common good reserves between unrestricted and revaluation elements during financial statements audit

Audit Risk		Source of assurance	Assurance procedure
<i>Audit risk to wider code of practice responsibilities</i>			
Financial position and funding gap Officers estimate that over the medium term to 2017/18 annual recurring savings of £30 million are required. The initial phase of The Better Council Change Programme (2014-2017) is anticipated to realise savings of £8.4 million over the medium term. There are additional financial risks arising from pay pressures and growing demand pressures on key service areas There is a risk that savings targets are not met and the ongoing need to deliver savings may have an impact on services and the delivery of strategic priorities.	Savings will be achieved through: • service and management restructuring • debt smoothing strategy • savings from accommodation costs • review of corporate support model.	• Review of detailed budget papers. • On-going discussion with council officers. • Review of progress/ achievement against savings plans and the budgeted financial outturn.	
Performance management: A suite of performance measures is still to be developed to support the new council plan 2014-2017, <i>A Better Future, A Better Council</i> There is a risk that the performance against the new council plan is not transparent.	• A council plan scorecard is currently being incorporated into the corporate management team quarterly scorecard and will be reported to the Leadership Board in spring 2015	• We will review the scorecard and assess whether it represents a fair and balanced reflection of performance.	

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petition

Board On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Annual Review of Compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance

1. Summary

- 1.1 Corporate governance is the name given to the system by which Councils direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. It is about ensuring that councils do the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
 - 1.2 This report reviews the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance and provides evidence of how the Council complies with the code. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance came into effect on 1 April 2002. It was updated in 2009 in line with the CIPFA/SOLACE corporate governance framework - "Delivering good governance in Local Government", and the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance note for Scottish Authorities which was published in late 2008.
 - 1.3 The code reflects the increased importance placed by the Council on self-assessment and activities involving greater scrutiny of services. It also links to the Best Value criteria where governance and accountability are key elements against which the Council is assessed.
 - 1.4 The evidence presented in Appendix 1 demonstrates that strong governance arrangements are in place within the Council and that Councillors and Officers are working together to lead and manage the Council in order to provide vital public services.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board is asked to

- note the Council's compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance which is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
 - Agree that the Local Code of Corporate Governance should be reviewed again in 2016.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council reviews its Local Code of Corporate Governance annually, and last reviewed and approved its code and the supporting evidence of compliance, in March 2014.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance covers the six core principles which bring together the main elements of council business. These are:
- Focusing on the purpose of the local authority and on outcomes for the local community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
 - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
 - Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability
- 3.3 Evidence of how the Council complies with the Local Code of Corporate Governance including examples of the systems, processes and documents in place, is detailed under each of the six core principles in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.4 The framework will be reviewed by Internal Audit, who will decide if they are satisfied with the adequacy and effectiveness of the code and the extent to which the Council has complied with it, and will report their findings to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board.
- 3.5 Governance and accountability is one of the Best Value characteristics as set out by Audit Scotland. During 2014/15 a shared risk assessment was carried out by the Local Area Network, which consists of auditors and inspectors from all scrutiny bodies that engage with Renfrewshire Council (e.g. Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Audit Scotland). The resulting Local Scrutiny Plan for 2015/16 will be published in Spring 2015. Initial results from the assessment show that the Council is low risk in terms of requiring external scrutiny.

- 3.6 The Best Value 2 toolkit for 'Governance and Accountability' published by Audit Scotland has been used by officers from the Chief Executive's Service and Finance and Resources to ensure that the Council's existing governance arrangements meet the Best Value 2 standard. Both this, and the above audit, confirms that the organisation has a well-developed and fully comprehensive code of governance, which in turn demonstrates the high standards and enhanced accountability which services strive to ensure.

Director of Finance and Resources
March 2015

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none

3. **Community Planning –**

Children and Young People – *none*

Community Care, Health & Well-being -

none Empowering our Communities - *none*

Greener - *none*

Jobs and the Economy - *none*

Safer and Stronger - *none*

4. **Legal** - *none*.

5. **Property/Assets** – *none*

6. **Information Technology** – *none*

7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - *none*

9. **Procurement** *none*.

10. **Risk** – *none*.

11. **Privacy Impact** – *none*

Author: *Nicola McKeand, Policy Lead, 0141 618 7413*

Appendix 1

PRINCIPLE 1: Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
1.1	Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.		
1.1.1	Develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision	Council Plan	The Council Plan, which was approved by Council on 19th December 2013, sets out the overarching strategic vision and objectives of the Council. The document is closely aligned to the Community Plan, highlighting how we will deliver our part of the plan. It also sets out how we will need to adapt and improve to achieve our ambitions. The plan is structured around 3 themes; a better future, a better council, and a high performing council. It clearly highlights the priorities for the council over the next 3 years, describing how we will achieve outcomes for residents. The Plan is filtered throughout the organisation through Service Plans, to operational plans and IDP's. The Community Plan, which was agreed by Council in June 2013, was based upon extensive research and community consultation which identified the key issues facing Renfrewshire. Five Strategic Needs Assessment Days were carried out between February and May 2012, attended by members of the Community Planning Executive Group and other officers. At the SNA Days, the Executive Group received challenging presentations on five priority themes from specialist external organisations, academics and professionals from partner organisations and discussed priorities for action in the new community plan/SOA. There was also extensive consultation via community groups, with over 950 people from 50 community groups being consulted on the outcomes identified within the plan. Revised service planning guidance was issued in January 2015, which links to the new priorities of the Community and Council Plans. The guidelines are outcome focused and flexible, supporting Services to take an individual approach to how they respond to the Community and Council Plans. The aim of the Service Plan will be to: • Explain in a structured way, how each Service is going to deliver their element of the Community Plan • Explain how we are going to improve, adapting into the organisation we need to be to deliver for Renfrewshire Services can demonstrate a clear flow from the Council/Community Plan priorities,

		Communications Plan – strategic vision	through service priorities, action plan tasks and performance outcomes. The performance indicators detailed within Services' Service Improvement Plans also relate to the delivery of these themes. The Chief Executive discusses the content of service improvement plans, before the plans are submitted to relevant policy boards. A communications plan/timeline was developed to improve our internal communications, and in particular, to promote and develop the awareness of both customers and employees with regards to the Council's priorities. This is now updated on a regular basis and presented to CMT. A communications strategy is currently being developed.
1.1.2	Review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements	Council Plan, Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement Community planning process Consultation activities Service improvement plans	During 2013, the Council reviewed its vision for the local area as part of the development of the Council Plan, Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan. Partners were heavily involved in the development of the Community Plan. This provided an opportunity for partners to agree a vision of what Renfrewshire will be like in 2023, and what action is required by all to achieve this. Consultation on the vision and activities of the organisation was undertaken through the Public Services Panel, annual community planning conference sessions and through service specific consultations. A full review of the community and council plans and the SOA was undertaken during 2012/13. This has involved a full strategic needs assessment for Renfrewshire and significant consultation with partners and the public to determine the priorities for the area. This has also included consultation with a range of community organisations, discussion with senior staff members of partner organisations, and consultation with 180 managers in the council. Services are able to demonstrate how their own activities link to the Council's vision and priorities through their service improvement plans.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Board reports Scheme of delegation Standing orders relating to contracts Procedural Standing Orders	When reporting to board, services are required to state whether the content of the report has implications on the 6 Community Plan themes. The Council's scheme of delegation ensures that decisions are made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved. With the exception of those powers which cannot be delegated or have been reserved to the Council, functions have been delegated to Boards and committees, the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers. A review of the Council's decision making structure was undertaken and agreed at the meeting of the Council in December 2012 incorporating changes of the scheme of delegation to Boards. A review of the scheme of delegation to the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers was agreed at Council in February 2013, with further revisions being agreed at Council in December 2013. Further revisions to governance arrangements were made in December 2014 to reflect the effect of a number of major initiatives approved by the Council on the existing governance structure. These major initiatives are: the proposed expansion of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited to include cultural and other related services and facilities; the creation of an Integration Joint Board as part of the implementation of health and social care integration; the merger of the Education Service with those elements of the Social Work service relating to children and families and criminal justice that are remaining within the Council; and the Council's involvement in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal. The Council has a statutory obligation to have standing orders in place relating to contracts, the main purpose of which is to provide open and transparent procedures for tenderers; to achieve value for money for the Council; and to provide guidelines for officers. These standing orders are reviewed regularly as a matter of good practice, most recently in February 2013, following a comprehensive review, revised standing orders were adopted. The Council has approved procedural standing orders which determine how the business of meetings of the Council and its boards will operate. These are based on provisions contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. These standing orders are reviewed regularly as a matter of good practice and the current standing orders were last amended in December 2013.

1.1.3	Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners.	Scheme of Decentralisation / Local Area Committees	The Council's scheme of decentralisation was introduced in April 2008, establishing five statutory local area committees to promote the well-being of the area and ensure that services meet the needs of the residents of that area. The local area committees are responsible for promoting active citizenship; shaping services around the needs of residents; promoting enhanced coordination and scrutiny of public services at a local level; funding local projects and distributing grants from delegated local area committee budgets. LACs prioritise the distribution of their resources in accordance with community needs identified in their respective local action plans and community plan key priorities. An annual report is submitted to each LAC highlighting each LAC's key achievements and providing information on the outcomes of a number of projects funded by the LAC.
		Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement	The Council currently complies with this requirement through its Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement, which set out a clear vision for partnerships and for Renfrewshire and its people, as well as the key areas of priority and actions to be undertaken. The Community Plan, which was agreed by Council in June 2013, was based upon extensive research and community consultation which identified the key issues facing Renfrewshire. Five Strategic Needs Assessment Days were carried out between February and May 2012, attended by members of the Community Planning Executive Group and other officers. At the SNA Days, the Executive Group received challenging presentations on five priority themes from specialist external organisations, academics and professionals from partner organisations and discussed priorities for action in the new community plan/SOA. There was also extensive consultation via community groups, with over 950 people from 50 community groups being consulted on the outcomes identified within the plan.
		Strategic partnership agreements	Partnership agreements are also in place for strategic partnerships involving the Council, for example, North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority and Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership. These set out the partnerships' priorities and objectives.
		Minutes of agreement	Minutes of Agreement set out the rights, duties, powers, liabilities and obligations of parties to the Agreement e.g. the Council and partner organisation. Appointments of members to outside bodies are not taken up until the Director of Finance and Resources confirms that the organisations have appropriate insurance policies in place.

1.1.4	Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance	Annual financial statements, annual accounts and annual audit review	The Council complies with this requirement through the publication of its Annual Accounts, through the regular submission of budget reports to Policy Boards, the submission of the annual audit review and other audit reports to the Council and/or Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board as appropriate and by publishing performance information on our website. The Council has reviewed its approach to public performance reporting and implemented a new approach based on customer feedback. The reports are more accessible, easier to read, and focused on key indicators which the public most want to know about. The first stage of this implementation was launched in September 2012 with the annual statutory performance indicator public performance report and a community planning performance report was published in November 2012. All this information has been uploaded onto the Council's website in an accessible format. The website is updated on a regular basis.
		Renfrewshire Council Performs web pages	Service improvement plan – outturn report
		Board report - Statutory performance indicators	Each service also produces a service improvement plan 'outturn report' annually, which summarises performance achieved against its service improvement plan over the previous financial year. In particular progress is monitored for each of the work actions in the action plan, and performance is measured against a scorecard of performance measures which are related to the service priorities, outcomes and actions in the service improvement plan. These updates are reported to the relevant policy board for the service each year. An annual report summarising the Council's performance against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework is also submitted to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board, and made available on the Council's website.
1.2	Ensuring that users receive a high-quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning		
1.2.1	Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available	Service improvement plans and key performance indicators	Each year, every service is required to produce a rolling 3 year service improvement plan which outlines how the service will contribute to the Council Plan and Community Plan priorities, and details how its actions and plans will achieve improved outcomes for customers in the future. Services are required to select a range of key performance indicators to create a scorecard to measure how well they are contributing to these priorities. It is monitored at a mid-year point and at the end of that service improvement plan year. The last Service Improvement Plan 'Monitoring Reports' (mid-point) were presented to boards in autumn 2013³⁴. Information including commentary on performance is collected and analysed using the Covalent performance management system.
			The Corporate Management Team monitors a CMT Quarterly Scorecard of

		performance information, which allows them to assess and review the quality and level of service being experienced by local residents/businesses each quarter. This includes information on Service levels, service cost and customer satisfaction. The Council's performance in terms of Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators is also reported to and reviewed by the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board each year. Quality of service is also measured through national standards such as the Customer Service Excellence Standard, which all services are now accredited for. The Council was awarded organisational accreditation for CSE in February 2013 and was reaccredited in March 2014. The Council rolled out the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) across all services, excluding schools, sport services and museum services. PSIF is a self-assessment framework which is based on the key concepts which underpin the European Foundation for Quality Management model, as well as the criteria set by the Investors in People Standard and Customer Service Excellence standard. The framework has helped services identify what is working well and what needs to improve. The Council has now completed cycle 1 and cycle 2 of PSIF and improvement plans are in place.	performance information, which allows them to assess and review the quality and level of service being experienced by local residents/businesses each quarter. This includes information on Service levels, service cost and customer satisfaction.
1.2.2	Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery	Petitions function	The Council introduced a public petitions procedure in 2007 which strengthens the connection between the Council and the community and which has the potential to influence policy. The procedure allows people to raise issues of concern which relate to services provided by the Council or other bodies such as the police and health board, recognising that the Council has limited influence over other bodies. The procedure is reviewed on an annual basis. Details of petitions received and their outcomes are included in the annual report to the Board and on the Council's website. During the period 2014/15, 7 petitions were received, two of which the Board determined to be invalid. Petitions heard by the Board related to grass cutting, road repairs and traffic speed issues. The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board's remit includes audit scrutiny, monitoring and review of service delivery, performance, policies and practice, community leadership through monitoring of other public bodies, and standards and ethics.

		The Board conducts an annual programme of reviews which have addressed areas such as: (a) terms and conditions of a Renfrewshire Housing lease/contract in relation to the upkeep of Council property; (b) communication between tenants, elected members and Development & Housing Services; and (c) effectiveness of the Invest in Renfrewshire programme. Annually, a report is submitted to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board which summarises the Council's performance and sets out actions which will be taken to improve performance. The Council's local area committees act as a focus for community consultation, including an open session at each ordinary meeting where members of the public can raise issues in relation to Council services. An annual report is submitted to elected members on complaints data. The next report is due to be presented to Board following the end of the financial year. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman has issued new guidance on complaints handling and has asked all local authorities to move towards a 2 stage complaints process. The new procedure was implemented from April 2013. The time taken to respond to complaints is monitored by services. This information is included as part of the complaints report to CMT (quarterly) and to Board (annually). All investigations of complaints against the Council by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are laid before the Scottish Parliament, and reported to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board. When a complaint has been upheld the Ombudsman's recommendations are implemented. An analysis of complaints received is submitted to the CMT annually. Services are encouraged when dealing with a complaint to accept responsibility where things have gone wrong, make changes, where appropriate, in procedures, rectify the situation if possible and apologise to the complainant. The Ombudsman's monthly commentary is published
	Performance reviewed each year by Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Local Area Committees Complaints procedure / form Ombudsman reports / bulletin	

		Public Service Improvement Framework	on the Council's website and considered by the complaints focus group in order that areas of good and poor practice can be identified and shared.
			The Public Service Improvement Framework was rolled out across the Council. Implementation of the PSIF improvement plans will improve service delivery.
1.3	Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money		
1.3.1	Decide how value for money (VFM) is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information that is needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board reviews Board reports Benchmarking / peer review Scotland Excel	The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board prepares an annual programme of reviews. Members suggesting an area for review must identify the purpose and objectives of the review and the intended outcome. The Board takes a common sense approach to reviewing decisions and policies and the process provides the opportunity for elected members to examine the various functions of the Council, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and makes recommendations as appropriate. For each review the Chief Executive appoints a lead officer to assist members of the board to identify potential issues and questions to be asked of witnesses. Following each review a report is prepared by the lead officer on behalf of the Board. If appropriate, minority or dissenting views are recorded. At the end of each report to policy boards, services are required to state whether the content of the paper has implications on various issues. Services across the Council are involved in both formal and informal benchmarking arrangements through for example, the Association for Public Service Excellence. Development and Housing Services participate in the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) annual benchmarking process. The Council has also been heavily involved in the development of the new Local Government Benchmarking Framework. This provides national benchmarking information on a range of indicators covering service delivery, cost and customer satisfaction. The Council is the lead authority for Scotland Excel, which was set up to deliver Best Value public services by securing cost reductions, improving best practice procurement capacity and capability, and creating a forum and communication medium for positive engagement with suppliers.

		Efficiency Statement	The Council produces and publishes an Annual Efficiency Statement which reports on its efficiency projects and activities and seeks to quantify the level of efficiency gains achieved by the Council over the period.
--	--	----------------------	--

PRINCIPLE 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
2.1	Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.		
2.1.1	Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of members generally and of senior officers	Code of conduct for employees and Councillor's Code of Conduct	The Council has adopted a code of conduct for its employees. In addition, the Councillors' Code, which was introduced by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees. A new code of conduct was approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into effect on 21st December, 2010. The Council benchmarked its standards against national guidance through the "How Councils Work Series" in their publication "Roles and working relationships: are you getting it right". This was presented to Scrutiny and Petitions Board in December 2010. A report to the General Management and Finance Policy Board held on 19th January, 2011 advised members of the principal changes to the code. The Council also has in place its own protocol on member / officer relations which has been reviewed. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have recently been reviewed. These protocols were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Guidance for Council employees on election duties. Code of corporate governance Scheme of delegation	Prior to any election Guidance to Council Employees on various issues associated with elections is issued covering political neutrality, use of Council resources, support to councillors, publicity and visits to council premises by election candidates. The Council also complies with this requirement through its Code of Corporate Governance which details the organisation's governance arrangements. This is in line with national guidance and is updated on an annual basis. The Council's scheme of delegation ensures that decisions are made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved. With the exception of those powers which cannot be delegated or have been reserved to the Council, functions have been delegated to Boards and committees, the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers. The Scheme is reviewed on a regular basis. A review of the Council's decision making structure was undertaken and agreed at the meeting of the Council in December 2012 incorporating changes of the scheme of delegation to Boards. A review of the scheme of delegation to the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers was agreed at Council in February 2013, with further revisions being agreed at Council in December 2013. Further revisions to governance arrangements were made in December 2014 to reflect the effect of a number of major initiatives approved by the Council on the existing governance structure. These major initiatives are: the proposed expansion of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited to include cultural and other related services and facilities; the creation of an Integration Joint Board as part of the implementation of health and social care integration; the merger of the Education Service with those elements of the Social Work service relating to children and families and criminal justice that are remaining within the Council; and the Council's involvement in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal.
2.2	Ensuring that a constructive relationship exists between authority members and officers, and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard.		

2.2.1	Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for the collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required	Scheme of administration/delegation	The Council's scheme of delegation ensures that decisions are made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved. With the exception of those powers which cannot be delegated or have been reserved to the Council, functions have been delegated to Boards and committees, the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers. The Scheme is reviewed on a regular basis. A review of the Council's decision making structure was undertaken and agreed at the meeting of the Council in December 2012 incorporating changes of the scheme of delegation to Boards. A review of the scheme of delegation to the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers was agreed at Council in February 2013, with further revisions being agreed at Council in December 2013. Further revisions to governance arrangements were made in December 2014 to reflect the effect of a number of major initiatives approved by the Council on the existing governance structure. These major initiatives are: the proposed expansion of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited to include cultural and other related services and facilities; the creation of an Integration Joint Board as part of the implementation of health and social care integration; the merger of the Education Service with those elements of the Social Work service relating to children and families and criminal justice that are remaining within the Council; and the Council's involvement in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal.
	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
2.2.2	Making the Chief Executive responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management	Conditions of employment, scheme of delegation, statutory provisions, and job description/person specification Annual review Covalent Performance Management System	The Chief Executive has responsibility as head of the paid service for all aspects of operational management. The Chief Executive is subject to a facilitated annual review by the leaders of the political groups at which objectives are agreed and reviewed. The Chief Executive and members of the Corporate Management Team are able to monitor a wide range of performance information from the corporate performance management system, Covalent, such as Statutory Performance Indicators, Local Government Benchmarking indicators, Single Outcome agreement indicators and operational indicators.

2.2.3	Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.	Councillor's Code of Conduct, code of Conduct for Employees member/officer protocol, and elected members protocol Inter-party protocol. Weekly meetings between Chief Executive/Leader/Depute Leader	The Council complies with this requirement through the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for employees and its Member/officer protocol. In 2007, the Council introduced an inter-party protocol which sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting council business; and an elected member protocol which sets out good practice guidelines in relation to multi-member ward issues. These protocols were last revised on 14 January, 2009 following consultation with elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have been reviewed. As these protocols dealt with similar issues, these were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014. The Chief Executive also holds weekly meetings with the Leader and Depute Leader of the Council.
	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
2.2.4	Make a senior officer (the section 95 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts and for maintaining effective systems of internal financial control	Section 95 responsibilities Statutory provision, statutory reports, budget documentation Audit reports and audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board	The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for Section 95 responsibilities; financial and budget matters. In terms of the Section 95 responsibilities the Director of Finance and Corporate Services complies by submitting accounts by the statutory deadline, receiving a clean audit certificate, and presenting a balanced budget to the Council by the statutory date for the setting of the Council Tax. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services also provides budget monitoring information to relevant Policy Boards throughout the year. In terms of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Council's Chief Auditor submits an annual report to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on the activities of internal audit to demonstrate performance and containing a view on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control. Again, in terms of the above standards regular reports are submitted to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board in relation to the findings of the Council's internal and external auditors and detailing the main issues arising.

