

Notice of Meeting and Agenda

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 16 March 2020	10:00	Corporate Meeting Room 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Councillor Tom Begg: Councillor Stephen Burns: Councillor Michelle Campbell: Councillor Neill Graham: Councillor Jim Harte: Councillor John Hood: Councillor Emma Rodden:

Councillor Bill Binks (Convener): Councillor Jim Sharkey (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 <http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx>

For further information, please either email

democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk or telephone 0141 618 7112.

Apologies

Apologies from members.

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.

AUDIT

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| | Report by Chief Auditor. | |
| 3 | Annual Internal Audit Plan 2020/2021 | |
| | Report by Chief Auditor. (Not Available - Copy to Follow) | |
| 4 | Compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance | 29 - 32 |
| | Report by Chief Auditor. | |

MONITORING AND REVIEWING SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE, POLICIES & PRACTICES

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| | Report by Chief Executive. | |
| 9 | Councils for Fair Tax Declaration Scotland | 91 - 102 |
| | Report by Chief Executive. | |
| 10 | Absence Statistics - 2019/20 Quarter 3 | 103 - 112 |
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ANNUAL PROGRAMME

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| 12 | Conversion of Grassed Areas to Parking - Lead Officer Michael Moran
Report by Lead Officer. | 119 - 124 |
| 13 | Review of Bus Deregulation and Effect on Transport Services In Renfrewshire - Lead Officer Jamie Mackie
Report by Lead Officer. | 125 - 136 |
| 14 | The Effectiveness of Fair Trade within Renfrewshire - Lead Officer Craig Doogan
Report by Lead Officer. | 137 - 162 |

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Board may by resolution exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the press and public are present, there could be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973.

Exempt Item

Exempt documents are no longer available in print format. You will require to log in to Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Exempt Items to access documents. Please note that access to exempt documents is now restricted.

- | | |
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| 15 | Summary of Internal Audit Investigations for Period 01 October to 31 December 2019
Report by Chief Auditor. |
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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress and Performance for Period to 31 December 2019

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Internal Audit Annual Plan was approved by the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board on 18 March 2019. Internal Audit measures the progress and performance of the team on a regular basis using a range of performance indicators. This report monitors progress from 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019, in terms of the delivery of the Audit Plan for the year and compares actual performance against targets set by the Director of Finance and Resources.
- 1.2 In terms of Counter Fraud, no formal performance targets for fraud investigation have been established for the following reasons. A major part of their work involves being the single point of contact for DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service and the Service Level Agreement for this work contains time targets for completing this work. A great deal of effort has also been on increasing fraud awareness amongst employees to prevent fraud from occurring against the Council. The types of fraud referrals received to date are wide ranging and the team's objective is to concentrate on investigating those referrals considered to contain the greatest fraud risk.
- 1.3 The report details progress against local and national initiatives involving Internal Audit and the Counter Fraud Team from 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to note the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team progress and performance to 31 December 2019.
- 2.2 Members are asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2019/2020.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The progress and performance of the Internal Audit Team is subject to regular monitoring using a number of performance measures. The Director of Finance and Resources has set annual targets for the team to demonstrate continuous improvement. In terms of the Counter Fraud team, there are time targets in place for responding to requests from the DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service. Due to the diverse nature of fraud referrals no formal performance targets have been established and the outcomes from investigations is regularly monitored by management.
- 3.2 Internal Audit and the Counter Fraud Team support a variety of local and national initiatives through participation in professional practitioner groups and co-ordination of national initiatives such as the National Fraud Initiative.
- 3.3 This report measures the progress and performance of both the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team for the period from 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

4. Internal Audit Team Performance

(a) Percentage of audit plan completed as at 31 December 2019

This measures the degree to which the Audit plan has been completed

Actual 2018/19	Annual Target 2019/20	Audit Plan Completion Target to 31 December 2019	Audit Plan Completion Actual to 31 December 2019
95.6%	95.0%	66.5%	66.8%

Actual performance is currently slightly ahead of target. However, during this quarter, at senior service management's request we have commenced a number of investigative assignments. In conjunction with the fact that we have already used the majority of our planned

contingency time budget to undertake other investigations and special exercises, this may have an impact on this target.

(b) Percentage of assignments complete by target date

This measures the degree with which target dates for audit work have been met.

Target 2019/20	Actual to 31 December 2019
95.0%	100%

Actual performance is ahead of the target set for the year.

(c) Percentage of audit assignments completed within time budget

This measures how well the time budget for individual assignments has been adhered to.

Target 2019/20	Actual to 31 December 2019
95.0%	100%

Actual performance is ahead of the target set for the year, although this is likely to reduce over the remainder of the year.

(d) Percentage of audit reports issued within 6 weeks of completion of audit field work

This measures how quickly draft audit reports are issued after the audit fieldwork has been completed.

Target 2019/20	Actual to 31 December 2019
95.0%	95%

Actual performance is at target set for the year.

5 Proposed amendments to the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan

- 5.1 The 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan included assignments for a review of the processes followed by the Community Learning Service and the processes for the administration of grants. However, following discussion with the responsible senior managers it was identified that these areas are currently undergoing a review as part of the first tranche of the Right for Renfrewshire programme and it was agreed that the scope of our reviews would likely include some similar objectives. Therefore, these assignments on the Audit Plan are recommended for cancellation at this stage.

- 5.2 It is anticipated that the resource planned for these assignments will be utilised to supplement our investigation budget to March 2020 which is nearing full utilisation.

6 Counter Fraud Team Progress and Performance

- 6.1 In line with the Service Level Agreement, the Counter Fraud Team act as the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to route potential housing benefit fraud referrals to the DWP, liaise with the Council's Housing Benefit Team and DWP Fraud Officers and retrieve the necessary evidence for the DWP Fraud Officers from the Housing Benefit System.
- 6.2 On 28 November 2018, Joint Working with the Department for Work and Pensions Counter Fraud Section became live for criminal fraud investigations which focuses on the investigation and prosecution of the LA administered Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) and Social Security benefit fraud. To date, we have 23 cases which either have been or are currently being jointly worked on. For those that have been completed we are still awaiting outcomes.
- 6.3 The matches arising from the National Fraud Initiative 2018/19 are still being worked on by the relevant staff within the services and the Counter Fraud Officers. Currently, there are 121 active cases open which are being further investigated either by service staff or counter fraud. To date £269,807 of outcomes have been identified. The full results of this exercise will be reported to this Board at a future meeting.
- 6.4 The remainder of the corporate counter fraud resource is currently being utilised to investigate non-benefit fraud referrals received to date in areas such as tenancy, revenues and education.
- 6.5 Although there are no specific performance measures for counter fraud, the team records the outcomes of investigations in line with any guidance issued by Audit Scotland. The financial and non-financial results from all investigations for the period up to quarter 3 (1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019) are noted in the table below.

Financial Outcomes	As at end of Quarter 3 (£)
Cash savings directly attributable to preventative counter fraud intervention	43,161.50
Cash recoveries in progress directly attributable to counter fraud investigations	42,679.24
Housing Benefit savings directly attributable to counter fraud investigation	51,793.91

Notional savings identified through counter fraud investigation, (e.g. housing tenancy and future council tax)	1,874,444.82
Non-Financial Outcomes	As at end of Quarter 3
Housing properties recovered	3
Housing applications amended/cancelled	17
Blue badge misuse warning letters issued	34

- 6.5 The team are continuing to engage with services to raise awareness of the work the Counter Fraud Team can undertake to mitigate and investigate fraud.

7. **Scottish Local Authorities Chief Internal Auditors' Group**

- 7.1 This group last met in November and the main focus for this meeting was data analytics. Three informative presentations were delivered from representatives from the NHS Counter Fraud Services, Audit Scotland and a private Accountancy Firm.

- 7.2 The Local Authorities Computer Audit Sub-Group was also attended during this quarter. One of the discussion topics at this meeting was also data analytics, using EXCEL tools.

8. **Local and National Initiatives**

- 8.1 We continue to be involved in the management and security of the Council's information and we have representation on the Information Security and Information Management Governance Groups. We also continue to be involved in various change projects including the Right for Renfrewshire Programme.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - The Council has in place arrangements to recover the any overpayments identified from the work of the Counter Fraud Team and the National Fraud Initiative.
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** - None
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** - The progress and performance reported relates to the delivery of the risk-based internal audit plan and the mitigation of the risk of fraud and error.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Implications** – None
13. **Climate Risk** - None

Author: Karen Campbell – 07768354651



To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Summary of Internal Audit Reports for period 01 October to 31 December 2019

1. Summary

1.1 In line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Internal Audit must communicate the results of each engagement to the Board. To comply with this requirement Internal Audit submits regular reports on the findings and conclusions of audit engagements to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board.

1.2 Appendix 1 provides details those audit engagements completed during the period 01 October to 31 December 2019 with the overall assurance rating and the number of recommendations in each risk category. The committee summary for each report is also attached. For each audit assignment where recommendations have been made, the relevant managers have put action plans in place to address the issues raised.

1.3 In addition to the reports listed in the Appendix, Internal Audit has an ongoing commitment to:

- A range of corporate and service initiatives;
- Progressing of information security matters in partnership with ICT and Legal Services;
- The regular provision of advice to departmental officers;
- The provision of internal audit services to the associated bodies for which Renfrewshire Council is the lead authority and to Renfrewshire Leisure Ltd and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Integrated Joint Board;

- Co-ordination of the Council's corporate risk management activity;
- Management of the counter fraud team;
- Management of the risk management and insurance team.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider and note the Summary of Audit Reports finalised during the period from 01 October to 31 December 2019.

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** – None
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** - The summary reported relates to the delivery of the risk-based internal audit plan.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Implications** – None
13. **Climate Risk** - None

Author: Karen Campbell – 07768354651

Appendix 1

Renfrewshire Council

Internal Audit Service

Update for Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Final Audit Reports issued from 01 October – 31 December 2019

Category	Service	Engagement	Assurance Rating	Recommendation Ratings			
				Critical	Important	Good Practice	Service Improvement
Governance	Corporate/Children's Services	Corporate Governance Framework – Social Work Complaints	Reasonable	0	1	4	1
Assurance	Chief Executive's	External Funding Arrangements - Leader	Substantial	0	0	0	1
	Environment & Infrastructure	Supporting Attendance – Absence Management	Limited	0	9	0	0
	Finance & Resources	Cloud Services	Limited	0	4	0	2
		Registration System	Substantial	0	0	1	0
Contingency	Finance & Resources	ICT Fraud Controls	Reasonable	0	4	3	0
	Communities, Housing & Planning	Housing Allocation Policy	Reasonable	0	1	2	0
Investigation	Communities, Housing & Planning	Housing Allocation Investigation	N/A (1)	0	0	0	0

Note 1 – No assurance rating can be given in respect of investigation assignments

Assurance Level	
Substantial Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the objectives of the area being reviewed. • The control processes tested are being consistently applied.
Reasonable Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal control processes are generally satisfactory with some areas of weakness being identified that could put some objectives of the area being reviewed at risk • There is evidence that the level of non-compliance with some of the control processes may put some of the objectives of the area being reviewed at risk.
Limited Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses in the system of internal controls are such as to put the objectives of the area being reviewed at risk. • The level of non-compliance puts the objectives of the area being reviewed at risk.
No Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control processes are generally weak with significant risk to the achievement of the objectives of the area being reviewed. • Significant non-compliance with control processes leaves the processes/systems open to error or abuse.

Recommendation Rating	
Service Improvement	Implementation will improve the efficiency / housekeeping of the area under review.
Good Practice	Implementation will contribute to the general effectiveness of control.
Important	Implementation will raise the level of assurance provided by the control system to acceptable levels.
Critical	Addresses a significant risk, impacting on the objectives of the area under review.

Internal Audit Report Corporate

Corporate Governance Framework – Children’s Services Social Work Complaints (B0007/2020/001)

Date: December 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>To ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant staff are aware of the complaint procedures. 2. There is sufficient evidence held by the Service to demonstrate compliance with the complaint procedures
Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Checked that there are sufficient procedures in place to ensure that relevant staff are aware of the Council's complaint procedures. 2. Checked that these procedures are being adhered to i.e. Complaints Registers are being properly maintained by the service.
Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Renfrewshire Council Social Work Model Complaints Handling Procedure provides adequate instructions to staff dealing with complaints and relevant staff have access to these procedures. 2. For the sample of Social Work complaints tested, response letters were sent within the required timescales.
Key Audit Risks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the sample of Social Work complaints tested, the service may not be able to demonstrate that all complaints have been adequately recorded, and this could affect the accuracy of the Performance Indicators reported.
Overall Audit Opinion
<p>The audit has provided reasonable assurance over the awareness and compliance with complaint handling procedures. Recommendations have been made to remind relevant officers to ensure that the information recorded when logging complaints in the Mail Tracking system is accurate and complete and for quarterly figures for the percentage of</p>

Internal Audit Report Corporate

Corporate Governance Framework – Children’s Services Social Work Complaints (B0007/2020/001)

Date: December 2019

complaints dealt with on time to be checked, so that they are accurately recorded and reported.

Management Commentary

Management are currently implementing the audit recommendations, including reminding staff of the complaint recording process to be followed to enhance the complaint data held.

Internal Audit Report Chief Executives

External Funding Arrangements – Leader (A0036/2020/001)

Date: October 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>The objectives of this audit were to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an adequate system in place which complies with EC guidance in terms of monitoring and control of the grants and payments of awards. 2. Applications are assessed for eligibility and value for money (reasonableness of costs and procurement). 3. There are appropriate arrangements in place to assess the progress of projects and that the outcomes are consistent with those objectives specified at the outset. 4. Grant awards are properly approved and payments made are in line with the amount awarded. 5. The necessary financial information is provided to the Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspection Directorate (SGRPID) in a timely fashion to support draw down of grant. 6. The agreed performance targets are being met.

Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviewed the appropriate officers to ascertain the arrangements in place to facilitate the award, control and monitoring of claims processing. 2. Selected a sample of 2 projects and carried out a series of tests to assess the adequacy of the controls in place across the grant process.

Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the sample of projects tested, there is an adequate system in place which complies with European Commission (EC) guidance in terms of monitoring and control of the grants and payments of awards. 2. Applications are assessed for eligibility and value for money (reasonableness of costs and procurement). 3. There are appropriate arrangements in place to assess the progress of projects and the outcomes are consistent with those objectives specified at the outset. 4. Grant awards are properly approved and payments made are in line with the amount awarded. 5. The necessary financial information is provided to the SGRPID in a timely fashion to support draw down of grant. 6. The agreed performance targets are being met.

Internal Audit Report Chief Executives

External Funding Arrangements – Leader (A0036/2020/001)

Date: October 2019

Key Audit Risks
1. There were no key risks identified during the audit.

Overall Audit Opinion
The audit identified that satisfactory arrangements are in place for issuing, monitoring and managing the External Funding Applications through the LEADER grant funding programme. One minor recommendation was made to ensure that the spending limits on the authorised signatory list are in accordance with those on the Council's main purchasing system.

Management Commentary
N/A as no key risks were identified

Internal Audit Report
Environment & Infrastructure
Supporting Attendance – Absence Management
(A0038/2019/001)

Date: October 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives

The objectives of the review were to ensure that:

1. Roles and responsibilities have been defined for absence management;
2. The council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and any service specific guidance is accessible to responsible officers;
3. Adequate training has been provided on the policy and any service specific guidance to officers involved in absence management;
4. The council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and any service specific guidance are being consistently applied.

Audit Scope

The following work was carried out:

1. Obtained the current Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and for a sample of two areas within this service prepared a programme of tests to ascertain the level of compliance with the issued policy/guidance for a sample of absences between March 2018 and January 2019.
2. Interviewed the appropriate members of staff to ascertain whether roles and responsibilities are clear and appropriate training has been provided to relevant officers. Checked that the appropriate officers have access to the policies/guidance.

Key Audit Assurances

1. Roles and responsibilities have been defined for absence management for both areas of service reviewed.
2. The council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy is accessible to responsible officers on the council's intranet or in paper form.

Key Audit Risks

1. There is insufficient evidence held to be able to demonstrate that the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy is being followed within the areas of service reviewed.
2. For the areas of service tested, training on the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy was insufficient.

Internal Audit Report
Environment & Infrastructure
Supporting Attendance – Absence Management
(A0038/2019/001)

Date: October 2019

Overall Audit Opinion
<p>The audit review identified that there was insufficient evidence available to demonstrate that the council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy was being followed consistently. It is acknowledged that supervisors within the areas reviewed did not have read only access to the Enviro system for a number of months and this may have contributed to the lack of evidence available at the time of the review. We were unable to obtain what alternative arrangements had been put in place during this period to enable supervisors to manage absence. They now have this access back again. However, this does not account for all the issues identified. Although recommendations have been made to address the specific issues identified and to improve the recording system, management should give due consideration to determining if further support can be provided to assist supervisors in managing absence. Based on this, the auditor has made a provision of limited assurance.</p>

Management Commentary
<p>The following steps have been taken by the service following the audit. These actions have been taken in full consultation with HR and with reference to the supporting attendance policy. The actions are focused within one area of the service as a three month pilot to address the points raised. At the end of this period the effectiveness will be fully evaluated and if successful rolled out to all Environment and Infrastructure sections.</p> <p>A single administrative point of contact has been established to create a record of all absence alerts received from the absence hot line. On receipt of the information it will be passed to a single manager who has been removed from all other duties for the duration of the pilot to ensure all steps within the policy have been dealt with timeously. An operation flow chart for this timeline has been developed in conjunction with HR.</p>

Internal Audit Report

Finance & Resources

Cloud Services (A0074/2019/001)

Date: October 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>The objectives of the audit were to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an appropriate strategy in place that governs the Council's vision and model for adoption and implementation of cloud data processing software services; 2. There is a mechanism in place to identify all providers and brokers of cloud services with which the council currently does business and all cloud deployments that exist across the organisation; 3. There is a clear methodology for assessing the contractual elements for proposed cloud data processing software services, which involves assessing business user, financial, legal, data and cyber security requirements; 4. Contracts/ Service Level agreements clearly define client and service provider roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and provide details on performance monitoring using measurable criteria; 5. Appropriate monitoring and escalation arrangements are in place to ensure that the cloud service provider complies with the determined contractual obligations on an ongoing basis.
Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviewed the appropriate staff to establish the current system in place for management and security assessment of cloud services. 2. The audit assessed the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements in ensuring a consistent approach to cloud service contracts.
Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A cloud strategy is in place and supported by senior management which clearly defines the approach to implementing cloud solutions. 2. The cloud security assessment is consistent with the 14 National Cyber Security Centre Cloud Security Principles. 3. The cloud security assessment determines if a minimum level of security is in place. Where this is not met, reasons to consider the tender for procurement includes a documented acceptance of the risk and is approved by senior management. 4. Project funding approval requires a cloud security review to be conducted, prior to design and planning a tender. 5. Data Owners are party to decisions on vendor acceptance.

Internal Audit Report

Finance & Resources

Cloud Services (A0074/2019/001)

Date: October 2019

Key Audit Risks

A number of processes in relation to cloud security were being developed at the time of our review and the following risk areas were identified:

1. Cloud Security Assessments were updated in 2017 to ensure that they were aligned to leading security practice requirements and were fit for purpose. For cloud solutions procured before then, the Council has a lower level of assurance on the extent of compliance with leading cloud security practices. In addition, ICT do not yet have visibility of all solutions purchased by schools, particularly those with a lower value.
2. Work has been undertaken to establish an Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) register. Work was continuing to populate all fields within this register.
3. Whilst there is a risk relating to cyber security on the Corporate Risk Register, there is currently no process to identify and monitor overall risk exposure to the Council from live cloud service provision. There is also no governance in place to assess how effectively cloud security risks are being managed.
4. The Council has not been provided with any evidence or assurance reports to confirm the adequacy of cloud security arrangements for one of the main children service's applications.
5. Processes relating to supplier assurance and performance management in relation to cloud security are not yet fully developed.

Overall Audit Opinion

Our audit identified that there was scope to improve the current cloud security control environment, a number of which are known to management and which work is underway to address. Recommendations were identified in a number of areas including ensuring that all contracts are identified, recorded and have formal Cloud Security Assessments performed upon next renewal. We also identified processes that would benefit from completion and implementation of a formal framework for supplier assurance and performance management to allow the Council to gain assurance that suppliers are meeting contractual requirements and maintain security operating environments.

Management Commentary

Management are actively implementing the audit recommendations and amending procurement and ongoing assessment processes to strengthen cloud computing controls.

Key Audit Risk response:

1. A Cyber Security assessment form (separate to initial tender evaluation questionnaire) has been developed to be completed annually by suppliers. This

Internal Audit Report Finance & Resources Cloud Services (A0074/2019/001)

Date: October 2019

will be issued as part of the annual supplier reviews. These will be aligned to contract anniversaries, the first of these will take place in March 2020.

Low value Education contracts – Children's Services are compiling a register of cloud-based applications used in schools, and will carry out an initial risk assessment of these. They will seek guidance from the Cyber Security Architect if required, and any formal Cyber assessment will be carried out by the Cyber Resilience Working Group.

2. ALM process is currently being updated to record Cyber assessments and any follow up actions. Currently recorded on a spreadsheet.
3. Overall risk exposure to the Council – the Cyber Security Risk Register is monitored and maintained by the Cyber Security Architect and reviewed by the Cyber Security Steering Group quarterly.

Technologies have been purchased as part of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement which will improve the identification of cloud-based risks and are currently being implemented (Q1/Q2).

4. The supplier of the childrens services application will attend the Scottish Local Authority Information Security Group (representing all Scottish Local Authorities) in February and will be asked to provide security evidence relating to the hosting of the application. They will be encouraged to provide information to align with the SCAS (Scottish Government's new supplier assessment scheme).

These are being finalised and implemented from March. Failures will result in contract review, and potential cancellation.

Internal Audit Report

Finance & Resources

Registration System (A0088/2020/001)

Date: October 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>The objectives of this audit were to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an adequate system in place for registering births, deaths and marriages. 2. The functions of the registrar are carried out in line with the relevant legislation and internal procedures. 3. The records are accurate, complete and securely maintained. 4. There are adequate controls in place over the collection of income.
Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviewed the appropriate officers to ascertain the system in place for the registration of births, deaths and marriages, considering relevant legislation 2. Prepared and carried out a programme of testing to meet the above objectives on a sample of registrations to ensure that the system in place is adequate and operating effectively. The auditor selected the sample of registrations at visits to the two registration offices.
Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an adequate system in place for registering births, deaths and marriages. 2. The national legislation is being followed for the registration of births, deaths and marriages through the electronic Register system. 3. The records tested were accurate, complete and securely maintained. 4. There are adequate controls in place over the collection of income.
Key Audit Risks
<p>No key risks were identified during the course of the audit.</p>
Overall Audit Opinion
<p>The system in place for the registration of births, deaths and marriages within the council is operating satisfactorily.</p>
Management Commentary
<p>N/A as no key risks were identified.</p>

Internal Audit Report

Corporate

ICT Fraud Controls (C0371/2018/042)

Date: October 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>As another Council was subject to a significant fraud perpetrated by an ICT professional over a number of years which enabled him to divert payments to his own bank account, the objectives of this audit are to ensure that the internal control weaknesses identified in that Council are being adequately controlled within Renfrewshire Council, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administration and super user access are adequately controlled and where appropriate monitored; 2. Segregation of duties is maintained where administration or super user access is granted; 3. There is segregation of duties between the BACS system and other financial systems; 4. User access is regularly reviewed for significant financial systems; 5. Regular reconciliations are undertaken between the general ledger and all financial interfaces; 6. Where interfaces post to a suspense account, the general ledger is reconciled to the interface and the suspense account is cleared regularly; 7. Supplier statements are reconciled to supplier accounts on the creditors system for significant suppliers; 8. Supplier remittances are produced and sent out for all payments;

Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained a copy of the other Council's investigation report for background information. 2. Met with relevant contacts within ICT and services to obtain details of payment feeder processes and administrator access to the main financial systems. 3. Analysed the information obtained to ascertain the effectiveness of the controls in place.