2.2.5	Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with	Monitoring officer provisions and job description/person specification, statutory provision Scheme of delegation	Head of Corporate Governance acts as Monitoring Officer in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and as detailed in his job description. He is responsible for advising the Council on the legality of its decisions and providing guidance to councillors and officers on the Council's powers. The Council's scheme of delegation ensures that decisions are made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved. With the exception of those powers which cannot be delegated or have been reserved to the Council, functions have been delegated to Boards and committees, the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers. The Scheme is reviewed on a regular basis. A review of the Council's decision making structure was undertaken and agreed at the meeting of the Council in December 2012 incorporating changes of the scheme of delegation to Boards. A review of the scheme of delegation to the chief executive, directors and heads of service and other officers, including statutory appointments of officers was agreed at Council in February 2013, with further revisions being agreed at Council in December 2013. Further revisions to governance arrangements were made in December 2014 to reflect the effect of a number of major initiatives approved by the Council on the existing governance structure. These major initiatives are: the proposed expansion of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited to include cultural and other related services and facilities; the creation of an Integration Joint Board as part of the implementation of health and social care integration; the merger of the Education Service with those elements of the Social Work service relating to children and families and criminal justice that are remaining within the Council; and the Council's involvement in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal.
		Standing orders relating to contracts	The Council has a statutory obligation to have standing orders relating to contracts, the main purpose of which is to provide open and transparent procedures for tenderers; to achieve value for money for the Council; and to provide guidelines for officers. These standing orders are reviewed regularly as a matter of good practice, most recently February 2013, following a comprehensive review, revised standing orders were adopted.
		Procedural Standing Orders	The Council has approved procedural standing orders which determine how the business of meetings of the Council and its boards will operate. These are based on provisions contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Revisions to the Procedural Standing Orders were agreed the Council in December 2013.
		Financial regulations	The Council has in place financial regulations which set out the responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Resources, who has been appointed as the 'proper officer', along with the responsibilities of the Chief Executive, directors and other authorised people for the financial affairs of the Council. These regulations also set

			out the responsibilities of the Leadership Board, the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board and the various policy boards for our financial affairs. These were most recently reviewed in February 2013 and agreed at Council.
2.3	Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other.		
2.3.1	Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.	Code of Conduct for Employees, Councillor's Code of Conduct and member/officer protocol Inter-party protocol	The Council currently complies with this requirement through its code of conduct for employees. The Councillors' Code, which sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees, has been issued to all elected members. In 2007, the Council introduced an inter-party protocol which sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting council business; and an elected member protocol which sets out good practice guidelines in relation to multi-member ward issues. These protocols were last revised on 14 January, 2009 following consultation with elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have been reviewed. As these protocols dealt with similar issues, these were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014.
2.3.2	Ensure that an established scheme for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable) are in place	Members' allowance scheme Pay and grading structure and appeals procedure	The Council currently complies through its scheme for member allowances and procedural documents. The Allowances and Expenses Regulations require that the Council may only reimburse claims for allowances and expenses where the expenditure has been incurred by an elected member in performing any approved duty. These Regulations also require all Councils to publish information on councillors' salaries, allowances and expenses on their website by 1 June in each year in respect of the previous financial year. Increased remuneration was approved by the Council at its meeting held on 27th February 2014. A key objective of the 1999 "Red Book" Agreement between the Scottish Employers and the trade unions was the introduction of a fair and non-discriminatory pay and grading structure based on the outcomes of a jointly developed job evaluation scheme. Following collective agreements being reached with the relevant trade unions, the Council introduced a new, fair and non-discriminatory pay and grading structure with effect from 1 April 2006 for all employees. A Job Evaluation Appeal Procedure for officers was also jointly agreed with the trade unions and has been implemented.

2.3.3	Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery	Covalent	The Council has a well-developed performance management system in place called Covalent, which is actively used by services across the Council to monitor service improvement plans, strategies, actions plan and scorecards.
		Corporate Management Scorecard	The Corporate Management Team Scorecard is monitored using Covalent. It includes the Local Government Benchmarking framework indicators and is reported quarterly to the CMT.
		Performance Scrutiny Framework	The Council has a comprehensive performance scrutiny framework in place, which involves meetings between the Chief Executive and Directors to scrutinise performance and service delivery. These cover:
			(i) Spring- Review progress of Service Plan implementation and assess the draft Service Improvement Plans covering the next three years.
			(ii) Autumn - meetings with Directors to scrutinise performance over the past year, at the mid year point
		Board reports	Services are required to submit a 6 monthly performance monitoring report to the relevant policy boards.
			Performance indicators are reported to appropriate Policy Boards, the Corporate Management Team, and Senior Management Teams, at all appropriate levels of management.
		Annual reports – Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement	An annual report is presented to the Community Planning Partnership Board on the Single Outcome Agreement and the Community Plan, which demonstrates the progress being made by the Council and its partners in respect of key areas of activity. The Community Plan 2013-2023 links its activities to 6 priorities or themes. 6 monthly update reports are also presented to thematic boards.
		Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board	The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board also reviews performance. The Council's performance in terms of the local government benchmarking framework indicators which are independently evaluated by Audit Scotland, is reported to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board every year, with the next report being presented in June 2015.

			The Council also has a mail tracking system, and services have also invested in effective Management Information Systems.
2.3.4	Ensure that the authority's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.	Mail tracking Council plan, Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement Communications Strategy Decentralisation – local area committees	The Council Plan, which was approved by Council on 19th December 2013, sets out the overarching strategic vision and objectives of the Council. The document is closely aligned to the Community Plan, highlighting how we will deliver our part of the plan. It also sets out how we will need to adapt and improve to achieve our ambitions. The plan is structured around 3 themes, A better future, a better council, and a high performing council. It clearly highlights the priorities for the council over the next 3 years, describing how we will achieve outcomes for residents. The Plan is filtered throughout the organisation through Service Plans, to operational plans and IDP's. The Community Plan, which was agreed by Council in June 2013, was based upon extensive research and community consultation which identified the key issues facing Renfrewshire. Five Strategic Needs Assessment Days were carried out between February and May 2012, attended by members of the Community Planning Executive Group and other officers. At the SNA Days, the Executive Group received challenging presentations on five priority themes from specialist external organisations, academics and professionals from partner organisations and discussed priorities for action in the new community plan/SOA. There was also extensive consultation via community groups, with over 950 people from 50 community groups being consulted on the outcomes identified within the plan. A communications strategy is currently being developed and will link closely with the new Community and Council Plans. Communications play a major part in delivering the new plans by promoting its key messages. Effective communications will help to make the vision and outcomes a reality by supporting council services, encouraging behavioural change and developing new levels of stakeholder engagement. A communications plan/timeline was developed to improve our internal communications, and in particular, to promote and develop the awareness of both customers and employees with regards to the Council's priorities. This is now updated on a regular basis and presented to CMT. A new communications strategy is currently being developed. Service specific strategies and plans have also been developed and informed through the Community Planning process and through wider consultation

			mechanisms such as the Public Services Panel, community planning conferences and through online consultations e.g. Local Development Plan. This process has been strengthened through the creation of the 5 local area committees as part of the decentralised approach to decision making. This allows consultation and performance review to be undertaken at a more localised level. The Council reviewed and updated its consultation strategy, to reflect new practices and plans for development, and this was approved at Leadership board in 2009. It sets out its broad approach for engaging with stakeholders. It provides a framework within which services can develop consultation practices and procedures appropriate to the specific requirements of the services being delivered, and users of those services. ■ The Consultation Strategy action plan contains 6 priorities for improving the consultation that we do. Priority 4 is called "Targeting Different Audiences" and is about including hard to reach underrepresented groups in consultation. This includes young people, Black and Minority Ethnic communities, disabled people and special interest groups. This priority recognises that hard to reach groups often require more innovative methods of consultation in order to fully engage with them and services will, where possible, tailor their approach to individual customer groups. The Council uses an e-consultation tool which enables the Council and its partners to develop the role of on-line consultation. A consultation toolkit has also been developed as a quick reference guide for staff undertaking consultation activities, and which was updated in 2014. The toolkit focuses on the different contexts in which consultation takes place, and the most appropriate ways to undertake consultation and engagement exercises, particularly bearing in mind the target consultees. An i-learn course has also been developed and is available for staff to access for training.
2.3.5	When working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority	Corporate Services Handbook and minutes of agreement	Information is contained in the Finance and Resources Handbook on the Role, Duties and Liabilities of Company Directors. This information was updated in 2009 when relevant provisions of the Companies Act were brought into force. In addition, Minutes of Agreement set out the rights, duties, powers liabilities and obligations of parties to these Agreements. On 12 August, 2009 the General Management and Finance Policy Board approved a framework for assessing representation on arms length external organisations.

2.3.6	When working in partnership ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership; and ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to decisions.	Corporate Services Handbook, Minutes of agreement and Councillor's Code of Conduct	Information is contained in the Finance and Resources Handbook of Procedural Documents on the Role, Duties and Liabilities of Company Directors. This information was updated in 2009 when relevant provisions of the Companies Act were brought into force. In addition, Minutes of Agreement set out the rights, duties, powers, liabilities and obligations of parties to these Agreements. The Code of Conduct for Councillors requires that where an elected member is appointed or nominated by the Council as a member of another body or organisation that the elected member is bound by the rules of conduct of these organisations. Elected members must continue to observe the rules of the Code in carrying out the duties of these bodies. On 12 August, 2009 the General Management and Finance Policy Board approved a framework for assessing representation on arms length external organisations.
-------	---	---	---

PRINCIPLE 3: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
3.1. Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.			
3.1.1	Ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.	Council Plan and Corporate Induction Publication scheme and Minutes and agendas Employee Survey	The Council complies with this requirement through the Council Plan which is introduced to all new employees through the Corporate Induction programme. The programme is now provided on-line via the Council's intranet, using the 'i-learn' facility. Employees who do not have immediate access to a computer can arrange this at a library or at a school office for teaching staff. Facilitated training days can also be arranged for employees without any access to a computer. The Council's vision and key themed priorities are explored in the induction modules. The Council's publication scheme, which was revised on 14 January 2009, specifies the classes of information which the authority makes available to the public, how that information is made available and whether there is a charge for the information. The scheme was reviewed and agreed in June 2013. Meetings of the Council and its boards are open to members of the public and they are entitled to a copy of the agenda and reports prepared by officers which deal with items on the agenda unless items are to be discussed which contain exempt or confidential information. The agenda and minutes are available on the Council's website. Renfrewshire Council conducts an employee survey on a regular basis to listen to employees and drive improvement across the council. The Council undertook an extensive survey in early 2013 across all services which gave an opportunity for employees to give their views and suggestions. Detailed analysis of the results has taken place, areas for improvement identified and improvement actions developed.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Engagement with trade unions	The council engages with the recognised trade unions through a number of forums including Joint Negotiating board non teaching, Joint negotiating committee for teachers, corporate Health and Safety Committee and corporate and departmental trade union liaison meetings. These forums provide the opportunity for employee representatives to engage in discussion and debate on matters relating to the councils workforce.
3.1.2	Ensure that standards of personal conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of practice.	Employee Code of Conduct, Protocol on member / officer relations and Code of conduct for employees and Councillor's code of conduct Complaints policy and Anti fraud and corruption policy Inter party protocol and Elected member protocol Elected member training and development and induction programme	The Council currently complies with this requirement by having a code of conduct for its employees, which is issued to all new employees. In addition, the Councillors' Code sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees. The General Management and Finance Policy Board at its meeting held on 17 November, 2010 agreed a revised code of conduct for employees on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations are currently being reviewed. As these protocols deal with similar issues, rather than having three separate protocols, they are being combined into one composite protocol. An internal complaints procedure for employees, and an anti-fraud strategy are also in place. In 2007, the Council introduced an inter-party protocol which sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting council business; and an elected member protocol which sets out good practice guidelines in relation to multi-member ward issues. These protocols were last revised on 14 January, 2009 following consultation with elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have been reviewed. As these protocols dealt with similar issues, these were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014. A programme of Induction training was provided for Councillors throughout May/June 2012, including mandatory training in relation to Planning, Appeals and Licensing. A series of "Introductions to Services" and a programme of briefings from officers and community planning partners were offered during the remainder of

		the year. An annual register of training undertaken by Councillors is published on our website in June each year. The Council has adopted the CPD framework for Councillors designed by the Improvement Service. A training programme for Councillors is in place for January to June 2015. Details of training undertaken are published with the Register of Interests in June each year and are available on our website at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk The council continues to optimise employee development through the continuation of MDP, MTIPD and 360 degree performance reviews and by encouraging employees to be involved in activities and projects to prepare them for future roles and to enhance their current skills. A number of E-Learning modules are now available to employees to support their learning and development. This includes a comprehensive E-Learning Induction module for employees which covers terms and conditions and the various key policies that are in place. Guidelines have been prepared, and revised following consultation in 2009, in relation to the operation of the Council's 5 local area committees which deal with membership and representation, conduct and operation of meetings, the roles of community representatives, community planning partners and council services, support to local area committees. A code of conduct for community representatives has been developed based on the principles of public service, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect. Guidance with regard to community representatives' conflicts of interest has also been issued. A code of conduct has also been developed for members of the local licensing forum based on the principles of public service. A Code of Conduct for Community Councillors has also been introduced as part of a Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, based on the national model Scheme introduced by the Scottish Government in 2009. This sets out the minimum standard of personal conduct and personal behaviour expected of residents who represent their area as members of a community council.
	MTIPD / MDP 2/360 review Induction Local Area Committee guidelines for operation	

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
3.1.3	Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	Councillors' Code of conduct Code of conduct for employees Inter party protocol Elected member protocol Protocol on inter-party protocol Training for elected members Register of interests Equality and Human Rights Impact assessment	The Council currently complies with this requirement by having a code of conduct for its employees. The Councillors' Code, which sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees, has been issued to all elected members. In 2007, the Council introduced an inter-party protocol which sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting council business; and an elected member protocol which sets out good practice guidelines in relation to multi-member ward issues. These protocols were last revised on 14 January, 2009 following consultation with elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have been reviewed. As these protocols dealt with similar issues, these were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014. A briefing to update elected members on the protocol for Member/Officer Relations was held in May 2010. Members were provided with a briefing in 2009 in relation to governance issues. As an aide-memoire to members regarding registration and declaration of interests, all Council and Board agendas since August, 2009 have included an item in relation to declarations of interest. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services wrote to members in May 2011 relative to advice by the Standards Commission for Scotland that Minutes should include a brief explanation of the individual nature of the interest and to assist members the agenda item has been modified to remind them to provide such an explanation on every occasion the interest is declared. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also issues a reminder on six monthly basis regarding members updating their register of interests. Equality and Human Rights impact assessments are undertaken for all new policies and procedures to ensure that there is no direct or indirect risk of discrimination. New guidance was issued to support services in conducting impact assessments.

3.2 Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective			
	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
3.2.1	Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners	Council Plan Community Plan Single Outcome Agreement	The organisation complies with this statement through its Council Plan which sets out its priorities and objectives. While the Plan not only lists a number of formal values, it also does describe fully the type of organisation that the Council wants to be, and how it intends to achieve this. The new Council Plan was agreed in December 2013. The Council is in the process of developing and implementing a wide ranging communications strategy which will ensure that partners, residents and employees are aware of the priorities and know how they can contribute towards achieving outcomes. Similarly, the Council has agreed a number of shared priorities and outcomes with its community planning partners and residents, which are outlined in the Community Plan. Again, whilst these do not list a number of shared values, they do however demonstrate the spirit into which these agreements have been entered into by all partners and major consultation local community groups. A communications plan/timeline was developed to improve our internal communications, and in particular, to promote and develop the awareness of both customers and employees with regards to the Council's priorities. It is now being refreshed on a regular basis. A new communications strategy is currently being developed. In 2007, the Council introduced an inter-party protocol which sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting council business; and an elected member protocol which sets out good practice guidelines in relation to multi-member ward issues. These protocols were last revised on 14 January, 2009 following consultation with elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have been reviewed. As these protocols dealt with similar issues, these were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Local Area Committee guidelines for operation	A code of conduct for community representatives on local area committees has been developed based on the principles of public service, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect. Guidance with regard to community representatives' conflicts of interest has also been issued. A code of conduct has also been developed for members of the local licensing forum based on the principles of public service and was agreed by the Forum on 16th September 2009. A Code of Conduct for Community Councillors has also been introduced as part of a new Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, based on the national model Scheme introduced by the Scottish Government in 2009. This sets out the minimum standard of personal conduct and personal behaviour expected of residents who represent their area as members of a community council.
3.2.2	Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice	Protocol for Relationships between Political Groups, Elected Members and Officers Register of Interests	Any alleged contraventions of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 would be referred for investigation to the Chief Investigating Officer and thereafter for consideration by the Standards Commission appointed by Scottish Ministers. Where a hearing involving members of Renfrewshire Council has taken place, the outcome of this is reported to the Council. Since August, 2009 all Council and Board agendas include an item in relation to declarations of interest. Councillors hold public office under the law and must observe the rules of conduct stemming from the law, the Code of Conduct for Councillors and any guidance from the Standards Commission and the rules, standing orders and regulations of the Council. In addition, the Council has developed an inter party protocol which highlights that Political Groups have the responsibility not to require individual councillors to vote on party lines in respect of decisions where group decision-making would be unlawful, contrary to the Councillors' Code of Conduct or against any Council approved guidance; in particular on planning applications, specific regulatory matters, employment issues affecting individuals, all matters coming before the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board or any matter which requires to be determined on the basis of evidence given to or the findings of a forum on which Councillors serve.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Register of interests for Senior Officers	Members are required to register their interests in terms of the Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Council has a register of annual declaration of interest by Senior Officers (which is completed on a voluntary basis by Directors and Heads of Service) Information contained in the register is subject to Freedom of Information. The register was re-established in November 2013. Officers are contacted on a 6-monthly basis to update the register.
3.2.3	Develop and maintain an effective standards committee (or ensure the function is undertaken by an appropriate equivalent).	Code of Conduct for Councillors Acceptable use policy and guidelines	There is no requirement in Scotland for Councils to establish a standards commission. Any alleged contraventions of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 would be referred for investigation to the Chief Investigating Officer and thereafter for consideration by the Standards Commission appointed by Scottish Ministers. Where a hearing involving members of Renfrewshire Council has taken place, the outcome of this is reported to the Council. This was updated in 2014.
3.2.4	Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority.	Code of Conduct for Councillors Code of conduct for employees Protocol for Relationships between Political Groups, Elected Members and Officers Council Plan	The Council currently complies with this requirement through its Code of Conduct for employees and the Councillors' Code, which sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees which has been issued to all elected members. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations have recently been reviewed. These protocols were combined into one composite protocol which was approved at the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014. The Council also complies with this requirement through the Council Plan,

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
		Community Plan Single Outcome Agreement Service improvement plans	Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement, which were agreed in 2013. The Council Plan highlights the key role that the Council will play in terms of delivering on the key targets and outcomes that it is committed to delivering with its partners, as set out in the Community Plan 2013-2023. Services are required to demonstrate through their service improvement plans how they contribute to the both the Council and Community Plans, and to the achievement of the various outcomes and targets agreed by the Council and its partners through these 2 strategic documents.
3.2.5	In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.	Codes of conduct Code for members of local area committees Community Plan Single Outcome Agreement Strategic Partnership arrangements	The various codes of conduct determine how officers and members work within partnerships, and the shared values that they will demonstrate. A code of conduct for community representatives on local area committees has been developed based on the principles of public service, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect. Guidance with regard to community representatives' conflicts of interest has also been issued. While the Council has not developed a set of agreed values with its partners, it has agreed to work with other organisations in the spirit of partnership to achieve a number of outcomes in Renfrewshire. These have been published through the Community Plan 2013-2023. Community planning structures across Renfrewshire were redesigned to reflect the nature and focus of these agreements and to promote closer partnership working. Within partnerships, specific values may be set out as part of the plan or strategy of that group. Partnership agreements are in place for strategic partnerships involving the Council, for example, North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority, the Clyde Valley Review and Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership. These set out the partnerships' priorities and objectives. A code of conduct has also been developed for members of the local licensing forum based on the principles of public service.

			A Code of Conduct for Community Councillors has also been introduced as part of a new Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, based on the national model Scheme introduced by the Scottish Government in 2009. This sets out the minimum standard of personal conduct and personal behaviour expected of residents who represent their area as members of a community council.
--	--	--	---

PRINCIPLE 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to scrutiny and managing risk

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.			
4.1.1	Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible	Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Policy boards Decentralisation – local area committees Petitions function	The Council has an established Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board the terms of reference for which include monitoring and reviewing service delivery, performance, policies and practice and community leadership through monitoring of other public bodies. The Council's policy boards also undertake a scrutiny role as do the five local area committees. The Council has also introduced a petitions function which allows members of the public to raise issues of concern. The process is reviewed on an annual basis and in 2009 following consultation a number of amendments were implemented to increase awareness of and participation in the process, including the 'get involved' campaign. Further consultation was undertaken in 2010 as a result of which the Scrutiny and Petitions Board agreed that no further changes were required to the procedure. However, a new action plan was developed to address some of the issues raised.
4.1.2	Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based	Board reports Minutes and agendas	Reports to the Council and all Board meetings provide members with sufficient information on which they are able to take reasoned decisions, including personnel, legal, financial, risk, health and safety and other implications, and provide clear recommendations. Minutes of meetings outline the decisions which have been taken and recorded where decisions contrary to a director's recommendations have been taken by elected members. Revised report templates were issued in late 2013 and came into effect in January 2014. These are now aligned to the new community planning themes and also have required sections on where equality, human rights and privacy impact implications are noted.

4.1.3	Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	Standing orders Scheme of delegated functions Code of Conduct for Councilors Code of conduct for employees	The Council currently complies through its procedural documentation including; Standing Orders; Standing Orders relating to Contracts; Financial Regulations; Scheme of Delegated Functions, code of conduct for employees and the Councilors' Code, which sets out a protocol for relations between councillors and employees. This code has been issued to all elected members. A new code of conduct was approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into effect on 21st December, 2010. A report to the General Management & Finance Policy Board held on 19th January, 2011 advised members of the principal changes to the code. The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations are currently being reviewed. As these protocols deal with similar issues, rather than having three separate protocols, they have been combined into one composite protocol which was approved by the Finance & Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014 The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 provides for the issue of a Code of Conduct for Councilors. The Code advises on declarations of interests especially those which specify integrity, honesty and openness which are given effect by the requirement for elected members to declare an interest at meetings. Members have been provided with a number of briefings in relation to this aspect of the Code and in particular advising them of their responsibility to make decisions about whether a declared interest prevents the member from taking part in any discussion or voting. Since August, 2009 all Council and Board agendas include an item in relation to declarations of interest.
		Elected member training and development programme including licensing	In addition, the Council has in place a training and development programme for elected members, details of which the Council requires to publish at the same time as publishing information about councilors' salaries, allowances and expenses.
		Register of interests	All members of the Licensing Board undertook a course of training accredited by the Scottish Ministers within 3 months of their appointment to the Licensing Board. Members are reminded in relation to declarations of interest and to keep their register of interests up to date. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services wrote to members in May 2011 relative to advice by the Standards Commission for Scotland that Minutes should include a brief explanation of the individual nature of the interest and to assist members the agenda item has been modified to remind them to provide such an explanation on every occasion the interest is declared.
			The Council has a register of annual declaration of interest by Senior Officers (which is completed on a voluntary basis by Directors and Heads of Service)

			Information contained in the register is subject to Freedom of Information. The register was re-established in November 2013. Officers are contacted on a 6-monthly basis to update the register.
4.1.4	Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee	Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Training programme for Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Training and development programme for officers	The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board functions as the Council's audit committee and has an overview of the internal audit role to ensure that resources are being targeted effectively. The board reviews the Council's internal control mechanisms, approves action where appropriate, considers reports by external auditors and submits recommendations to the Council where this is considered appropriate. The Chief Auditor provides a regular training programme for members of the Board, prepared in consultation with them, to assist them in fulfilling their audit committee role. Issues covered by the training programme during 2014 included visits to other Local Authorities to identify how their Audit and Scrutiny arrangements operated and also Members roles in relation to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The training programme is approved annually by the Board. The council continues to optimise learning and development through the continuation of MDP, MTIPD and 360 degree performance reviews and by encouraging employees to be involved in activities and projects to prepare them for future roles and to enhance their current skills. As the council reshapes and re-sizes through the Better Council Programme, these programmes will be reviewed to ensure fitness for purpose. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman has issued new guidance on complaints handling and asked all local authorities to move to a 2 stage complaints process. The process was officially implemented from April 2013. The process makes the complaints process simpler and more accessible for customers, as we have widened the definition of a complaint, and improved logging of complaints. This means that complaints can now be made in person, over the phone, via e-mail or in writing. There has also been a drive towards frontline handling of complaints. The time taken to respond to complaints is monitored by Services. The Council is also conducting in depth analysis of complaints and will soon be publishing complaints information on the website. Quarterly complaints reports are given to CMT and an annual report goes to Board. All investigations of complaints against the Council by the Ombudsman are laid before the Scottish Parliament, and reported to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions
4.1.5	Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.	Complaints procedure Complaints monitoring Reports to Ombudsman	

			Board. The Ombudsman's monthly bulletin is featured on the Council's website, and considered by the complaints focus group, in order that areas of good practice can be identified and shared.
4.2 Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs			
4.2.1	Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications	Reports to Council / boards	Reports to the Council and all Board meetings provide members with sufficient information on which they are able to take reasoned decisions, including personnel, legal, risk, financial and other implications relating to the Key Council Plan / Community Plan themes, and provide clear recommendations. An annual timetable covering the various board cycles is approved by the Council and circulated.
4.2.2	Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have financial or legal implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately	Annual timetable of board meetings Reports to board / Council	All reports have a 'frontispiece' which details consultation undertaken by the author of the report in relation to financial and legal implications. Reports are in a standard format in which legal and financial implications (if any) require to be detailed. Revised report templates were issued in late 2013 and came into effect in January 2014. These are now aligned to the new community planning themes and also have required sections on where equality, human rights and privacy impact implications are noted. Pre-agenda meetings are held at which legal and financial issues can be addressed prior to the finalised agenda being issued.
4.3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place			
4.3.1	Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.	"Risk Matters" - the council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy Corporate Risk Register: ▪ Submission report to Board ▪ ¼ reports to CRMG ▪ Midyear report to Board Service Risk Management Plans: ▪ Submission reports to Boards ▪ ¼ reports to SMTs/DMTs ▪ Midyear reports to Boards Strategic Risk Management Development Plan	The council has a well-established risk management strategy which is subject to routine monitoring and review. Risk Matters is formally reviewed by the Finance and Resources Policy Board at periodic intervals of not more than 2 years and annually (interim review) by the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) to ensure it reflects current standards and best practice and fully reflects the rapidly changing environment in local government. Risk Matters is explicit regarding the council's risk management philosophy and regarding members' and managers' responsibilities for risk management. The council maintains, and routinely monitors and reviews its corporate risk register and service risk management plans in accordance with Risk Matters. The SRMDP underpins Risk Matters. It reflects the development work required to fulfil the Strategic Risk Management Objectives outlined in Risk Matters. Progress on the SRMDP is monitored by the CRMG on a Quarterly basis.

		CRMG Risk Management Annual Report Board paper template Project Management Framework Partnership Risk Management Training & Development Risk communications Financial Regulations and Codes	The Corporate Risk Management Group oversees the council's risk management framework on behalf of the Corporate Management Team. The Group oversees the ongoing development, monitoring and review of the corporate risk register and facilitates an escalation process whereby risk can be moved between corporate or service level. The Group monitors Risk Management Key Performance Indicators. A report on the effectiveness of the council's risk management framework is provided to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on an annual basis. -The council's Board paper template includes a 'risk implications' section. -The PMF provides guidance on project risk management. -Partnership risk management resources are available on Renfo -e-learning risk management course available in addition to other opportunities Risk Management Articles are included in the Audit and risk Newsflash The Financial Regulations require each Director to review their management of risk annually and provide the Director of Finance and Corporate Services with an annual risk management plan for the forthcoming year. A template is used to aid consistency and ensure robustness of approach across all services. The template is also available for use by associated bodies. The Council complies with this requirement by having a whistle blowing policy which is part of the employees' code of conduct.
4.3.2	Ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle-blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access.	Whistle blowing policy	
4.4.	Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their areas		
4.4.1	Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed upon them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities	Scheme of delegation Standing Orders Procedural standing orders Financial regulations Policy Board reports	The Council complies with this requirement in terms of its scheme of delegated functions, standing orders relating to contracts, financial regulations and procedural standing orders which are kept under review and updated as appropriate. In addition, each of the Council Boards has a dedicated solicitor who reviews reports in order that the vires of proposed actions can be checked. Each report has a section on legal implications. The frontispieces to reports require that community planning partners are consulted in the preparation of reports where appropriate and reports must outline community/council plan implications.
4.4.2	Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law.	Scheme of delegation Standing orders Procedural standing orders Financial regulations Board reports Training and development	The Council complies with this requirement in terms of its scheme of delegated functions, standing orders relating to contracts, financial regulations and procedural standing orders which are kept under review and updated as appropriate. In addition, each of the Council Boards has a dedicated solicitor who reviews reports in order that the vires of proposed actions can be checked. Each report has a section on legal implications. In addition, the Council has a programme of training

			programme for members. Monitoring officer	and development for elected members in place. The Head of Corporate Governance acts as Monitoring Officer in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and as detailed in his job description. He is responsible for advising the Council on the legality of its decisions and providing guidance to councillors and officers on the Council's powers.
4.4.3	Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law -rationality, legality and natural justice -into their procedures and decision making processes	Scheme of delegation Standing orders Procedural standing orders Financial regulations Board reports Training and development programme for members.	The Council complies with this requirement in terms of its scheme of delegated functions, standing orders relating to contracts, financial regulations and procedural standing orders which are kept under review and updated as appropriate. In addition, each of the Council Boards has a dedicated solicitor who reviews reports in order that the vires of proposed actions can be checked. Each report has a section on legal implications. In addition, the Council has a programme of training and development for elected members in place.	

PRINCIPLE 5: Developing the capacity and capabilities of members and officers to be effective.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
5.1	Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform their roles well.		
5.1.1	Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	Corporate Induction programme Member training and development programme MTIPD/MDP2/360 reviews i-learn Training	The Council complies with this requirement through the Corporate Induction programme and through wider training programmes for both officers and elected members. The Council continues to optimise employee development through the continuation of MDP, MTIPD and 360 degree performance reviews and by encouraging employees to be involved in activities and projects to prepare them for future roles and to enhance their current skills. A number of E-Learning modules are now available to employees to support their learning and development. This includes a comprehensive E-Learning Induction module for employees which covers terms and conditions and the various key policies that are in place. The courses offered provide an opportunity for officers to update their knowledge as and when required.
5.1.2	Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority.	Job description – Chief Executive Scheme of delegation Management Development Programme MTIPD / MDP 360 reviews	Statutory appointments of officers are detailed in the Council's scheme of delegation and this is reviewed on a regular basis. The Council has developed a core competency framework as part of its management development programme. As part of the competency -Customer / Community Focus, one of the sub-competencies is Governance which requires the need to demonstrate understanding and ensures compliance with all regulatory, ethical and social requirements. The council continues to optimise employee development through the continuation of MDP, MTIPD and 360 degree performance reviews and by encouraging employees to be involved in activities and projects to prepare them for future roles and to enhance their current skills.

			As part of the Management Development Programme an online 360 degree assessment tool has been designed to give managers feedback about their performance. This tool is based on our Core Competency Framework and focuses on key behaviours expected of all Renfrewshire Council managers.
5.2 Developing the capability of people with governance and responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.			
5.2.1	Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop these skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively	Members' induction Regular update sessions Within partnerships, specific values may be set out as part of the plan or strategy of that group. Training and development plan for members / Individual Development Plans Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Training programme MTIPD/MDP2 / 360 reviews	A training and development programme for members is in place. This is based on a rolling programme with an initial induction being undertaken after the local elections. Meetings are also held with all Council services in relation to members' training and follow up training is undertaken as required. In addition, services hold regular seminars for members on specific service issues. A series of information leaflets has been issued to elected members and they have access to the Finance and Resources Handbook of Procedural Documents. A programme of Induction training was provided for Councillors throughout May/June 2012, including mandatory training in relation to Planning, Appeals and Licensing. A series of "Introductions to Services" and a programme of briefings from officers and community planning partners was offered during the remainder of the year. An annual register of training undertaken by Councillors is published on our website in June each year. The Council has adopted the CPD framework for Councillors designed by the Improvement Service. A training programme for Councillors is in place for January to June 2015. The MTIPD/MDP2 programmes have been developed to ensure that staff receive the appropriate support to develop their knowledge and skills and to carry out their existing role effectively. As part of the Management Development Programme an online 360 degree assessment tool has been designed to give managers feedback about their performance. This tool is based on our Core Competency Framework and focuses on key behaviours expected of all Renfrewshire Council managers.

5.2.2	Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed	Training plan for members MTIPD/MDP2 / 360 review	We comply with this requirement through our training programme for members and the MTIPD/MDP2 and 360 review and training programmes for employees.
5.2.3	Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs	Covalent performance management system Corporate Management Team/ Council Plan scorecard Public Service Improvement Framework Self evaluation of the Community Planning Board Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board review programme Member training and development programme. Petitions function Decentralisation – local area	Performance information from across services is monitored by the Chief Executive and her Corporate Management Team using the Council's performance management system, Covalent. The system is used to monitor the Corporate Management Team scorecard quarterly. The scorecard has been developed to reflect key areas of service delivery. All services in the Council are using PSIF to review various aspects of their services, including performance. Cycle 1 and 2 are now complete and action plans are being monitored. A recent development has been the start of a large scale self evaluation process leading to the development of an improvement plan to assess the high level partnership working and governance arrangements functioning of the Renfrewshire Community Planning Board. This process will be managed jointly by the national Improvement Service and officers from the Chief executive's Service. The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board agrees an annual programme of activities which includes areas for specific investigation. The Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board also has a written intimation procedure in respect of which any member of the Board may request that a particular matter be considered by the Board. Each of the policy boards has a scrutiny function and the local area committee also perform this role. A training and development programme for members is also in place. The Council has also introduced a petitions function which allows members of the public to raise issues of concern. Following consultation with members of the Board, Community Councils and members of the public, the process was reviewed in 2009 amendments were agreed to increase awareness of and participation in the process, including development of the 'get involved' campaign. Further consultation was undertaken in 2010, as a result of which the Scrutiny and Petitions Board agreed that no further changes were required to the procedure. However, a new action plan was developed to address some of the issues raised. Training for local area committee (LAC) members was carried out prior to the first full round of LAC meetings in 2008. Since then training has been carried out when

		committees	possible as new members have joined the LACs. Two examples are Paisley West and Central Community Council and Renfrewshire Youth Voice (twice) who have had individual training sessions.
5.3	Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individual skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.		
5.3.1	Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority	Consultation strategy and toolkit Consultation mechanisms Decentralisation – local area committees. Petitions function	The Council reviewed and updated its consultation strategy, to reflect new practices and plans for development, and this was approved at Leadership board in 2009. It sets out its broad approach for engaging with stakeholders. It provides a framework within which services can develop consultation practices and procedures appropriate to the specific requirements of the services being delivered, and users of those services. A 2010 update of the Consultation Strategy was completed and went out to consultation with the Council's partners. The strategy has been updated to take into account changes to consultation activities and the context within which consultation is taking place. It has now been published on Renfo and shared with partners. A report to Leadership Board in October 2010 showed details of progress made on the Consultation Action Plan that was agreed in the 2009 strategy. This showed that good progress was being made and that most actions were either completed or on target to be completed. The update of the strategy was completed in 2014. The Consultation Strategy action plan contains 6 priorities for improving the consultation that we do. Priority 4 is called "Targeting Different Audiences" and is about including hard to reach underrepresented groups in consultation. This includes young people, Black and Minority Ethnic communities, disabled people and special interest groups. This priority recognises that hard to reach groups often require more innovative methods of consultation in order to fully engage with them and services will, where possible, tailor their approach to individual customer groups. The Council procured an e-consultation tool which enables the Council and its partners to develop the role of on-line consultation. We have also developed a consultation toolkit as a quick reference guide for staff undertaking consultation activities, and which was updated in 2010. The toolkit focuses on the different contexts in which consultation takes place, and the most appropriate ways to undertake consultation and engagement exercises, particularly bearing in mind the target consultees. Council services engage and consult with communities in a number of ways including: Public Services Panel, Focus Groups, Tenants and Residents Forums, service user groups, Community Planning process, Complaints Procedure, and

			Community Councils.	One of the key ways in which the Council has encouraged local people to participate in local decision making, is through the creation of 5 local area committees. The committees give local people and groups more input into the delivery of services within their own area, including the right to review and monitor performance and to be consulted at a local level wherever possible. The Council has also introduced a petitions function which allows members of the public to raise issues of concern. Following consultation with members of the Board, Community Councils and members of the public, in 2009 to increase awareness of and participation in the process, a number of amendments were made and the 'get involved' campaign developed. Further consultation was undertaken in 2010, as a result of which the Scrutiny and Petitions Board agreed that no further changes were required to the procedure. However, a new action plan was developed to address some of the issues raised.
5.3.2	Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development	Workforce planning strategy MTIPD/MDP2 Learning and Development Opportunities		The development and implementation of the Council's workforce plan and action plan will assist the Council in ensuring that workforce planning is embedded in all service development strategies, and will assist services and the Council meeting the key challenges faced now and in the future, demonstrating Best Value. Workforce planning will also help ensure the Council has a workforce aligned in terms of skill, aptitude and flexibility to meet service demand and customer expectation. The MTIPD/MDP performance review processes ensure that all learning and development needs are identified and actioned and that service improvement and career pathways are discussed and promoted. Key performance indicators are reported regularly to CMT and the Workforce Development and Equality Group (WFDandE). The Council's Organisational Development Team provides a wide range of tailored in house learning and development opportunities and solutions which all employees can access throughout the year to assist in addressing identified development/performance needs.
		Pay and Grading model		The Council has agreed a revised pay and grading model.

PRINCIPLE 6: Engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

	Requirements of corporate governance:	Evidence of meeting requirement:	Demonstration of annual compliance:
6.1	Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.		
6.1.1	Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what	Council Plan Community Plan Single Outcome Agreement Annual Accounts Scheme of Delegation Board structure LACs / Scheme of Decentralisation	The Council Plan and Community Plan confirm to our employees and to local communities, what the Council is trying to achieve with its partners for Renfrewshire. We communicate progress on this through the Annual Report on Community Plan, and also through Local Area Committees and community planning conference events. Progress on delivering on the priorities in the Council Plan will be reported to the Leadership Board on a regular basis. The Plan highlights the key priorities, targets and outcomes that it has committed to deliver on. Our annual accounts also set out what and to whom the Council is accountable. This is also detailed in the Scheme of Delegation and through information on board membership and structure which is published on our website. The Council's scheme of decentralisation was introduced in April 2008, establishing five statutory local area committees to promote the well-being of the area and ensure that services meet the needs of the residents of that area. The local area committees are responsible for promoting active citizenship; shaping services around the needs of residents; promoting enhanced coordination and scrutiny of public services at a local level; funding local projects and distributing grants from delegated local area committee budgets. LACs prioritise the distribution of their resources in accordance with community needs identified in their respective local action plans and community plan key priorities. An annual report is submitted to each LAC highlighting each LAC's key achievements and providing information on the outcomes of a number of projects funded by the LAC from delegated local area committee budgets

		Results from specific local consultations published	The results from specific local consultation exercises are published on our website, for example on issues within relevant board reports. The www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay section of the website lists consultation exercises that are currently underway and gives details of the results from previous exercises. The Public Service Panel (PSP) section of the website lists the questions asked of PSP members, the findings and how we are using their feedback.
6.1.2	Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	Independent evaluation Shared Risk Assessment Community planning structures Membership of Scottish Government Groups	The Council is independently evaluated by bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Audit Scotland and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman considers complaints against the Council. Governance and accountability is one of the Best Value characteristics as set out by Audit Scotland. During 2014/15 a shared risk assessment was carried out by the Local Area Network, which consists of auditors and inspectors from all scrutiny bodies that engage with Renfrewshire Council (e.g. Education Scotland, SWIA, Audit Scotland). The resulting Scrutiny Plan is currently in draft form and will be published in Spring 2015. Initial results from the assessment show that the Council is low risk in terms of requiring external scrutiny. The Council engages regularly with partner organisations across the public, private and voluntary sector, through community planning structures. These were updated in 2013 to reflect the focus of the Community Plan 2013-2023. The Council also actively participates and has fostered relationships with the Scottish Government.

		means that complaints can now be made in person, over the phone, via e-mail or in writing. There has also been a drive towards frontline handling of complaints. Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs) send delegates to a Council Wide Forum (CWF) once a year, where all general issues relating to housing policy, service performance of service development are discussed. An Executive Committee (made up of 2 RTO delegates from each Neighbourhood Housing Forum and two owner-occupiers who are also tenant representatives) determines the agenda for the CWF meeting, and acts as a 'sounding board' for tenant opinion between CWF meeting. The annual CWF will continue to enable RTO's to engage with Council officers and discuss issues of relevance on a Renfrewshire Wide basis, whilst the Tenant Open Days will complement this with local events to encourage and increase tenant participation and engagement. The Tenants Open Days will be organised at a more decentralised local level with one in Renfrew, one in Johnstone, one in Paisley North and one in Paisley South. They will include a wide range of things of interest to tenants such as stalls with relevant information and advice, and feedback on Housing Services and other service developments. In accordance with guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator and the arrival of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, a Tenants Scrutiny Panel has been established as the platform for delivering customer scrutiny of our performance in meeting Charter outcomes. There are also nine Neighbourhood Housing Forums which place greater focus on the day-to-day issues which matter to tenant representatives – for example, particular problems with empty properties or antisocial behaviour - rather than strategic matters. All tenant and resident groups which meet the Council's registration criteria in full are invited to send two representatives to their local Neighbourhood Housing Forum. Officers from Development and Housing Services liaise with other Council services and partner organisations about issues raised by tenant representatives at the Forums. Other Council officers or external partners will be invited to attend, where there are specific issues relating to their service being discussed. The Neighbourhood Housing Forums are responsible for: - monitoring performance in relation to housing services and monitoring progress in respect of local housing initiatives - monitoring progress on Estate Actions Plans (these are used in some areas by housing management staff to co-ordinate action to deal with specific local problems) - agreeing and prioritising small scale improvement works which are funded through Neighbourhood Forum Budgets
Registered Tenants' Organisations		