Key Audit Assurances
<p>With the transition to the new financial system, ICT staff have no direct access to the Business World system therefore, in the context of the lack of segregation of duties present in the other authorities fraud case, this risk has been sufficiently mitigated.</p>

Key Audit Risks

Internal Audit Report

Corporate

ICT Fraud Controls (C0371/2018/042)

Date: October 2019

There is a risk of inappropriate levels of access being granted and continuing for lengthy periods of time, if user accounts both standard and at administrator/superuser level are not managed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Overall Audit Opinion

The audit review was undertaken during a period when the Council was transitioning between two financial systems. It had been identified that some ICT staff had access privileges which may have been a potential vulnerability, however as ICT staff no longer have direct access to the new financial system the auditor is satisfied that there is currently adequate segregation of duties over the main financial system. Recommendations have been made to improve the robustness of controls in relation to monitoring and review of access privileges within supporting systems and based on this the auditor has made a provision of reasonable assurance.

Management Commentary

Management have taken action to implement the audit recommendations including developing a protocol reviewing user permissions and access to financially significant systems on a 6 monthly basis. The document will also be distributed to system administrators of those systems managed outwith ICT.

Internal Audit Report

Communities, Housing & Planning

Housing Allocations (C0011/2020/001)

Date: November 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>As a result of a complaint, the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning requested an independent review of the housing allocation process in place prior to the implementation of a new Housing Allocations Policy in May 2019.</p> <p>The objectives of the review were to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedures are operated in accordance with housing and landlord legislation and the organisation's agreed written policy. 2. There is adequate documentary evidence to support all applications and lettings. 3. All relevant records are updated to record all tenancies.
Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviewed the appropriate staff to ascertain the policies and procedures and assess controls in place for allocation of council properties. 2. Selected a sample of housing lets to ensure that procedures were followed and records were appropriately maintained.
Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedures are operated in accordance with housing and landlord legislation and the Council's agreed written policy. 2. Documentary evidence is available to support all applications and lettings. 3. Tenancy records are updated to record all tenancy details and changes to tenancies.
Key Audit Risks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although there is a process for applicants to declare family connections on the application form and the Code of Conduct states that employees must not use their position to further the interests of others, the absence of a formalised process for employees to follow when faced with a potential conflict of interest could lead to inconsistencies in practice.
Overall Audit Opinion
<p>The audit identified that there is no formal system in place to enable officers involved in the Housing Allocation process to declare an interest when a house is being allocated to a member of their family. Also, there are no programmed checks that tenants continue to</p>

Internal Audit Report
Communities, Housing & Planning
Housing Allocations (C0011/2020/001)

Date: November 2019

occupy premises after the tenancy has been established. The auditor has made a provision of reasonable assurance.

Management Commentary

Work is ongoing to implement the audit recommendations, including the roll out to staff of a friends, relatives and colleagues personal connections form to be consistent with practices followed by other Council Teams.

Internal Audit Report

Communities, Housing & Planning

Housing Allocation Investigation (C0003/2020/009)

Date: May 2019

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Audit Objectives
<p>A councillor contacted the Director of Communities, Housing & Planning, raising an issue regarding the allocation of a specific property. The Director asked Internal Audit to conduct an independent review into the allocation of this property.</p> <p>The objectives of this audit were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ascertain the circumstances surrounding the allegation through discussions with relevant officers. 2. Examine relevant documentation and electronic information to ensure that proper processes were followed.
Audit Scope
<p>The following work was carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Met with the appropriate officers to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the allegation. 2. Examined and reviewed relevant documentation and electronic information to ensure that proper processes had been followed.
Key Audit Assurances
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proper processes appear to have been followed and relevant documentation is available to support that the property was appropriately let.
Key Audit Risks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There were no key risks identified during the audit.
Overall Audit Opinion
<p>From examination of the records and processes followed it is the auditor's opinion that the house was let appropriately.</p>
Management Commentary
<p>The internal audit validated the internal management review of this housing allocation that the allocation was appropriately made in accordance with policy and procedures.</p>



To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Chief Auditor

Heading: Compliance with the 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. 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 The Director of Finance and Resources has responsibility for reporting annually to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny 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, Risk and Scrutiny 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 was presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 28 May 2019. 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 contents of this report.
-

3. **Background**

- 3.1 *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework*, published by CIPFA in association with Solace in 2007, set the standard for local authority governance in the UK. CIPFA and Solace reviewed the Framework in 2015 to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose' and published a revised edition in spring 2016. The new code places greater emphasis on relationship and behaviours between elected members and senior management; performance reporting; and council and service level plans.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance has been reviewed and updated in line with this framework and to reflect any updated Council policies.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None.
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – None.
8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
13. **Climate Risk** – None.

Author: Karen Campbell – 07768 354 651



To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: 2018/19 Complaints Data

1. Summary

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Council's complaint handling procedure (CHP) helps the Council to improve services and processes based on customer feedback. It is one of a range of methods to help the Council understand how well it is delivering its services.
- 1.2 Introduced in 2013, the Council's CHP complies with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) guidance and aims to help 'get it right first time'. The expectation is to have quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with early resolution by capable, well-trained staff. As part of the procedure, all complaints are recorded and monitored.
- 1.3 This report provides information on complaints closed during the year from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and performance on key indicators, as well as highlighting improvements made to the CHP over the past year to ensure that complaints are handled well and the organisation learns from them.
- 1.4 The key messages highlighted in the report are as follows:
 - 8,200 complaints were received in 2018/19, which has increased from 6,752 in 2017/18, as set out in section 4.8;
 - 89% of our complaints dealt with are frontline resolution, demonstrating the Council's commitment to getting it right first time in response to complaints;
 - 77.5% of frontline complaints and 73.9% of investigation complaints received were completed within target timescales;

- the average time to respond to an investigation complaint was 15 days, which is within the SPSO target of 20 days;
- a number of improvements to the Council's CHP have been implemented since the 2018 review;
- 0.5% of our complaints for 2018/19 were reported to the SPSO, of the 47 reported, one was upheld and one was partly upheld. The SPSO indicates that a low uphold rate suggests a robustness in the authority's handling of complaints;
- 2018/19 breakdown of complaints received by services is broadly reflective of the volume of services provided, with Environment and Infrastructure Services delivering the highest volume of frontline Council services and consequently receiving the highest volume of customer interactions;
- the internal review identified the requirement to revise the CHP and an opportunity to update the provision of training and guidelines for officers, for social work complaints to be in line with the council-wide procedure and for a more robust system to support the logging of and learning from complaints; and
- the next stage of the complaints review will be to drive improvement and improve performance, which will be underpinned by a new council-wide system. The internal communication plan and training will emphasise this.

1.5 A case study and performance scorecard have been included within the appendices of this report to provide additional context and data.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board:

- Note the content of this report

3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Council's complaint handling procedure was implemented in 2013 and complies with the model complaints handling procedure for local authorities introduced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at that time.
- 3.2 The CHP reflects Renfrewshire Council's ongoing commitment to the provision of high-quality complaints handling. The CHP operates to ensure that complaints are processed and responded to consistently within target timescales, with a particular focus on working to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of contact or service delivery.
- 3.3 Services record, analyse and monitor complaints performance and use the information gathered through the CHP to improve service delivery wherever possible.
- 3.4 In line with the model SPSO complaints handling procedure, Renfrewshire Council's CHP uses a two-stage process, Frontline Resolution and Investigation stage:

Frontline Resolution

The frontline resolution stage 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.**

An example of a complaint which may be addressed at the frontline resolution stage is where a customer has provided evidence to verify their claim for benefits, but the Benefits Service has not updated their case records with this information. When this is reported, the service would apologise, update the customer's benefit record to record receipt of evidence and check that the benefit award is corrected from the appropriate date.

Investigation

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at this stage. Investigation complaints are typically complex or require a detailed examination before resolving. These complaints may already have been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing 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 the final position. **The Council has 20 days to respond to these complaints.**

An example of an investigation may relate to the standard or nature of a repair within a Council property which requires an inspection or visit to investigate.

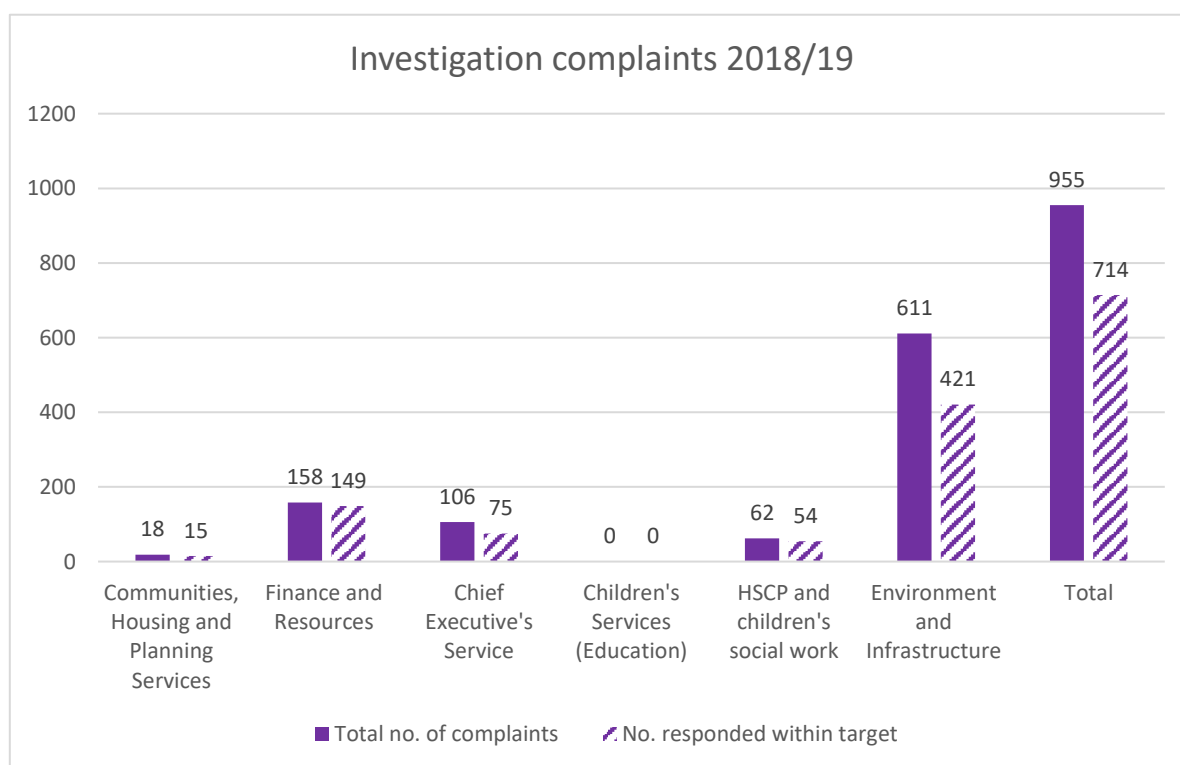
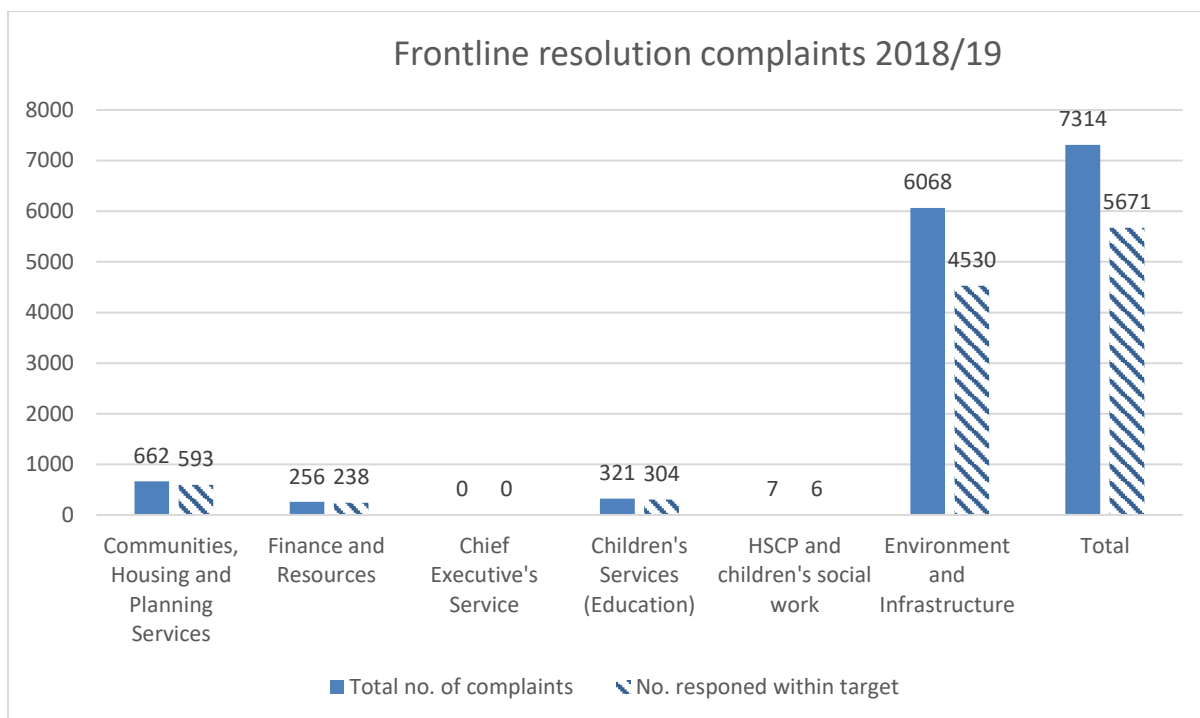
- 3.5 In line with other authorities, our complaints policy does not include a number of service areas that are processed through other means, some examples include: the right to appeal a refusal of planning permission or to appeal planning conditions - this is made to the Local Review Body or the Scottish Ministers; allegations of bullying are treated and investigated as bullying incidents - by the education establishment; and a compensation claim for personal injury, loss of or damage to property - are processed through the Council's standard 'Public Liability Claim Form'.

4. 2018/19 Council performance

- 4.1 Complaints are crucial in identifying areas or processes that need to be improved for our customers and councils are required to report their complaints handling performance against a range of high-level performance indicators related to the SPSO complaints handling procedure. This report provides information on the complaints closed during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and Appendix 2

details Renfrewshire Council's complaints performance for 2018/19 against these key SPSO performance indicators.

- 4.2 As reported previously to this Board, a review of complaints handling procedures and performance commenced in 2018, with revised Complaints Handling Procedure approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Service Policy Board in March 2019. The review identified a requirement to move to a single system for complaints, streamlining the process and ensuring consistent reporting across the Council. This will also strengthen the complaints data and support greater analysis and learning. Development of this system was undertaken during 2019 and it will be in place from 1 April 2020. In the interim, work has taken place to address variances in recording wherever possible, and updated information has been provided in the appendix, based on this approach.
- 4.3 In 2018/19, the number of complaints received increased from 6,752 to 8,200. This can largely be attributed to an increase in waste complaints in Quarter 4 (January to March 2019). Elected members will be aware of the significant programme of change that was implemented during late 2018 and early 2019 in relation to waste collection.
- 4.4 The Council strives to ensure that complaints are answered right first time and customers are responded to quickly, and during 2018/19 89% of complaints were addressed through frontline resolution. 77.5% of frontline complaints and 73.9% of investigation complaints received were completed within target timescales. The average time to respond to a frontline resolution complaint was 5.3 days, which is slightly above the SPSO target of 5 days. The average time to respond to an investigation complaint was 15 days, which is within the SPSO target of 20 days.
- 4.5 From 1 April 2017, the process for handling social work complaints was brought into line with the council-wide complaints process. There is still a minor difference between the two procedures - under the social work procedure frontline complaints may be extended by up to 10 working days in agreement with the complainant. This extension was not applied to any complaints in 2018/19.
- 4.6 As all 2017/18 and 2018/19 social work complaints were handled under the new procedure the data has been included in the service charts below. The 69 complaints across social work services relate to services provided by Children's Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Social Work Children's Services received 20 complaints, and all were processed on time whilst the HSCP received 49 complaints and 39 (79%) were completed on time.



- 4.7 Overall the breakdown of complaints received by services is broadly reflective of the volume of services provided. Environment and Infrastructure delivers the highest volume of frontline Council services, which includes: refuse collection, roads maintenance, Streetscene and land services, parks and cemeteries and street lighting. It is to be expected therefore that the service will receive the highest level of customer interactions. There was also an increase in investigation complaints experienced by this service in 2018/19, due to strengthening complaints recording, as well as major waste service changes during December 2018.

- 4.8 A case study has been provided in Appendix 1 on how complaints and correspondence were managed during a period of significant change for waste services last year. It is important to note the scale of this service provision, with over 11 million waste and recycling collections made each year, complaints about service delivery account for only 0.1% of the actual services delivered reflecting very high levels of general satisfaction. Forecasted analysis of the 2019/20 data indicates that complaint levels relating to waste services are back in line with 2017/18 year's performance.

5. Complaints escalating to SPSO

- 5.1 In January 2020, the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board considered a report relating to the SPSO annual report for 2018/19. The SPSO will not generally consider a complaint in relation to a local authority unless the complainant has gone through the Council's complaints procedure. During the period of the report the SPSO determined 47 complaints relative to Renfrewshire Council (out of a total of 8,200) compared with 48 in 2017/18. Of the 47 complaints determined by the SPSO during 2018/19, one was upheld, and one was partly upheld.
- 5.2 The SPSO undertook a review on their own guidance and model complaints handling procedure. Following this some adjustments have been made to the national procedure which councils will be required to adopt from 1 April 2020. The Council's own policy will be updated to reflect this, with guidance provided to staff.

6. Improving the Council's complaints handling procedure

- 6.1 In 2018, a review was undertaken on our CHP. The findings of the review were reported to the Finance, Resources & Customer Services Policy Board on 16 March 2019. Since then the following actions have been completed:
- the publication of the refreshed complaints handling procedure and staff guide on the 1st April 2019.
 - a team brief was issued in April 2019 to all employees.
 - further guidance on complaints handling has been made available on the intranet, for all employees, which also includes guidance on dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
 - the Complaints Development Working Group has continued to meet quarterly.
 - learning and benchmarking opportunities have been pursued through the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network (LACHN) and directly with other councils on their approach to complaint handling and reporting, a specific example has been the recording of missed bins as a front-line resolution complaint or service request.
 - social work related complaints are now being dealt with using the council-wide procedure.
 - review process identified several procedural issues in relation to the recording and reporting of complaints and provided an opportunity to address these through the revised CHP and the operational processes which underpin this. The 2017/18 data has been recalibrated to ensure robust baseline data is in place to assist

with the scrutiny of performance and consistent with the methodology applied for the 2018/19 data.

- the internal review identified the requirement to revise the CHP and an opportunity to update the provision of training and guidelines for officers, for social work complaints to be in line with the council-wide procedure and for a more robust system to support the logging of and learning from complaints.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 The next stage of the complaints review will be to improve complaints performance and to use analysis of complaints to help drive service delivery and process improvements. This work will be underpinned and enabled by the adoption of the new council-wide system, rolling out from 1 April 2020. Benchmarking work will continue, including aligning reporting with other authorities through the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network. A revised model complaints handling procedure was published by the SPSO in January 2020, with councils required to fully implement the new procedure by 1 April 2021, as mentioned in section 5 of this report the Council's own policy and staff guidance will be updated to reflect this.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
We consider our services performance against a number of strategic outcomes to measure how we are delivering better outcomes for our local communities:
 - *Working together to improve outcomes* – complaints are monitored under this outcome of the Council Plan and service improvement planning process.
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
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk-** none

List of Background Papers: none

Author: *Nicola Irvine-Brown, Planning & Policy Development section, Chief Executive Services. 0141 618 7414*

Take 5

Case Study on waste complaints

1: What change did the service make?

The redesign changed how waste and recycling is collected from households and businesses across Renfrewshire, increasing quality and quantity of recycling whilst reducing costs. The move from fortnightly collections to three-weekly residual and four-weekly separated recycling, was the largest service change implemented in recent years, completely re-routing 90,000 households and 1,200 commercial waste collections.

As with any service change of this scale, a period of lower performance was expected while the changes were embedded and the public adapted to the changed service. A range of measures were planned to support both our customers and our employees through the change, anticipating this increase in enquiries and complaints

2: How did we support our customers?

All households received bespoke calendars and information packs in advance of the change. We launched the new website for calendar collection information with 'download to smartphone' capability and an email reminder service. Roadshows took place in communities to engage with the public face to face and explain the changes. There was also an increase in the use of social media to communicate the changes.

Additional training and resources were provided to assist Customer Contact Centre employees to handle increased call volumes, including re-skilling other Contact Centre employees and the establishment of a dedicated email address for the waste-related enquiries.

3: What was the impact?

Teams from Environment and Infrastructure and the Customer Contact Centre worked closely together before and during the changes.

They closely monitored the impact and ensured close communication between both teams throughout in order to deal with any emerging issues.

Analysis shows that:

- 900 frontline complaints about waste services were received in January 2019, compared to 249 in January 2018 and 267 in January 2020; and
- 14,419 customer service centre calls relating to waste were received in November and December 2018, compared to 5,033 from the same period in 2017.

4: Why did customers complain?

Analysis of the complaints shows that for January 2019 almost 80% of waste complaints were down to non-collection of bins.

The second largest area of complaints in January 2019 at almost 5% related to the in the delivery of new bins.

The remaining 15% of waste complaints were routine matters unrelated to the change.

Most of these complaints were dealt with as frontline resolution and were resolved quickly for the customers.

5: What lessons have been learned?

The service has used technology-based solutions to improve the response time for missed bins and overall complaints handling.

One solution allows the download of data from systems into useable information first time without requiring manipulation. This is produced in a format that can be quickly distributed to frontline staff for immediate action. This reduces overall response times, offering a quicker resolution for our customers. For example, refuse collectors can now be notified of a missed bin whilst still out on route allowing the service to quickly resolve the complaint.

Forecasted analysis of the 2019/20 data indicates that complaint levels relating to waste services are back in line with 2017/18 year's performance.