			We recognise that we should regularly monitor and evaluate how our formal tenant participation structure is operating, and consequently we will carry out regular reviews of the effectiveness of the current structure. In Spring 2013 a Tenants Satisfaction Survey (TSS) was conducted; results from the 2013 TSS indicated a clear preference for tenants wishing to be consulted on issues that may affect them directly on an individual basis. We will carry out another TSS during 2015. The Customer Engagement Strategy, approved by The Housing and Community Safety policy board in August 2010, is being implemented with the aim of building on existing good practice to engage more effectively with all customers (not just those involved in tenants' organisations) and other service users. We report progress on this annually to the Housing and Community Safety policy board. We have continued to expand our 'Quality Circles' initiative and this is now established in our high rise flats and our sheltered housing complexes. The Quality Circle inspections provide the platform for residents to become involved in improving services which directly affect them, and the model also attracted attention from other local authorities and RSLs who are keen to learn from our experience and develop similar initiatives. All meetings of the Council and its Boards are held in public unless, in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the meeting takes a decision to exclude the press and public. Where it is recommended that a matter be held in private, the reason for this is identified on the agenda for the meeting and in the minutes. The Council's scheme of decentralisation was introduced in April 2008 establishing five statutory Local Area Committees (LACs) to promote the well-being of each LAC area and ensure that services meet the needs of the residents of that area. The LACs are responsible for promoting active citizenship; shaping services around the needs of residents; promoting enhanced coordination and scrutiny of public services at a local level; and funding local projects and distributing grants from delegated local area committee budgets. LACs agree Local Action Plans each year which promote a strategic approach to the funding of local projects and the delivery of local services. The council trialled webcasting Council meetings to enable anyone to watch the debates, proceedings and decisions taken with the first live broadcast taking place on the 27/02/2014. Following the trial it was agreed that Council meeting be webcast from October 2014 The Council reviewed and updated its consultation strategy, to reflect new practices
6.2.2	Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality	Meetings held in public Scheme of decentralisation – local area committees Webcasting of Council meetings	
6.2.3	Ensure that arrangements are in place	Consultation strategy and toolkit	

	to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.	Consultation and engagement mechanisms Community planning structure Through our website – complaints, comments, consultation	and plans for development, and this was approved at Leadership board in 2009. It sets out its broad approach for engaging with stakeholders. It provides a framework within which services can develop consultation practices and procedures appropriate to the specific requirements of the services being delivered. A report to Leadership Board in October 2010 showed details of progress made on the Consultation Action Plan that was agreed in the 2009 strategy. This showed that good progress was being made and that most action were either completed or on target to be completed. The update of the strategy was completed in 2014. A consultation toolkit has been developed as a quick reference guide for staff undertaking consultation activities, and which was updated in 2010. The toolkit focuses on the different contexts in which consultation takes place, and the most appropriate ways to undertake consultation and engagement exercises, particularly bearing in mind the target consultees. An i-learn course has also been developed and is available for staff to access for training. Council services engage and consult with communities in a number of ways including: Public Service Panel, Focus Groups, Tenants and Residents Forums, service user groups, Community Planning process, Complaints Procedure, and Community Councils. Renfrewshire Forum for Empowering Communities is taking a lead role in giving local communities a voice in Renfrewshire. It will provide meaningful, sustained and effective engagement with communities and citizens. It values the knowledge, skills and capacity and potential that our communities have and seeks to build on the commitment and confidence evident in local groups and organisations. The aim is to localise decision making and accountability as far as possible and work co-operatively with communities. The Empowering Communities Board is led by Engage Renfrewshire, our 3rd sector interface. The forum acts as a sounding board of the Community Planning Partnership in the development of community capacity building, consultation and communication. At community planning conferences, community planning partners engage with individuals and representatives from local community and voluntary sector organisations. Our recent thematic conferences included over 330 participants. Members of the public are also able to contact the Council through the website and are able to take part in consultations through the e-consultation system or complete complaints forms.
--	--	---	--

		Decentralisation – local area committees Petitions function	Decentralisation and the creation of 5 local area committees provide an opportunity for the Council and its partners to engage with residents on a localised basis. The Council has also introduced a petitions function which allows members of the public to raise issues of concern. Following consultation with members of the Board, Community Councils and members of the public to increase awareness of and participation in the process, in 2009 a number of amendments were made and the 'get involved' campaign developed. Further consultation has been undertaken as a result of which the Scrutiny and Petitions Board agreed that no further changes were required to the procedure. However, a new action plan was developed to address some of the issues raised.
6.2.4	Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	Public Services Panel Consultation strategy and toolkit Online consultation Petitions function of Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board	The Council complies with this requirement through its consultation framework which encompasses the Public Services Panel, online consultation facilities and guidance and advice available through the corporate consultation strategy and toolkit. Feedback on online consultations is available through the website, and feedback on the Public Services Panel is undertaken through the website and by sending newsletters to Panel members. The Petitions function of the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board provides an opportunity for individual members of the public to raise issues of concern with the council either as individuals or on behalf of an organisation.

6.2.5	On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.	'Renfrewshire Council Performs' web pages Council Plan, Community plan, Single Outcome Agreement Service Improvement Plan - Outturn report Performance Indicator Report Annual accounts Satisfaction ratings Inspection / audit results Customer Satisfaction	The Council has reviewed its approach to public performance reporting and implemented an approach based on customer feedback. The reports are more accessible, easier to read, and focused on key indicators which the public most want to know about. A full report will be online as of March 2015 for 2013/14. The Council provides regular updates covering performance in terms of delivering on the Council Plan, and in conjunction with partners, on the Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement. Each service also produces an outturn report annually, which summarises performance achieved against its service improvement plan. These updates are reported to the relevant policy board for the service in Spring each year and are available online. A report summarising the Council's performance against the Local government benchmarking framework Indicators is also submitted to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board, and made available on the Council's website. The Council also complies with this requirement through the publication of its Annual Accounts, through the regular submission of budget reports to Policy Boards, the submission of the annual audit review and other audit reports to the Council and / or Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board as appropriate and by publishing performance information on our website. Services assess satisfaction with the activities that they undertake through regular consultation or service monitoring activities. This is a fundamental activity for all services that have Customer Service Excellence (CSE) status. Independent inspection reports from bodies such as Education Scotland are also published on the Council website. Customer satisfaction is measured annually. Members of the Public Services Panel are asked to report their satisfaction with individual Council services and with the Council overall. The results of these findings are published on the Council website.
-------	---	---	---

6.2.6	Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff to ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so	Minutes and agendas available online and at reception points. Publications Scheme Public can attend Board/Council meetings Plans and strategies published on Council website. Freedom of Information requests Consultations Complaints procedure Public performance reporting Local area committees	The Council complies with this requirement by ensuring the minutes and agendas of all Board and Council meetings are available to the public, and by ensuring that key documents are also available through its publication scheme. Board and Council meetings are also open to the public. A leaflet on the public's right of access is available. A range of information, policies, strategies and plans are available on the Council website. The Council also actively participates and responds positively to Freedom of Information requests received. Members of the public and businesses are able to take part in consultations by invitation or voluntarily online. Service users and members of the public can also use our complaints procedure to pass on any complaints, comments or suggestions. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman has issued new guidance on complaints handling and asked all local authorities to move to a 2 stage complaints process. The process was officially implemented from April 2013. The process makes the complaints process simpler and more accessible for customers, as we have widened the definition of a complaint, and improved logging of complaints. This means that complaints can now be made in person, over the phone, via e-mail or in writing. There has also been a drive towards frontline handling of complaints. The Council has reviewed its approach to public performance reporting and implemented an approach based on customer feedback. The reports are more accessible, easier to read, and focused on key indicators which the public most want to know about. The first stage of this implementation was launched in September 2012 with the annual statutory performance indicator public performance report and a community planning performance report was published in November. All this information has been uploaded onto the Council websites in an accessible format. The Council's scheme of decentralisation which established five local area committees allows members of the public to raise issues at an 'open session' held at each ordinary meeting. All meetings are held in public. Agendas are produced in a preferred format for representatives who have a visual impairment.
-------	---	--	---

6.3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff			
6.3.1	Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.	Employee survey Staff suggestion schemes Staff Panel Trade unions e.g. Joint Consultative Board Public Services Improvement Framework	Renfrewshire Council conducts an employee survey on a regular basis to listen to employees and drive improvement across the council. The Service undertook an extensive survey in early 2013 across all services which gave a new opportunity for employees to give their views and suggestions. Detailed analysis of the results has taken place, areas for improvement identified and improvement actions developed. The Council also has a Joint Consultative Board and a Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers. The Council rolled out the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) across all services, excluding schools, sport services and museum services. PSIF is a self-assessment framework which is based on the key concepts which underpin the European Foundation for Quality Management model, as well as the criteria set by the Investors in People Standard and Customer Service Excellence standard. The framework has helped services identify what is working well and what needs to improve. PSIF is a key vehicle by which to drive employee involvement, particularly in terms of putting forward suggestions for improvements to services. The self-assessment process that underpins PSIF, requires a team of staff from all levels and divisions of a Service to be involved in determining how their service needs to improve. The Council has now rolled out cycle 2, and improvement plans are being actioned.

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance

1. Summary

- 1.1. Corporate Governance is the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance came into effect formally on 1 April 2002.
 - 1.2. The Director of Finance and Resources has responsibility for reporting annually to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on compliance with the Code and any changes to the Code that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness in practice. In addition, the Council's Chief Auditor has responsibility to review independently and report to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Code and the extent of compliance with it.
 - 1.3. Internal Audit has reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of the revised Code which is being presented to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on 30 March 2015. Based on our sample check of the evidence used to demonstrate compliance, we would confirm that the Council complies with the requirements of the Local Code of Corporate Governance. In addition, it is evident that the Local Code has been subject to review and updating in line with developments in best practice and any revised Council Policies.
 - 1.4. The Director of Finance and Resources endorses the Chief Auditor's recommendation that the Local Code should continue to be subject to an annual review to ensure that it continues to reflect developments in best practice in governance.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to note the content of this report.
-

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance came into effect formally on 1 April 2002.
- 3.2. In 2007, CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) in conjunction with SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) published a revised Corporate Governance Framework – “Delivering good governance in Local Government”. The Council's Local Code was updated in line with this best practice framework.
- 3.3. CIPFA, in conjunction with SOLACE, recognised that authorities of different types and geographical areas are subject to separate legislative arrangements and in 2008, published a guidance note for Scottish Authorities to complement their Corporate Governance Framework. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance has been reviewed and updated in line with this guidance note and also to reflect any updated Council policies.

Implications of the Report

- 1 **Financial** – None.
- 2 **HR and Organisational Development** - None.
- 3 **Community Planning** –
 - Children and Young People – None.
 - Community Care, Health and Wellbeing – None
 - Empowering our Communities – None.
 - Greener – None.
 - Jobs and the Economy - None
 - Safer and Stronger – This report provides assurance that the governance arrangements in place show a clear commitment to following governance best practice guidance and of promoting the involvement of customers, staff and partners in service delivery.
- 4 **Legal** - None.
- 5 **Property/Assets** - None.
- 6 **Information Technology** - None.
- 7 **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** - None
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

Author: Andrea McMahon - 01416187017

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Training for Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board Members

1. Summary

- 1.1 In line with national guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the implementation of Audit Committee Principles in Scottish Local Authorities, training on audit and risk related matters is being provided to members of the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board.
- 1.2 At the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board meeting on 30 September 2014, it was agreed that a programme of training briefings for members would be provided and would continue to form part of the main agenda at every alternate meeting.
- 1.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is the agreed programme of briefings, and at Appendix 2 the outline for the briefing at the current meeting on “Annual Accounts – use for members”.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of the current training briefing.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community Planning –
Safer and Stronger** – an effective audit committee is an important element of good corporate governance.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** - training for elected members on audit and risk-related matters reflects audit committee principles
11. **Privacy Impact** – None

Author: Andrea McMahon – 01416187017

Appendix 1

Date	Topic
Cycle 2 (01/12/14)	PSIAS – Members roles and responsibilities
Cycle 4 (30/03/15)	Final Accounts – use for Members
Cycle 6 (TBC)	Fraud Risk
Cycle 8 (TBC)	a) Regulation of the Third Sector b) Benefits of Trusts and other delivery models
TBC	Risk Management
TBC	Policy development and measuring success
TBC	Serious and Organised Crime – how to deter

Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board

30 March 2015

Annual Accounts Training

**holding to account
using local authority financial statements**



Renfrewshire Council Annual Accounts 2013-14



115 Pages, 19 Statements, 52 Notes

Key Groups in Financial Statements

Explanatory Statements P5-23

Single Entity Numerical Statements P24-85

Authority Specific Elements P86-91

Group Numerical Statements P92-115

Explanatory Statements

Foreword

Annual Governance Statement

Remuneration Report

Statement of Responsibilities

Single Entity Numerical Statements

Movement in Reserves Statement

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Balance Sheet

Cash Flow Statement

Notes to the Financial Statements

Authority Specific Elements

Housing Revenue Account

Council Tax Income Account

Non Domestic Rates Account

Group Numerical Statements

Paisley, Renfrew and Johnstone Common Good

Renfrewshire Leisure Limited

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Cart Corridor Joint Venture Company Limited

Park Lane Developments (Renfrewshire) LLP

Key Statements

Foreword to the Statement of Accounts

Annual Governance Statement

Movement in Reserves Statement

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

Balance Sheet

Foreword to the Statement of Accounts

Financial Performance

Financial Outlook and Key Risks

Borrowing

Provisions and Contingencies

Annual Governance Statement

Governance Framework

System of Internal Financial Control

Review of Effectiveness

Significant Issues and Improvements

Role of the Chief Financial Officer

Movement in Reserves Statement

	Note	Usable reserves					Total usable reserves	Unusable reserves	Total reserves
		General Fund Balance	Housing Revenue Account Balance	Revenue statutory funds	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital statutory funds			
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2012 carried forward (restated)		45.358	11.800	2.849	12.393	39.641	112.041	1827.420	939.461
<i>Movement in reserves during 2012-2013 (restated):</i>									
Surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services		14.636	(17.865)	-	-	-	(3.229)	-	(3.229)
Other comprehensive income and expenditure		-	-	-	-	-	-	(322.028)	(322.028)
Total comprehensive income and expenditure		14.636	(17.865)	-	-	-	(3.229)	(322.028)	(325.257)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	6	(9.095)	17.872	-	(8.189)	(16.710)	(16.122)	16.122	-
Net increase or (decrease) before transfers to other statutory reserves		5.541	0.007	-	(8.189)	(16.710)	(19.351)	(305.906)	(325.257)
Transfers to or (from) other statutory reserves	12	0.005	-	0.004	-	(0.009)	-	-	-
Increase or (decrease) in 2012-2013		5.546	0.007	0.004	(8.189)	(16.719)	(19.351)	(305.906)	(325.257)
Balance at 31 March 2013 carried forward		50.904	11.807	2.853	4.204	22.922	92.690	521.514	614.204
<i>Movement in reserves during 2013-2014:</i>									
Surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services		0.556	(14.441)	-	-	-	(13.885)	-	(13.885)
Other comprehensive income and expenditure		-	-	-	-	-	-	100.202	100.202
Total comprehensive income and expenditure		0.556	(14.441)	-	-	-	(13.885)	100.202	86.317
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	6	1.384	16.006	-	(0.996)	(2.422)	13.972	(13.972)	-
Net increase or (decrease) before transfers to other statutory reserves		1.940	1.565	-	(0.996)	(2.422)	0.087	86.230	86.317
Transfers to or (from) other statutory reserves	12	0.081	(2.127)	0.003	-	2.043	-	-	-
Increase or (decrease) in 2013-2014		2.021	(0.562)	0.003	(0.996)	(0.379)	0.087	86.230	86.317
Balance at 31 March 2014 carried forward		52.925	11.245	2.856	3.208	22.543	92.777	1607.744	700.521

Movement in Reserves Statement

Usable Reserves

General Fund Balance – includes ringfenced reserves

HRA Balance – includes ringfenced reserves

Capital Receipts Reserves

Capital Statutory Funds

Revenue Statutory Funds

Unusable Reserves

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

	2012-2013 (restated*)			2013-2014		
	Gross expenditure £m	Gross income £m	Net expenditure £m	Gross expenditure £m	Gross income £m	Net expenditure £m
Central services to the public	23.530	(11.878)	11.652	20.812	(9.251)	11.561
Cultural and related services	24.869	(4.195)	20.674	28.552	(4.728)	23.824
Education services	182.388	(14.817)	167.571	185.102	(19.625)	165.477
Environmental services	35.888	(9.962)	25.926	31.187	(10.705)	20.482
Fire services	7.921	-	7.921	-	-	-
Housing services - Housing Revenue Account	60.508	(47.196)	13.312	56.471	(47.821)	8.650
Housing services - other	72.277	(68.380)	3.897	75.815	(69.335)	6.480
Planning and development services	10.018	(4.016)	6.002	11.058	(4.978)	6.080
Police services	14.471	(0.054)	14.417	-	-	-
Roads and transport services	25.103	(7.289)	17.814	25.606	(8.173)	17.433
Social work	140.112	(47.200)	92.912	148.570	(47.981)	100.589
Corporate and democratic core	9.938	(0.245)	9.693	11.260	(2.308)	8.952
Non-distributed costs	(5,096)	(0.329)	(5.425)	1.686	(0.080)	1.606
Net cost of services	601.927	(215.561)	386.366	596.119	(224.985)	371.134
Other operating expenditure:					Note	
(Gains) or losses on the disposal of non-current assets	0.177		0.177			(0.594)
Financing and investment income and expenditure	24.125		24.125		7	26.322
Taxation and non-specific grant income	(407.439)		(407.439)		11	(382.977)
(Surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	3.229		3.229			13.885
(Surplus) or deficit on the revaluation of non-current assets	279.908		279.908			(116.936)
Impairment (gains) or losses on non-current assets charged to the revaluation reserve	4.152		4.152			(9.217)
(Surplus) or deficit on the revaluation of available-for-sale financial assets	(0.218)		(0.218)		13(ii)	0.098
Actuarial (gains) or losses on pension assets and liabilities	38.186		38.186		35(ii)	25.853
Other comprehensive income and expenditure	322.028		322.028			(100.202)
Total comprehensive income and expenditure	325.257		325.257			(86.317)

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

Net Cost of Services

Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services

Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

Balance Sheet

31 March 2013 (restated)	31 March 2014	31 March 2013 (restated)	31 March 2014
£m	£m	£m	£m
1,089.726	1,203.150	(187.693)	Long-term borrowing
1.572	1.575	(87.708)	Long-term creditors
38.409	38.661	(10.002)	Long-term provisions
0.912	0.964	(202.355)	Other long-term liabilities
2.884	2.845	(0.249)	Grants Receipts in Advance
6.156	5.889	(488.007)	Long-term liabilities
1,139.659	1,253.084	614.204	Net assets
57.870	27.605		
0.884	0.898	92.690	Usable reserves
45.845	39.188	521.514	Unusable reserves
24.395	29.826	614.204	Total reserves
0.358	1.176		
129.352	98.693		
(92.860)	(58.006)		
(66.615)	(58.100)		
(7.325)	(7.266)		
(166.800)	(123.372)		

Balance Sheet

Long Term Assets

Current Assets

Current Liabilities

Long Term Liabilities

Net Assets

Total Reserves

**holding to account
using local authority financial statements**





To: Audit Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30 March 2015

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Annual Complaints report 2013/14

1. Summary

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Council sets high standards for the services it delivers and manages millions of transactions each year. For example, Community Resources carries out over 10 million waste and recycling collections and the customer services unit manages 400,000 phone calls and 40,000 face to face enquiries from the public.
- 1.2 To ensure we know how well we are delivering services, we have implemented a new complaints handling procedure during 2013/14 which reflects Renfrewshire Council's commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.
- 1.3 Our procedure complies with the SPSO's guidance on a model complaints handling procedure and aims to help us 'get it right first time'. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early resolution by capable, well-trained staff.
- 1.4 Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve customer satisfaction. Our complaints handling procedure will enable us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and may also prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from happening again. For our employees, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss.
- 1.5 Handled well, complaints can give our customers a form of redress when things go wrong, and can also help us continuously improve our services. Resolving complaints early saves money and creates better customer

relations. Sorting them out as close to the point of service delivery as possible means we can deal with them locally and quickly, so they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure.

- 1.6 Renfrewshire Council received 5209 complaints in 2013/14. Through the new procedure, we have been able to capture and analyse more areas of customer dissatisfaction with our services and have used this information to improve services. This report provides information on the complaints Renfrewshire Council received in 2013/14 and show how we have used this information to ensure that the services we deliver are of high quality, efficient and responsive to people needs.
- 1.7 From 2013/14, Councils are required to assess their complaints handling performance around a range of high-level performance indicators related to the SPSO complaints handling procedure. This is designed to help organisations measure how well they are performing against the new procedure, to manage performance and to facilitate benchmarking between organisations to learn from one another and to contribute towards continuous improvement for the customer. The focus is not only on how organisations are performing against the two-stage process but will also aim to capture performance relating to learning derived from complaints and ultimately, how effective an organisation is in using complaints to improve service delivery. Appendix 1 contains a full list of indicators for Renfrewshire.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board:
- Notes the contents of this report
 - Agrees that a quarterly report on complaints performance should be brought to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 gave the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) the authority to lead the development of a model complaints handling process across the public sector. New guidance was published by SPSO in March 2012 and Councils were asked to implement its recommendations from 1st March 2013. Renfrewshire Council began implementation in October 2012 with full operation of the procedure from 1st March 2013.
- 3.2 The purpose of the new local authority model complaints handling process is to provide a standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across the local authority sector. The aim is to implement a consistent process for customers to follow which makes it simpler to complain, ensures staff and customer confidence in complaints handling and encourages bodies to make best use of lessons from complaints.

- 3.3 A key element of the policy is the requirement to monitor and log all complaints coming into the authority and use this information to drive service improvement.
- 3.4 Complaints within this new policy are defined as: *‘An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the local authority’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the local authority.’*
- 3.5 In line with SPSO recommendations, the new policy uses a two stage process, removing the current appeals stage. The two new definitions for complaints are:

Stage 1: Frontline resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage.

The main principle is to seek early resolution, resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This may mean a face-to-face discussion with the customer, or asking an appropriate member of staff to deal directly with the complaint.

The Council has **5 days** to respond to these complaints.

Stage 2: Investigation

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination before the Council can state its position. These complaints may already have been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position.