Appendix 2: Renfrewshire Council Annual Complaints Report SPSO Indicators



The total number of complaints received, frontline and investigation	2017/18	2018/19
Total number of complaints received	6,752	8,200
Number of complaints closed at Frontline Resolution as a percentage of all complaints	95.9%	89.1%
Number of complaints closed at Frontline Resolution	6,478	7,307
Number of complaints closed at Investigation	274	893
Number of complaints closed at Investigation after escalation	9	7
Number of complaints closed at Investigation as a percentage of all complaints	4.05%	10.89%
Number of complaints closed at Investigation after escalation as a percentage of all complaints	0.13%	0.8%

The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage	2017/18	2018/19
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at Frontline Resolution	5.9	5.3
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at Investigation	12.7	15
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	20	9

The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were responded to in full within the set timescales	2017/18	2018/19
Number of complaints closed at Frontline Resolution within 5 working days as a percentage of the total number of Frontline Resolution complaints	72.4%	77.5%
Number of complaints closed at Investigation within 20 working days as a percentage of total number of Investigation complaints	94.96%	73.9%
Number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as a percentage of total number of Investigation complaints	0.62%	0.78%

The number and percentage of complaints where an extension to the timescale has been authorised	2017/18	2018/19
Number of complaints closed at Frontline Resolution where extension was authorised, as a percentage of all complaints at Frontline Resolution	0.09%	0.2%
Number of complaints closed at Investigation where extension was authorised, as a percentage of all complaints closed at Investigation	0%	0.6%

Historical data is available for these indicators for some services only, due to the recording system. This will be addressed through the new single system being implemented.



To: **Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board**

On: **16 March 2020**

Report by: **Chief Executive**

Heading: **Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2018/19**

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 In January 2020 the Improvement Service published the 2018/19 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) performance data for all Scottish local authorities. The Framework is a high-level benchmarking tool which allows local authorities to compare their performance across a wide range of key service areas such as education, housing, and adult social care.
- 1.2 Renfrewshire Council has participated in the development of the LGBF since its inception in 2010, with the Framework now expanded to 90 indicators. The purpose of the Framework is to support evidence-based comparisons and encourage shared learning and improvement.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of Renfrewshire's performance for 2018/19, as well as outlining the wider context and trends for local authorities across Scotland.
- 1.4 Renfrewshire Council LGBF performance overview 2018/19:
 - 29 indicators have improved since last year
 - 6 have remained roughly the same
 - 37 indicators have declined in performance
 - 14 have no current data available, and 4 have no comparable data available
 - 21 indicators are in the top quartile (ranked 1st to 8th)
 - 9 indicators are in the bottom quartile (ranked 25th to 32nd)

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board notes the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 All Scottish local authorities participate in the LGBF, which allows councils to compare their performance across a suite of indicators, including costs and performance of key council services, and levels of public satisfaction. Whilst there are always different views on the nature and calculation of specific indicators, the framework provides a tool for the Council to consider its performance in relation to delivering Best Value, as well as a platform for learning and sharing good practice.
- 3.2 There are now 90 indicators in the Framework, which cover the majority of council services under eight categories:
- Children's services
 - Corporate services
 - Adult social care
 - Culture and leisure services
 - Environmental services
 - Housing services
 - Corporate asset management
 - Economic development
- 3.3 The data is collated, verified and published for all Scottish councils by the Improvement Service. The final data for 2018/19 was published on 31 January 2020. A link to the Improvement Service reporting tool is available on the [performance section of the Council website](#), and a summary of the data is provided in appendix 1.
- 3.4 There were a number of changes to the Framework this year, including: expanding the suite of adult social care measures by six indicators; amending the "cost per planning application" measure to "cost of Planning and Building Standards Services per planning application"; updating guidance on virtual library visits; and removing the 'experimental' tag from the primary teachers' judgements indicators.

4. National Context

- 4.1 Alongside the performance data, the Improvement Service published a report providing an overview as well as key trends across Scotland. The national report highlights:
- 4.2 *"Councils are now operating in a more challenging context than when the LGBF began. Across the nine-year period for which we present data, total revenue funding for councils has fallen by 9.4% in real terms (and by 7.6% since 2013/14). Against increasing budgetary pressure, councils have had to manage growing demographic pressures, increasing national policy demands, and higher public expectations. In addition, the welcome introduction of the Living Wage and recent local government pay awards place further pressure on already tight budgets. While these reflect progress in relation to fairness and equity for staff, they represent a significant increase in expenditure without additional capacity within the system."*
- 4.3 The report also highlights that, in this challenging fiscal environment, councils are increasingly relying on reserves, and draws attention to the growing proportion of funding which is committed to national policy initiatives, reducing the flexibility to respond to local priorities. The report notes that councils are continuing to protect or increase expenditure in core areas such as education and social care, whilst other services have experienced substantial reductions in spending over the last nine years, in particular central support services, followed by roads, culture and leisure, and planning.
- 4.4 In terms of general performance across Scotland, the report notes that local government has performed well despite growing pressure on budgets. However, there is evidence that performance, satisfaction, and system capacity are being negatively impacted.

5. Overview of Renfrewshire's Performance

5.1 An overview of the 90 indicators for Renfrewshire 2018/19 shows:

- 29 indicators have improved since last year
- 6 have remained roughly the same
- 37 indicators have declined in performance
- 14 have no current data available, and 4 have no comparable data available

5.2 The Council is in the top quartile for 21 indicators and in the bottom quartile for 9. Appendix 1 provides the Council's data, ranked position, and the Scottish average and range for all the indicators.

Indicators in the top quartile

5.3 The Council ranked in the top quartile (1st to 8th) for 21 of the framework indicators:

Indicator	Rank
Cost per primary school	3 rd
Cost per secondary school	3 rd
Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 1	8 th
Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 2	7 th
Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 3	6 th
Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 5	8 th
Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good / better	5 th
Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over (adult social care)	4 th
Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	7 th
Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	4 th
Cost per attendance at sports facilities	5 th
Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries	8 th
Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities	4 th
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	2 nd
Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	8 th
Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	1 st
Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	6 th
Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	7 th
Cost of Planning and Building Standards Services per planning application	1 st
Average time per business and industry planning application (wk)	8 th
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	8 th

Indicators in the bottom quartile

5.4 The Council ranked in the bottom quartile (25th to 32nd) for 9 of the framework indicators. Additional context for these indicators is summarised below, with further detail in appendix 1.

Indicator	Rank
% of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home	28 th
The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax	29 th
Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	28 th
Cost per library visit	32 nd
Cost of museums per visit	29 th
Costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	29 th
Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads	28 th
Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population	30 th
Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning	29 th

5.5 % of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home

The service has been actively reviewing the needs of service users to ensure that the partnership meets their care requirements appropriately. This has resulted in changes to the level and nature of services that some individuals receive. The reduction can also be attributed to individuals no longer being supported via the service for a variety of reasons including transferring to a Self-Directed Support budget option or residential care.

The methodology for calculating this indicator doesn't include the support provided via our Community Meals service, which has been very successful in releasing time previously spent supporting individuals with food preparation by frontline Care at Home services. This differs considerably from other HSCPs where Care at Home staff continue to provide this support, this results in higher percentages of service users meeting the criteria of "intensive home care".

5.6 The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax

Although in the bottom quartile, the cost of collecting council tax has reduced by 6.5% compared to the previous year. Since the LGBF began in 2010/11, the cost has reduced from £17.31 - £10.88. This can be attributed to factors associated with on-line services for council tax (MyAccount) which have been introduced to provide customers with easy access to services while reducing contact costs for the Council. In addition to decreasing the cost of collecting Council Tax, the percentage of Council Tax due in the year, collected by year end, has consistently performed at 96% over the last five years.

5.7 Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)

The two main types of illness classification presented across the time period were musculoskeletal and joint disorders and psychological (non-work related). To address this the Council provides a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance, including counselling and physiotherapy support. There are a range of Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees, with further detail provided in appendix 1. Data on sickness absence is regularly presented to the Corporate Management Team to ensure there continues to be a high-level focus on improving performance.

5.8 Cost of museums per visit

The cost of museums per visit has increased slightly from £43.88 to £44.47 in 2018/19. The Council and RLL have historically queried the methodology for the calculation of this indicator. As this indicator is influenced by visitor numbers, it was anticipated that there

would be an impact on performance due to reduced annual visitors to the museum, which closed part way through the year in September 2018. However, further work is planned to query the costs that have been included in relation to museum provision as these appear to be much higher than local data held by RLL.

Over the next few years, the Council will continue to make significant investment in its cultural assets including the £42 million investment in Paisley museum. The cultural investment programme is a key priority for the Council and partners, with the renewed venues anticipated to attract significant volumes of new visitors to the town. The transformed Paisley museum alone is expected to attract 125,000 visits a year (four times current numbers) when it reopens in 2022, with such a significant projected increase in footfall it is anticipated it will directly reduce the cost of museum per visit.

5.9 Cost per library visit

Paisley Central Library closed in September 2018, as part of the Council's cultural investment programme. Services were re-located for a short period of time to 5 High Street in Paisley and the Lagoon leisure centre which resulted in a drop in attendance figures until the opening of a new temporary Paisley Central library in mid-February 2019. The temporary library will remain in place until the opening of the new library in 2021. Similar to the costs of museum visits, the data underpinning this indicator is currently being queried and benchmarking opportunities continue to be explored. Additional costs have and will continue to be incurred whilst these projects are underway which will be reflected in this indicator. Once the new Paisley Library is opened it is forecasted that this will significantly improve visitor numbers and consequently reduce the cost per visit.

5.10 Costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population

The increased costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population for 2018/19 reflects internal changes to how income is included on the Local Finance Return, as the 2018/19 costs now include recharges to other council services. A further increase in costs can be attributed to the pay award and the additional funding received for environmental improvements.

5.11 Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads

The cost of Renfrewshire's roads maintenance has increased from £18,036 in 2017/18 to £18,050 in 2018/19 and is above the Scottish average of £9,417. The 2018/19 costs reflect the £8.089m roads capital investment programme allocation expenditure on roads and pavements. The costs associated with this indicator also include revenue expenditure on road and winter maintenance plus total expenditure to be met from capital resources including street lighting. This significant capital allocation reflects the current focus on investment in roads infrastructure. Renfrewshire continues to spend higher than the Scottish Average.

5.12 Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population

The increased cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population for 2018/19 reflects internal changes to the Local Finance Return. Following recent changes in service structures, the allocation of some services has been reviewed and as a result, this indicator now includes additional cost relating to for example Advice works, business regulation costs and external advice services.

5.13 Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning

Streetscene have invested £2.5m into street cleanliness whilst a programme of support and community engagement through Team Up to Clean Up has been introduced to provide advice, guidance, equipment, and support for communities to become involved in local

environmental improvements. As this indicator is calculated using a three-year average, it will not, as yet, capture the full impact of the Team Up to Clean Up programme. It is likely that local satisfaction with street cleaning arising from the programme will reflect positively on the future performance of this indicator.

It should also be noted that while this survey data is proportionate at the Scottish level, it is acknowledged by the Improvement Service that there are limitations at council level in relation to the very small sample sizes (240 in Renfrewshire in 2018). Further information is provided in appendix 1.

6. Significant Movement

- 6.1 Listed below are indicators where there has been significant movement in the ranked position since 2017/18, by nine positions or more. Further details are provided in the Appendix.
- Cost per pre-school education registration (7th to 21st)
 - Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 4 (3rd to 12th)
 - Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good / better (23rd to 5th)
 - Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over (18th to 4th)
 - Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days (4th to 18th)
 - Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability programmes (1st to 10th)
 - Cost of Planning and Building Standards Services per planning application (32nd to 1st)
 - Average time per business and industry planning application (wk) (19th to 8th)
 - Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (9th to 20th)

7. Monitoring and reporting of LGBF

- 7.1 The performance of the LGBF indicators will continue to be monitored by the Corporate Management Team, through the service improvement planning process and through further benchmarking activities to develop and share best practice. A report on the LGBF will continue to be submitted to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board annually to review performance and monitor progress.
- 7.2 Renfrewshire Council publishes its statutory public performance reporting document on the Council's website in March each year. Relevant performance information gathered through the LGBF is included as part of the report.

Implications of this report

1. **Financial** – n/a
2. **HR and Organisational Development** – n/a
3. **Community/Council Planning** – n/a
4. **Legal** – n/a
5. **Property/Assets** – n/a
6. **Information Technology** – n/a

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 for example 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 and Safety** – n/a
9. **Procurement** – n/a
10. **Risk** – n/a
11. **Privacy Impact** – n/a
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – the LGBF framework represents a joint commitment by SOLACE (Scotland) and COSLA to develop better measurement and comparable data to target resources and drive improvements.
13. **Climate Risk** – n/a

Author: Nicola Irvine-Brown, Strategic Planning and Policy Development section, Chief Executive's Service

List of background papers: 2018/19 LGBF Overview Report,
<https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking>

Appendix 1

Family Groups were set up to facilitate comparisons and encourage discussions between similar councils. Renfrewshire is currently in the following two family groups:

Family Group 1 for Children Services, Adult Social Care and Housing Services – Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Falkirk, Fife, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, and West Lothian.

Family Group 2 for Corporate Services, Culture and Leisure, Environmental Services, Corporate Assets and Economic Development – Angus, Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

Children's Services

There are 31 indicators in the Children's Services category. For 2018/19, 6 have improved, 1 has remained stable, and 10 have declined. Data is currently not available for 10 indicators, and 4 have no comparable data as this is the first year they have had their 'experimental' tag removed (noted at section 3.4).

- 9 are in the top quartile
- 0 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
CHN1 – Cost per primary school pupil	2	3	£4,563	£4,753	£5,250	£4,655 (Falkirk) - £5,424 (West Lothian)
CHN2 – Cost per secondary school pupil	1	3	£6,022	£6,518	£7,185	£6,433 (Fife) - £8,103 (Clackmannanshire)
CHN3 – Cost per pre-school education registration	7	21	£3,696	£5,786	£5,070	£3,312 (West Lothian) - £5,852 (Clackmananshire)
CHN4 – Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 5	8	11	66%	65%	63%	70% (West Lothian) – 53% (Clackmannanshire)
CHN5 – Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 6	9	10	36%	36%	35%	44% (West Lothian) - 27% (Clackmannanshire)

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
CHN6 – Percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SIMD)	12	12	43%	45%	44%	53% (West Lothian) – 35% (Clackmannanshire)
CHN7 – Percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (SIMD)	16	10	16%	18%	18%	27% (West Lothian) – 13% (Fife)
CHN10 – Percentage of adults satisfied with local schools	7	9	80%	79%	71.83%	83.4% (South Ayrshire) – 65.1% (Fife)
CHN12a – Overall average tariff score	8	11	935	911	892	951 (Falkirk) – 773 (Clackmannanshire)
CHN12b – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 1	14	8	619	652	625	703 (Falkirk) – 516 (Clackmannanshire)
CHN12c – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 2	13	7	782	807	740	831 (South Ayrshire) – 679 (Fife)
CHN12d – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 3	7	6	969	968	872	968 (Renfrewshire) – 838 (Fife)
CHN12e – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 4	3	12	1200	1062	1013	1212 (Falkirk) – 841 (Clackmannanshire)
CHN12f – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 5	7	8	1275	1215	1193	1228 (West Lothian) – 1133 (Fife)
CHN13a - % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy	n/a	7	n/a	76%	72%	79.9% (South Ayrshire) – 69.2% (Dumfries & Galloway)
CHN13b - % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy	n/a	5	n/a	84%	79%	84.1% (West Lothian) – 76.8% (Clackmannanshire)
CHN14a - Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	n/a	11	n/a	20.44%	20.66%	24.3% (Falkirk) – 18.15% (Dumfries & Galloway)
CHN14b - Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	n/a	14	n/a	17.28%	17%	13.07 (East Renfrewshire) – 28.84 (Scottish Borders)
CHN18 – Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good / better	23	5	87.69%	96.88%	90.58%	98.5% (Falkirk) – 87.1% (Dumfries & Galloway)
CHN19a - School attendance rates (per 100 pupils)	19	17	93.3	93.04	92.95	93.6% (Dumfries & Galloway) - 92.5% (Fife)
CHN21 – Participation rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)	20	18	91.6	91.7%	91.56%	92.6% (South Lanarkshire) – 90.1% (Clackmannanshire)

Significant Movement (i.e. moved nine or more places in the rankings since 2017/18)

CHN3 – Cost per pre-school education registration (7th to 21st) – The Council is progressing with the expansion of free provision from 600 hours per child to 1140 hours. This means that provision is almost doubling but with no increase in registrations (expansion is in the number of hours per child, not in the number of eligible children) resulting in higher costs being attributed to the same number of places. As well as the increased staffing costs (which will be experienced by most local authorities), the local programme to support expansion has included significant spending on infrastructure, including four new build projects and extensions to 16 buildings. This is providing an early years estate fit for the future.

CHN12e – Average total tariff SIMD Quintile 4 (3rd to 12th) - This figure has decreased since 2017/18 but Renfrewshire remains above national average and there is an increasing trend over 3 and 5 years. There tends to be more variation in quintile 4 data as this is a smaller group than the other quintiles.

CHN18 – Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good / better (23rd to 5th) – This indicator refers to inspections carried out by the Care Inspectorate. For each inspection year there is a focus on a different quality theme. The Council's quality improvement framework and programme of support visits to funded partner providers and local authority early years establishments supports them to maintain quality.

Adult Services

There are 11 indicators in the Adult Services category. For 2018/19, 3 have improved, and 4 have declined. Data is currently not available for 4 indicators.

- 3 are in the top quartile
- 1 is in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
SW1 – Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over	12	19	£22.83	£26.4	£24.67	£14.6% (Clackmannanshire) - £33.35 (Fife)
SW2 – SDS (Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets) spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+	18	12	£4.25	£5.8	£7.3	£9.8 (West Lothian) - £1.93 (Clackmannanshire) -
SW3a - % of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home	24	28	61.06%	55.43%	61.02%	73.6% (Clackmannanshire) – 55.4% (Renfrewshire)

SW5 – Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over	18	4	£422	£277	£381	£194 (Dumfries & Galloway) - £567 (Fife)
SW6 - Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	8	7	90.1	88.27	102.97	88.27 (Renfrewshire) – 127 (South Ayrshire)
SW7 - Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections	5	12	90.53	84.16	82.17	96.97 (Clackmannanshire) – 78 (South Lanarkshire)
SW8 - Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	3	4	189.9	245.92	792.66	245.92 (Renfrewshire) – 1,354 (South Ayrshire)

Bottom Quartile Indicator Commentary

SW3a - % of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home - The service has been actively reviewing the needs of service users to ensure that the partnership meets their care requirements appropriately. This has resulted in changes to the level and nature of services that some individuals receive. The reduction can also be attributed to individuals no longer being supported via the service for a variety of reasons including transferring to a Self-Directed Support budget option or residential care.

The methodology for calculating this indicator doesn't include the support provided via our Community Meals service, which has been very successful in releasing time previously spent supporting individuals with food preparation by frontline Care at Home services. This differs considerably from other HSCPs where Care at Home staff continue to provide this support, this results in higher percentages of service users meeting the criteria of "intensive home care".

Significant Movement (i.e. moved nine or more places in the rankings since 2017/18)

SW5 – Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over (18th to 4th) - The decrease in costs from 2017/18 to 2018/19 is currently being explored. Initial assessment analysis indicates that this is at least partially related to a 16% increase in the number of clients.

Corporate

There are 8 indicators in the Corporate category. For 2018/19, 3 have improved, 2 have remained stable, and 3 have declined.

- 0 are in the top quartile
- 2 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
CORP 1 – Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure	24	22	5.11%	4.62%	4.37%	3.2 (Inverclyde) - 8.09 (Clackmannanshire)
CORP 3b – percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women	7	11	56.82%	57.11%	55.79%	59.9% (East Renfrewshire) – 48.8% (South Lanarkshire)
CORP 3c – The gender pay gap	20	15	4.57	3.58	3.96	8.2 (Inverclyde) -1.6 (Angus)
CORP 4 – The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax	27	29	£11.64	£10.88	£6.92	£3.58 (Clackmannanshire) - £10.88 (Renfrewshire)
CORP 6a – Sickness absence days per teacher	22	18	6.7	6.35	6.21	4.92 (Inverclyde) – 8.48 (Clackmannanshire)
CORP 6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	28	28	12.77	13.24	11.49	9.86 (Midlothian) – 15.02 (Clackmannanshire)
CORP 7 – Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year	20	20	96.05%	96.02%	96%	97.6% (East Renfrewshire) – 95.1% (Midlothian)
CORP 8 – Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	4	18	96.58%	92.21%	92.68%	96% (West Lothian) – 81.4% (East Renfrewshire)

Bottom Quartile Indicator Commentary

CORP 4 – The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax – Despite being in the bottom quartile, the cost of collecting council tax has reduced by 6.5% compared to the previous year. Since the LGBF began in 2010/11, the cost has reduced from £17.31 - £10.88. This can be attributed to factors associated with on-line services for council tax (MyAccount) which have been introduced to provide customers with easy access to services while reducing contact costs for the Council. In addition to decreasing the cost of collecting Council Tax, the percentage of Council Tax due in the year, collected by year end, has consistently performed at 96% over the last five years.

CORP 6b – Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher) - The two main types of illness classification presented across the time period were musculoskeletal and joint disorders and psychological (non-work related).

To address psychological (non-work related) absences the Council provides a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance.

If an employee suggests to their manager that they are experiencing psychological issues, then they should be given time to speak to the mental health first aider and also provided with the Timefortalking counselling service information. The service operates a flexible approach to appointments offering telephone consultations in the early mornings or evenings as well as throughout the day and face to face sessions at their offices in Paisley.

To support this, the Council continues to deliver Mindfulness Courses and Scottish Mental Health First Aider courses, and are working with the counselling service to provide other types of training which can be delivered, for example personal resilience.

There are a range of Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees that are specific to stress-related issues, including wellbeing courses available on the Council's iLearn system.

The Council continues to promote the NHS Choose Life team, who offer safeTalk and ASIST training on suicide awareness and prevention, as well as working with other NHS colleagues to promote the "doing well" service which helps people with depression and low moods.

In relation to addressing musculoskeletal and joint disorders the Council offers a physiotherapy service through an Occupational Health provider, accessible to all employees. Following on from a successful pilot, onsite physiotherapy is available at Underwood Road depot where most of the manual activities are based.

In addition to the Council policies, training and guidance available to assist managers and employees, we continue to promote healthy lifestyles and workplaces through the Healthy Working Lives, Gold Award programme.

Service absence champions continue to work with their management teams and the Human Resources and Organisational Development service to identify absence trends and put in place supporting attendance strategies.

Data on sickness absence is regularly presented to the Corporate Management Team to ensure there continues to be a high-level focus on improving performance.

Significant Movement (i.e. moved nine or more places in the rankings since 2017/18)

CORP 8 – Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days

Clarification of the agreed approach used to process provider invoices has reinstated the control measures required to demonstrate compliance with self-directed support requirements and the council financial regulations. Reinstating this control measure, along with various process improvement measures and data cleansing, has impacted on the performance of this indicator. Amendments to both the approach and data reporting are planned to take effect for the new financial year which should result in the indicator returning to more normal expected levels, above 95%.

Culture and Leisure

There are 8 indicators in the Culture and Leisure category. For 2018/19, 4 have improved, 1 has remained stable, and 3 have declined.