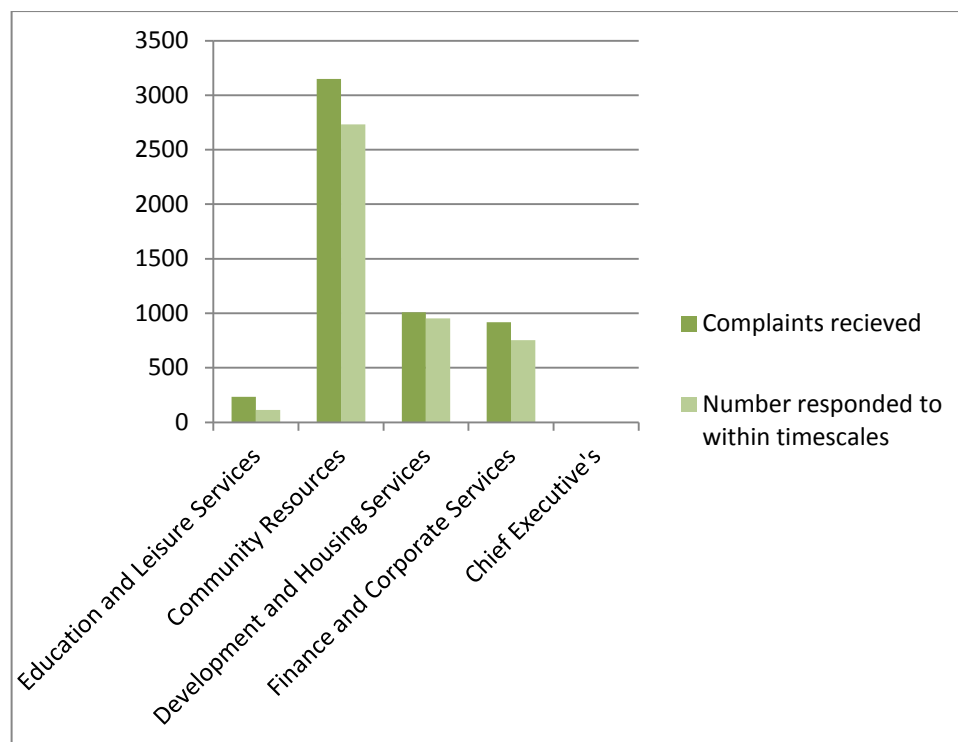
The Council has **20 days** to respond to these complaints.

- 3.6 The new policy applies to all local authorities and all local authority services (including arms length organisations) with the exception of social work services. Guidance on social work complaints is due to be published over the next year and revised guidance will be published for Social Work staff in due course.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 contains a full summary of the SPSO performance indicators. In summary:
- Renfrewshire Council received 5209 complaints in 2013/14

- 96% of these complaints were handled at the frontline stage, showing that we are being responsive to initial reports of dissatisfaction about complaints
- 82% of complaints at frontline and 90% of investigation were completed within target timescales
- The average time to respond to a frontline complaint was 3.43 days
- The average time to respond to an investigation level complaint was 12.83 days
- 72% of complaints were upheld at frontline and 37% at investigation stage.

3.8 Key areas of complaints were:

Key complaint area	What we are doing to address issues
1. Complaints relating to grass cutting, trees and other grounds maintenance issues during the summer months	The Service is working with the Customer Service Centre and is aiming to improve communication and information provided to customers to better manage expectations of service delivery.
2. Special uplifts	Improved scrutiny of the number of requests and allocation of work will ensure uplifts are completed within timescale.
3. Waste bin collections	A number of complaints are received relating to waste collections, however, this relates to 0.02% of bin collections in Renfrewshire. By analysing the complaints received, service managers are able to identify and pinpoint areas of service dissatisfaction and, where possible, put measures in place to prevent recurrence.
4. Housing repairs not completed within target times	There are a number of complaints relating to delays in housing repairs, 94% of housing repairs are completed within target timescales. We work closely with contractors to monitor volume and type of repairs and adjust resource accordingly to improve performance on this indicator, however, there will always be occasions where the target timescale is not achieved (for example due to the complexity of repair / weather conditions etc). The Council will continue to look for opportunities to improve this area of work.
5. Delays in processing housing benefit claims	New processes have been implemented to improve response times and a new capacity grid is currently being rolled out which will identify target areas for improvement and staff training.



3.9 As a result of analysing these complaints, a range of improvements to services have taken place to improve customer experience and to ensure problems do not happen again. Noted below are a range of improvements which have been made during 2013/14:

What the customer said	What we did
A number of complaints were made in relation to the length of time customers waited to receive their council tax refunds	A new process has now been set up to prioritise refunds that have been requested to ensure they are issued within a reasonable time. In addition, changes have been made to the information given to customers on timescales for council tax refunds – this has been changed from 5-10 days to 21 days. This has aligned customers' expectations more closely to our timescales and has resulted in reduced complaints.
A number of complaints were made about lack of clarity around payments for Council Tax not being allocated to the correct financial year when a customer uses the automated payment line	Improvements have been made to the standard messages on the customer payment line to better inform customers of options and to make the instructions clearer.
There were issues around clarity of letters relating to benefit entitlements	A new letter has been created for customers when their benefit entitlement has been recalculated following an overpayment to save misinterpretation and subsequent complaints.

There have been a number of complaints relating to bullying in schools.	Schools were reminded to follow the current Tackling Bullying policy. In addition to this, there is currently a policy review taking place to update the policy.
There have been complaints from members of the public regarding pupils loitering and leaving litter at properties.	The school involved has reiterated to all pupils that this is unacceptable. There are now community wardens and senior members of staff from the school have been patrolling the area at break times.
Complaints regarding investigating fire damaged properties	The Council has implemented a revised process for investigating fire damaged properties. Some of the changes implemented were suggested by the customer involved in the complaint and feedback was provided to the customer that we had made changes to the process taking their views into account.
When staff were setting up a Direct Debit, there was no ability to check that the sort codes were correct. This meant that some errors were made resulting in customers payments not being taken from their bank account	A Bank Sort Code On line checker was made available to staff and put on the system to ensure accuracy.
Customer's appointments not being checked correctly leading to the service not being provided when expected	Staff were advised to check all appointments with customers when they originally make the appointment and if they phone back for any other information
A complaints was received by a primary school, from a parent, regarding travel arrangements for schools trips	The school has reviewed its procedures in relation to school trips.
Improving customer information when calling regarding to grass cutting, trees and other grounds maintenance issues during the summer months and bin collections	Community Resources continue to work with the call centre to advise of specific issues relating to grass cutting, trees, special uplifts and waste bin collections to try and reduce front line complaints. This involves advising of any seasonal issues and delays in service which may affect customers.
If customer did not have rent account number when making a payment they were transferred to their Neighbourhood Office to obtain this information and then transferred back to the CSU which caused complaints.	Staff have been given training on how to search for a Rent Account number on the payment system, enabling the customer's issue to be dealt with immediately.

4 Social Work Complaints

- 4.1 Social Work currently manages complaints differently from the rest of the Council due to the legislative framework that sets out how complaints are

processed. Social Work endeavours to acknowledge complaints within 3 working days and reply to complaints within 10 working days, or within 20 days with agreement of the client for more complex complaints. Anyone who is still unhappy with the complaint can appeal to the Director of Social Work or the Chief Executive if the Director has already been involved in the complaint. Finally if they are still unhappy they may have their complaint reviewed by the Social Work Complaints Review Committee (CRC).

4.2 Until the necessary changes to legislation are passed, the service continues to process complaints through this 3 stage process. The Scottish Government has conducted national consultation on potential changes and is proposing to bring Social Work complaints into line with other Council Services. This would involve moving to a 20 working day investigation phase and the Social Work CRC being replaced by SPSO. The necessary changes in legislation will take around 2 years to complete.

4.3 During 2013/14, Social Work received 70 formal complaints. The main areas of complaint were Child Care (34%), Care at Home (17%), and Occupational Therapy (12%). Of the 70 complaints received by the service, the main two areas of complaint related to Standards of Service and Looked after Children. Standards of Service represented 39% (27 complaints) and related to when customers felt that services received and had not met their expectations. Looked after Children 17% (12 complaints) relate to Social Work's statutory duty to support children in its care and is a highly emotive area. The majority of complaints relate to dissatisfaction regarding levels of contact between parents and accommodated children. This can be attributed to a core difference in expectations of parents versus the professional view of an appropriate and safe level of contact.

5.0 Customer satisfaction monitoring

5.1 The Council is eager to understand how this new procedure is working for customers and conducted satisfaction monitoring during the year. The aim was to find out about people's experience of the complaints process so that we could identify areas for improvement.

5.2 33 responses were returned to the Council and key findings were:

- 85% of customers felt it was easy to log their complaint
- 59% of customers were satisfied with the way in which staff handled their complaint
- When a complaint took longer than expected to resolve, 81% of customers felt they were not kept up to date
- 73% of customers felt their response was clear and easy to understand
- Overall, 50% of customers were satisfied with the process

5.3 The key area for improvement coming from this research is keeping customers up to date when there is a delay to resolution. This will be addressed over the coming period and improvements identified and implemented.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none

2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none

3. **Community Planning –**

Children and Young People – The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

Community Care, Health & Well-being - The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

Empowering our Communities - The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

Greener - The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

Jobs and the Economy - The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

Safer and Stronger - The Chief Executive’s Service will support services and partners to meet the targets set out in the Community Plan.

4. **Legal** - none

5. **Property/Assets** - none.

6. **Information Technology** - none.

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals’ human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council’s website.

- 8. **Health & Safety** - none
- 9. **Procurement** – none
- 10. **Risk** - none
- 11. **Privacy Impact** - none

List of Background Papers

Complaints procedure, November 2012, Council

Author: Nicola McKeand, Policy Lead, 0141 618 7413

Renfrewshire Council Annual Complaints Report SPSO Indicators



Priority 01. The total number of complaints received per thousand population

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14				Q2 2013/14				Q3 2013/14				Q4 2013/14			
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Total number of complaints received	↑	↓	1,401	1,357	1,158	1,293	5,209											
Total number of complaints received per 1000 population	↑	↑	4	3	2	4	3.25											

Priority 02. Complaints closed at stage 1 and stage 2 as a percentage of all complaints closed

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14				Q2 2013/14				Q3 2013/14				Q4 2013/14			
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value

	Term Trend	Term Trend	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Number of complaints closed at stage 1	↑	↑	1,362	1,286	1,105	1,254	5,007
Number of complaints closed at stage 2	↓	↓	45	78	62	40	225
Number of complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation	↓	↓	4	7	8	1	20
Number of complaints closed at stage 1 as a percentage of all complaints	↑	↑	96.8%	94.3%	94.7%	96.9%	95.68%
Number of complaints closed at stage 2 as a percentage of all complaints	↓	↓	3.2	5.7	5.3	3.1	4.33
Number of complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation as a percentage of all complaints	↓	↓	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.1%	0.4%

Priority 03. The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed at each stage

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14				Q2 2013/14				Q3 2013/14				Q4 2013/14			
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Number of complaints upheld at stage 1 as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage 1	↓	↓	80.5%	71.9%	69.5%	64.2%	71.53%											

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14				Q2 2013/14				Q3 2013/14				Q4 2013/14				2013/14			
			Q1 2013/14		Q2 2013/14		Q3 2013/14		Q4 2013/14		Q1 2013/14		Q2 2013/14		Q3 2013/14		Q4 2013/14		2013/14		2013/14	
			Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend	Value	Trend
Number of complaints not upheld at stage 1 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 1	↑	↑	12.5%	↑	15.2%	↑	15.8%	↑	21%	↑	12.5%	↑	15.2%	↑	15.8%	↑	21%	↑	16.13%	↑	16.13%	↑
Number of complaints partially upheld at stage 1 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 1	↑	↑	7%	↑	13%	↑	14.7%	↑	14.8%	↑	7%	↑	13%	↑	14.7%	↑	14.8%	↑	12.38%	↑	12.38%	↑
Number of complaints upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↑	↑	37.8%	↑	42.3%	↑	27.4%	↑	42.5%	↑	37.8%	↑	42.3%	↑	27.4%	↑	42.5%	↑	37.5%	↑	37.5%	↑
Number of complaints not upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↓	↓	33.3%	↓	33.3%	↓	50%	↓	32.5%	↓	33.3%	↓	33.3%	↓	50%	↓	32.5%	↓	37.28%	↓	37.28%	↓
Number of complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↑	↑	28.9%	↑	24.4%	↑	22.6%	↑	25%	↑	28.9%	↑	24.4%	↑	22.6%	↑	25%	↑	25.23%	↑	25.23%	↑
Number of escalated complaints upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints at stage 2	↓	↓	4.4%	↓	3.8%	↓	3.2%	↓	0%	↓	4.4%	↓	3.8%	↓	3.2%	↓	0%	↓	2.85%	↓	2.85%	↓
Number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↓	↓	2.2%	↓	3.8%	↓	6.5%	↓	2.5%	↓	2.2%	↓	3.8%	↓	6.5%	↓	2.5%	↓	3.75%	↓	3.75%	↓
Number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↓	↓	2.2%	↓	1.3%	↓	3.2%	↓	0%	↓	2.2%	↓	1.3%	↓	3.2%	↓	0%	↓	1.68%	↓	1.68%	↓

Priority 04. The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2013/14
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1	↑	↓	2.5	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.43				
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2	↑	↓	8.1	11.9	23.4	7.9	12.83				
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	↓	↓	0.5	6.1	23.4	5	8.75				

Priority 05. The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were responded to in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days

Short Name	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2013/14
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as a percentage of the total number of stage one complaints	↓	↓	86.9%	78.4%	80.9%	82.1%	82.08%				

Short Name	Q1 2013/14 Q2 2013/14 Q3 2013/14 Q4 2013/14 Q4 2013/14 2013/14									
	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14		Q2 2013/14		Q3 2013/14		Q4 2013/14	
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Number of complaints closed at stage 2 within 20 working days as a percentage of total number of stage 2 complaints	↑	↑	95.6%		89.7%		85.5%		92.5%	90.83%
Number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as a percentage of total number of stage 2 complaints	↓	↓	8.9%		9%		8.1%		2.5%	7.13%

Priority 06. The number and percentage of complaints at each state where an extension to the 5 or 20 working day timeline has been authorised

Short Name	Q1 2013/14 Q2 2013/14 Q3 2013/14 Q4 2013/14 Q4 2013/14 2013/14									
	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q1 2013/14		Q2 2013/14		Q3 2013/14		Q4 2013/14	
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
Number of complaints closed at stage 1 where extension was authorised, as a percentage of all complaints at stage 1	↑	↑	1%		1.7%		3.1%		1%	1.7%
Number of complaints closed at stage 2 where extension was authorised, as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage 2	↓	↓	0%		6.4%		8.1%		2.5%	4.25%

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30th March 2015

Report by: Lead Officer

**Heading: Review of Communication Between Tenants, Elected Members
and Development and Housing Services**

1. Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 3 June 2013, the Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2013/14. This included a review of the communications between tenants, elected members and Development and Housing Services. This review was initially proposed as part of the 2012/13 programme, but did not proceed at that time.
- 1.2 The appointed lead officer submitted an initial scoping report on the “Review of Communication between Tenants, Elected Members and Housing Services” to the Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board at its meeting held on 1 December 2014. The Board considered and approved the purpose and scope of the report and agreed the proposed provisional timescale associated with the review. In addition, the board approved that authority be delegated to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Convener, to alter the proposed timescale for the review to accommodate the provision of material evidence including that provided by witnesses.
- 1.3 The report intimated that the purpose of the review would be to evaluate the factual situation between Council and tenants awaiting repairs and to determine if there was scope for improvement and what this should be. The Board was advised that the review would also explore opportunities to improve communications between the Council and tenants awaiting repairs which should reduce Elected Member involvement with tenants and officers through the process of escalation of complaints.
-

2. Scope of the Review

- 2.1 The initial scoping report informed the Board that the review would consider the current processes, practices and procedures as well as communication channels with tenants. It also advised that investigation would be undertaken into complaint escalation including where this involved elected members.
 - 2.2 The Board was also informed that review would consider how the Council complied with its current targets and obligations to tenants in relation to housing repairs. It was advised that this would also include information on meeting repair target times for emergency repairs, urgent repairs, repairs by appointment and programmed repairs.
 - 2.3 The review would also seek to identify areas of best practice currently in Renfrewshire and would consider examples of best practice either in other local authorities or other registered social landlords in Scotland.
 - 2.4 This review was requested by an elected member as it was perceived that there has been a high level of contact from tenants experiencing issues with housing repairs, which have taken some time to resolve. In addition, reasons given for the contact with elected members was that there has been a lack of communication between the Council and the tenant on delayed or cancelled repairs.
-

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board notes the content of this report and considers and approves its findings which are as follows:
 - Since the initial proposal for the review which was first suggested in to be part of the programme for 2012/13, Housing Services has undergone many strategic service improvements including significant customer focussed improvements particularly in the use of new technology.
 - Following a request to all elected members to nominate individuals who could be asked to give evidence to the Board on their experience of the Council's housing repair service, no tenant's names were suggested. This may indicate that there is no longer a perception that there is an issue with a lack of communication between Housing Services and tenants relating to repairs.
 - The Service has been engaged in a significant planned investment programme of £138m for upgrading its stock to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards by April 2015 and as such customer satisfaction levels will be improved due to an increase in property standards. The satisfaction

level for repairs for Renfrewshire tenants is 6% better than the Scottish Average. For 2013/2014 satisfaction levels with repairs was 93.5% whereas the Scottish average was 87.6%.

- There is no empirical evidence to support the view that there is currently an issue with communications between tenants, elected members and Housing Services in relation to housing repairs.

4 Current Processes for Delivering Housing Repairs

4.1 A repairs hand book has been prepared by Housing Services and forms part of the new tenant pack. The pack is reviewed annually and provides essential information to tenants about getting repairs done in their property. This information is also made available through the Council's web site (appendix1).

4.2 Reporting a repair

4.2.1 Housing Services provide several traditional and technologically advanced methods for tenants to report repairs to their homes which are follows:

- By telephone to 0300 300 0300 (recommended for an emergency as it has an out of hours service) or access to a free phone repair reporting service from Customer Service Centres in Paisley or neighbourhood offices in Renfrew, and Johnstone.
- By E-mail to the customer contact centre giving name, address contact number and details of repair (not to be used for an emergency repair).
- Through a Ren Repairs App which is suitable to use with Apple or android phones on mobile devices or tablets. Tenants can report repairs needed to windows, doors, heating and water and can also book appointments for annual gas servicing. They can also attach a photograph showing the extent of the damage to allow a quick assessment of the potential repair. This App also allows tenants to update on the status of their repair and add more comments or pictures until the job is complete to their satisfaction.
- There is also an instant messaging function allowing tenants a real time discussion with a customer services advisor. The Service is currently developing a text messaging module on Opti-time to remind customers of their appointment in advance to reduce the level of no access to properties.

4.2.2 As part of the process for reporting a repair tenants are asked to advise staff when they will be at home and what arrangements can be made to let the repair service into their home. If there is enough information to instruct the

contractor an order will be raised for the repair straight away. A visit prior to pre inspect the repair will also be arranged if necessary, for example where it is a more complex repair issue. An appointments system is offered to tenants where a date and time will be offered along with a morning, afternoon or school run slot for the visit/repair. At every call customer contact information is checked and amended if necessary to ensure an accurate line of communication is established with the customer.

4.3 Carrying Out of Repairs

4.3.1 The in house contractor, Building Services operate using an IT system known as Opti-time which provides a diary system for scheduling resources and work instructions. It also allows staff to mark off repairs as completed and amend repairs and works orders as necessary electronically giving live information in case of an enquiry.

4.3.2 Repairs are split into four groups and the response time for each one is different.

- Emergency repairs- where there is a serious threat to health and safety or where quick action is required to prevent damage to the tenant or neighbouring properties. Such repairs are attended to and made safe within one day of being reported.
- Urgent repairs- repairs which have to be carried out quickly to prevent further damage such as minor leaks. They are carried out within 5 working days from the initial report.
- Appointable repairs- every day repairs which are required as a result of normal wear and tear to a property. They are carried out within 15 days of being reported. Some 82% of repairs are made by appointment across all repair categories.
- Programmed repairs which are general maintenance repairs such as renewing items, working at height, seasonal works and/or common repairs involving owners. This work is generally completed in 30 – 90 days depending on the type of work.

4.4 Legislative Right to Repair

- 4.4.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives tenants the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. The scheme covers certain repairs up to the value of £350 and if the Council fail to carry out the repair the tenant may have be entitled to compensation.

4.5 Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

- 4.5.1 The procedure for making a complaint in relation to housing repairs is documented in the housing repairs policy and Tenant's Repairs Handbook. Housing Services reported 78% satisfaction with the repairs service based on an independent tenant satisfaction survey carried out in April and May 2013. The Scottish average for all social landlords including Councils and Housing Associations is 87.6%. The Council also carries out customer satisfaction surveys by telephone shortly after a repair takes place. These surveys indicate a satisfaction level of 93.5% based on surveys of 3,700 tenants for 2013/2014.

In addition the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs was 8.5 days against a target of 15 days. This is the most common type of repair requested with 42,670 requests made in 2013/14.

- 4.5.2 Complaints performance is recorded and published. For 2013/2014 94.86% of 1st stage complaints were responded to in full within timescale 94.92 2nd stage complaints were responded to in full within timescale. Of the 1st stage complaints 30.94% were upheld and 3.39% of 2 stage complaints were upheld.

4.6 Compliance with Current Targets for Housing Repairs for 2013/14.

- 4.6.1 There were 3,086 repairs were cancelled during 2013/14 (approx 4.2% of all repairs raised). The main reasons for cancellation were as follows:

- New job ticket required (usually where work is more complex than reported and additional follow on works are required);
- No work required (e.g. duplicate job raised, works already complete on other job ticket);
- No owner agreement (for common repairs where owners do not wish to participate, hence works cannot proceed);
- Tenant refusal / no access.