- 3 are in the top quartile
- 3 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
C&L1 – Cost per attendance at sports facilities	11	5	£2.12	£1.25	£2.62	£0.75 (Clackmannanshire) - £4.14 (East Renfrewshire)
C&L2 – Cost per library visit	22	32	£3.52	£7.65	£2.05	£0.45 (Clackmannanshire) - £7.65 (Renfrewshire)
C&L3 – Cost of museums per visit	29	29	£43.88	£44.47	£3.48	£0.22 (West Lothian) - £44.47 (Renfrewshire)
C&L4 – Costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	17	29	£21,857	£30,446	£20,174	£7,434 (Midlothian) - £30,446 (Renfrewshire)
C&L5a – Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries	12	8	77.67%	79.73%	72.37%	79.7% (Renfrewshire) – 69.1% (Midlothian)
C&L5b – Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces	23	17	84%	85%	84.83%	88.4% (Inverclyde) – 80.4% (South Lanarkshire)
C&L5c – Percentage of adults satisfied with museums and galleries	8	10	76.33%	74.67%	69%	74.7% (Renfrewshire) – 42.4% (Clackmannanshire)
C&L5d – Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities	5	4	80.67%	81.30%	71.43%	84.7% (Inverclyde) – 64.3% (East Renfrewshire)

Bottom Quartile Indicator Commentary

C&L2 – Cost per library visit – Paisley Central Library closed in September 2018, as part of the Council's cultural investment programme. Services were re-located for a short period of time to 5 High Street in Paisley and the Lagoon leisure centre which resulted in a drop in attendance figures until the opening of a new temporary Paisley Central library in mid-February 2019. The temporary library will remain in place until the opening of the new library in 2021. Similar to the costs of museum visits, the data underpinning this indicator is currently being queried and benchmarking opportunities continue to be explored. Additional costs have and will continue to be incurred whilst these projects are underway which will be reflected in this indicator. Once the new Paisley Library is opened it is forecasted that this will significantly improve visitor numbers and consequently reduce the cost per visit.

C&L3 – Cost of museums per visit – The cost of museums per visit has increased slightly from £43.88 to £44.47 in 2018/19. The Council and RLL have historically queried the methodology for the calculation of this indicator. As this indicator is influenced by visitor numbers, it was anticipated that there would be an impact on performance due to reduced annual visitors to the museum, which closed part way through the year in September 2018. However, further work is planned to query the costs that have been included in relation to museum provision as these appear to be much higher than local data held by RLL.

Over the next few years, the Council will continue to make significant investment in its cultural assets including the £42 million investment in Paisley museum. The cultural investment programme is a key priority for the Council and partners, with the renewed venues anticipated to attract significant volumes of new visitors to the town. The transformed Paisley museum alone is expected to attract 125,000 visits a year (four times current numbers) when it reopens in 2022, with such a significant projected increase in footfall it is anticipated it will directly reduce the cost of museum per visit.

C&L4 – Costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population – The increased costs of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population for 2018/19 reflects internal changes to how income is included on the Local Finance Return, as the 2018/19 costs now include recharges to other council services. A further increase in costs can be attributed to the pay award and the additional funding received for environmental improvements.

Environment

There are 15 indicators in the Environment category. For 2018/19, 6 have improved, 2 have remained stable, and 7 have declined.

- 3 are in the top quartile
- 3 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	17/18	18/19	2017/18	2018/19		
ENV1a – Net cost per waste collection per premise	8	12	£53.86	£59.45	£67.45	£36.08 (Inverclyde) - £79.9 (West Lothian)
ENV2a – Net cost of waste disposal per premise	25	24	£116.97	£108.84	£97.29	£85 (East Renfrewshire) - £108.8 (Renfrewshire)
ENV3a – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	3	2	£6,298	£6,114	£14,880	£6,114 (Renfrewshire) - £19,028 (Inverclyde)
ENV3c – Cleanliness Score (% acceptable)	23	21	90.54%	91.90%	92.80%	94.9% (East Renfrewshire) – 89.6% (Inverclyde)
ENV4a – Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads	26	28	£18,036	£18,050	£9,417	£7,815 (Midlothian) - £25,188 (Inverclyde)
ENV4b – Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	10	8	23.76%	23.03%	30.03%	17.24% (East Renfrewshire) – 27.4% (Midlothian)
ENV4c – Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	11	10	25.98%	24.67%	35.71%	22.2% (Clackmannanshire) – 37.4% (Angus)
ENV4d – Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	19	20	37.54%	37.93%	36.25%	30.4% (Clackmannanshire) – 46.6% (West Lothian)
ENV4e – Percentage of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	14	17	35.09%	36.93%	38.25%	28.9% (West Lothian) – 44.2% (East Renfrewshire)
ENV5 – Cost of Trading Standards and environmental health per 1,000 population	1	9	£8,672	£16,840	£20,884	£13,291 (Midlothian) – £24,914 (Inverclyde)
ENV5a – Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population	2	30	£1,348	£11,845	£5,890	£2,724 (Clackmannanshire) - £11,845 (Renfrewshire)
ENV5b – Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	2	1	£7,324	£4,995	£14,994	£4,995 (Renfrewshire) - £20,307 (Inverclyde)
ENV6 – The percentage of total waste arising that is recycled	17	17	47.80%	49.20%	44.70%	66.2% (East Renfrewshire) – 44.3% (South Lanarkshire)
ENV7a – Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection	12	20	84.33%	79.63%	76.30%	87.1% (Midlothian) – 71.7% (Clackmannanshire)
ENV7b – Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning	29	29	61.33%	60.10%	66.30%	74.3% (Angus) – 56.6% (Clackmannanshire)

Bottom Quartile Indicator Commentary

ENV4a – Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads – The cost of Renfrewshire's roads maintenance has increased from £18,036 in 2017/18 to £18,050 in 2018/19 and is above the Scottish average of £9,417. The 2018/19 costs reflect the £8.089m roads capital investment programme allocation expenditure on roads and pavements. The costs associated with this indicator also include revenue expenditure on road and winter maintenance plus total expenditure to be met from capital resources including street lighting. This significant capital allocation reflects the current focus on investment in roads infrastructure. Renfrewshire continues to spend higher than the Scottish Average.

ENV5a – Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population – The increased cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population for 2018/19 reflects internal changes to the Local Finance Return. Following recent changes in service structures, the allocation of some services has been reviewed and as a result, this indicator now includes additional cost relating to for example Advice works, business regulation costs and external advice services.

ENV7b – Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning - Streetscene have invested £2.5m into street cleanliness whilst a programme of support and community engagement through Team Up to Clean Up has been introduced to provide advice, guidance, equipment, and support for communities to become involved in local environmental improvements. As this indicator is calculated using a three-year average, it will not, as yet, capture the full impact of the Team Up to Clean Up programme. It is likely that local satisfaction with street cleaning arising from the programme will reflect positively on the future performance of this indicator.

The data released by the Improvement Service for 2018/19, shows Renfrewshire's ranking has remained at 29. Data for this indicator is drawn from the Scottish Household Survey which is based on a three-year average covering the period 2016/19. This three-year average will not, as yet, capture the full impact of the Team Up to Clean Up programme. It is likely that local satisfaction with street cleaning arising from the programme will reflect positively on the future performance of this indicator.

It should also be noted that while this survey data is proportionate at the Scottish level, it is acknowledged by the Improvement Service that there are limitations at council level in relation to the very small sample sizes (240 in Renfrewshire in 2018). The Improvement Service continues to explore opportunities to develop alternative measures of customer/resident satisfaction which is comparable at local authority level.

Housing

There are 5 indicators in the Housing category. For 2018/19, 1 has improved, and 4 have declined.

- 1 is in the top quartile

- 0 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
HSN1b – Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	5	6	4.88%	5.76%	7.33%	3.2% (South Ayrshire) – 9% (Fife)
HSN2 – Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	21	22	1.31%	1.43%	0.95%	0.5% (South Lanarkshire) – 1.4% (Renfrewshire)
HSN3 – Percentage of council dwellings meeting SHQS	19	17	93.51%	94.49%	94.32%	98.8% (West Lothian) – 92.5% (South Lanarkshire)
HSN4b – Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	8	10	7.06	6.9	7.8	6 (Fife) – 14.3 (South Lanarkshire)
HSN5 – Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient	5	10	99.95%	99.81%	97.49%	100% (Clackmannanshire & West Lothian) – 97% (South Lanarkshire)

Corporate Asset

There are 2 indicators in the Corporate Asset category. For 2018/19, 1 has improved, and 1 has declined.

- 1 is in the top quartile
- 0 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19		
CORP-ASSET 1 – Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	3	7	94.89%	92.58%	82.14%	96.3% (South Lanarkshire) - 66.29% (Midlothian)
CORP-ASSET 2 – Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory positions	13	9	92.24%	95.20%	87.21%	99.64% (West Lothian) – 83.4% (Midlothian)

Economic Development

There are 10 indicators in the Economic Development category. For 2018/19, 5 have improved, and 5 have declined.

- 3 are in the top quartile
- 0 are in the bottom quartile

Indicator	Ranked Position		Data		Scottish Average	Family Group Range
	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19		
ECON1 – Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability programmes	1	10	29.15%	17.51%	12.59%	29.94% (East Renfrewshire) – 1.2% (South Lanarkshire)
ECON2 – Cost of Planning and Building Standards Services per planning application	32	1	£8,001	£1,048	£4,439	£1,048 (Renfrewshire) - £8,818 (Inverclyde)
ECON3 – Average time per business and industry planning application (wk)	19	8	9.04	7.74	9.09	7.6 (Clackmannanshire) 13.02 (South Lanarkshire)
ECON4 – Percentage of procurement spend on local enterprises	15	13	25.37%	29.92%	28.71%	36.6% (Angus) - 8.90% (East Renfrewshire)
ECON5 – Number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	24	22	14.99	16.65	16.7	23 (Clackmannanshire) – 14.8 (Angus)
ECON6 – Cost of Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 population	21	24	£90,798	£109,044	£102,086	£35,447 (Clackmannanshire) - £109,044 (Renfrewshire)
ECON7 – Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	9	20	17.7	25.1	19.4	30.1 (East Renfrewshire) – 14.8 (Midlothian)
ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	15	8	93.71	96.4	92.01	97.1 (Inverclyde) – 86.1 (Angus)
ECON9 – Town Vacancy Rates	16	18	10.95	10.65	10	17.7 (Inverclyde) – 7.5 (Midlothian)
ECON10 – Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan	19	24	27.72%	21.97%	37.38%	78.8% (West Lothian) – 5.3% (Clackmannanshire)

Significant Movement (i.e. moved nine or more places in the rankings since 2017/18)

ECON1 – Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability programmes (1st to 10th)

- A decrease in our ranked position was anticipated for 2018/19 as the service has recently undergone a full service redesign and has moved to a sectoral approach in line with growth sectors.

ECON2 – Cost of Planning and Building Standards Services per planning application (32nd to 1st) – This indicator has been amended to more accurately reflect what is included in the measure. The Environmental Services element of the costs has also been removed to improve the measure by giving it more of a focus on direct planning and building standards services.

ECON3 – Average time per business and industry planning application (wk) (19th to 8th) – This indicator tends to fluctuate depending on the level of complexity in planning applications received.

ECON7 – Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (9th to 20th) – This indicator is from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) report. It measures a random sample of all employee jobs from HMRC's Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system, and doesn't include those who are self-employed, jobs within the armed forces, or certain types of seasonal work. Renfrewshire Council is an accredited Living Wage employer, paying at least the Living Wage to all our employees, as well as working with suppliers and contractors to ensure they are also paid the Living Wage. We also promote the Living Wage across Renfrewshire-based organisations.



To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 Based on its analysis of the risks facing the Council, Audit Scotland has submitted an Audit Plan, attached at Appendix 1, that outlines its approach to the audit of the 2019/20 financial statements of the Council and the charities that the Council controls, in order to assess whether these statements provide a true and fair view of their respective financial positions, and also whether they have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice, i.e. the 2019 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK.
 - 1.2 The Plan outlines the responsibilities of the Council and Audit Scotland; its assessment of key challenges and risks and the approach and timetable for completion of the 2019/20 audit.
 - 1.3 A Management Report will be presented by Audit Scotland to the May Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. This will cover the outcome of early audit work during March and April.
-

2. **Recommendations**

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

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – An unqualified audit opinion demonstrates that the Council has effective systems of internal control in place.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None arising from this report.
3. **Community Planning** – None arising from this report.
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 arising from this report.
6. **Information Technology** – None arising from this report.
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 arising from this report.
9. **Procurement** – None arising from this report.
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 arising from this report.
12. **COSLA Policy position** – None arising from this report.
13. **Climate Risk** – None arising from this report.

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Renfrewshire Council

Annual Audit Plan 2019/20



 **AUDIT SCOTLAND**

Prepared for Renfrewshire Council
March 2020

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Risks and planned work

1. This Annual Audit Plan contains an overview of the planned scope and timing of our audit which is carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs), the [Code of Audit Practice](#), and [guidance on planning the audit](#). This plan sets out the work necessary to allow us to provide an independent auditor's report on the annual accounts and meet the wider scope requirements of public sector audit, including the audit of Best Value.

2. The wider scope of public audit contributes to assessments and conclusions on financial management, financial sustainability, governance and transparency, and value for money.

Adding value


3. We aim to add value to Renfrewshire Council through our external audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas for improvement, and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In so doing, we intend to help Renfrewshire Council promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making, and more effective use of resources.


Audit risks

4. Based on matters arising from the 2018/19 audit, our discussions with staff, attendance at Council and policy board meetings, and a review of supporting information, we have identified the following significant risks for Renfrewshire Council. We have categorised these risks into financial statements risks and wider dimension risks.


5. The key financial statements risks, which require specific audit testing, are detailed in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1 2019/20 Financial statements risks

 Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
Risk of material misstatement		
<p>1 Closedown procedures</p> <p>We identified issues in the closedown procedures used to prepare the 2018/19 unaudited annual accounts.</p> <p>Balances reported in the financial ledger in respect of debtors and creditors were not properly reflected in the unaudited annual accounts and journals continued to be processed after the unaudited annual accounts had been presented for audit. The differences arose because finance staff had</p>	<p>In response, the Council has taken actions to redress the issues identified which includes immediate actions to correct the issues in the 2018/19 annual accounts and permanent, corrective changes to prevent a recurrence of the issues going forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of revised closedown procedures for reasonableness and identification of key dates. • Review of debtors and creditors in unaudited financial statements against the financial ledger, working papers, and primary records. • Ongoing liaison with the Director of Finance and Resources, the Head of Finance, and key finance officers to review and

	Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
	<p>identified issues with intra-group balances between the Council and Renfrewshire Leisure Limited (RLL) and the journals were processed to try and correct these issues. However, the journals processed did not appropriately correct the identified issues and further correcting adjustments were required. This issue resulted in the statutory deadline for certification of the annual accounts being missed and a modification in the independent auditor's report.</p>		<p>assess progress against actions arising from the 2018/19 audit.</p>
2	<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>ISA 240 requires that audit work is planned to consider the risk of fraud, which is presumed to be a significant risk in any audit. This includes consideration of the risk of management override of controls to change the position disclosed in the financial statements.</p>	<p>Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable in this instance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed testing of journal entries. • Review of accounting estimates. • Focused testing of accruals and prepayments. • Evaluation of significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business.
3	<p>Fraud over expenditure</p> <p>Most public sector bodies are net expenditure bodies and therefore the risk of fraud is more likely to occur in expenditure. There is a risk that expenditure may be materially misstated in the financial statements.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council incurs expenditure on a range of activities. The extent and complexity of expenditure means that there is an inherent risk of fraudulent or erroneous reporting of expenditure to achieve a desired financial position.</p>	<p>The Council has well-developed processes for the authorisation, workflow and separation of duties in relation to payments. Clear schemes of delegation and authorised signatory databases are regularly updated. Financial systems have workflow authorisation processes in-built to ensure that the risk of fraud is minimised. The audit plan, prepared by internal audit, includes a range of systems testing across income and expenditure processes, with any recommendations then monitored for implementation.</p> <p>The Council has an established Counter-Fraud Team who have been actively raising awareness of both financial and non-financial fraud risks through a series of training events targeted at key personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical procedures on expenditure streams. • Detailed testing of expenditure transactions focusing on whether expenditure is processed in the correct accounting year.

	Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
4	Accounting for pensions Renfrewshire Council recognised a net liability of £276.674 million relating to its share of Strathclyde Pension Fund at 31 March 2019. There is a significant degree of subjectivity in the measurement and valuation of the pension fund liability. The valuation is based on specialist assumptions and estimates, and changes can result in material changes to the valuation. Additionally, successful legal action was brought against the UK government in relation to pension schemes for judges and firefighters in 2018/19, on the grounds of age discrimination. The judgements for these pension schemes will impact on Strathclyde Pension Fund as it had similar arrangements in place. Uncertainty remains over the remedy for the legal judgements. The expected impact of the legal judgements, or remedy if agreed, will need to be reflected in the pension fund liability valuation in 2019/20.	The Council will seek advice from the Pension Fund actuaries regarding the progress and of McCloud / Sargeant and any implications on the value of pension assets and liabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of 'review of the work of Management's expert' for the pension fund actuary. • Review of the estimates used, and assumptions made in calculating the pension fund liability. • CIPFA intend to issue a briefing note outlining the accounting requirements of the legal judgments. Compliance with the briefing note will be assessed.
5	Estimates and judgements in the valuation of land and buildings Renfrewshire Council held land and buildings with a net book value (NBV) in excess of £780 million at 31 March 2019. There is a significant degree of subjectivity in the valuation of land and buildings. Valuations are based on specialist and management assumptions and estimates, and changes in these can result in material changes to valuations.	Any significant estimates and judgements are clearly explained in the Notes to the Accounts. Where these are required, they are based on the best information available at the time of the estimate and on both a professional and a prudent approach, either by Council staff, or appointed experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of 'review of the work of Management's expert' for the professional valuer. • Review of revaluations performed by the internal valuer in year, assessing whether they have been performed using an appropriate and relevant valuation basis / methodology by suitably qualified individuals. • Review of the information provided to the valuer and assess whether this was complete and included all Renfrewshire Council's land and buildings relevant for the 2019/20 revaluation exercise. • Review and assess the reasonableness of revaluations.
6	Identification of internal recharges Changes were made to the 2018/19 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) which required internal	The Council has established a new ledger transaction type for the processing of internal charges and is developing a revised Central Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and assessment of the process for identifying internal recharges.

 Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
recharges to be removed from the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). Our audit work in 2018/19 identified issues in the process for identifying internal recharges and noted there was scope for improvements in the process.	model for use at the 2019/20 closedown and for government returns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of internal recharges to assess if these are reasonable.


Source: Audit Scotland


6. As set out in ISA 240, there is a presumed risk of fraud in the recognition of income. We do not consider this to be a significant risk for Renfrewshire Council as there are limited opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in this area over and above our standard audit procedures.

7. The key wider dimension risks, which require specific audit testing, are detailed in [Exhibit 2](#). These are risks that have been identified within the four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope requirements of public sector audit.

Exhibit 2

2019/20 Wider dimension risks

 Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
Wider dimension risks		
1 Financial sustainability <p>The Council approved its 2019/20 budget in February 2019. A surplus of £5.832 million was forecast in the original budget paper, however this was before decisions were approved by the Council. Motions approved by the Council resulted in the forecast surplus moving to a forecast breakeven position. The latest revenue budget monitoring report to 8 November 2019 highlights a year to date underspend of £58,000 and a forecast year end underspend of £0.358 million.</p> <p>While an underspend is forecast in 2019/20, Renfrewshire Council's Financial Outlook 2020 – 2023 forecasts a net budget gap of between £26 - £67 million over the three-year period. The council plans to address the funding pressures through a combination of savings and a transformational change programme. The plans also acknowledge the option for further</p>	<p>The Council's transformation programme, "Right for Renfrewshire" has progressed during 2019/20. A number of workstreams have been identified that reshape how the Council will deliver its services in future and financial savings arising from these plans will be incorporated into the Council's 2020/21 budget. An update report was presented to the Leadership Board on 19 February 2020.</p> <p>These plans, along with the Council's financial strategies, will be continually reviewed to ensure that financial sustainability is maintained over the medium term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of revenue budget monitoring reports during the year and comment on financial position within the Annual Audit Report. Attendance at Council, board, and committee meetings. Monitoring of progress against savings plans and delivery of the transformational change programme. Monitoring service delivery key performance indicators (KPIs). Assessment of savings plans over the medium term.

 Audit Risk	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit work
<p>council tax increases to balance future budgets.</p> <p>Meeting the savings targets and the transformational change programme and are expected to have a considerable impact on the way services are delivered, and there is a risk that the changes will affect the quality of services provided.</p>		
Source: Audit Scotland		

Reporting arrangements

8. Audit reporting is the visible output for the annual audit. All Annual Audit Plans and the outputs as detailed in [Exhibit 3](#), and any other outputs on matters of public interest, will be published on our website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.

9. Matters arising from our audit will be reported on a timely basis and will include agreed action plans. Draft reports will be issued to the relevant officer(s) to confirm factual accuracy.

10. We will provide an independent auditor's report to Renfrewshire Council and the Accounts Commission setting out our opinions on the annual accounts. We will provide the Accountable Officer and Accounts Commission with an annual report on the audit containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen during the audit.

Exhibit 3 2019/20 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Date
Annual Audit Plan	2 March 2020	16 March 2020
Management Report	12 May 2020	26 May 2020
Independent Auditor's Report	7 September 2020	21 September 2020
Annual Audit Report	7 September 2020	21 September 2020

Source: Audit Scotland

The audit of trusts registered as Scottish charities

11. Members of Renfrewshire Council are sole trustees for one trust and three common good funds, registered as Scottish charities, with total assets of £37.412 million. The preparation and audit of financial statements of registered charities is regulated by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

12. The 2006 Regulations require charities to prepare annual accounts and require an accompanying auditor's report where any legislation requires an audit. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 specifies the audit requirements for any

charity where some or all members of a council are the sole trustees. Therefore, a full and separate audit and independent auditor's report is required for each registered charity where members of Renfrewshire Council are sole trustees, irrespective of the size of the charity.

Audit fee

13. The audit fee for the 2019/20 audit of Renfrewshire Council, including the trust fund and common good funds, is £358,030 (2018/19: £363,500). In determining the audit fee, we have taken account of the risk exposure of Renfrewshire Council, the planned management assurances in place, and the extent to which we plan to take from the work of internal audit. Our audit approach assumes receipt of the unaudited annual accounts, with a complete working papers package, on 26 June 2020.

14. Where our audit cannot proceed as planned through, for example, late receipt of unaudited annual accounts 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 out with our planned audit activity.

15. An additional fee of £7,800 has been charged for a piece of non-audit work undertaken during 2019/20.

Responsibilities

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board and Accountable Officer

16. Audited bodies have the primary responsibility for ensuring the proper financial stewardship of public funds, compliance with relevant legislation and establishing effective arrangements for governance, propriety and regularity that enable them to successfully deliver their objectives.

17. The audit of the annual accounts does not relieve management or the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Appointed auditor

18. Our responsibilities as independent auditors are established the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Code of Audit Practice (including supplementary guidance) and guided by the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard.

19. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements and other information within the annual accounts. We also review and report on the arrangements within the audited body to manage its performance and use of resources. In doing this, we aim to support improvement and accountability.

Audit scope and timing

Annual accounts

20. The annual accounts, which include the financial statements, will be the foundation and source for most of the audit work necessary to support our judgements and conclusions. We also consider the wider environment and challenges facing the public sector. Our audit approach includes:

- understanding the business of Renferwshire Council and the associated risks which could impact on the financial statements
- assessing the key systems of internal control, and establishing how weaknesses 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 the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements
- determining the nature, timing, and extent of audit procedures necessary to provide us with sufficient audit evidence as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

21. We will give an opinion on whether the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2019/20 Code of the state of affairs of the council and its group as at 31 March 2020 and of its income and expenditure of the council and its group for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the 2019/20 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.



Statutory other information in the annual accounts

22. We also review and report on statutory other information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, and the Remuneration Report. We give an opinion on whether these have been compiled in accordance with the appropriate regulations and frameworks in our independent auditor's report.

23. We also read and consider any information in the annual accounts other than the financial statements and audited part of the Remuneration Report and report on any uncorrected material misstatements.

Materiality

24. We apply the concept of materiality in planning and performing the audit. It is used in evaluating the effect of identified misstatements on the audit, and of any uncorrected misstatements, on the financial statements and in forming our opinions in the independent auditor's report.

25. The materiality values for Renfrewshire Council are set out in [Exhibit 4](#).

Exhibit 4

Materiality values

Materiality	Amount
Planning materiality – This is the figure we use to assess the overall impact of audit adjustments on the financial statements. It has been set at 1% of gross expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2019 based on the 2018/19 audited annual accounts.	£6.700 million
Performance materiality – This acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of errors identified during the financial statements audit exceeds performance materiality this would indicate that further audit procedures should be considered. Using our professional judgement, we have set performance materiality at 50% of planning materiality.	£3.350 million
Reporting threshold (i.e. clearly trivial) – We are required to report to those charged with governance on all unadjusted misstatements more than the 'reporting threshold' amount. This has been set at 2.5% of planning materiality.	£0.168 million



Source: Audit Scotland

Timetable

26. To support the efficient use of resources, it is critical that the annual accounts timetable is agreed with us to produce the unaudited annual accounts. We have included an agreed timetable at [Exhibit 5](#).

Exhibit 5

Annual accounts timetable

 Key stage	 Date
Consideration of unaudited annual accounts by the Audit. Risk and Scrutiny Board	26 May 2020
Consideration of unaudited annual accounts by the Council	25 June 2020
Latest submission date of unaudited annual accounts by Renfrewshire Council, with complete working papers package to Audit Scotland	26 June 2020
Latest date for final clearance meeting with Director of Finance and Resources	4 September 2020
Issue of Letter of Representation and proposed independent auditor's report	21 September 2020
Agreement of audited unsigned annual accounts	21 September 2020
Issue of Annual Audit Report to those charged with governance	21 September 2020
Independent auditor's report signed by Audit Scotland	28 September 2020
Latest date for signing of WGA return	28 September 2020

Internal audit

27. Renfrewshire Council's internal audit function is provided in-house and overseen by the Chief Internal Auditor. As part of our planning process, we carry

out an annual assessment of the internal audit function to ensure that it operates in accordance with the main requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). ISA 610 requires an assessment on whether the work of the internal audit function can be used for the purposes of external audit. This includes:

- the extent to which the internal audit function's organisational status and relevant policies and procedures support the objectivity of the internal auditors
- the level of competence of the internal audit function
- whether the internal audit function applies a systematic and disciplined approach, including quality control.

28. We have completed our review and have concluded that the internal audit function complies with PSIAS and appropriate documentation standards and reporting procedures are in place.

Using the work of internal audit

29. Auditing standards require internal and external auditors to work closely together to make best use of available audit resources. We seek to use the work of internal audit wherever possible to avoid duplication. We have considered the findings of the work of internal audit as part of our planning process to minimise duplication of effort and to ensure the total resource is used efficiently.

30. From our initial review of internal audit plans, we plan to use internal audit work in the following areas:

- General ledger
- Payroll
- Non-domestic rates.

Audit dimensions

31. Our audit is based on four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of public sector audit requirements as shown in [Exhibit 6](#).

Exhibit 6

Audit dimensions



Source: Code of Audit Practice

32. In the local government sector, the appointed auditor's annual conclusions on these four dimensions will help contribute to an overall assessment and assurance on best value.

33. Our standard audits are based on four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of public sector audit requirements. These are: financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency, and value for money.

Financial sustainability

34. As auditors, we consider the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting as part of the annual audit. We will also comment on financial sustainability in the longer term. We define this as medium term (two to five years) and longer term (longer than five years) sustainability. We will carry out work and conclude on:

- the effectiveness of financial planning in identifying and addressing risks to financial sustainability in the short, medium and long term
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of arrangements in place to address any identified funding gaps
- whether there are arrangements in place to demonstrate the affordability and effectiveness of funding and investment decisions.

Financial management

35. Financial management is concerned with financial capacity, sound budgetary processes, and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively. We will review, conclude, and report on:

- whether arrangements are in place to ensure systems of internal control are operating effectively
- the effectiveness of budgetary control system in communicating accurate and timely financial performance can be demonstrated
- how Renfrewshire Council has assured itself that its financial capacity and skills are appropriate
- whether there are appropriate and effective arrangements in place for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

Governance and transparency

36. Governance and transparency are concerned with the effectiveness of scrutiny and governance arrangements, leadership and decision making, and transparent reporting of financial and performance information. We will review, conclude, and report on whether Renfrewshire Council can demonstrate:

- that governance arrangements in place are appropriate and operating effectively (including services delivered by, or in partnership with, others such as Renfrewshire Leisure Limited (RLL));
- there is effective scrutiny, challenge and transparency on the decision-making and finance and performance reports; and
- the quality and timeliness of financial and performance reporting.

Value for money

37. Value for money refers to using resources effectively and continually improving services. We will review, conclude, and report on whether Renfrewshire Council can demonstrate:

- value for money in the use of resources
- there is a clear link between money spent, output, and outcomes delivered
- that outcomes are improving
- there is sufficient focus on improvement and the pace of it.

Best Value

38. The Accounts Commission agreed the overall framework for a new approach to auditing Best Value in June 2016. The introduction of the new approach coincided with the new five-year audit appointments. Auditors started using the framework for their audit work from October 2016.

39. A key feature of the new approach is that it integrates Best Value into the wider scope annual audit, which will influence audit planning and reporting. Best Value will be assessed comprehensively over the five-year audit appointment, both through the ongoing annual audit work, and through discrete packages of work to look at specific issues. Conclusions and judgements on Best Value will be reported through:

- The Annual Audit Report for each council that will provide a rounded picture of the council overall.
- An annual assurance and risks report that the Controller of Audit will provide to the Commission that will highlight issues from across all 32 council annual audit reports.
- A Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for each council that will be considered by the Accounts Commission at least once in a five-year period. Renfrewshire Council's BVAR was published in August 2017.

40. The seven councils on which a BVAR will be published during the fourth year of the new approach are listed in [Exhibit 7](#). Reports will be considered by the Accounts Commission in the period between March and November 2020.

Exhibit 7

2019/20 Best Value Assurance Reports



Aberdeenshire Council

Dundee Council

Argyll and Bute Council

Falkirk Council

City of Edinburgh Council

Moray Council

North Ayrshire Council

Source: Audit Scotland

41. The work planned on Renfrewshire Council this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in equalities and a follow up of all recommendations made over the audit appointment. The results of this work will be reported in the Management Report or Annual Audit Report.

Independence and objectivity

42. Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission or Auditor General must comply with the Code of Audit Practice and relevant supporting guidance. When auditing the financial statements auditors, must also comply with professional standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and those of the professional accountancy bodies. These standards impose stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors. Audit Scotland has robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with these standards including an annual “fit and proper” declaration for all members of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Director of Audit Services, who serves as Audit Scotland’s Ethics Partner.

43. The engagement lead (i.e. appointed auditor) for Renfrewshire Council is John Cornett, Audit Director. Auditing and ethical standards require the engagement lead 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.

Quality control

44. 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.

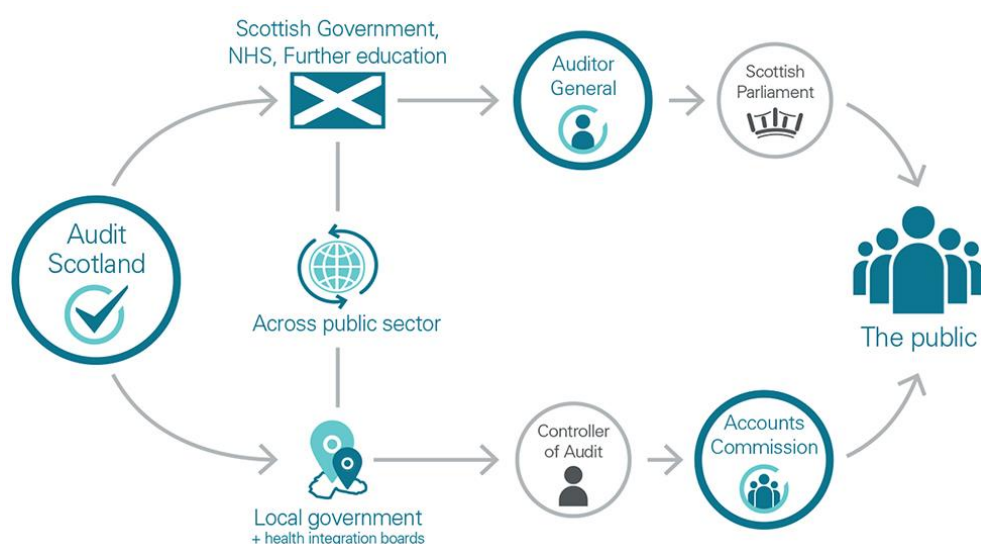
45. The foundation of our quality framework is our Audit Guide, which incorporates the application of professional auditing, quality and ethical standards and the Code of Audit Practice (and supporting guidance) issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. To ensure that we achieve the required quality standards, Audit Scotland conducts peer reviews and internal quality reviews. Additionally, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) have been commissioned to carry out external quality reviews.

46. 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 welcome feedback at any time and this may be directed to the engagement lead.

Who we are

The Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland work together to deliver public audit in Scotland:

- The Auditor General is an independent crown appointment, made on the recommendation of the Scottish Parliament, to audit the Scottish Government, NHS and other bodies and report to Parliament on their financial health and performance.
- The Accounts Commission is an independent public body appointed by Scottish ministers to hold local government to account. The Controller of Audit is an independent post established by statute, with powers to report directly to the Commission on the audit of local government.
- Audit Scotland is governed by a board, consisting of the Auditor General, the chair of the Accounts Commission, a non-executive board chair, and two non-executive members appointed by the Scottish Commission for Public Audit, a commission of the Scottish Parliament.



About us

Our vision is to be a world-class audit organisation that improves the use of public money.

Through our work for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, we provide independent assurance to the people of Scotland that public money is spent properly and provides value. We aim to achieve this by:

- carrying out relevant and timely audits of the way the public sector manages and spends money
- reporting our findings and conclusions in public
- identifying risks, making clear and relevant recommendations.

Renfrewshire Council

Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Audit Scotland – “Preparing for withdrawal from the European Union”

1. Summary

- 1.1 Audit Scotland has published a briefing paper focusing on how the Scottish public sector has been preparing for European Union (EU) withdrawal. The briefing builds on the paper “Withdrawal from The European Union” that was published in October 2018. A copy of the latest briefing is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 The briefing “Preparing for withdrawal from the European Union” draws on Audit Scotland’s work, knowledge of the Scottish public sector, published material and engagement with key stakeholders over the last 18 months.
- 1.3 It highlights key messages, provides illustrations of the impact that preparing for withdrawal from the EU has had on public bodies and suggests questions for public bodies to ask themselves about their ongoing preparations for EU withdrawal.
- 1.4 An outline of Council activity relating to each of the questions is included in Appendix 1. Members will also be aware from previous council papers of the range of mitigating actions that have already been identified and put in place. These measures are monitored and updated as the national position in relation to EU withdrawal develops.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to note:
 - Audit Scotland’s key questions for public bodies attached in Appendix 1, and;

- the activities being undertaken by council officers to prepare appropriately for EU withdrawal and the transition period, which are also noted in Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the general election on 12 December 2019, the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. There remains considerable uncertainty about the longer-term implications of withdrawal from the EU.

4. Key findings

- 4.1 The key findings within the report are summarised as follows:
- While there are good examples of effective joint working, Audit Scotland notes that preparing for Brexit has impacted “the Scottish Government’s relationships with the UK Government over the last 18 months”.
 - Preparations for leaving the EU required management attention and resources across the Scottish public sector during 2019.
 - The economic effect of EU withdrawal will depend on the final nature of any trade deals agreed between the UK Government and the EU.
 - Scotland’s working-age population is in decline and there is a risk that a reduction in the number of EU nationals able to work in Scotland may exacerbate these pressures.
 - The public sector is already facing workforce and service pressures that will likely intensify as the working-age population decreases.
 - Sectors including health, social care and teaching are experiencing workforce pressures and increased demand for services.
 - Financial pressure currently being experienced by the public sector could be intensified by EU withdrawal in the immediate and longer term.
 - Public bodies and councils have identified potential increases in the cost of goods as the most immediate risk to their financial sustainability.
 - In the event of the UK being subject of additional customs checks and trade tariffs, restrictions on the supply to goods such as food, medicines, medical equipment and fuel have the potential to affect people receiving public services.
 - Any increase in the price of goods will also affect public-sector budgets and could mean increased costs for service users.

5. Case Studies

- 5.1 The report details four case studies. These can be summarised as follows:
- **Case Study 1: Continuity of medicines and other medical supplies** - The UK Government’s Department of Health and Social Care has engaged with the pharmaceutical industry to coordinate the availability of medicines across the UK. The Scottish Government is a member of the UK Medicines Shortage Response Group and established an equivalent Scottish group to work with the UK group in identifying, assessing and responding to any shortages of medicines. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) has been ensuring adequate stores of medical

devices and clinical supplies on the direction of the Scottish Government. NSS also acts as a liaison between NHS Scotland and the UK-wide National Supply Disruption Response Centre on contingency planning arrangements for medical supplies.

- **Case Study 2: Continuity of food supplies** - Scotland Excel undertook contingency planning to ensure continuity of food supplies following the UK's departure from the EU. This work involved regular communication with its largest suppliers about the cost and availability of products under different scenarios. Public bodies and councils are involved in a public-sector food group, which has been mapping food supply chains and transport links. The group is engaging regularly with food suppliers to assess risks and monitor contingency planning and has created a resilience plan. Councils have been monitoring developments and working with suppliers and catering providers to establish planning arrangements to deal with potential disruption to food supplies.
- **Case Study 3: Planning for legislative changes in Food Standards Scotland-** FSS started a programme of work in 2016, aimed at protecting consumers following the UK's exit from the EU. Initiatives included:
 - Considering what capability and capacity might be required in Scotland to deliver statutory functions currently administered by EU institutions.
 - Working with UK bodies and government departments to ensure the same level of public protection would be available through legal standards and regulations applicable to food when the UK leaves the EU.
 - Developing UK-wide frameworks to ensure coordination and implementation of functions from EU institutions to the UK.
 - Providing information to consumers and businesses on the implications of EU withdrawal for food law and standards.

The Scottish Government increased the FSS budget allocation for 2018/19 from to reflect the scale of preparations for EU withdrawal.

- **Case Study 4: Financial planning in the Scottish Police Authority** - The SPA's planned reduction in officers has been postponed to allow it to respond to issues relating to EU withdrawal. This includes requirements for Police Scotland officers to provide support at the border and to customs officials, to deal with potential civil unrest, or to support other services in the UK. The delay in reducing officer numbers means the SPA is no longer on track to achieve financial balance by the end of 2020/21. Additional funding was provided by the Scottish Government in 2019/20 to fully fund the 'Brexit operating deficit', creating provision for 400 additional police officers for the full year. However, beyond 2019/20 there is currently no available funding to support the additional officers. While the SPA has taken reasonable steps to prepare for EU withdrawal, medium-term financial planning remains challenging and the planned balanced budget for 2020/21 is now unachievable.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 The report notes the effects of EU withdrawal will influence the Scottish public sector for many years. In addition to addressing any short-term pressures, the report notes that the public sector will also potentially need to adapt to new partnership or trade arrangements, a different economic context, new funding mechanisms and legislation, as well as responding to demographic changes and any subsequent impacts on the public finances.
- 6.2 Given the level of preparedness which has been reached locally, Renfrewshire Council's Brexit Readiness Group has been stepped down with longer-term issues being progressed by the Strategic Brexit Officer Group (SBOG). The Council's SBOG will continue to monitor progress throughout the transition period and engage with COSLA, the Scottish Government and other organisations as appropriate as the nature of the UK's future relationship with the EU becomes clearer.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - Audit Scotland recognises the ongoing financial pressure faced by public bodies, which could be increased further by EU withdrawal, and asks the Council to consider the impacts of EU withdrawal in medium and long-term financial planning.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - Audit Scotland indicate that these relate to areas of service activity which may require additional staffing resource.
3. **Community/Council Planning** - none
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and 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 and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** - As outlined in Appendix 1.
10. **Risk** - Brexit preparedness is included in our risk register as outlined in Appendix 1.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** - Regular engagement has been undertaken with national groups and organisations and other local authorities through COSLA.
13. **Climate Risk** - none

List of Background Papers

(a) Nil

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Appendix 1

	Key Questions for Public Bodies	Renfrewshire Council Position
1	What have we learned from our preparations to date for the UK's withdrawal from the EU?	<p>As part of our preparations for the potential impacts of Brexit, a Strategic Brexit Officers Group (SBOG) has been established. The SBOG, which sits alongside the Brexit Readiness Working Group, is focused on the strategic risks to the Council and the area. The SBOG has identified employment, the local economy, the Council's own workforce and the potential impact on Renfrewshire's most vulnerable households as key areas of focus for the Council as the UK withdraws from the EU.</p> <p>The Council has allocated funding of £10,000 per year for three years to support Renfrewshire Foodbank to ensure a food supply as part of wider work to support vulnerable households. The Council has also been working with FareShare and the Scottish Government to distribute food, funded by the Scottish Government, to organisations in Renfrewshire. In terms of workforce, the Council continues to engage with and reassure Council employees who are EU nationals as well as working with independent providers of social care services as this has been highlighted nationally as an area potentially vulnerable to workforce issues due to the high number of employees from the EU. The SBOG also monitors the potential impact to Renfrewshire's economy, linking to national trends, pressures and opportunities.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with a wide range of regional and national bodies focused on contingency planning for Brexit, ensuring a multi-agency approach and taking account of the unique characteristics of our area. The Civil Contingencies Team has acted as a conduit for this integrated planning activity. Planning for Brexit continues to be given precedence as a standing agenda item on Council Resilience Management team meetings and wider regional / national groups.</p>

2	Has the extended timescale for EU withdrawal generated any new risks for our organisation?	<p>The extended timescale has not generated any new risks, existing risk will continue to be monitored as the transition period progresses. Both the short- and long-term impacts of Brexit are captured in the Council's risk register and are regularly updated and reported to board. Current risk control measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning Partnership Brexit workshop undertaken and initial CPP risk assessment and action plan established with follow-up sessions arranged • Maintaining a high level of understanding of the current position in relation to EU funding and maximising current benefits
3	How are we ensuring our planning for EU withdrawal is proportionate to the level of risk to our organisation and relative to other business risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum drawdown of existing funds identified • Ongoing engagement in development process for new funds (successor to EU funding) • Scotland Excel and Corporate Procurement monitoring Suppliers and markets which may impact the provision of services on ongoing basis • Analysis and ongoing review of the Council's financial position based on independent advice of investments and reserves • Procurement/ budget monitoring for increase in supplier costs
4	Does our medium and long-term financial planning consider the potential impact of EU withdrawal?	<p>Renfrewshire Council develops medium-term financial plans on a three-year rolling basis, with Council approving the most recent Financial Outlook 2020- 2023 report on 26 September 2019. The Financial Outlook notes that longer-term financial planning has been impacted by uncertainty surrounding the outcome of Brexit negotiations and the finalised exit route as well as several other variables. The long-term strategy will therefore be reviewed towards the end of 2020 to ensure it remains appropriately current and informed.</p> <p>The Leadership Board receives regular updates on the Council's preparation for EU withdrawal. The SBOG, chaired by the Director of Finance and Resources, considers the medium to longer-term impacts of EU exit, both in terms of the Council's finances and the local (and national) economy and maintains corporate oversight of the impact of EU withdrawal.</p>

5	Are we continuing to provide effective support for colleagues from elsewhere in the EU?	As reported previously to the Leadership Board, the Council has limited data on the number of EU nationals working within Renfrewshire Council. 74 employees have been identified as being from EU member states. Very few EU employees have required assistance to date with local community groups providing assistance on applying for EU Settlement.
6	Are our workforce planning arrangements reflecting any changes in workforce pressures in our organisation, or that of the organisations and sectors we work with?	<p>Work continues to be undertaken to engage with and provide updates to the Council's workforce and to ensure that those affected know where to go for help and information. A key focus of our engagement to date has been to provide reassurance, signpost to available information and to ensure employees know that support is available. This approach was extended to staff working across the Health and Social Care Partnership.</p> <p>In terms of workforce planning, no issues of concern have been identified in terms of skills or expertise loss.</p>
7	Are we assured that we have appropriate contingency arrangements in place to protect our supply chains and manage the cost and availability of products and services?	Our strategic critical suppliers have been identified and their capacity and contingency planning assessed. The level of impact will be determined by the nature of the agreed future relationship with the EU.
8	How might we need to adapt our work once the UK has left the EU?	Renfrewshire Council will continue to provide key services regardless of being in or out of the EU. The Council will continue to monitor developments as we move into the transition period.



To: *Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board*

On: *16 March 2020*

Report by: *The Chief Executive*

Heading: *Councils for Fair Tax Declaration Scotland*

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 26 September 2019, elected members considered a motion in relation to the potential adoption of the "Councils for Fair Tax declaration".
- 1.2 It was subsequently agreed that the declaration be referred to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board for further investigation, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the declaration and implications for the Council and its services.
- 1.3 An initial background paper was prepared for consideration at the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 20 January 2020. This provided an overview of the information available to officers on the Fair Tax declaration and highlighted key initial areas for exploration. The Board agreed that these areas would be explored by officers and a final report with recommendations be prepared for the next meeting of the Board on 16 March 2020.
- 1.4 This report provides a summary of all available information and recommends that the Council notes the content but does not adopt the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration at present.
-

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 Members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board are asked to:

- note the information provided on the adoption of Councils for Fair Tax Declaration;
- note that under the current Procurement Regulations the Council can exclude any organisation from participating in Council tenders if that organisation has not met all of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions; and
- agree the recommendation that Renfrewshire Council does not formally adopt the Declaration at this time.

3. **Background**

3.1 At the meeting of full Council on 26 September 2019, elected members considered a motion to adopt the “Councils for Fair Tax Declaration”. The key points of the declaration were summarised in the motion as:

- Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities. Including:
- Ensuring contractors implement IR35 robustly and a fair share of employment taxes are paid.
- Shunning the use of offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
- Undertaking due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- Ensuring that there is clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit and loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.
- Promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- Join in and support Fair Tax Week events in the area and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride.

- Support calls for urgent reform of EU, UK and Scots law to enable municipalities to revise their procurement policies and better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct."
- 3.2 The above declaration is promoted by a not-for-profit organisation called Fair Tax Mark (www.fairtaxmark.net), which aims to improve tax practices and encourage business and other organisations to pay their fair share of tax. It achieves this through providing accreditation to businesses and other organisations which evidences they support fair tax objectives. Fair Tax Mark has links to the Co-operative movement, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Cadbury Trust and other ethical community and charitable organisations. There is a fee payable for assessment and accreditation. The fee is calculated based on annual turnover, starting at £199+VAT for organisations with a turnover of less than £250,000 per annum up to £4,000 - £14,000 + VAT for organisations with a turnover of over £25m calculated based on the nature and complexity of the organisation.
 - 3.3 While the Fair Tax Mark is aimed predominantly at commercial businesses, the organisation also encourages local authorities as procuring bodies to consider ethical issues when purchasing as well as value for money and quality; and to also ensure fair taxation practice in other aspects of their organisation e.g. use of contractors and payment of non-domestic rates and other taxes.
 - 3.4 Adopting the declaration would oblige the Council to potentially review existing procurement practice, support Fair Tax events, and support calls for reform of relevant laws to penalise poor tax practice and reward good tax conduct.
 - 3.5 At the Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board of 20 January 2020, it was agreed that Council officers would seek to contact the 6 English local authorities named on the Fair Tax Mark website. (Peterborough City, Oxford City, Oldham Borough, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Bingley Town Council and Cannock Chase District). No council in Scotland has signed up as yet according to current information, whilst in the region of 50 businesses have currently gained accreditation.