4.6.2 Performance levels for completing repairs are demonstrated in the table below;

Total of 68,901 repairs completed as follows:

Repair Category	Volume	Target Timescale for Completion	%age complete within target timescale
Emergency	11,494	24 hours	96%
Right to Repair	11,558	24 – 48 hours	93%
Urgent	1,078	5 days	95%
Routine	42,670	15 days	93%
Planned	2,101	30 – 90 days	97%
Total	68,901		94%

4.7 Performance Reporting

4.7.1 In August 2014, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published a report on the Councils performance as a landlord. This report concentrated on what the Regulator, through consultation with tenants across the country, thought would be of most interest to tenants. It included 18 indicators covering topics such as satisfaction with the service the Council provides and how well it performs in terms of repairs.

4.7.2 Following on from the landlords' report the Council produced a report on its performance during 2013/14. The Housing Charter Tenant Report 2014 outlines Renfrewshire Council's performance and compares it with the Scottish Average produced by SHR (which is the average of all local authorities with housing stock and other registered social landlords in Scotland). This report has been issued to all tenants.

4.7.3 During 2013, the Scottish Government commissioned the Chartered Institute of Housing, Scotland to develop and deliver a scrutiny, training and learning programme for tenants aimed at developing effective scrutiny arrangements.

4.7.4 Renfrewshire Council was selected as one of only 4 organisations within Scotland to participate in this new Scottish Government funded pilot scrutiny training programme 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny'.

Renfrewshire Council's Tenants Scrutiny Panel (TSP) was set-up to help provide another vehicle for tenant involvement and to provide a mechanism for tenants to examine and evaluate our performance in specific service areas.

Implications of this report

- 1. Financial Implications** - None.
- 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications** - None.
- 3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications** – none
- 4. Legal Implications** - None.
- 5. Property/Assets Implications** - None.
- 6. Information Technology Implications** - None.
- 7. Equality and Human Rights Implications** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for approving scope of the review only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
- 8. Health and Safety Implications** - None.
- 9. Procurement Implications** - None.
- 10. Risk Implications** - None.
- 11. Privacy Impact** - None.

Author: Karen Anderson, Amenity Services Manager-Waste
Tel: 0141 618 7627
e-mail: karen.anderson@renfrewshire.gov.uk

tenant information



Contents

Moving in	3
Collecting rubbish	5
Voting	6
Community alarms.....	6
Paying your rent	7
How to pay your rent.....	8
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction	9
About your tenancy	10
Ending your tenancy.....	14
What we expect from you.....	15
What you can expect from us	16
When you need our permission	17
Buying your home	18
Protecting your home	20
To protect your home from burglars or any other criminals	21
Insurance.....	22
Fire safety.....	22
What to do in an emergency involving water, electricity or gas.....	24
Cold weather.....	26
Additional safety information for high-rise flats.....	27
Looking after your estate	30
Permissions.....	31
Abandoning your home.....	33
Waste and recycling	33
Pest control	34
Using the drying area	35
Energy advice	37
Heating your home	38
Tariffs and methods of payment	39
Making your voice heard	45
Making a complaint	46

moving in

Once we've shown you round your new home, we'll ask you to **read and sign your tenancy agreement**. We'll then give you a signed copy of your tenancy agreement and a new tenant's pack.



Around the time of your tenancy starting, our housing officer will get in touch with you to check:

- If you've moved yet
- Your benefits are sorted out (if this applies)
- There are no outstanding repairs
- You've had the support you need

We'll then arrange another 'settling in' visit for 2–4 weeks time to make sure your rent's being paid on time, find out if you've settled in to your new tenancy and ask if you need more support.

One of the first things you'll need to do is arrange for gas and electricity supplies. Phone these numbers to check who currently supplies fuel to your address.

- **Electricity: 0845 270 9101**
- **Gas: 0870 608 1524**

Tip: It's useful to have your meter readings and meter reference numbers ready in case you need to give them. These are shown on the meters.

Call our Energy Advice Team (more on p37) on **0141 618 6197** and an advisor will visit your home.

They can show you the best way to use your heating and hot water systems, and even set the central heating and hot water programmes or the thermostats for your gas and electricity.

The team can also advise on how to reduce your fuel bills, what payment schemes are available and what to do if you are behind with your payments.

You may want to contact some or all of the following organisations before you move so you can tell them about your change of address:

- Renfrewshire Council's Council Tax section
- The Benefits Agency
- The post office (to redirect your mail)
- Your bank, credit card and savings organisations
- TV licensing
- The DVLA (for your driver's licence)
- Your employer
- The electoral register (for voting)

Collecting rubbish

We will collect your household rubbish and items for recycling. We'll let you know about your rubbish and recycling collection days.

Please remember to bring your bin in from the street as soon as possible after we have emptied it.

If you have any bulky or awkward household rubbish you'd like us to take away, call us on **0300 300 0300**.

If there is a chute in your building, remember to wrap all rubbish tightly. Don't put any bulky items in the chute as this will cause a blockage.

You can only use your chute at certain times. Your neighbours (or caretaker or concierge in multi-storey flats) can tell you when this is. If you live in a multi-storey flat, your caretaker or concierge can also tell you how to arrange for us to collect bulky items.

Voting

If you want to vote in local or general elections, you need to make sure you're registered. You can register to vote at any time.

Don't wait until an election is called; make sure you register to vote **now**. Phone **0141 842 5922** for more information.

Community alarms

Community alarms are designed to reassure you that help will be on hand if you need it.

If you have a disability, or you are frail or housebound, we can provide a community alarm to help you or your carers call for help 24 hours a day.

We can fit an alarm in your home if you have a working phone line and modern phone socket. There is a small weekly charge for this service.

If you'd like a community alarm, call Renfrewshire Care 24 on **0300 300 1180 or 0141 618 2584**.

Tip: If you want us to move your community alarm to your new home, call Renfrewshire Care 24 or you can tell the community alarm control centre that you are moving by pressing the button on your community alarm. They will tell us that you are moving.

paying your rent

Paying your rent in advance and on time is very important in order to avoid unnecessary arrears.



Your rent depends on the size and type of your home, including the type of heating.

A new rent structure has been introduced and rent levels have been set until 2015. We've done this so we can invest in our houses and meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by that year. SHQS is a Government standard requiring houses to be acceptable, modern, safe and secure, good quality and energy efficient.

We may consider carrying out certain duties in relation to your tenancy which we may charge for, for example, cleaning shared areas and maintaining shared ground. We will consult you before we introduce schemes like this.

How to pay your rent

We'll give you a swipe card to use for paying your rent.

You can use your swipe card at PayPoint facilities throughout Renfrewshire (for example, at cash collection points in your local corner store).

You can also pay your rent in the following ways:

- online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk;
- by Direct Debit or standing order;
- at the Customer Service Centres in Paisley, Renfrew or Johnstone;
- at payment kiosks in Ferguslie Park, Glenburn and Foxbar libraries or Johnstone Castle and Gallowhill community centres;
- at most post offices;
- by debit or credit card by phoning **0300 300 0222** (during office hours) or **0845 602 0355** (24 hours); or
- by post, making your cheque or postal order payable to '**Renfrewshire Council**' and sending your payment to:
Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1HY.

Please do not send cash unless you send it by registered post.

We'll send you a statement every three months showing the payments you've made.

If you're having problems paying rent or Council Tax, the most important thing is to get help and advice as quickly as possible – speak to an income advisor from our Advice Works service.

Tip: You can also use your swipe card at the [Customer Service Centre in Renfrewshire House](#) to pay your Council Tax.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit/Reduction

You may be able to get help to pay your rent and Council Tax. This will depend on your income, the age and number of people living with you, and the amount of your rent and Council Tax.

You should apply for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction straightaway – even if you don't have all the information we need to work out your benefit.

If you don't apply straightaway, you may lose out as we can't usually backdate benefit.

If you don't qualify for Housing Benefit when you first apply, but your circumstances change, you should apply again.

If you do receive Housing Benefit and your circumstances change, you must let us know as this could affect your benefit. If you don't let us know at the time, we will have to get back from you any amounts we have overpaid.

Examples of changes we need to know about are if:

- you start work;
- your income changes; or
- someone moves into, or out of, your home.

If you want to appeal against a decision on your claim, you must make your appeal in writing. Phone Advice Works on **0300 300 1238** and they'll advise you on how to make your appeal.

For information about the current benefit changes programme, call **0300 300 0288**.

When you rent a council home, we will give you the keys and a **tenancy agreement**. Your tenancy agreement sets out the conditions of your tenancy, which protect both you and us. It is a contract, and records information such as your name, the date you became our tenant and how much rent you must pay. It also lists the conditions you must keep to as a tenant.



We cannot change the conditions listed in your tenancy agreement without your permission unless we get an order from the Sheriff Court. However, we can increase your rent as long as we give you four weeks written notice.

You should read your tenancy agreement carefully and keep it in a safe place. If you need us to explain anything, please ask at the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team.

You have the right to a **Scottish Secure Tenancy**. This means that we cannot evict you from your home (force you to move) unless we can prove in court that we have a good reason for doing so.

Examples of good reasons for evicting are if you do not pay your rent or look after the property, or if you cause a nuisance to your neighbours. Eviction is a last resort and we will do all we can to deal with any problems in other ways before we consider it.

You might also want to know more about the following:

Applying for rehousing

If you want to move from your council house, you should contact your local Neighbourhood Team to discuss your housing options. You can then choose the solution that meets your housing needs. This could be an exchange with a tenant from either a council house or another landlord (housing association or private), or through the Homes Mobility Scheme.

Joint tenancy

You may want to share the responsibilities of your tenancy with someone who lives with you. This can be a person who is not currently a tenant but lives in or plans to live in the house as their main or only home. This can be your husband, wife, partner, brother, sister, carer and so on. In this case, you need to apply to the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team for a joint tenancy.

Transferring your tenancy

If you are leaving your home to live somewhere else, you may be able to apply to transfer your tenancy to your partner or a member of your family who has lived with you for six months. Please ask the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team for advice.

Succeeding to a tenancy

If you die, your partner or a joint tenant has the first priority to succeed (take over the tenancy of your home).

If you don't have a partner or joint tenant, or if you do and they don't want to succeed, your home can go to a member of your family aged 16 or over as long as your home was their only or main home when you died.

Finally, we give third priority to a carer who is providing or has provided care to you or a member of your family. To qualify, the carer must be aged 16 or over, and have given up his or her only main home to live with you.

In all three cases, your house must have been the only or main home of the person who wants to take over your tenancy.

Mutual exchange

If you are a council tenant, you can exchange homes with another council tenant. This is called a mutual exchange.

You can also exchange with a tenant from a different council or housing association, or the tenant of a private property.

If you want more information about the procedure and what to next please contact us.

We will normally allow a mutual exchange if this will not cause overcrowding in either home and if there have been no problems with either tenancy. We will refuse an exchange if you are behind with your rent or there have been any complaints about your behaviour at your present home.

The appropriate landlords must approve all exchanges. You must not exchange homes without getting permission from us and any other landlord involved.

If you do, you could lose your home.

The Renfrewshire Council House Exchange website brings together tenants looking to swap their home. You can also search for tenants who live in other parts of the UK if you are considering moving from Renfrewshire. For more information, go to www.renfrewshire.houseexchange.org.uk

Ending your tenancy

If you want to end your tenancy, you must contact the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team **at least 28 days** before you plan to leave your home.

We will ask you to confirm this by writing to us or by filling in an 'end of tenancy' form at the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team.

If you don't give us 28 days written notice, we will charge you four weeks rent from the date you return the keys.

- We expect you to leave your home in good condition. If there is damage to your home or if we need to arrange to get rid of things you have left behind, we may charge you for this.

If you've made certain improvements to your home, you may be entitled to compensation when you end your tenancy, as long as you had our permission to carry out the work.

You must:

- have had our written permission to make any improvements before you started work; and
- keep any bills relating to the improvements you have made.

If you carry out alterations or improvements to the property without our permission, and we have to pay to put the property back to its original state, we may have to charge you for this.

For more information, please contact your housing officer.

What we expect from you

- You must pay your rent on time.
- You must let us know if anyone moves into or out of your home, or if your name changes.
- You must look after the fixtures and fittings in your home.
- You must keep your garden tidy and cut the grass regularly. If you are elderly or disabled, you can ask us to include you in the Garden Assistance Scheme (this means we will send someone to cut your grass and hedge if you have one).
- If you live in a flat, you must make sure you take your turn to clean shared areas, like stairs and landings.
- You must ask for our permission to keep a dog. If you live in a multi-storey or sheltered property, you are not allowed to keep dogs. Please contact us for an application form.
- You must keep your pets under control.
- You must keep any noise in your home at an acceptable level.
- You must keep your home properly decorated. We do not recommend using Artex on your walls. If you want to use Artex, please contact the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team for advice. You may have to pay for it to be removed when you move out of your home.
- For your safety, you must not paint or varnish wooden gas-fire casings or fire surrounds.
- For your safety, you must not install ceiling fanlight fittings in rooms which have gas or solid-fuel appliances.

Please try not to fall out with your neighbours. You are living in a community. What happens in and around your home affects your neighbours. **Be considerate.**

We will hold you responsible if your visitors misbehave inside or outside your home. If you are having problems with your neighbours, please contact us. The good-neighbour agreement (which is included in your tenancy booklet) says that we will do everything possible to deal with the problem of antisocial behaviour effectively and firmly but in a fair way.

We also provide a mediation service to help sort out any problems between neighbours.

What you can expect from us

We have responsibilities to you. As your landlord, we will:

- make sure that the wind and rain cannot get into your home;
- carry out necessary repairs to your home;
- tell you, each year, about any change to your rent; and
- not refuse permission, without good reason, if you want to make changes to your home, or transfer or sublet your tenancy.

We are committed to providing good quality, affordable housing in an attractive and secure environment. To help us achieve this, you must look after your home and be a good neighbour.

When you need our permission

You must ask for our permission if you want to do the following:

- Make alterations to your home or change any of the fixtures and fittings (for example, change the doors, or install a fitted kitchen or laminated flooring).
- Transfer your tenancy to someone else.
- Exchange homes with someone else.
- Take in a lodger, or rent your home to someone else if you have to leave the area for a while.
- Leave your home for more than four weeks.
- Have a dog.
- Run a business from your home.
- Build a garage, a garden hut, or a fence.
- Build a driveway.
- Install a satellite dish.

buying your home

You may have the right to buy your home. If you are interested in doing so, contact our Legal Services Section on **0141 618 7078**



Your right to buy depends on the start date of your tenancy:

Tenancies starting on or after 1 March 2011

You do not have the right to buy.

If you return to social housing after 1 March 2011, after a voluntary break, you will not have the right to buy. However, there are a few exceptions to this.

Tenancies starting on or after 30 September 2002

You are entitled to a discount after you have been a tenant for five years. The discount will start at 20% of the value of your property and increase by 1% for each year (up to 35% or £15,000, whichever is less).

Tenancies existing before 30 September 2002

You will keep the right to buy on exactly the same conditions.

You will keep this right even if your landlord changes.

For these tenancies there will be a discount on the value of the property of up to 60% (70% for flats), depending on how long you have been a tenant. If you end your existing tenancy (including moving to another council house), you will no longer qualify for the right to buy under these conditions.

If you move to another property, your right to buy will be covered by the same conditions as the new Scottish Secure Tenancy. That is, the discount will be up to 35% of the market value of the property or £15,000, whichever is less.

If you want to buy, we will arrange to value your home. We will also draw up a plan showing the areas of ground which belong to you and any areas which are shared. Once you apply to buy your home, we will remove your property from any improvement programmes.

If you buy the house you currently live in, you must make sure that you provide access for repairs to shared areas and that you pay your share of these repairs. Any garden area must be maintained to a reasonable standard.

protecting your home

From burglars and vandals to extreme weather, there are many things which threaten the safety and security of your home and can cause damage and loss.



To protect your home from burglars or any other criminals

- Always lock your windows and doors when you go out. Take a few minutes to check around. You should even lock up if you are only leaving your home for a few minutes.
- Leave a light on if you will be out after dark.
- Never leave keys hidden outside your home. Burglars usually know the right places to look.
- If you live in a flat with a door-entry system, make sure that you keep the door shut at all times. When you answer your handset, only let people in if you know them.
- Do not let strangers into your home. If someone comes to your home claiming to be a tradesman or official, insist that they show you their identity card. If they do not have one, don't let them in.
- Report anything suspicious to the police immediately.

It is an important condition of your Scottish Secure Tenancy that you contact us **if you plan to leave your home for more than four weeks.**

When you go away on holiday, you should:

- leave your valuables at a bank or other safe place;
- leave your keys and the address where you will be staying with someone you trust, preferably a neighbour;
- ask someone to keep an eye on your home; and
- stop your milk and paper deliveries.

Insurance

We have arranged buildings insurance for the structure of your home but you must insure the contents, your personal belongings and decorations.

We offer a low-cost home contents insurance scheme which you can pay for with your rent. You can get more information about our insurance scheme from your Customer Service Centre or local Neighbourhood Team or our website by visiting www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

If you don't insure your belongings, you risk having to pay the full cost of replacing or repairing them if they are damaged or stolen. The cost of household insurance is small compared with the cost of replacing all your possessions.

Fire safety

There are smoke alarms in your home. Some alarms are connected to the electricity supply. They will have a battery in case there is a power cut. Other smoke alarms will be battery operated.

You must check that your smoke alarm is working properly. Test the alarm every week by pressing the button in the centre. If your smoke alarm is not working, report the fault to Renfrewshire Council's repair line on **0300 300 0300**.

Your life, your family's lives and your neighbours' lives depend on an early warning if there is a fire. Do not disconnect your smoke alarm, even if the noise is irritating when the toast burns!

Tip: We strongly advise that you do not fit polystyrene ceiling tiles. If there is a fire, these tiles are extremely flammable and give off a poisonous gas.

Some general fire safety tips are to:

Always:

- unplug electrical appliances at night when you are not using them;
- put out all cigarettes properly and empty all ashtrays at night;
- put a fireguard in front of open fires; and
- close all the doors inside your home at night.

Never:

- overload electrical power points;
- leave matches where children can reach them;
- leave open fires unattended; or
- leave a chip pan unattended on the cooker.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue are now offering free home fire safety visits to everyone in their area.

To arrange a visit call **0800 0731 999** or text "check" to **61611** on your mobile phone. Your local fire station will call you back to arrange a time and date that suits you. During the visit, firefighters will check each room of your house with you, helping you make sure your house is safe.

Visit www.dontgivefireahome.com or www.strathclydefire.org for practical safety advice.

Or contact Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on **0141 889 2222**.

What to do in an emergency involving water, electricity or gas

Water

There will usually be two water supplies in your home. To turn off the water, turn the stopcocks.

The first stopcock is usually in the kitchen next to or under the sink. The stopcock for the storage tank, which feeds water into your toilet cistern and bath, is usually in the bathroom or in a bedroom.

If you can't find your stopcocks, your repairs officer can tell you where they are.

Electricity

The electricity meter is usually in the hall next to the fuse box.

If a fuse blows and your power goes off, this means that something (usually an appliance) is overloading the fuse. If you know which appliance it is, unplug it. Repair the fuse and reset the circuit breaker (reset the switches on your fuse box). Ask an electrician to check your faulty appliance.

If you need to switch the electricity off at the mains, the switch is next to the fuse box.

We carry out essential checks to the electrical circuits in your house before you move in. Every vacant property must receive a certificate confirming that this has been carried out before it can be re-let to a new tenant.

By law, we must carry out an electrical safety check in your home every five years. Please try to keep any appointments we make for the safety check. If you need to change the appointment, please contact us beforehand.

Gas

If you need to turn off the gas supply, your customer control valve is next to the gas meter. Make sure you have turned it off completely.

When you turn it back on, make sure you turn the control valve fully and relight the pilot lights on all appliances.

We carry out essential checks to the gas supply and appliances in your house before you move in. We must provide every vacant property with a certificate confirming that this has been done before we can re-let the property to a new tenant.

By law, we must carry out a safety check on all gas appliances every year. Please try to keep any appointments we make for the safety check. If you need to change the appointment, please contact us beforehand.

Carbon monoxide is a very poisonous gas which you cannot see or smell. Any gas, oil or coal heater or fire can produce carbon monoxide. Breathing in carbon monoxide can make you feel tired and dizzy, and can give you headaches and chest pains.

Carbon monoxide can kill.

The carbon monoxide alarm in your home is designed to detect levels of carbon monoxide long before they reach harmful levels.

If the alarm detects carbon monoxide, it will make a continuous beeping noise to warn you.

If you have a carbon monoxide alarm, you still need to take basic precautions. Do not cover air vents in windows, walls, floors and so on and make sure you allow our experienced gas fitters to come into your home every year to carry out the gas-safety check on your appliances.

If you feel that your carbon monoxide alarm is not working correctly, contact your local Neighbourhood Team immediately.

Cold weather

Here are some tips on coping with things like damp, condensation and frost.

To reduce condensation in your home:

- Make your home warmer.
- Increase the ventilation in your home.
- Allow fresh air into your home. Open windows a little and use any extractor fans you have. Do not cover airbricks or vents.
- Reduce the amount of moisture you produce.
- Dry clothes outside when possible.
- Make sure you vent tumble dryers outside.
- Open your kitchen window when you are cooking, and keep all your other doors closed to stop the steam spreading through your home.
- Do not use Calor Gas fires or paraffin heaters.

If you have any persistent condensation problems, please contact your repairs officer.

In very cold weather, frost can get into water pipes and make them expand. This can cause burst pipes. If your pipes burst, you should do the following.

- Turn off the water supply at the stopcock.
- Turn on all the taps.
- Switch off the electricity at the mains if the water has come into contact with electrical wires or fittings.
- Switch off your water heater or the central heating system. (If you have solid-fuel heating, put out the fire. Do not try to drain the boiler unless the fire has gone out.)

Sometimes water can freeze in the pipes. If this happens, you should:

- turn off the water at the stopcock;
- switch off the boiler or immersion heater; and
- turn on all the taps.

If you have any of these problems, contact our repairs service on 0300 300 0300. They will send a plumber to your home.

Additional safety information for high-rise flats

Living in a high-rise flat does not make you any more at risk from fire. Planning what you should do in the event of a fire is largely the same as for people in other homes.