4. Report Findings

- 4.1 Council Officers have issued requests for information to the six English local authorities who are signatories to the Fair Tax Declaration. To date only Oxford City and Peterborough City Council have responded.
- a) Oxford City confirmed that they are currently reviewing their processes but that they have not yet implemented any new measures to support the introduction of the Fair Tax Declaration.
 - b) Peterborough City Council confirmed that they are in the early stages of adoption, their first steps will be to provide links to the Fair Tax Mark website via their council website. They hope to encourage their existing suppliers to sign up but acknowledge that under the terms of the Procurement Regulations they cannot penalise suppliers who do not wish to engage with the scheme.
- 4.2 No Scottish Council has signed up as yet, with a number of Scottish Councils confirming that they have had no discussions or requests to consider adoption of the policy.
- 4.2 The content of the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration was raised with Scottish Government procurement policy officers at the Procurement Policy Forum. The policy officers had not previously seen the Fair Tax Declaration and confirmed that this is not a government initiative and that this will not be included in future Scottish Procurement Policy Notes nor is there any intention to revise Scottish procurement Legislation.
- 4.3 The key elements of the Declaration can be addressed through use of the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD). (Refer to Appendix 1 for excerpt from ESPD containing relevant section). Renfrewshire Council mandate use of the ESPD for all tender processes over £50,000.00. This limit is lower than the Regulatory regime requires however by requesting ESPD's for all tenders of £50,000 and above we are ensuring that even tenders of lower values are subject to scrutiny.
- 4.4 The ESPD is used at selection stage of a tender process and allows officers to identify suitably qualified and experienced bidders. The question set in the ESPD aligns to the requirements of the Procurement Regulations and it is not permitted to add questions to the ESPD. Selection criteria should be proportionate to the value of the purchase,

its sensitivity, estimated risks, and the complexity of the requirement. Selection criteria also requires to be published in the Contract Notice so that all bidders understand the level of qualification they require when submitting a bid.

- 4.5 Under the ESPD, bidders are asked to confirm that they have met all obligations relating to the payment of taxes, both in the UK, and in the country in which the bidder is registered, if that is not the UK. Where the bidder has been convicted of not paying taxes, they are required to submit certification confirming the subsequent actions taken to address non-payment. The Council as contracting authority has the option to exclude a bidder convicted of non-payment of taxes where suitable measures have not been taken to address the non-payment.
- 4.6 “Section II: Information concerning the bidder” of the ESPD asks bidders to provide background information about the bidder. This section is not normally evaluated; however, the Council may choose not to select bidders that cannot provide basic company information. In this section bidders are asked to confirm their company number, the name of their parent company (if applicable) and their ultimate parent company (if applicable). This allows due diligence to be carried out in terms of economic and financial standing of the bidder and any parent companies.
- 4.7 The current Regulations allow for the exclusion of any organisation convicted of an offence relating to the non-payment of taxes. Under the terms of the EU Treaty Principles of proportionality, non-discrimination and equal treatment it is not possible to evaluate an organisation based on tax conduct deemed to be either good or poor. To do so would be a breach of the Treaty Principles.
- 4.8 Initial analysis by officers of the obligation to “undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates” identified that such activities already occur in terms of applications for charitable relief from non-domestic rates.
- 4.9 The Council already has in place procedures to ensure appropriate monitoring and recording of payments to contractors who fall within IR35.
- 4.10 The Council does not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property and will continue to ensure that land and property transactions are tax efficient.

- 4.11 Based on information currently available adoption of the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration may not be compliant with the procurement regulatory regime and could potentially disadvantage organisations who have not applied for the Fair Tax Mark.
- 4.12 Some of the core elements of the Declaration reflect good practice which is already taking place across the Council. Our current processes are robust and aligned to best practice across the Scottish public sector.
- 4.13 The Council will continue to benchmark this good practice with other councils and public sector bodies and will continuously review and update processes where regulation permits this.
- 5.0 Consultation with other public bodies**
- 5.1 The Council sought feedback from other public sector bodies regarding the Fair Tax Declaration. Representatives of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), Scottish Prison Service and Central Government have all confirmed that it is not their intention to sign up to the Fair Tax Declaration.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial – None**
2. **HR & Organisational Development – None**
3. **Community/Council Planning – None**
4. **Legal** – There is currently no legal or statutory basis for signing the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.
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.

8. **Health & Safety – None**
9. **Procurement** – There is currently no statutory requirement under the procurement Regulations to mandate the Fair Tax Mark or evaluate questions relating to tax conduct.
10. **Risk - None.**
11. **Privacy Impact - None.**
12. **Cosla Policy Position – None.**
13. **Climate Risk - None**

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APPENDIX 1 – Excerpt from the ESPD



European Single Procurement Document
ESPD (Scotland)

Version 1.14

The ESPD (Scotland) includes the following parts and sections:

- 1. Instructions**
- 2. Part I. Information concerning the procurement procedure and the public body**
- 3. Part II. Information concerning the bidder.**
 - A: Information about the bidder.**
 - B: Information about representatives of the bidder**
 - C: Information about reliance on the capacities of other entities**
 - D: Information concerning subcontractors on whose capacity the bidder does not rely**
- 4. Part III. Exclusion criteria:**
 - A: Grounds relating to criminal convictions.**
 - B: Grounds relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions.**
 - C: Blacklisting.**
 - D: Grounds relating to insolvency, conflicts of interests or professional misconduct.**
- 5. Part IV. Selection criteria**
 - A: Suitability.**
 - B: Economic and financial standing.**
 - C: Technical and professional ability.**
 - D: Quality assurance schemes and environmental management standards.**
 - E: Global indication for all selection criteria.**
- 6. Part V. Reduction of the number of qualified candidates.**
- 7. Part VI. Concluding Statements**

Part III: Exclusion grounds

Instructions for Bidders

Failure to disclose information relevant to this section or misrepresentation in relation to the information disclosed may result in exclusion of the bidder from this procurement process or the termination of any subsequent contract that is awarded to them.

The bidder may be asked to provide the relevant documentation or to state where the extract from the relevant register, for example judicial records, is available electronically to the public body so that it may retrieve this information. **By indicating this information, the bidder agrees that the public body may retrieve the documentation subject to the national rules implementing Directive 95/46/EC on the processing of personal data, and in particular of special categories of data such as on offences, criminal convictions or security measure.**

The bidder uses the ESPD response as a self-declaration that they have not breached any of the mandatory and discretionary exclusion grounds (or, if they have, they can demonstrate to the public bodies satisfaction that they have taken **self-cleansing measures**) and that they meet the relevant selection criteria.

For further information regarding regulated procurements of OJEU threshold and above, please refer to [Regulations 58 and 59 of The Public Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#), [Regulation 78 of the Utilities Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#).

Regarding regulated procurements which are between £50k and OJEU threshold, please refer to Regulations 8, 9 and 10 of [The Procurement \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#).

B: GROUNDS RELATING TO THE PAYMENT OF TAXES OR SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Question Reference	Payment of taxes or social security contributions	Answer	
3B.1	Has the bidder met all its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions, both in the UK, and in the country in which it is registered, if that is not the UK?	Taxes	Social Security contributions
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have met all my obligations <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have met all my obligations <input type="checkbox"/> No
3B.1.1	If not , please indicate: Country or Member State concerned	Taxes	Social Security contributions
		[text]	[text]

3B1.2	What is the amount concerned?	[number]	[number]
3B.1.3	How has this breach of obligations been established: Through a judicial or administrative decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3B.1.4	Is this decision final and binding?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3B.1.5	Please indicate the date of conviction or decision.	[date]	[date]
3B.1.6	By other means? Please specify:	[text]	[text]
3B.1.7	Has the bidder fulfilled or will it fulfil its obligations by paying or entering into a binding arrangement with a view to paying the taxes or social security contributions due, including, where applicable, any interest accrued or fines?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes , I have <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please provide details: [text]	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please provide details: [text]
3B.1.8	If the relevant documentation concerning payment of taxes or social contributions is available electronically, please indicate:	The web address: [text]	
		The issuing authority or body: [text]	
		The precise reference of the documentation: [text]	

[Note for reference: the European Single Procurement Document is an agreement template and contracting organisations cannot add to this template nor can they amend the wording.]



To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16th March 2020

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Absence Statistics – Quarter 3 of 2019 / 2020

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board of the absence statistics for the period 1 October to 31st December 2019. The report details the absence statistics by service and by category of staff.
 - 1.2 The report provides information in relation to absence targets and how services have performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence has also been compiled and details are included within the report. Information is also provided on supporting attendance activity.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report and that this report reflects the absence statistics for the period 1 October to 31st December 2019.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed that absence levels will be reported on a quarterly basis. It was agreed that the report will include the following information

relating to supporting attendance: -

- Absence statistics broken down by service and category of staff.
- Reasons for absence broken down by service and category of staff.
- Progress made by services in relation to their supporting attendance action plans.

4. Absence Statistics

4.1 Service and Council overall absence performance from quarters ending March 2018 to December 2019 is detailed in the table below. In line with the reporting requirements for Scottish Councils, absence is expressed as a number of work days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee.

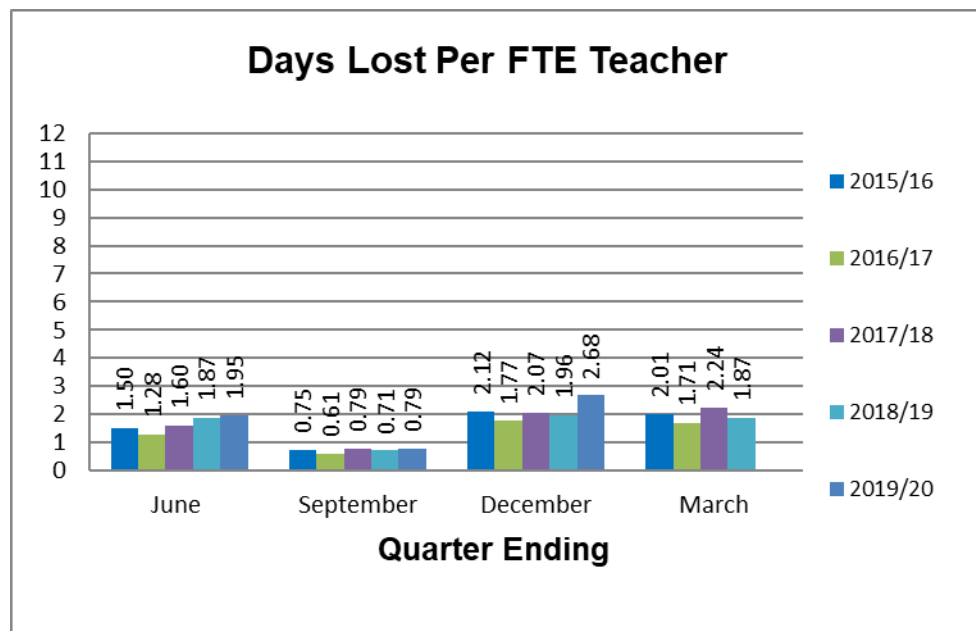
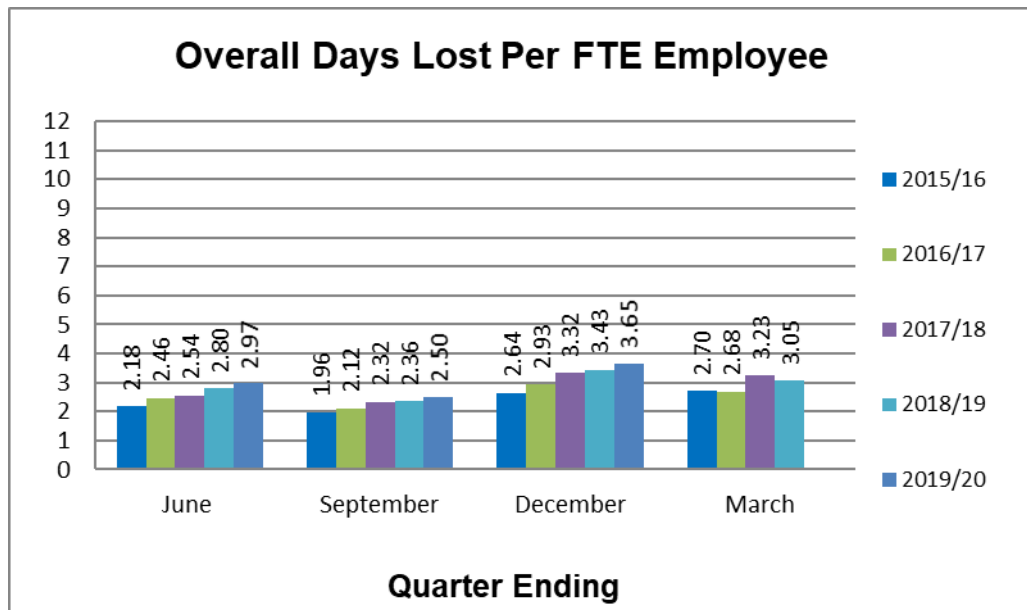
Service/Area	Quarter Ending Dec. 2017	Quarter Ending March 2018	Quarter Ending June 2018	Quarter Ending Sept. 2018	Quarter Ending Dec. 2018	Quarter Ending March 2019	Quarter Ending June 2019	Quarter Ending Sept. 2019	Quarter Ending Dec. 2019
Chief Executive's Services	2.16	2.78	1.57	1.05	2.18	2.12	2.6	1.46	2.05
Children's Services	2.74	2.71	2.13	1.29	2.97	2.78	2.56	1.64	3.32
Environment & Infrastructure	4.33	4.49	3.75	3.18	4.51	3.53	3.22	3.29	4.86
Finance and Resources	2.20	2.59	2.56	2.62	2.78	2.42	2.49	2.10	2.56
Communities, Housing and Planning	2.63	1.88	2.04	2.72	2.61	2.36	2.55	2.88	3.69
Health and Social Care Partnership	5.13	4.34	4.02	4.64	4.64	4.13	4.64	4.61	4.39
Council Overall	3.32	3.23	2.80	2.36	3.43	3.05	2.97	2.50	3.65
Council Overall Targets	2.69	2.69	1.79	1.79	2.69	2.69	2.40	2.10	2.80

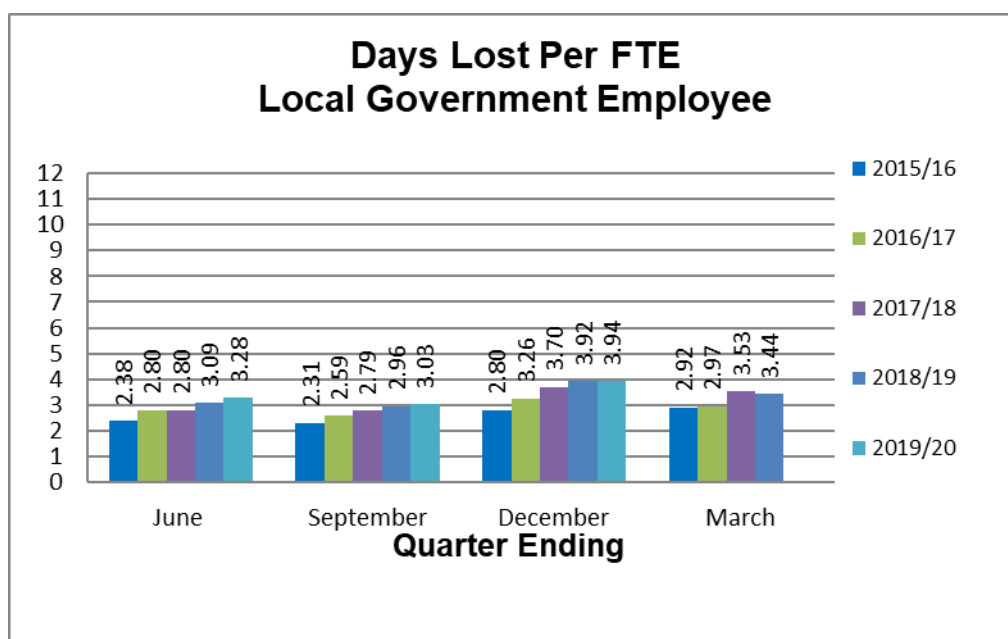
5. Analysis and Trends – Quarter Ending December 2019

5.1 Council overall absence performance in work days lost per FTE employee from January to December 2019 compared to the previous year is as follows: -

Quarter ending	Days lost per FTE	Quarter ending	Days lost per FTE	Variance
December 2017	3.32	December 2018	3.43	+0.11
March 2018	3.23	March 2019	3.05	-0.18
June 2018	2.80	June 2019	2.97	+0.17
September 2018	2.36	September 2019	2.50	+0.14
December 2018	3.43	December 2019	3.65	+0.22

- 5.2 The following tables detail the work days lost due to absence by employee category for the quarter ending December 2019 namely: overall, teachers and local government employees.





6. Absence Targets Analysis – Quarter Ending December 2019

- 6.1 The Council has recorded an overall absence rate of 3.65 days lost per FTE employee, which is 0.85 days **above** the target figure of 2.80 days.
- 6.2 In addition, the Teacher absence level of 2.68 days lost per FTE employee is 0.48 days **above** the target of 2.20 days.
- 6.3 Local Government employee absence level of 3.94 days lost per FTE employee is 2.02 days **above** the target of 1.92 days.

7. Reasons for Absence Overview and Related Interventions

- 7.1 The illness categories with the highest level of absence, compared to the same quarter in the previous year are as follows:

Quarter ending	Illness categories
December 2018	Psychological (non-work related) Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders
December 2019	Psychological (non-work related) Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders

- 7.2 To address Psychological (non-work related) absences the Council provide a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance, such as the Council's Occupational Health Service and the Time for Talking employee counselling service.
- 7.3 Through the Occupational Health Service access can also be provided to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for more complex psychological issues. The Time for Talking counselling service can provide confidential support to

employees with a range of personal health and well-being issues. It operates a flexible approach to appointments offering telephone consultations in the early mornings or evenings as well as throughout the day and face to face sessions at their offices in Paisley.

7.4 Over the reporting period, 67 cases were supported by the Time for Talking counselling service.

7.5 The presenting issues to the counselling service over the period were;

Issue type	Number of cases
Personal	
Loss/Bereavement	8
Stress/anxiety/panic	18
Depression/Self-worth	9
Family Relationships	15
Health	4
Work & Personal	
Stress/anxiety	7
Work related	
Demands (Workload/Stress/Anxiety/Depression)	1
Role (Understanding of)	5

7.6 If an employee suggests to their manager that they are experiencing Psychological (non-work related) issues, then they should be given time to speak to a Mental Health First Aider and also provided with the Time for Talking counselling service information.

7.7 If an employee suggested that the stress is work related, a stress risk assessment should be undertaken to identify the perceived issues and an action plan agreed to try and resolve the issue. This can be undertaken at a local level or with the specialist support from HR and OD.

7.8 The Council continues to deliver Mindfulness Courses and Scottish Mental Health First Aider courses to raise awareness of mental health issues and provide support.

7.9 HR and OD are working with the counselling service to provide other types of training which can be delivered, for example personal resilience. There are also Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees that are specific to stress related issues. There are some well-being courses available on the iLearn system that anyone can access.

7.10 HR and OD continue to promote the NHS Choose Life Team, who offer safeTalk and ASIST on suicide awareness and prevention. There is also

continued work with NHS colleagues to promote the “Doing Well” service which helps people with depression and low moods.

- 7.11 In relation to addressing musculoskeletal and joint disorders the Council offers a Physiotherapy service through the Council’s Occupational Health Service provider. This service can be accessed by all employees.
- 7.12 As part of the Council’s Health and Safety Management system, occupations which include manual handling activities as part of the role require task risk assessments. These risk assessments are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that safe working practices are maintained.
- 7.13 HR and OD continue to investigate the practical options for further training and interventions available that may reduce the impact of musculoskeletal and joint disorders.
- 7.14 The provision of a Physiotherapy service specifically for Environmental and Infrastructure employees based at the Underwood Road Depot continues. This use of the Physiotherapist is being expanded to other parts of the service.

8. Supporting Attendance Activity

- 8.1 Recent and planned actions to improve absence performance include the following: -
 - HR and OD continue to work closely with service management teams on supporting attendance activity. In December 2019 a specialist Supporting Attendance Team was established in HR and OD to work in partnership with services and increase focus on employee health, well-being and attendance at work.
 - HR and OD proactively contact and support managers who have absence cases of 2 to 4 weeks in duration, to monitor action taken to date and proposed next steps. This approach has been very successful in assisting and supporting employees back to work, particularly those who have been on restricted duties.
 - Within the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, both the Council and NHS HR teams have presented statistics and held interactive sessions that allowed managers the opportunity to discuss and share good practice. Further training has taken place with the operational managers.
 - A review of the current supporting attendance policies covering all employees, including teachers continues. Meetings have taken place with the respective Trade Unions to ensure this is a fully collaborative process.

- Continued delivery of supporting attendance training at a corporate level for managers, and the provision of tailored training for managers and employees at a service level on request.
- Ongoing health promotion activities aimed at raising employee awareness of health issues continue.
- HR and OD are currently revising the supporting attendance training for managers and employees. Delivery methods for this type of activity are also being reviewed.
- HR and OD have introduced a supportive call back service across all services. An HR Adviser contacts employees when they report their absence due to sickness and ensures that they are being supported properly throughout the absence. The HR Adviser also contacts the employee's line manager to ensure the correct process is being followed and that all support mechanisms have been offered. This additional support is fully endorsed by the Trades Unions.
- HR and OD and the Business World Team are working to improve the absence information available to managers, and to streamline supporting attendance related processes to facilitate prompt absence reporting, recording and updating of relevant systems. Early intervention reminders are also displayed for managers on Business World when inputting sickness absence.
- Meetings continue with Directors and their management teams to discuss their service's supporting attendance performance.
- HR and OD continue to work closely with the absence champions for every service and identified link officers for supporting attendance issues in Environment and Infrastructure and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. This is to help develop supportive strategies and interventions that will enable employees to be supported back to work.

Implications of this Report

- 1 **Financial Implications** - Improvement in attendance impacts on the financial costs of absence.
- 2 **HR and Organisational Development Implications** - HR and Organisational Development Practitioners will continue to work with service managers and consult with the Trade Unions, on the implementation of the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and Guidance and initiatives detailed in this report.
- 3 **Community Planning**
Children and Young People - none.

Jobs and the Economy - none.

Community care, health and wellbeing - provides for continuous improvement in health and attendance.

Safer and Stronger - provides for improved service performance across the Council.

Greener - none.

Empowering our Communities - none.

4 **Legal Implications** - none.

5 **Property/Asset Implications** - none.

6 **Information Technology Implications** - none.

7 **Equality and Human Rights Implications** - none.

8 **Health and Safety Implications** - it is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and well-being of employees.

9 **Procurement Implications** - none.

10 **Risk Implications** - Without continued effective supporting attendance focus, there is a risk that sickness absence levels will adversely impact on the Council both financially and in terms of service delivery. Consequently, supporting attendance activities are monitored via the Corporate Risk Register.

11 **Privacy Impact Implications** - none.

12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none

13. **Climate Risk** - none

List of Background Papers - none.

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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Records Management Plan Update

1 Summary

- 1.1 Following our 2018 Public Records (Scotland) Act – Records Management Plan Progress Update Review (“PUR”) completed in October 2018, the Council achieved Green status for 12 of the 14 elements assessed through the RMP. The Council has now received the draft response to our 2019 PUR. The feedback from the Assessment Team is positive with one of the two remaining amber elements being upgraded to green.
- 1.2 Progress continues to be made in the processing of the records held within the Corporate Records Store.
-

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- Note the progress of the Council Records Management Plan, including the progressing of the Archiving element from amber to green

- Note the continued progress of the new Corporate Records Store

3 Background

- 3.1 In March 2016 the Council submitted its original RMP in compliance with the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (“the Keeper”) and conditional agreement from the Keeper was received on 16 August 2016. This meant that the Keeper had fully accepted 9 out of the 14 elements of the RMP with the remaining 5 elements being on an “Improvement Route” to be completed in a 5-year period.
- 3.2 Being on an “Improvement Route” meant that the RMP had self-identified gaps in the required elements that required further improvement. The elements requiring further work were:
- Element 4 - Business classification
 Element 6 - Destruction arrangements
 Element 7 - Archiving and transfer arrangements
 Element 11 - Audit trail
 Element 13 - Assessment and review
- 3.3 In May 2018 the Council’s PUR was submitted. This submission included a new Records Disposal Policy and refreshed supporting guidance. Information was provided on the audit functionality of our key systems holding sensitive data. An updated Business classification Scheme (“BCS”) was submitted along with how the Council intends to use it. There was also a confirmed commitment to align our Assessment and Review of the RMP in line with the annual PUR invites from the Keeper.
- 3.4 In October 2018 it was confirmed by the Keeper’s Assessment Team that Audit Trail, Destruction Arrangements and Assessment & Review had been approved. The remaining two elements were:
- Element 4 - Business classification
 Element 7 - Archiving and transfer arrangements
- 3.5. We received our next invitation in August 2019 to provide another PUR to the Keeper. Our PUR was submitted in November 2019 and received the draft response from the Keeper’s Assessment Team on 10th February 2020.

- 3.6. The Assessment Team thanked the Council for the update regarding the improved facility for permanent record storage, adding there is clearly a move to tighten up the tracking and selection of records for permanent preservation in line with the availability of this new facility. The Archiving and Transfer Arrangements element has now been changed to approved and changed to green.
- 3.7. The remaining one amber element is:
- Element 4 - Business classification
- 3.8. The Assessment Team advised that it was clear that the roll-out of the Business Classification Scheme (BC) to all areas of the Council is progressing well. They were also pleased that future IT tender requirements will include the need for Function Classification and Retention Period monitoring functionality.
- 3.9. The Assessment Team advised that adoption of SharePoint as the core records management system of the Council is bound to be incremental and take several years to bed-in properly. The Assessment Team reminded the Council that appropriate policies, governance and staff training will be crucial in making this major project a success. The Keeper would expect to see evidence of these aspects of the SharePoint implementation in any full resubmission. This element remains at Amber while this work is ongoing.
- 3.10. To ensure progress against the RMP, the Council will categorise all SharePoint sites to align with the Council's BCS. The classification(s) relevant to each site will be captured on the request form and held on a central SharePoint register.
- 3.11. Information within specific Council systems (applications) are by default categorised with the classification(s) relevant to the Service(s) which own the system. We will record Business Classifications against all system in the Council's application catalogue.
- 3.12. These tasks will be completed during 2020.
- 3.13. In the longer term, the Council will also investigate opportunities to exploit SharePoint as a Document Management System. This will include collaboration with other Local Authorities.

4. Corporate Records Store

- 4.1. The transfer of all boxes of records from Renfrewshire House to the new store was completed in September 2019.

- 4.2. Progress has been made in processing and logging the approximately 1400 boxes with over 900 boxes now processed and on the new database.
 - 4.3. Progress has also been made on conducting an audit of all archive materials centrally held. These items and records are also being logged on the newly developed SharePoint Tracking System. We anticipate having a full list of archival materials centrally held in the Corporate Records Store by the June 2020.
 - 4.4. Along with the processing of the other records, work on the archive collection will also require continued assistance from the Records Management reps from all the Services in identifying records, archival materials and agreeing retention periods during this period.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – *none*
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – *none*
3. **Community Planning** – Implementing good records management principles within the organisation supports the Council to deliver on its key objectives and priorities.
4. **Legal** – Implementation of the RMP is a key element in complying with the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.
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 for example 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** - Effective records management can only have a positive impact on people's privacy whereby records are only retained for as long as necessary and are kept securely.
- 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – *none*
- 13. **Climate Risk** - *none*

List of Background Papers

- (a) *none*

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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Lead Officer

Heading: Conversion of Grassed Areas to Parking

1. Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 4 November 2019, members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed the purpose, scope and timeline for this review.
- 1.2 This review will consider the potential to relieve parking pressures within residential areas through the repurposing of Council maintained open spaces.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to:
- Note the current position regards progress with this review.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 There are many small areas of grassed and / or planted areas within our residential estates. The majority of which are maintained, on behalf of the Council, by Environment and Infrastructure (Amenity Services).

- 3.4 There are also suggestions of increasing pressures around available parking spaces within our residential estates.
- 3.5 This review will consider whether there is a need to, and whether it would be possible to, repurpose some of these maintained small areas to create additional parking space and thereby relieve some of the parking pressures.

4.0 Purpose of the Review

- 4.1 The key purpose of the review is to:
- (1) Set out the Council's current arrangements for maintaining and / or repurposing open spaces across Renfrewshire;
 - (2) Review available evidence to measure and identify the scale of the parking problem, linked to open spaces, within specific areas and across Renfrewshire;
 - (3) Identify benefits or challenges regards the repurposing of open spaces within residential areas; and
 - (4) Provide recommendations for consideration of the Board.

- 4.2 This first update focuses on Point 4.1(1) above, specifically setting out current arrangements for open space maintenance and the process involved in meeting requests to repurpose open spaces within Renfrewshire.

5 Current Arrangements – Open Space Maintenance

- 5.1 The council currently has significant areas of open space across Renfrewshire with ownership, split between Environment and Infrastructure and Communities, Housing and Planning Services (CHAPS).

Each open space tends to be identified as being under the ownership of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or of General Services Account.

- 5.2 General maintenance of these areas is managed by Environment and Infrastructure (Operational Services).
- 5.3 Each open space is provided with a reference number. However, it is difficult to explicitly identify the actual total number of open spaces within residential areas, as many open spaces are in close proximity within the same locality and are often identified using the same reference number, also known as Polygons.

6. **Current Arrangements – Repurposing of Open Spaces**

6.1 There are opportunities available for an individual(s) to request to repurpose an area of open space. This will generally involve an application to purchase the open space from the Council.

6.2 The individual will identify the open space, which tends to be adjacent to their own property, and make an application to purchase to the Council's Asset Management Team.

6.3 Asset Management will initially seek advice from:

- Legal Services – to complete a Title Check to confirm the land is owned by the Council;
- CHAPS - to confirm that the land in question is / could be deemed as surplus and there are no Planning issues and / or applications; and
- Environment and Infrastructure – to confirm there are no issues with transferring the land.

6.4. If there are no issues the applicant will be provided with a quote for the purchase of the land and appropriate legal fees.

6.5. The timeframe for completion of each application can vary, however it would usually take a minimum of 6 months from initial enquiry to completion and transfer.

6.6. Points of Note:

- There are on average, no more than 10 applications each year;
- Very few applications are made by groups, including community groups, with the vast majority being made by individuals; and
- Very few applications are to allow the repurposing of the open space to create parking facilities, with the vast majority to accommodate property extensions.

6.7 A small number of requests have been made by Community Groups. However, these have tended to be to propose aesthetic changes to the open area e.g. planting of flower beds, rather than repurposing of the space.

Such requests tend to be dealt with through a leasing arrangement, rather than a purchase request.

- 6.8 Elected members can also make requests for repurposing of open spaces, as this would be viewed as a local ward issue. Such requests would be considered by the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board.

Officers from Environment and Infrastructure would usually undertake a formal consultation process and traffic monitoring surveys within the affected area. This would support Board members to take informed decisions.

- 6.9 If a community group felt they could improve underused or neglected green space within their area and had a project which could potentially strengthen the character, identity and heritage of their community they could consider making a funding request to the Council's Green Spaces, Parks, Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund.

This fund provides investment where the community can demonstrate a sustainable plan to improve and maintain the condition and use of a green space or community asset.

Whilst additional parking spaces could potentially be an element of such a request, it is unlikely that it would be its' core purpose.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – Not applicable
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
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
12. **Cosla Implications** – None
13. **Climate Implications** – None apparent as this stage, however this will require to be explored in more detail during the review.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Approval 27/08/18
- (b) Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Minutes 04/11/19

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Finance and Resources for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Michael Moran, Assistant Economic Development Manager, 0141 618 7269

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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16 March 2020

Report by: Lead Officer

Heading: Review of Bus Deregulation and Effect on Transport Services in Renfrewshire

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board of 28 May 2019 agreed the purpose and scope of a review on bus deregulation and the effect on transport services within Renfrewshire.
 - 1.2 In accordance with the scope approved by the Board, the attached report summarises key findings and recommendations. Subject to approval of the Board, the report will be submitted to Council for consideration at its meeting of 7 May 2020.
 - 1.3 The outcomes of the review demonstrate that there are a number of opportunities for the Council to work in partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, commercial operators and local communities to promote, strengthen and enhance bus services across Renfrewshire.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
 - (i) Notes the review outcomes and recommendations;

- (ii) Approves the report for submission to the Council meeting of 7 May 2020;
 - (iii) Notes that the Lead Officer is grateful to all stakeholders who participated in the review.
-

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The report to Council outlines the purpose and scope of the review on bus deregulation and the effect on transport services within Renfrewshire. It highlights key information reported to each Board meeting and concludes with key findings and recommendations.
 - 3.2 Previous reports to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in relation to this review are recorded as background papers within the Council report.
-

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** - None
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
- 3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
- 4. **Legal** - None
- 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. **Cosla Policy Position** - None
 13. **Climate Risk** - None
-

List of Background Papers

- a) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 28/5/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 1)
 - b) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 26/8/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 2)
 - c) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 23/9/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 3)
 - d) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 4/11/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 4)
 - e) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 20/1/20 (Bus Deregulation Report 5)
-

Author: Jamie Mackie
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To: Council

On: 7 May 2020

Report by: Lead Officer

Heading: Review of Bus Deregulation and Effect on Transport Services in Renfrewshire

1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of the annual programme of activity for 2018/19, the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake a review on bus deregulation and the effect on transport services within Renfrewshire.
 - 1.2 This report summarises the scope and findings of the review, which have been presented to meetings of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board over a period of months. Reports presented to the Board are appended as background papers.
 - 1.3 The findings of the review demonstrate that there are a number of opportunities for the Council to work in partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, commercial operators and local communities to promote, strengthen and enhance bus services across Renfrewshire.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:-
 - (i) Note the review outcomes and recommendations.
-

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board of 27 August 2018 agreed that a review on the topic of bus deregulation would form part of its annual programme of activity for 2018/19.
- 3.2 The purpose of the review was to evaluate the effectiveness of current or proposed legislation in providing bus services to the public, enabling consideration of any proposals regarding changes in the legislative framework.
- 3.3 The scope of the review firstly considered legislation and available information on bus deregulation, before gathering views from statutory bodies, commercial operators, community groups and stakeholders. The municipal model operated by Lothian Buses to the east of Scotland was also considered to inform the review.

4. **Key Findings**

- 4.1 Progress reports were presented to the Board at each stage of the review. The key findings from each stage are summarised below.

Review of Legislation – 26 August 2019

- 4.2 The outcomes of this stage of the review provided the Board with a summary of the legislative framework governing bus services, key trends and academic research.
 - The Transport Act 1985 introduced the deregulated market within the British bus industry. This limited transport authorities to subsidy of socially necessary bus services, provision of infrastructure and the creation of statutory partnerships to deliver improvements to services.
 - The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 became law on 15 November 2019 and is now the central legislation governing bus services in Scotland. The Act updates statutory partnership models and introduces powers to allow a transport authority to provide bus services, subject to a number of tests and criteria.
 - The majority of bus services in Scotland are operated on a commercial basis by privately owned operators. Transport Scotland subsidises a proportion of the costs of the bus network (around 44%) through a Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and the national concessionary bus travel scheme (NCT).

- The general trend of bus service patronage is decline. While 74% of all public transport journeys were made by bus in 2017/18, the number of journeys has decreased by 20% from 2007/8. Factors contributing to this decline include increased car ownership, improved rail services, changing employment patterns and growth in online services.

Transport Authority and Commercial Operator – 23 September 2019

4.3 The outcomes of this stage of the review provided the Board with a summary of the views of the Regional Transport Authority, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and commercial operator McGill's Buses.

- Buses offer significant flexibility as a transport mode and are capable of quickly adjusting to changing circumstances. They have a significant role to play in daily lives and are the mode of transport most likely to be used by those on lower incomes.
- Public sector investment in infrastructure supporting bus services is limited and often orientated to road and rail enhancements. Policies such as providing free parking encourage car use and add to growing congestion. McGill's consider congestion to be one of the most significant factors affecting the running of services.
- In this context a stronger emphasis on policies and infrastructure investment to promote sustainable transport, augmented by stronger partnerships between operators and authorities, would support improvements to bus services.

Stakeholders and Community Groups – 4 November 2019

4.4 The outcomes of this stage of the review provided the Board with a summary of the views of community representatives and key stakeholders, including Bus Users Scotland, Unite the Union and Lochwinnoch Community Council.

- Congestion and journey times are key issues which influence the attractiveness of bus as a transport mode. Innovations such as real time information and contactless payment are positive and increase the simplicity and attractiveness of bus use.
- Buses are a social and economic necessity, providing residents with the ability to access vital services such as health centres, shopping, schools and workplaces across Renfrewshire. Bus services are often limited and have contracted in terms of scale and frequency in recent years. The

impact of this may be significant on the most vulnerable, such as the elderly population or those on lower incomes.

- Greater transparency in the use of public sector funding and decisions made by commercial operators would be helpful. The views of bus users and communities are paramount and the opportunity for these groups to be involved in the process of service delivery would be welcome.
- To improve services, the potential for Renfrewshire Council to consider powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, including municipal services, should be investigated.

Lothian Buses and Unite the Union – 20 January 2020

4.5 The outcomes of this stage of the review provided the Board with a summary of the municipal model of operation run by Lothian Buses to the east of Scotland. The Board also received additional information from Unite the Union in relation to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

- Lothian Buses are the only municipal operator in Scotland, owned by the City of Edinburgh Council and adjacent local authorities. Lothian have a fleet of 850 buses and carry around 120M passengers per annum.
- Lothian operates as an arm's length company. While in public ownership, the view and strategy of the company is determined on a commercial basis. As such, the company compete with and may act on a similar basis to private operators.
- A number of factors have contributed to Lothian's success and are not considered by the company to be directly related to public sector ownership. These include significant population growth to the east of Scotland, the lack of a competing rail network and the promotion of policies and infrastructure which support bus operation, such as bus priority lanes and parking charges.
- Lothian face similar pressures to other operators and patronage dropped by 1.6% in 2018 as a result of issues such as congestion and changes to travel patterns related to employment and retail trends.
- Unite the Union consider that the deregulated system benefits large operators and that public ownership is the most appropriate mechanism for the bus system to operate in the interests of passengers. Unite support use of franchising powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 as an initial step towards public ownership.

- Views on franchising are mixed. The Society of Chief Transportation Officers in Scotland (SCOTS) are supportive but consider that the process is complex, while the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT Scotland) and Lothian Buses consider that statutory partnerships would support more effective outcomes.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Bus services play a significant role in daily lives and provide linkages to vital services, often for the most vulnerable. They offer significant flexibility as part of a sustainable transport system which reduces congestion, improves air quality and in turn supports the Council's response to climate change.
- 5.2 A key finding emerging from the review is the decline of bus patronage, as a result of factors such as increased car ownership, changing employment patterns and growth in online services. This in turn has contributed to the contraction of available services.
- 5.3 Measures which seek to arrest further decline and support growth in patronage and service provision should therefore be prioritised in the short term. This may then create conditions for further investigation of powers and ownership models identified within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 5.4 In this context, the key recommendations from the review and to be considered by the Council are set out below.
 - (i) Embed and strongly promote sustainable transport modes, particularly bus services, as a key element of the Council's corporate policy and wider strategies. This will require the consideration of policies and proposals which seek to actively discourage use of private cars in favour of public transport.
 - (ii) Build upon and maintain regular dialogue with operators to support the smooth operation of bus services and consider scope for improvements. This may for example include a review of programmed roadworks and alternative routes, supporting a reduction in congestion affecting bus services, improving reliability and in turn consumer confidence.
 - (iii) Explore opportunities to invest in infrastructure which would complement policies strongly promoting public transport, for example priority bus lanes and traffic management measures which favour bus services, such as priority traffic signal operation.

- (iv) Engage with both bus and rail operators to consider opportunities to more effectively integrate transport modes and provide a stronger public transport network across Renfrewshire.
- (v) Investigate, in partnership with SPT and where appropriate neighbouring authorities, the toolkit of regulatory powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, such as statutory partnerships, franchising and municipal operation, to support improvements to bus services.

Implications of the Report

- 7. **Financial** - None
- 8. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
- 9. **Community/Council Planning** – None
- 10. **Legal** - None
- 11. **Property/Assets** - None
- 12. **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. **Cosla Policy Position** - None
- 13. **Climate Risk** - None

List of Background Papers

- f) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 28/5/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 1)
- g) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 26/8/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 2)
- h) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 23/9/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 3)
- i) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 4/11/19 (Bus Deregulation Report 4)
- j) Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board, 20/1/20 (Bus Deregulation Report 5)

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To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 16th March 2020

Report by: Lead Officer

Heading: The Effectiveness of Fair Trade within Renfrewshire

1. Summary

- 1.1 Over a period of months and as part of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board's annual programme, reports have been presented to the Board by the Lead Officer on the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire.
- 1.2 In undertaking this review, the Lead Officer liaised with and interviewed various external organisations, steering group members, council officers and elected members. Council officers were presented information and key partners and witnesses attended Board meetings to describe their roles in fair trade and provide further background an relevant information.
- 1.3 This report describes the purpose and scope of the review and concludes with the key findings and proposed recommendations. Upon approval from the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board the lead officer will submit a final report to Council for their consideration.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to:

- Consider the findings and recommendations within this report.
- Approve the report for submission to council on May 7th 2020.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on 27th August 2018, members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2018/19. This included a review which would look at the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire.

3.2 The key purpose of this review was to:

- (1) understand what motivates people to purchase fair trade products.
- (2) ensure that fair trade in Renfrewshire benefits the producer at source.
- (3) understand the processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire
- (4) understand how fair trade is promoted within schools.
- (5) determine if the current processes in place for the purchase and distribution of fair trade goods is the most efficient, both for the end producer and the customer.
- (6) identify if there are other ways to deliver fair trade to ensure best value, whilst ensuring that the correct people are benefiting. This could include investigating if the current process of purchasing from numerous countries and spreading the wealth is the most beneficial, or, focus on a single country.

3.3 The scope of the review focused on liaising and interviewing:

- Fair trade Organisations within and out-with Renfrewshire, including:
 - Rainbow Turtle,
 - Gavin's Mill
 - Just Trading Scotland,
 - Scottish Fair Trade Forum,
 - Fairtrade International
 - Fair Trade Scotland.

The intention of this was to understand the process of purchasing, distributing and selling fair trade products and to understand what motivates people to purchase fair trade.

- Services currently provided by the Chief Executive's service, this is predominantly how Renfrewshire Council engages with schools and community groups and how Renfrewshire Council monitors if fair trade is effective.

- Liaised with Renfrewshire Council Strategic Procurement Manager to gauge the financial implications of purchasing Fair Trade items if and when available.
- Renfrewshire's Fair Trade Steering Group to understand the work being undertaken in the local community.
- Attending the Scottish Fair Trade Forum to understand Fair Trade in Scotland.
- East Dunbartonshire Council, a Local Authority widely regarded as being one of the leading fair trade Authorities in Scotland to highlight potential areas of improvement within Renfrewshire.
- Engaged with Elected Members on the Fair Trade Steering Group to gain their overall views on fair trade within Renfrewshire.
- Undertaking a staff survey to get a better understanding as to what motivates people to purchase fair trade and to provide examples of fair trade products that people are interested in purchasing.

4 Key Findings

4.1 While findings and recommendations follow, Renfrewshire Council's activity relating to fair trade is an ever-developing area and the council is continually looking at ways to promote and engage with fair trade organisations. Some findings are therefore observations only; not all lead to recommendations.

4.2 The promotion of fair trade within schools should be encouraged and is echoed by 85% of staff surveyed. However, schools cannot be forced to engage as it does not form part of the school curriculum.

Discussions have been ongoing with the Scottish Fair Trade Forum with a view to developing a Fair Trade culture within schools. The programme would be extended to not only cover fair trade but would also seek to educate children and young adults on issues surrounding poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equity, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. This would help current and future generations to appreciate and embrace their responsibility as global citizens. This approach would potentially have a greater uptake than Fair Trade on its own in a time when many environmental platforms are vying for the public's attention.

4.3 It has been noted that fair trade could benefit from the council purchasing fair trade goods unless there is justification not to, as agreed by 84% of staff.

Discussions have taken place with the council's Strategic Procurement Manager to investigate the practicalities of introducing such a policy whilst ensuring that products are still reasonably priced. As an example, at present we purchase bananas through a contract at £1.08/kg. If we were to switch to fairtrade bananas through the same contract, that price would increase to £1.90/kg, an increase of 76%. When pro rata'd over a 12 month period the additional cost to introduce fairtrade bananas would be approximately £55,000. Whilst consumers may look for a choice between fair trade and non fair trade, it would be costly for Renfrewshire Council to implement a fair trade only option on certain food-types.

- 4.4 It is noted that the Fairtrade Mark and WFTO accreditation both have their roles to play in the promotion of Fair Trade. It should be down to individual organisations to decide what level of fair trade they wish their products to be and to ensure that consumers are aware of each when making a fair trade purchase.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1
- (1) Elected Members and Council Officers on the Renfrewshire Fair Trade Steering Group should support and encourage other members to set the agendas and initiate common objectives to benefit fair trade throughout Renfrewshire, with officers continuing to minute the meetings.
 - (2) It is recommended that the members of the steering group become more proactive in ensuring their own towns have Fairtrade status.
 - (3) It is recommended that the group introduce a structured communications plan for the year ahead as introduced by East Dunbartonshire Council. This would provide an ongoing focus and enable groups to plan in advance and liaise with other fair trade providers. It would also provide momentum for the group and could be used to harness the energy of each of the towns of Renfrewshire to work collectively towards a common goal.
 - (4) The Fair Trade Steering Group should look to establish a fair trade award in conjunction with the wider public and businesses. This could encompass a Renfrewshire Council fair trade sticker that can be displayed by local businesses with criteria set by the group.
 - (5) It is a recommendation of this report that the option to deliver a programme to educate staff and pupils is progressed with engagement with senior representatives within education. This programme, co-ordinated by The Scottish Fair Trade Forum would cover issues such as fair trade, poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equity, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth as detailed in section 4.2 of this report. In doing so, the

profile and awareness of the fair trade awards within schools would be increased.