But there are some key differences you should know if you live in a high rise flat.

Your building has been designed and built with fire safety in mind. The walls and the doors between flats, stairs and corridors are designed to resist fire and stop the spread of smoke.

Most fires don't spread across more than one or two rooms, so if there is a fire in your building you are usually safest in your own flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you.

If fire breaks out in the building

- If you smell smoke in the corridor, bin area or refuse chute, call 999.
- Stay inside your flat and close all windows and doors.
- Only leave your flat if you are affected by heat or smoke or told to do so by the firefighters or police.

If there is a fire in your flat

- Try to keep calm. Make sure everyone in your home knows about the fire. Then get out and stay out.
- Don't stop for valuables – your life is more important.
- Don't go looking for the fire.
- Don't open doors if they are warm to touch.
- If there is a lot of smoke, crawl on the floor as the air will be clearer there.
- Do not use the lift – go down the stairs.
- As soon as you can call 999, giving them your full address including your flat number and floor.

If your escape route is blocked

- Get everyone into a room with a window or balcony.
- Put cushions, bedding etc round the bottom of the door to keep out smoke.
- If possible, open the window for fresh air, wave a sheet and shout for assistance to let firefighters know you are there and need rescued.
- If the fire is outside your flat, seal your front door with tape, damp towels or bedding.
- Close any ventilators.
- Phone 999, giving the number of your flat.
- If your front door becomes hot, wet it down.

Make a fire plan

- Plan to make one room in your home a 'safe room' in case you can't escape. It's best if it's a room with a window and a phone.
- If you are trapped, go to the balcony or window. Wait for the fire and rescue services.
- If you are leaving your flat, do not use the lift – go down the stairs.
- Tell everyone in your home what the escape plan is.
- Tell everyone where the door key is.
- Practice what you would do if you had a real fire.

General advice

- Never use or store bottled gas cylinders.
- Never tamper with water inlets on landings. It could cost lives if they are not working properly when there's a fire.
- If you see a water inlet vandalised, report it immediately to your caretaker/concierge service.
- Outside the building, roads and other areas are designed so that fire engines can get as near as possible. They must not be blocked by parked vehicles.
- Keep landings and other common areas clear. Storing furniture, rubbish, etc, in these areas can pose a serious risk of fire and may hinder firefighters. If you see any rubbish etc, please report to your concierge/caretaker.

If you feel you'd need help to leave your home in the event of a fire, please inform your caretaker/concierge now. This will help the fire and rescue service if there is a fire.

looking after your estate



Permissions

There are certain things that you need our permission for:

Keeping a dog

You may keep a small domestic animal (for example, a cat, a hamster or a budgie) without getting our permission. We would only need to be involved if the animals cause a nuisance to other people.

Due to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, you need our permission if you want to have a dog, even if it is a dog not covered by the Act. Please contact us to fill in an application form to have a dog.

If you have problems with stray dogs, contact our animal warden service on **0300 300 0380**.

Put up a satellite dish

If you want to put up a satellite dish, you must apply to us.

You will have to provide proof of buildings insurance and fill in an application form giving details of:

- the size of the satellite dish;
- where you plan to put the dish; and
- how you will fix the dish to the property.

We will let you know the result of your application within 28 days. We may remove any satellite dish which you have put up without permission.

Build a garage or lay a driveway (or both)

If you want to build a garage or lay a driveway (or both), you must get permission from your local Neighbourhood Team and from our Planning section. You will have to pay a fee.

Please contact us and we will give you the application forms you need.

Put up a fence, hut or greenhouse

If you want to put up a fence, hut or greenhouse on your property, please fill in an application form which you can get from the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team.

If you are not sure which area of garden you are responsible for, ask your housing officer.

Antisocial behaviour

What happens in and around your home can affect the quality of life within your neighbourhood. You are living in a community and you should consider your neighbours, as should any visitor(s) to your home.

We will hold you responsible for your visitors' behaviour. The good-neighbour agreement included in your tenancy booklet says that we will do everything possible to deal with the problem of antisocial behaviour, effectively and firmly but in a fair way.

If you have any problems with your neighbours, call the freephone Antisocial Behaviour helpline on **0300 300 0380**.

Abandoning your home

You may lose your tenancy if you do not permanently live in your home.

If your home appears to be empty, or if we believe that you are no longer using the property as your home, we can serve a notice which allows us to legally claim the property back. If you do not respond to the notice within 28 days giving the reason why you are not staying in your home, we will take action to end your tenancy.

Waste and recycling

Your normal household waste is collected in your grey bin one week and all your recyclable waste in your blue bin the next week. Glass is collected every four weeks in the green and blue boxes that were previously used for recycling.

Your bin must be presented for collection before 7am on the collection day and returned to its storage point as soon as possible after collection.

When you put your bin out for us to collect, don't block the footpaths. Always leave room for people, prams and wheelchairs to get past.

If you have large, bulky items to dispose of, you can use one of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres throughout Renfrewshire.

Alternatively, the special uplift service can collect bulky or awkward items householders are unable to deal with themselves. Tenants are limited to a maximum of two special uplifts per year. If any additional uplifts are requested, they will be charged at current rates. You can get more information on special uplifts on **0300 300 0300** and more information on the recycling service on **0300 300 0380**.

Pest control

Normally, we expect you to deal with everyday insects, for example, flies, garden insects and the occasional wasp. You can contact Environmental Services on **0300 300 0380** or use the online form on our website if your house is infested with larger beetles, fleas, bedbugs or cockroaches. The department can also deal with wasps nests in or near your home, but you will normally be charged for this service. You can also contact the department if your house is infested with mice or rats.

Using the drying area

You may have a local agreement with your neighbours about using the drying area in the garden. But if you don't, you should use this rota. If you have a problem with this, please contact your housing officer.

A tenant of a cottage-type property with three drying poles has full use of these poles on any day.

TWO TENANTS SHARING A DRYING AREA (Two days per week)	
Monday and Tuesday	Ground Flat or lowest numbered cottage
Wednesday and Thursday	Upstairs flat of higher numbered cottage
Friday	By arrangement between tenants

THREE TENANTS SHARING A DRYING AREA (One Day per week)	
Monday	Ground floor
Tuesday	First-floor flat
Wednesday	Second-floor flat
Thursday and Friday	By arrangement between tenants

FOUR TENANTS SHARING A DRYING AREA (One day per week)	
Monday	Ground flat to Left
Tuesday	Ground flat to Right
Wednesday	First-floor flat to Left
Thursday	First-floor flat to Right
Friday	By arrangement between tenants

SIX TENANTS USING ONE DRYING AREA (One day per fortnight)	
Monday	Ground Flat to Left
Tuesday	Ground Flat to Right
Wednesday	First-floor flat to Left
Monday following	First-floor flat to Right
Tuesday following	Second-floor flat to Left
Wednesday following	Second-floor flat to Right
Thursday and Friday	By arrangement between tenants
EIGHT TENANTS USING TWO DRYING AREAS (One day per week)	
Monday	Ground Flat to Left
Tuesday	Ground Flat to Right
Wednesday	First-floor flat to Left
Thursday	First-floor flat to Right
Friday	By arrangement between tenants
Following Monday	Second-floor flat to Left
Following Tuesday	Second-floor flat to Right
Following Wednesday	Third-floor flat to Left
Following Thursday	Third-floor flat to Right
Friday	By arrangement between tenants

Note: Ropes must only be attached to the poles provided. Do not attach them to fences, pipes, and so on. Do not leave the ropes up when the drying area is not in use.

energy advice



Heating your home

Make sure you know how to use your heating controls and programmer. Set your timer to suit your personal requirements. If you don't understand how to use them properly, call the Energy Team on **0141 618 6197**.

As a guide, the Scottish Government set out what they call a 'Satisfactory' heating regime:

- For older and infirm people, **23c** in the living room and **18c** in other rooms for 16 hours a day
- For all others, **21c** in the living room and **18c** in other rooms for 9 hours a day (or 16 in 24 over the weekend) with 2 hours being in the morning and 7 hours in the evening. If it goes above **21c**, try turning your heating down. It should still be warm enough to be comfortable and it will help save you money.

Running costs vary according to the type and size of your house, how often you use your heating and the tariff you are on. However, the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that comes with your property will tell you the estimated cost of heating. Based on previous EPCs, we know that a typical 3 bedroom flat would cost around **£600–£800 a year in heating, water heating and lighting costs**.

On top of this, you need to add on the running costs of your appliances.

Appliance	Average Cost
Washing machine	£43 per year
Tumble Dryer	£86 per year
Television	£32 per year
Toaster	£9 per year
Vacuum Cleaner	£11.60 per year
Kettle	£43.20 per year
Light Bulb	£21.60 per year

Source: *Ukpower.co.uk and Council's Energy Advice Team*

Tariffs and methods of payment

You are responsible for all payments to gas and electricity suppliers. You should arrange with your supplier a heating payment plan that suits your circumstances.

Here is a summary of the main types of payment plans and what circumstances they might suit:

Standing charges

These are fixed charges that must be paid regardless of how much fuel you use. Some suppliers may offer lower charges or no standing charges at all. It is worth checking suppliers to see who offers the best deal.

Meters

Suppliers offer various types of meters that can be broadly divided into:

- Credit or quarterly meters, when fuel is supplied in advance of payment;
- Prepayment meters, when fuel is paid before consumption.

Credit meters are the most popular type and often the cheapest.

The bill is sent at the end of each billing period and can be paid by direct debit or standing order. Make sure you get the meter read – estimated bills can mean you may not be paying enough to cover your actual use.

You can also arrange flexible payment and budget schemes that allow you to pay weekly, fortnightly, monthly or whenever you like. But you need to be careful that you have enough money in your bank account to cover the direct debit/standing order to avoid overdraft charges.

If you use electric storage heaters or immersion heaters, you should consider a variable rate meter, such as an Economy 7 or a White meter, to take advantage of their cheaper night-time rates.

Prepayment meters are generally the most expensive way to pay, but they are a 'pay as you go' budgeting method suitable for some people's circumstances. Be aware that if you do not put sufficient funds in the meter, you will effectively disconnect yourself. The meter can be reset to collect arrears, and you will pay for the supply of fuel, standing charges and any arrears you owe.

Types of **prepayment meter** systems available include:

Token meters

These meters use plastic tokens purchased from shops, post offices, petrol stations or 24 hour vending machines, and are available in £5 units. If your fuel runs out, you can use an emergency button on the meter to obtain a small amount of credit. The next token inserted will be used to pay for the emergency credit used.

Key meters

These operate the same way as token meters, but using a rechargeable 'key'. Emergency credit is normally available on the meter.

Card meters

These are similar to token meters but are operated by electronically-coded cards, inserted into the meter and available in units of £1 or £5 from customer service centres, vending machines and some shops, post offices and petrol stations. Emergency credit is available on the meter.

Quantum meters

Developed by British Gas, this is an electronically-coded card encoded with the customer's reference number and the meter serial number. Gas cannot be purchased from anyone else. The card reads the meter and passes the reading on to the charging point when you next purchase credit. Emergency credit is available on this meter.

Variable rate meters are available for electricity only.

Types available include:

Economy 7 / White meters

These meters allow you to pay for your electricity at two different rates, or 'tariffs'. A low rate is charged at night for heating and to heat water overnight, so you can cut your fuel costs if you run some electrical appliances (washing machines and tumble dryers) overnight.

All energy providers have to offer 'Warm Home Discounts' to help their most vulnerable customers cope with the high costs of gas and electricity. So if you're struggling to keep up with the rising cost of heating your home, talk to your provider and see if you qualify for their discount or can be moved to a cheaper tariff.

Getting the best deal

It's worth checking regularly if there are more competitive tariffs available from your own or other suppliers.

Before deciding to change supplier, get free advice from the local Energy Saving Trust centre, your current energy supplier and even energy price comparison service websites.

Switching energy suppliers generally takes 4 – 6 weeks. The only change you will notice is the name of the energy supplier on your bill, and the price you pay. You can change energy suppliers as often as you like, but if you are in a fixed-term contract there may be termination fees for breaking the contract early.

Once you have selected the supplier best suited to your needs, actually changing is a relatively simple process:

- Contact your chosen supplier, either direct with the company or via a comparison service and apply to switch your supply. You will receive a contract to check and sign which will start the transfer process.
- Inform your old supplier that you are switching to a new energy company and give 28 days notice. It's a good idea to do this by telephone and also provide written confirmation.
- Pay any outstanding bills to your existing energy supplier and cancel any direct debit with your bank.
- Read your meter on the day specified by your new supplier so they can update their records.

Use your energy wisely

Remember, any fuel you use, you will have to pay for. It makes sense to use it as wisely as possible. This doesn't mean sitting in a cold house – it means making sure you don't waste energy.

By following these simple energy saving tips, you can save money on your fuel bills:

- Turn your heating down by one degree and you could save 10% on your bill
- Always turn off lights when you leave a room
- Get lined curtains. Close your curtains at dusk to prevent heat escaping through the windows and check around windows and doors for draughts
- Do not leave appliances on standby
- Try to fill appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers
- Only boil the water you need in the kettle (but always remember to cover the element)
- Use energy saving light bulbs. They last longer than standard light bulbs and can save you £40 over the lifetime of the bulb.
- Use a lid on saucepans where possible so that the contents heat up faster and require less energy. Set your heating to go off 30 minutes before you leave the house and come on 30 minutes before you are due back
- When buying new appliances, try to buy those that have an energy rating of 'A' as these will cost you less to run

Tip: You can get free and impartial energy-efficiency advice from the Energy Savings Scotland advice centre on 0800 512 012.

making your voice heard

You are our customer and we want to make sure you have a say in how we run the housing service.

You can play your part and influence decisions about housing policies, housing conditions and the standard of housing and other related services.



There are a number of registered **tenants' and residents' associations** in Renfrewshire. Call our Tenant Consultation Officer on **0141 618 6260** to find out if there is an association in your area.

If there isn't, and you're interested in setting one up, we can provide support and training and explain about the grants that are available to help with the costs of running an association.

There are nine area-based **neighbourhood housing forums** which meet regularly to monitor the performance housing services and discuss local housing issues, for example, particular problems with empty houses or antisocial behaviour. Each forum also has a budget for small-scale improvement works to be carried out in their areas.

Tenants' and residents' associations are invited to send two representatives to their local neighbourhood housing forum.

There are three **council-wide forums** each year, attended by representatives from registered tenants' and residents' associations and council officers from Development and Housing Services. At these forums, the representatives and officers discuss matters which tenants are interested in, and we consult them on any proposed changes in the way we deliver our services.

The **Council-wide Housing Forum Executive** is made up of two tenants nominated from each of the neighbourhood housing forums and two owners nominated from the council-wide forum. The executive meets at least four times a year and focuses on higher level issues such as policy development and overseeing the work of tenant/officer working groups.

making a complaint

If you have a general question about housing matters, you should phone, write to or call in at the Customer Service Centre or your local Neighbourhood Team.

If you're not happy with the level of service you've received, ask to speak to the manager. He or she will look into your concerns and make sure that you're being treated fairly. In most cases, this should deal with the problem.

If you still feel that they've not dealt with the matter properly, you may want to make a formal complaint. Use the 'Help us to help you' form which you can get from any council office or also e-mail your complaint to us at **hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk**.

Our customer services officer investigates every formal complaint. They will acknowledge your complaint in writing within three working days. They will also try to send you a full reply within another 10 working days.

At any time, you can raise the matter with your local councillor or the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

Write to:

The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh EH3 0BR

Ren Repairs

If you have a smartphone or tablet, **Ren Repairs** is a new app you can download which lets you report any housing repairs.

Available for Apple or Android, it lets you do a number of different things:

- report repairs needed to windows, doors, heating and water systems;
- attach a photograph showing the extent of the damage;
- book appointments for annual gas servicing and more.

To download the app, go to the Apple or Android app store and search for 'Renfrewshire Council'.

Ren Repairs should only be used for routine repairs. Emergency repairs should be reported on **0300 300 0300**.

This document can be made available in braille, large print or audio.

A summary is also available in these languages on request:

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

 0300 300 0222

April 2014



repairs handbook



This repairs handbook has essential information about getting repairs done in your property. It tells you how to report a repair, the timescales for repairs being done and important safety information. There's also a useful section on how to fix minor faults.

For more information about repairs, visit us online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Contents

Repairs information.....	3
What repairs are we responsible for?	3
What are you responsible for?	4
Reporting your repairs	5
Out-of-hours emergency repairs.....	6
When will my repair be carried out?	7
Your Right to Repair	9
Repairs covered by the scheme	10
Will I have to pay for any repairs?	11
Common repairs	12
Gas safety checks.....	12
Asbestos in the home	13
Home safety.....	15
Our staff.....	15
Customer satisfaction.....	16
Handy hints.....	17
Gas	18
Electricity	19
Plumbing	21
Condensation	24
Lost keys.....	25
Ren Repairs	26

What repairs are we responsible for?

As your landlord, the Council has a legal duty to repair and maintain your property.

We will carry out certain repairs to your property to make sure it is maintained to a safe standard.

We are responsible for:

Outside

- Roof and chimneys
- Drains, gutters and rainwater pipes
- Walls and windows
- External doors and frames
- Boundary walls, fences and paths
- Bin areas and the poles supporting washing lines

Inside

- Walls and ceilings
- Heating and hot water systems
- Plumbing systems
- Electrical wiring, sockets, light fittings and hard wired smoke detectors
- Kitchen and bathroom fittings
- Doors and surrounds inside your home

We are also responsible for communal areas around the property.

We will maintain common entrances (including door entry systems), halls, stairways, lifts and other communal areas to make sure they are in good condition. However, this may be a joint responsibility if other owners are involved.

What are you responsible for?

As a tenant, you are responsible for minor repairs such as:

- repairing or replacing any minor fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, light bulbs, toilet seats and plugs;
- replacing keys and fitting extra locks;
- maintaining internal decoration;
- maintaining or replacing floor coverings supplied in kitchens and bathrooms as part of our investment programme;
- maintaining or replacing shower curtains supplied in bathrooms as part of our investment programme; and
- repairs to television aerials and reception equipment (except in multi-storey flats and sheltered housing complexes).

You are also responsible for any non standard fixture or fittings you have accepted as part of the property including floor coverings, garages and sheds.

You must also:

- report any damage or repairs needed to your home or communal areas;
- take care of your home, including carrying out minor repairs and decorative work as described above;
- allow us access to your property so we can carry out repairs, inspections, maintenance and annual gas servicing;
- tell us as soon as possible about any alterations you wish to carry out in your home and get our permission before they are carried out; and
- report any criminal damage or vandalism to your home to us and the police, and always remember to get a crime reference number.

You are also responsible for repairs which have been caused by misuse, neglect or damage by you, your family or any visitors to

your home. If we repair this damage, you will be responsible for paying the cost of these repairs.

For more information on repair responsibilities, our Housing Repairs Policy is available at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Reporting your repairs

There are a range of easy ways for you to report a repair.

You can report by phone:

- Call the Repair Line on **0300 300 0300**.
- Use the freephone Repairs Direct telephones in the Johnstone and Renfrew neighbourhood offices and the Paisley Customer Service Centre.

You can report online:

- Fill in an online repairs request at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

When you contact us to report a repair, you'll receive an appointment for the repair to be completed by a tradesperson or, if it needs to be inspected first, a visit from a repairs and maintenance officer.

When reporting a repair, please make sure that you:

- arrange the appointment at a time when it is convenient for you to be in the house;
- give a contact number in case we need to reschedule the work; and
- let us know about any disability or impairment that may affect our ability to gain access to the property, so that we can act accordingly.

Once you have an appointment time, there are a number of things you can do to make sure we can carry out our job as quickly, effectively and safely as possible.

We need you to:

- make sure there is a responsible adult present to allow our tradesperson access to the repair;
- clear the area around the repair before our tradesperson arrives to carry out the work (this may include uplifting carpets or laminate flooring, clearing work surfaces, emptying cupboards, taking down curtains or moving furniture away from the area); and
- keep pets and young children away from the area of the repair work whilst work is in progress.

If you're unable to keep an appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on **0300 300 0300** and we will be happy to arrange an alternative time to suit you.

If you don't notify us and we attend to carry out the repair but cannot access your home, the repair request will normally be cancelled and you will need to call and arrange a new appointment.

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Some emergency repairs are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Emergency repairs will be attended to outwith normal working hours only when:

- there is a **serious** risk to health and safety;
- there is a **serious** risk to the structure of the property; or
- the property is not secure.

If a serious fault occurs outwith normal working hours, and it is not safe to wait until the next working day, you should call us on **0300 300 0300**. If the repair does not qualify as an out-of-hours emergency and does not require immediate attention, you will be given an appointment for the repair to be carried out the following day.

When will my repair be carried out?

Repairs are split into four groups and the response time for each one is different.

Emergency repairs

These are repairs where there is a serious threat to health and safety or where we need to take quick action to prevent damage to your home or a neighbouring property eg front door not secure, burst pipe or carbon monoxide alarm sounding.

Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within **one day** of being reported and, where possible, we will carry out the full repair.

If this is not possible, we may carry out temporary repairs immediately to make the situation safe, and then return to complete the repair.

Urgent repairs

These are repairs which are not emergencies, but which need to be carried out quickly to prevent more damage to your home eg minor leaks and overflows, damaged flooring or faulty showers.

Urgent repairs will be carried out within **5 working days** of being reported.

Appointable repairs

These are everyday repairs which are required as a result of normal wear and tear to a property.

Appointable repairs will be carried out within **15 working days** of being reported.

Programmed repairs

These are generally non-urgent, general maintenance repairs and many of these jobs will involve renewing items, working at height or common repairs involving owners.

Sometimes it is better to carry out repairs (particularly larger scale repairs) on a programmed basis rather than carrying out individual responsive repairs.

We will inspect all jobs which fall into this category before we programme the work. The length of time to complete programmed repairs depends on the volume and type of work required, but generally we would hope to complete these works within approximately **three months**.

For more information on different types of repairs, visit us online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Your Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives you, as a tenant, the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. This is called the Right to Repair. The Right to Repair scheme covers certain repairs up to the value of £350 – if we do not carry out the repair within the set timescale, you may be entitled to compensation.

To qualify for the Right to Repair scheme, the repair must:

- have an estimated value of less than £350; and
- be included in the table below ('Repairs covered by the scheme').

If we do not start the repair within the set timescale you have the right to arrange for an alternative contractor from our approved list of contractors to carry out the repair. You cannot use a contractor who is not on the Council's approved list.

If we fail to carry out a qualifying repair within the maximum time allowed, you will be entitled to £15 compensation. You will then be entitled to a further £3 per day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £100.

The Right to Repair does not apply if:

- the repair has an estimated value of £350 or more
- the defect has been caused by a breach of your tenancy conditions (e.g. deliberate damage)
- the repair is delayed due to matters outwith our control (e.g. a spare part is required or the work is covered by a guarantee that requires another contractor)
- the repair is not the Council's responsibility or is to the common parts of the building.

If we cannot get into your home at a time agreed with you, your repair will be cancelled. You will then have to reapply and start the process again.

For more information on your Right to Repair, visit us online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk. Alternatively you can find out more at the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk

Repairs covered by the scheme

1 working day means by the end of the next working day, we must have completed the job or made it safe. For example, if a repair was reported on Tuesday, we would have until 5pm Wednesday to attend (excludes weekends and public holidays).

Fault	Maximum period for completion in working days
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked, leaking or foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	1
Electric power:- loss of electric power	1
partial loss of electric power	3
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of hot water and/or heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Water supply:- loss of water supply	1
partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working and no alternative ventilation	7

Will I have to pay for any repairs?

You are responsible for any damage that you, your family or visitors to your home have caused.

If we carry out a repair for such damage you will be asked to pay for it. We will give you an estimate for the repair, including an administration charge.

If you believe the damage was caused by vandalism, you must report the matter to the police and get an incident reference number. You will be recharged for the cost of the repair; however you may be able to appeal against the recharge cost on receipt of your invoice as per the Council's Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

When you move out of your property, you must:

- leave the property in a clean and tidy condition;
- remove all your belongings;
- remove all floor coverings (unless agreed at your pre-termination inspection);
- make sure decoration inside the property is in a reasonable condition;
- do any repairs you are responsible for; and
- remove any fixtures and fittings you have installed without our permission and put right any damage.

If you fail to leave the property in the required condition or any repairs you carry out prior to the end of the tenancy are not of a satisfactory standard, Renfrewshire Council will carry out the work and you will be recharged for the cost.

For more information, please refer to the Council's Rechargeable Repairs Policy available at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Common repairs

Responsibility for repairs and maintenance of common areas within flats is shared between all the owners, including the Council.

Common areas include parts such as roofs, external walls, gutters and close and stair areas.

To get non-urgent repairs done to common areas, a majority decision is needed, in line with the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004.

Where common repairs are required, we will work with owners to encourage them to participate in any proposed improvement works in compliance with the legislation. This can sometimes cause delays in work being carried out to Council-owned properties, particularly where the Council is not the majority owner in the building.

For more information on common repairs, visit us online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Gas safety checks

By law, the Council is responsible for carrying out annual gas services and other safety checks. As your landlord, we have a legal obligation to ensure our gas appliances (gas fires or gas central heating installed by us) and flues are maintained in a safe manner.

We service our gas appliances every year to keep them in good working order and safe for your use. Unsafe systems are dangerous and can have potentially fatal consequences, so it is very important that you allow us access to your home.

This is a legal requirement – you must allow us reasonable access to your home so that we can carry out these essential checks.

If you don't allow us access, we will have to arrange for a forced entry and you will have to pay any costs, such as repairs to the door.

If you install a gas heater or gas water-heating appliance with written permission, we will maintain and service it. Gas appliances will become the property of Renfrewshire Council at the end of your tenancy. If you wish to take such appliances with you at the end of your tenancy, a suitable, fit-for-purpose heating appliance must be left in its place and properly installed by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

When carrying out gas safety checks, we will shut down any unsafe gas appliances that we have no responsibility to maintain.

Asbestos in the home

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral which is mined out of the ground. In the past, after processing, most asbestos was made into building materials and was used in building work for many years, reaching a peak during the period after 1945. We, along with most other UK local authorities, own many properties with buildings which contain asbestos. All asbestos is potentially very dangerous.

However, health risks only happen if asbestos fibres are released when materials containing asbestos are damaged or disturbed.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

You will find asbestos most commonly in some, but not all, of the following materials:

- Decorative textured coatings and paints applied to walls and ceilings
- Floor tiles
- Heating and ventilation flues and parts of heaters
- Toilet cisterns
- Bath panels

- Old electrical fuse boxes
- Access panels to service ducts
- Screen panels under windows, fascia boards, soffits, roof tiles, rainwater gutters and pipes
- Water storage tanks

Please remember

Building materials in houses which contain asbestos, but which are in good condition, will not be a risk to anyone living in the property and are best left undisturbed rather than being removed. Asbestos which has been painted, covered by other materials or enclosed in ducts, for example, in cupboards, also should not be a risk.

What can I do to help?

If you know there is damaged asbestos in your home or you are planning DIY or maintenance work which could involve working with building material containing asbestos, contact the Housing Repairs Line on 0300 300 0300. You can arrange an appointment for a technical officer to visit you. We may arrange for a sample of suspected material to be taken for analysis and will give you advice on what action, if any, you need to take.

Home safety

We do not insure the contents of your house or your personal possessions.

We recommend that you insure your possessions against loss by fire, flood, theft and accident.

From as little as 75p per week, we can offer home contents insurance for a small additional charge on your rent.

If you would like to join our insurance scheme, call into any of our neighbourhood offices or fill in an online form at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Our staff

All Building Services employees and workers employed by our contractors carry an identification card.

Before you let anyone into your home, you should ask to see their identity card.

If you are unsure about anyone requesting access to your home, please contact us on **0300 300 0300** before allowing them into your property.

Our staff will always conduct themselves in a professional, quiet and orderly manner and try to minimise disruption and mess.

We have developed a Customer Respect Statement which all Building Services employees adhere to. This is available online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Customer satisfaction

We are committed to providing a quality repairs service and want to make sure you are satisfied with work carried out in your home.

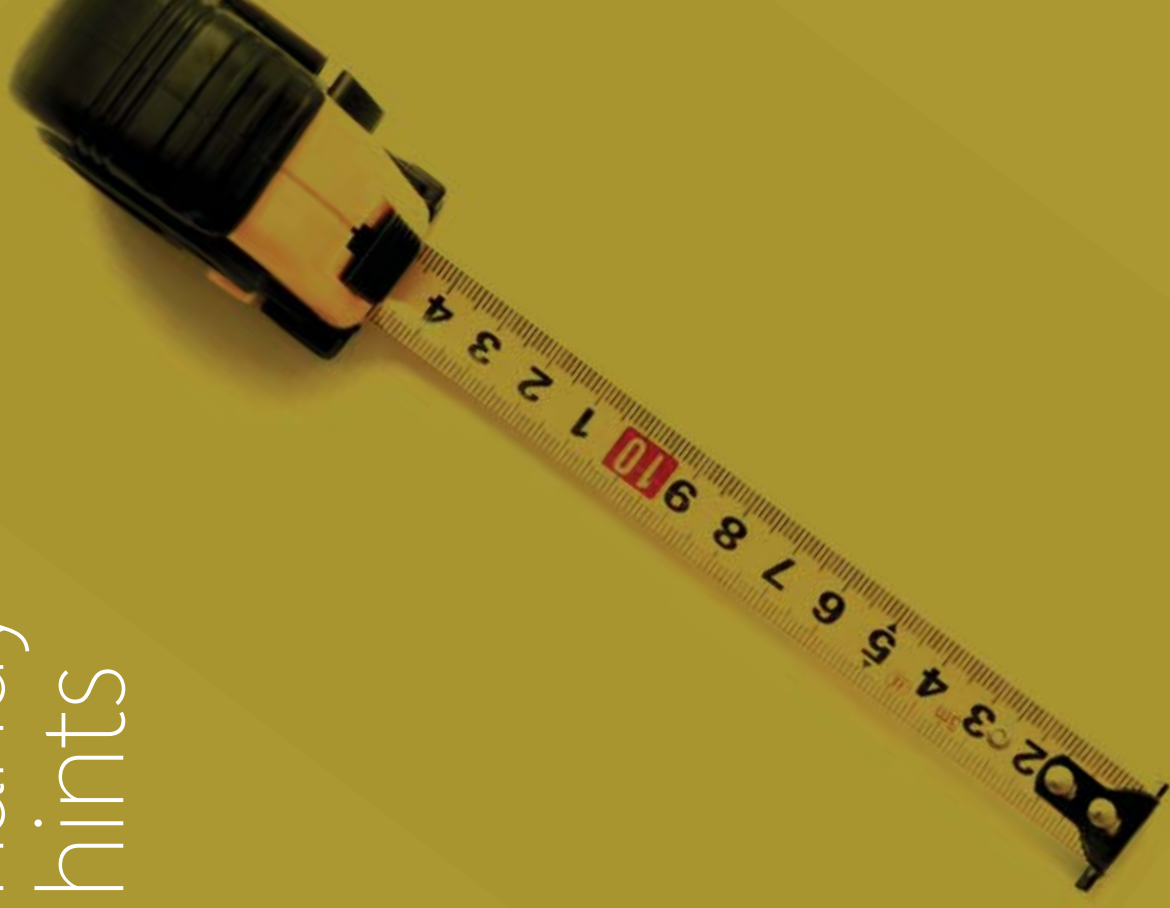
If our service does not meet the standard expected, it is important that you let us know as quickly as possible so that we can put things right.

If, for any reason, you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you can let us know through any of the methods via which repairs can be reported. We can normally solve problems quickly and easily at this stage.

However, if you are still unhappy with our service, you can make a formal complaint by completing the online complaints form available at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Our Customer Service Team will investigate your complaint and, where appropriate, correct the problem and take steps to make sure it does not happen again. We will also let you know the outcome of your complaint.

handy hints



Gas

If you suspect you have a gas leak, you should contact **TRANSCO**, the national gas emergency service on **0800 111 999** and take the following steps:

- ✓ Turn off the gas supply at the meter. Turn the handle at the meter to the horizontal position to turn it off.
- ✓ Open all windows and doors to allow any gas to escape
- x Do not use any naked flames
- x Do not turn any sockets or lights on or off

If you have no gas or have high or low pressure, phone the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999**.

No heating or hot water	Check the pilot light has not gone out Check the timer is set correctly Check the isolation switch
Pilot light has gone out	Press the reset button on the boiler
Radiators are not very hot	Check the timer is set correctly
Other	Call the Housing Repairs Line on 0300 300 0300

Electricity

If you have no electricity to all or part of your property, the first thing you should do is check the trip switch.

This can sometimes happen when there is a problem with your electrics and a switch is tripped to break the circuit.

This can happen when:

- there are too many appliances on a circuit and it's overloaded
- an appliance is faulty or hasn't been used properly
- water has leaked into a circuit or has spilled onto a plug
- a light bulb has blown

Trip switches	The consumer unit (fuse box) is next to your electricity meter. If any of the switches are down, push them to the up position. (The main switch may need to be turned off then on again to reset the system).
---------------	---

If this doesn't fix the problem, you should then try the following:

No electricity (power points and lights) at all

Card meter	The power will be cut off if you do not have enough credit on your card meter; you will need to get more credit to reinstate the supply.
Are your neighbours affected? (you could also check the stairwell or communal areas)	Yes – Call Scottish Power on 0845 272 7999 No – It is likely that the fault starts from inside your home, call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 stating that you have no electricity at all. An emergency electrician will come and investigate the problem further.

No electricity (power points or lights) to part of the property

Is it the electrical supply or the appliance?	Electrical Supply – If lighting is affected in a part of your home, or if no appliance will work in the affected socket, call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 stating that you have a partial loss of electricity. They will arrange an appointment for an electrician to call. Appliance – If only one appliance is not working, it may be faulty. If other appliances work in the same socket, you should get the appliance checked by a qualified electrician.
---	--

Plumbing

Stopcock	This is a tap that controls water flowing from the mains into your home. Stopcocks are often located in the hallway or under the kitchen sink; there is sometimes more than one stopcock to allow you to turn water off to part of the property. If you have a leak you should turn the water off at the stopcock to prevent any more water leaking. Turn the mains stopcock to the right (clockwise) to turn it off. A leak may not stop immediately because water is still flowing from the header tank or the hot water tank; you should turn on other taps to drain down the tank. Check immersion heater is switched off before the hot water tank is drained down. In the case of gas heating switch off the water heater.
Frozen pipes	If the temperature inside a property drops below freezing, water may freeze inside the pipes. When the ice thaws out it may cause pipes to burst. To prevent frozen pipes always ensure that you turn the water off at the mains or leave central heating on low if the property is going to be unattended for long periods of time during the winter months.
No water	Check the stopcock and then check to see if your neighbours have water. If they don't there may be a burst mains, contact Scottish Water on 0845 600 8855 to report it, otherwise call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 for advice.

Taps won't turn off	Contact us and we will arrange an appointment to repair it. If the water is running very quickly (full bore) you may need to turn the water off at the stopcock. (Sometimes there is a separate stopcock for the kitchen sink, this is usually under the sink) You will be able to turn the stopcock on if you need water in the meantime.
Water discoloured	If your water is a different colour to normal, there may be a problem with the water supply. You should contact Scottish Water on 0845 600 8855 for further advice.
Blocked toilet	As a responsible tenant you should ensure that your toilet does not become blocked due to foreign objects being flushed down it. Common examples are: • Children's toys • Nappies • Entire toilet rolls • Kitchen roll • Paper • Plastic toilet fresheners If a foreign object causes a blockage, the cost of the repair will be recharged to you. If an object accidentally falls into the toilet bowl, you should always remove it by lifting it out, NEVER try to flush it away
Blocked shower head	It is your responsibility to clean the shower head.

Blocked sink or bath	Using a plunger, sink un-blocking agent or sodium bicarbonate can often clear blocked sinks or baths quickly and easily. Some blockages will also clear by themselves if they are left for a few hours.
Toilet won't flush	If this is your only toilet, we will fix the fault by the end of the next working day. In the meantime toilets can be flushed manually by pouring a bucket of water down it after each use.
Water from above	If you are on the top floor, a leaking roof could cause this, we will arrange for a temporary roofing repair. Please be aware that we cannot go onto a roof in the dark, during high winds or when it is raining for health and safety reasons. If there is another flat above you, please try speaking to the occupier and get them to turn off their water. If they are not in, check the flats on both sides and the floor above, as sometimes the leak can travel some distance before it becomes noticeable. Where the property is privately owned, we cannot break into an empty property to repair a leak without first going through a legal process. This may take some time.

Condensation

Condensation happens when moist air comes into contact with a cool surface and water droplets form. This is what happens when your bathroom mirror steams up.

When this happens on your window, the glass mists up and drops of water run down the window. When it happens on a wall, the wall soaks up the moisture and becomes damp. Mould could then grow on the damp areas.

We also put lots of moisture into the air when we take a bath or shower, cook or wash the dishes. Moisture is also produced when we dry clothes indoors or use an unvented tumble dryer.

Condensation can increase in particularly cold weather therefore it is important that you keep your heating on at low throughout the day.

How to remove mould

The best way of tackling mould is to reduce the condensation levels and prevent it from growing in the first place.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down or spray walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'approval number', and ensure that you follow the instructions for its safe use. These fungicidal washes are often available at local supermarkets and DIY stores.

Dry-clean mildewed clothes, and shampoo carpets. Do not try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner.

Prevent condensation

To help reduce the risk of condensation in your home:

- Keep a window open when drying clothes indoors or ensure your window vents are open.
- Don't dry clothes over warm radiators.
- Keep the kitchen door closed when cooking.
- Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking.
- Keep the bathroom door closed when running a bath and bathing.
- Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes – make sure air can circulate.

Lost keys

If you lose your keys or get locked out you will be charged for any costs to do with gaining access to your property.

This will include:

- A call out fee
- Cost of replacing all locks
- Cost of repairing any damage to the door
- Cost of repairing any damage to the door frame
- An administration charge

We must attend other emergency repairs before attending to anyone who is locked out, this means you could wait up to six hours before we are able to gain access to your property.

To avoid this we strongly recommend that you leave a spare set of keys with family, friends or neighbours.

Ren Repairs

If you have a smartphone or tablet, **Ren Repairs** is a new app you can download which lets you report any housing repairs.

The instant messaging function lets you have a real-time discussion with a customer service advisor. You can also use the app to update the status of the repair and add more comments or pictures, until the job's complete to your satisfaction.

To download the app, go to the Apple or Android app store and search for 'Renfrewshire Council'.

Ren Repairs should only be used for routine repairs. Emergency repairs should be reported on **0300 300 0300**.



Notes

[illegible]

This document can be made available
in braille, large print or audio.

A summary is also available in these languages on request:

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub
w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

 0300 300 0300

To: Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board

On: 30th March 2015

Report by: Lead Officer

**Heading: Upkeep of Common Areas within Council Housing Stock including
 Garden Areas**

1. Summary

2. At its meeting on 2 June, 2014 the Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2014/2015. This included a review, continued from the previous annual programme, which would consider potential options for ensuring that internal and external areas of Council housing stock are maintained to an appropriate standard throughout Renfrewshire and that tenants should be made aware that action will be taken if this is not the case.
-

3. Recommendations

2.1 The Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board is asked to:-

- Note the terms of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, the Good Neighbour Agreement and the New Tenants Pack.
- Note the evidence presented by representatives of Tenants Associations
- Note the evidence presented by Lesley Ferrie, Williamsburgh Housing Association.

4. **Background**

- 4.1. Tenants of Renfrewshire Council occupy their homes by virtue of a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.
- 3.2 The Tenancy Agreement contains obligations on both landlord and tenant.
- 3.3 98% of Council tenants have signed the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of tenants who use shared parts to keep them clean and tidy and, in addition, if a Council property is leased with a garden the tenant must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown or untidy.
- 3.5 The Board has already heard evidence from Council Officers that the Council's Department of Development and Housing Services provide assistance to tenants through their common maintenance programme (CMP) and their garden assistance scheme.
- 3.6 Ferguslie Park Housing Association, Paisley South Housing Association, Williamsburgh Housing Association and Linstone Housing Association have again been written to requesting information and asking whether a representative would be willing to attend this Board meeting. Written answers have already been received from Ferguslie Park Housing Association and previously reported to Board. Williamsburgh Housing Association have confirmed that a representative will be in attendance.
- 3.7 The eighteen Tenants and Residents Association recognised by the Department of Housing and Development Services have been written to and a number have agreed to send representatives to the meeting.
- 3.8 At the last meeting of the Board on 16th February 2015, the Board requested that evidence be obtained from the Department of Community Resources in relation to certain matters. A representative from Community Resources will attend the meeting.

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** – none.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none.
- 3. **Community Planning** – none.
- 4. **Legal** – the rights of tenants under the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – none.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – none.
- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** – none.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **List of background Papers**
Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
Good Neighbour Agreement

Author: Dorothy Briggs
Senior Solicitor – Litigation

Tel. No. 0141 618 7174

Email: dorothy.briggs@renfrewshire.gcsx.gov.uk

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 30th March, 2015

Report by: Director of Finance & Resources

Heading: Petition: Bus Stop, Renfrew Road

1. Summary

- 1.1 A petition, comprising around 75 signatures, has been received from Ms Mary Quigley in the undernoted terms

“To move the bus stop from outside of Trident House in the Renfrew Road, because of danger to passengers alighting from buses at this stop, and then having to either cross at the entrance to the M8 Motorway in order to access the Abbotsinch Estate, or either crossing the exit from the M8 Motorway to access the bottom end of Gallowhill. Residents of Gallowhill want the bus stop put back to where it was previously sited, before a serious injury or fatal accident occurs.”

- 1.2 The Head of Amenity Services has advised that the bus stop was moved to make way for the access road for the new retail development on Renfrew Road so it cannot go back to its original position. This bus stop was one of a pair, one on either side of the pedestrian crossing, so there is still a bus stop where passengers can get off close to a controlled crossing point. He advises that in terms of the road layout this is a very difficult area to find a suitable location for a bus stop. There are two roundabouts and an on-slip and an off-slip for the M8. There is no other place to put it except at Trident House, where it has been operating safely for the last 10 months.

He further advises that a pedestrian survey has been undertaken to determine the routes people use near the stop including the roundabout to the retail park and the slip roads to the M8 motorway. These results

are still being analysed but he is aware of the issues and is trying to establish what pedestrian facilities are required. SPT's guidelines say there should be at least 450m between stops so this one is actually unnecessary and one option might be to remove it entirely.

- 1.3 The petition is valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions and the principal petitioner, together with one supporter, has been invited to attend the meeting and they will be asked to make a statement, lasting no more than 10 minutes, in support of the petition.
- 1.4 The role of the Board is to consider the petition, hear and ask questions of the petitioner and take the appropriate action in respect of the petition which will be one of the following: (a) that no action is taken, in which case the reasons will be specified and intimated to the petitioner; (b) that the petition be referred to the relevant director/and or policy board for further investigation, with or without any specific recommendation; or (c) refer the petition to another organisation if the petition relates to that organisation.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board hear from the petitioner
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none.
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none.
 3. **Community Planning** – none.
 4. **Legal** – none
 5. **Property/Assets** – none.
 6. **Information Technology** – none.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** – none.
 9. **Procurement** – none.
 10. **Risk** – none.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
-

List of Background Papers – (a) petition form; (b) e-mail from Community Resources dated 24 February, 2015

Author: Lilian Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager
(tel: 0141 618 7112/email: lilian.belshaw@renfrewshire.gcsx.gov.uk)