- (6) It is recommended that the Fair Trade Steering Group introduce an awareness campaign to the wider community to highlight what fair trade produce is sold locally, as 69% of staff surveyed were aware of the location of the fair trade shop, but were unaware as to the products sold. It would also be beneficial to highlight the benefits of purchasing fair trade and help to entice customers through the door. This could also be incorporated into the communications plan, as per recommendation (3).
- (7) Rainbow Turtle, Renfrewshire's flagship fair trade shop does not advertise other than facebook and twitter which is a captive audience for those individuals that already have an interest in fair trade. Smaller organisation like this would benefit from and support that could be offered through the community benefits section of the councils procurement contracts. It is recommended that the Steering Group meet to discuss any benefits with the councils Strategic Procurement Manager.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - *none*
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *none*
3. **Community Planning**
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*
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.
 13. **Climate Risk** - *none*
-

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To: Council

On: 7th May 2020

Report by: Lead Officer, on behalf of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board

Heading: The Effectiveness of Fair Trade within Renfrewshire

1. Summary

- 1.1 Over a period of months and as part of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board's annual programme, reports have been presented to the Board by the Lead Officer on the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire.
- 1.2 In undertaking this review, the Lead Officer liaised with and interviewed various external organisations, steering group members, council officers and elected members. Council officers were presented information and key partners and witnesses attended Board meetings to describe their roles in fair trade and provide further background and relevant information.
- 1.3 This report describes the purpose and scope of the review, it includes summaries of the information reported to each Board meeting and concludes with the key findings and proposed recommendations approved by the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council is asked to:
- note the findings and recommendations of this report.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on 27th August 2018, members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2018/19. This included a review which would look at the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire.

3.2 The key purpose of this review was to:

- (1) understand what motivates people to purchase fair trade products.
- (2) ensure that fair trade in Renfrewshire benefits the producer at source.
- (3) understand the processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of fair trade within Renfrewshire
- (4) understand how fair trade is promoted within schools.
- (5) determine if the current processes in place for the purchase and distribution of fair trade goods is the most efficient, both for the end producer and the customer.
- (6) identify if there are other ways to deliver fair trade to ensure best value, whilst ensuring that the correct people are benefiting. This could include investigating if the current process of purchasing from numerous countries and spreading the wealth is the most beneficial, or, focus on a single country.

3.3 The scope of the review focused on liaising and interviewing:

- Fair trade Organisations within and out-with Renfrewshire, including:
 - Rainbow Turtle,
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 - Scottish Fair Trade Forum,
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 - Fair Trade Scotland.

The intention of this was to understand the process of purchasing, distributing and selling fair trade products and to understand what motivates people to purchase fair trade.

- Services currently provided by the Chief Executive's service, this is predominantly how Renfrewshire Council engages with schools and community groups and how Renfrewshire Council monitors if fair trade is effective.
- Liaised with Renfrewshire Council Strategic Procurement Manager to gauge the financial implications of purchasing Fair Trade items if and when available.

- Renfrewshire's Fair Trade Steering Group to understand the work being undertaken in the local community.
- Attending the Scottish Fair Trade Forum to understand Fair Trade in Scotland.
- East Dunbartonshire Council, a Local Authority widely regarded as being one of the leading fair trade Authorities in Scotland to highlight potential areas of improvement within Renfrewshire.
- Engaged with Elected Members on the Fair Trade Steering Group to gain their overall views on fair trade within Renfrewshire.
- Undertaking a staff survey to get a better understanding as to what motivates people to purchase fair trade and to provide examples of fair trade products that people are interested in purchasing.

3.4 Progress reports were presented regularly to the Board and paragraphs 3.5 – 3.8 provide a resume of the main points presented on each occasion.

3.5 28th May 2019 – Scoping Paper & Fair Trade Summary

3.5.1 What is Fair Trade?

Fair trade aims to provide fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world, whilst:

- obtaining fairer prices,
- improving working conditions,
- providing local sustainability,

This is undertaken in a variety of ways by requiring companies to pay sustainable prices. That is, prices that never fall below the market price for the produce.

Fair trade aims to stop discrimination against the poorest, weakest producer by addressing conventional trade. This enables farmers, producers and those associated with fair trade in the developing world to improve their conditions and have more control over their lives.

3.5.2 Fair Trade in Renfrewshire

Renfrewshire Council recognises the importance that fair trade has; both within Renfrewshire and the effect it has Globally to the producer.

In 2007, a motion was raised at council Board supporting Renfrewshire's application to become a fairtrade zone, with status

being granted shortly thereafter. Within a fairtrade zone, individual towns can also apply to become a fairtrade town. At present, Renfrewshire's fairtrade zone status has lapsed and the council are in the process of renewing it. Within Renfrewshire, only Kilbarchan currently has fairtrade town status, with the other towns requiring renewal, this is undertaken by community groups.

On 28th February 2019, Renfrewshire Council became one of the first Local Authorities in the UK to formally adopt the International Fair Trade Charter. Adoption of the Charter is not legally binding, however it signals Renfrewshire Council's intention to commit to the fair trade principles set out in the Charter.

The International Fair Trade Charter is a comprehensive document that lays out the purpose and aims of fair trade, as agreed by the World Fair Trade Organisation and Fairtrade International, two of the biggest global fair trade organisations.

Renfrewshire has a strong fair trade brand with a prominent retail outlet (Rainbow Turtle) situated in Paisley that is dedicated to the selling of fair trade produce. Paisley is also home to a commercial fair trade importer, distributor and educator based in Paisley (Just Trading Scotland).

3.6 26th August 2019 - Fair Trade out-with Renfrewshire

- 3.6.1 To facilitate a balanced review it was important to understand what other local authorities do in addressing fair trade. To further provide context to this element of the review, a knowledge sharing exercise was held with East Dunbartonshire to help share working practices and to highlight potential areas of improvement within Renfrewshire.

East Dunbartonshire Council support the principles of fair trade and as a consumer, the promotion and purchase of fair trade goods as part of their commitment to sustainable development.

East Dunbartonshire Council have successfully implemented:

- To offer fair trade goods where possible when catering for Council meetings and functions.
- To implement fair trade through procurement processes and those of suppliers wherever possible.
- To appoint a named Council representative to support the work of the East Dunbartonshire Fairtrade Steering Group.
- To promote Fair Trade issues and practices among local business, commercial and other organisations.

- To support the Group's communication plan (Appendix 1).
- To share best practice with regard to Fair Trade and sustainable development with other public bodies, stakeholders and partners.
- To work with the Steering Group to ensure that East Dunbartonshire continues to meet and exceed the requirements necessary to maintain its status as a Fairtrade Zone.

3.6.2 In relation to local fair trade wholesaler, Just Trading Scotland (JTS) are a fair trade importer based in Paisley and a registered Scottish charity, the business manager at Just Trading Scotland attended the August Board and gave an insight into the process from growing crops, to selling it throughout Renfrewshire and the UK. Discussion also took place in relation to the 90kg rice challenge that is undertaken in both schools and the wider community. It also allowed the Board to understand fully the process of fair trade and the associated benefits and challenges faced.

To date JTS have informed over 20,000 school children and 10,000 adults about fair trade and sustainable farming. The Lead Officer interviewed their business manager in relation to the purpose of this review.

The key areas covered were those highlighted in the initial scoping paper as being the key purpose of the review with the main points noted:

- Motivation - Shops selling various products publicise that people are motivated to help the producers, but also that their customers feel that they are doing the right thing.
- Benefits the producer - JTS deal direct with organisations in South Africa and have confidence that the producer at source is benefiting from products purchased in Renfrewshire. JTS are also in the audit stage of obtaining World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) membership. WFTO membership ensures that registered organisations are improving their ethical performance.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of fair trade - this is very difficult to undertake as there are no existing benchmarks that can be used year on year and there are various version of what is fair trade.
- Promotion within schools - at present, very little proactive promotion is undertaken by Renfrewshire Council within its schools. It is largely left to individual schools to engage with fair trade organisations. A

structured approach to fair trade led by a nominated officer would provide the emphasis and focus to promote fair trade within Renfrewshire schools.

3.7 23rd September 2019 – the Fair Trade Steering Group & Fair Trade within Schools

3.7.1 In keeping with the scope agreed by the Board, the review moved on to consider the relevant activities carried out by and facilitated by Renfrewshire Council. The main activities include chairing and facilitating the Fair Trade Steering Group and co-ordinating Fair Trade in schools.

3.7.2 The Steering group is there to allow any persons or organisations to come together to discuss fair trade within Renfrewshire

Renfrewshire's Fair Trade Steering Group is chaired by the Leader of Renfrewshire Council. Renfrewshire Council officers are there in the role of facilitators to support the group, to help it expand and to provide support to the work they are doing.

The objectives of the steering group are:

- To promote fair trade within Renfrewshire.
- To encourage the use of fairly traded goods.
- To secure the renewal of Fairtrade Zone status for Renfrewshire.
- To provide support for community groups to develop local fair trade campaigns.
- To support Scotland's aim to become a fair trade nation.
- To provide support for schools to encourage wider understanding about fair trade and to promote the benefits of becoming a fairtrade school.
- To provide publicity to raise awareness of trade issues with the developing world.
- To take any action incidental to supporting these objectives.

3.7.3 Fair trade or the ethical purchasing of goods does not form part of the school curriculum.

At present it is down to individual schools as to whether they want to get involved in the promotion of fair trade and to introduce it into lessons, with some schools choosing to be more pro-active than others.

At present, the John McDowell award which is given to primary schools and a separate secondary schools award is given each year to schools. There is a basic application form that the Fair Trade Steering Group sends to schools with set criteria.

3.8 4th November 2020 - Staff Survey, Discussions with Councillor Nicolson & External Organisations

3.8.1 To facilitate a balanced review it was important to understand what motivated staff to purchase fair trade and to gather views on fair trade overall, as such a staff survey was undertaken by 268 staff members with the key points highlighted below with the full survey results available in Appendix 2. Discussions also took place with the chair of the fair trade Steering Group and a number of external organisations.

3.8.2 The key points from the staff survey highlighted:

- 69% of staff purchased a variety of fair trade products with the vast majority aware of where to go to purchase products.
- 64% of respondents believe all towns in Renfrewshire should be Fairtrade towns
- 85% of respondents believe that the children of Renfrewshire should be taught about fair trade at school.
- 84% of respondents believe that Renfrewshire Council should purchase Fairtrade products where possible.
- 33% of staff believe Renfrewshire Council does enough to promote fair trade.

3.8.3 The Leader of the Renfrewshire Council, Councillor Nicolson is the chair of the Renfrewshire Fair Trade Steering Group. Discussions took place with Councillor Nicolson and the key points are highlighted:

- Fair trade should be promoted along with ethical procurement of goods.
- Engagement with local communities and voluntary groups should be explored as the steering group exists to support fair trade throughout Renfrewshire.
- New members would help promote fair trade to the wider community.
- Renfrewshire Council should be doing more to promote fair trade. This thought mirrors part of the staff survey with only 33% of staff thinking that the council does enough to promote fair trade.
- Councillor Nicolson discussed that one element could be a more aggressive procurement policy, with the council purchasing fair

trade goods unless there is justification not to, whilst ensuring that products are still reasonably priced.

- Councillor Nicolson believes that the promotion of fair trade within schools should be encouraged and is echoed by 85% of staff surveyed. However, schools cannot be forced to engage as it does not form part of the school curriculum.

3.8.4 In order to facilitate a balanced review it was important to understand what other organisations do in promoting fair trade. As such, the Directors of Fair Trade Scotland Ltd were invited to a discussion to better understand the process involved in produce becoming certified.

There are a number of certifications for goods that are fair trade, there is the world renown logo of the Fairtrade Mark and there is also the Fair Trade Charter, to mention but a few.

The Fairtrade Mark guarantees giving a set price to the producer. Unfortunately, not all products carrying the Fairtrade logo are 100% fairtrade. The impact of goods must be audited to ensure the producer is benefiting. At present, this is not undertaken in order to get the Fairtrade Mark and the process of accreditation is not fully audited. Large International Organisations have diluted the mark in recent years as they purchase produce from co-operatives. Many of these co-operatives are not monitored and it may be a family with a number of farms that excludes the rest of the surrounding community.

At present, the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) is the only organisation that ensures the producer is key in the chain. It is relatively straight forward for a company to get the Fairtrade Mark. However, many would find it difficult to obtain the WFTO accreditation due to the thoroughness of the accreditation process.

The WFTO have set out 10 principles that must be adhered to in order to obtain their accreditation. This rigorous accreditation takes many years to obtain. Producers must stick to all 10 principles to get the WFTO mark. The 10 principles are:



4 Key Findings

4.1 While findings and recommendations follow, Renfrewshire Council's activity relating to fair trade is an ever-developing area and the council is continually looking at ways to promote and engage with fair trade organisations. Some findings are therefore observations only; not all lead to recommendations.

4.2 The promotion of fair trade within schools should be encouraged and is echoed by 85% of staff surveyed. However, schools cannot be forced to engage as it does not form part of the school curriculum.

Discussions have been ongoing with the Scottish Fair Trade Forum with a view to developing a Fair Trade culture within schools. The programme would be extended to not only cover fair trade but would also seek to educate children and young adults on issues surrounding poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equity, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. This would help current and future generations to appreciate and embrace their responsibility as global citizens. This approach would potentially have a greater uptake than Fair Trade on its own in a time when many environmental platforms are vying for the public's attention.

4.3 It has been noted that fair trade could benefit from the council purchasing fair trade goods unless there is justification not to, as agreed by 84% of staff.

Discussions have taken place with the council's Strategic Procurement Manager to investigate the practicalities of introducing such a policy whilst ensuring that products are still reasonably priced. As an example, at present we purchase bananas through a contract at £1.08/kg. If we were to switch to fairtrade bananas through the same contract, that price would increase to £1.90/kg, an increase of 76%. When pro rata'd over a 12 month period the additional cost to introduce fairtrade bananas would be approximately £55,000. Whilst consumers may look for a choice between fair trade and non fair trade, it would be costly for Renfrewshire Council to implement a fair trade only option on certain food-types.

- 4.4 It is noted that the Fairtrade Mark and WFTO accreditation both have their roles to play in the promotion of Fair Trade. It should be down to individual organisations to decide what level of fair trade they wish their products to be and to ensure that consumers are aware of each when making a fair trade purchase.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1
- (1) Elected Members and Council Officers on the Renfrewshire Fair Trade Steering Group should support and encourage other members to set the agendas and initiate common objectives to benefit fair trade throughout Renfrewshire, with officers continuing to minute the meetings.
 - (2) It is recommended that the members of the steering group become more proactive in ensuring their own towns have Fairtrade status.
 - (3) It is recommended that the group introduce a structured communications plan for the year ahead as introduced by East Dunbartonshire Council. This would provide an ongoing focus and enable groups to plan in advance and liaise with other fair trade providers. It would also provide momentum for the group and could be used to harness the energy of each of the towns of Renfrewshire to work collectively towards a common goal.
 - (4) The Fair Trade Steering Group should look to establish a fair trade award in conjunction with the wider public and businesses. This could encompass a Renfrewshire Council fair trade sticker that can be displayed by local businesses with criteria set by the group.
 - (5) It is a recommendation of this report that the option to deliver a programme to educate staff and pupils is progressed with engagement with senior representatives within education. This programme, co-ordinated by The Scottish Fair Trade Forum would cover issues such as fair trade, poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equity, environmental protection and sustainable economic

growth as detailed in section 4.2 of this report. In doing so, the profile and awareness of the fair trade awards within schools would be increased.

- (6) It is recommended that the Fair Trade Steering Group introduce an awareness campaign to the wider community to highlight what fair trade produce is sold locally, as 69% of staff surveyed were aware of the location of the fair trade shop but were unaware as to the products sold. It would also be beneficial to highlight the benefits of purchasing fair trade and help to entice customers through the door. This could also be incorporated into the communications plan, as per recommendation (3).
- (7) Rainbow Turtle, Renfrewshire's flagship fair trade shop does not advertise other than facebook and twitter which is a captive audience for those individuals that already have an interest in fair trade. Smaller organisation like this would benefit from and support that could be offered through the community benefits section of the councils procurement contracts. It is recommended that the Steering Group meet to discuss any benefits with the councils Strategic Procurement Manager.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - *none*
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *none*
3. **Community Planning**
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*
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.
 13. **Climate Risk** - *none*
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Appendix 1

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE FAIR TRADE STEERING GROUP – COMMUNICATIONS PLAN – 2017-19

1. KEY MESSAGES

Fair Trade is about decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers. It encourages sustainable production techniques and protection for the environment. It contributes to the sustainability of supply chains. The Fairtrade Mark gives consumers guarantees about the product so they can make an informed decision about their purchase.

1. The East Dunbartonshire Fair Trade Steering Group supports all fair trade, not just farmers in the Fairtrade system, so it supports a raising of social, economic and environmental standards in all supply chains both locally and globally.
2. East Dunbartonshire was one of the first areas to gain Fairtrade Zone status in 2007 and has held Fairtrade Zone status continually since then - the only area in Scotland to achieve continual zone status for so long.
3. It has pioneered new initiatives, such as the Fairtrade Cotton Schoolwear Campaign, the Nurseries Campaign and Themed Menus in Schools. These have been rolled out nationally.
4. It is well supported by the Council, something the Fairtrade Foundation praised “we were particularly impressed by the excellent and continuing relationship with the Council and their active involvement locally and nationally encouraging fair trade food procurement in schools”.
5. Fair Trade is supported throughout all geographical areas of East Dunbartonshire, being particularly strong in schools and churches. The Coach House at Balmore was established in 1980 and was one of the first supporters of Fair Trade in Scotland.

2. KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED

Alongside the members of the East Dunbartonshire Fair Trade Steering Group

- Lenzie Fairtrade Group
- Bearsden and Milngavie Fairtrade Group
- Milton of Campsie Parish Church Justice and Peace Group (Founding Group)
- The Balmore Trust

The Group also operates a Nursery Group and a Schools Group to support Fair Trade in Teaching and Learning. Nursery Group led by Tracy Mitchell, Schools Group led by Angela Oakley

The Group works closely with the Scottish Fair Trade Forum. One member is also on the Board of the Forum and another is the Forum’s Volunteers Schools Advisor. The Forum offers advice and support.

3. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- Local newspapers (Kirkintilloch Herald, Bishopbriggs Herald, Milngavie and Bearsden Herald)
- Local radio
- Meetings and events
- Email bulletins
- Magazines, newsletters and flyers (e.g. EDC Edit but also of other partners e.g. EDVA quarterly newsletter)
- Websites (EDC plus those of partners)
- Social media (facebook and twitter)

4. ACTION PLAN

Date	Milestone / Event / Task	Target Group	Communication Method	Purpose / Key Messages
January 2017	Update Council website with new Fair Trade Motion		Council Website	Awareness of Council commitment to Fair Trade
Ongoing	Continue to update and share posts from other organisations on Facebook		Social Media	Raise awareness of fair trade amongst a wider audience
Ongoing	New school mergers (Auchinairn/Woodhill & St. Agatha's/St. Flannan's) and ongoing consideration of fair trade school uniforms		Emails, meetings, newsletters.	Raise awareness and encourage take up of fair trade school uniforms.
Ongoing	Steering Group to secure another flagship employer		Press Release/Social Media	Raise Awareness and uptake of Fair Trade with business sector
2 February	Fairtrade nursery group meets in Hillhead Primary			
End February 2017	Article about Fair Trade in East Dunbartonshire Council 'You and Your Community' newsletter. Update community grant guidance to refer to sustainable development.	Community groups and General Public	EDC Website and email to community groups.	Raise Awareness and uptake of Fair Trade with community groups. Seek new members of steering group and offer to talk

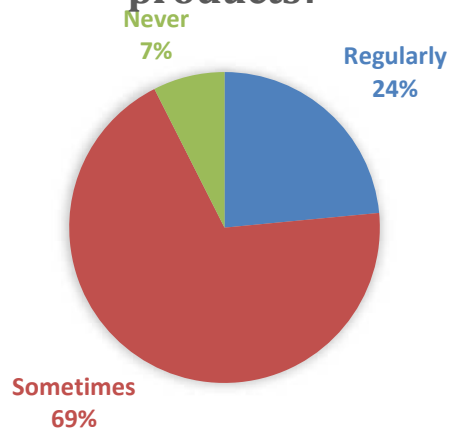
				to community groups about Fair Trade.
27 February – 12 March 2017	<i>Fair Trade Fortnight</i> <i>Activity will be Put Fairtrade in your Break. Don't feed Exploitation</i> <i>Event packs and special resources are available from the Fairtrade Foundation.</i> http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/		<i>Press Release/Social Media</i>	
Early March 2017	Celebrate Fair trade zone renewal for East Dunbartonshire		Press Release/Social Media	Ten years of fair trade status
1 March	Gavin's Mill opening		Council Facebook and Social Media	
2 March	Photo opportunity in Lairdsland School dining area with P6 pupils in the afternoon at 1:15. Fair Trade stalls in Southbank receptions on March 2nd 12-1 Marina, 1.30-2.30 Southbank House and 2.30-3.30 Campus Building. Brommhill Stall (8 March over lunch in canteen) following week.		Press Release/Social Media Internal email bulletin for stalls in Southbank.	Put Fairtrade in your Break. Don't feed Exploitation. During Fairtrade Fortnight this year we are being encouraged to choose Fairtrade items for our Breaks. As well as tea and coffee, this may include cakes, biscuits and sweets made with Fairtrade ingredients and we should also think about fairly traded fruit from countries where farmers may struggle to provide life's necessities for their families.
Saturday 11 March	'Time to put Fairtrade in your Break' event by Lenzie Group. Lenzie Fairtrade Group is organising a coffee morning devoted to the theme of putting Fairtrade into our Break which will take place on		Press Release/Social Media	Put Fairtrade in your Break. Don't feed Exploitation

	Saturday 11 March from 10 - 12 in Lenzie Union Parish Church Hall. As well as a range of Fairtrade coffee blends to taste, there will be plenty of home baked "Fairtrade Break" items to try as well as the ever popular "smoothie bike". There will also be lots of activities for children to help them understand the Fairtrade message in a fun and enjoyable way. Admission charge will be £2 per adult and £1 per school age child.			
13 May 2017	World Fair Trade Day		Press Release/Social Media	A worldwide festival of events celebrating Fair Trade as a tangible contribution to the fight against poverty and exploitation, climate change and the economic crises.
TBC in 2017	Closure of the Coach House and ensuring its work continues.		TBC	Celebrate achievements and plans for future.
TBC in 2017	Council to affiliate with Electronics Watch		Press Release / Social Media	First Council in Scotland to affiliate? Highlight progress re fair trade in Council procurement (e.g. laptop rollout)
24-30 April 2017	Fashion Revolution Week			Ethical clothes production
Summer 2017	Fair Trade presence at Kirkintilloch Canal Festival		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
Summer 2017	Fair Trade presence at town Gala Days		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
TBC in 2017	Directory of Fair Trade ED retailers	Steering Group members to add retailers to ED asset map: http://www.east	TBC in 2017 (funding for leaflet)	Directory of Fair Trade ED retailers Encourage people to buy Fair

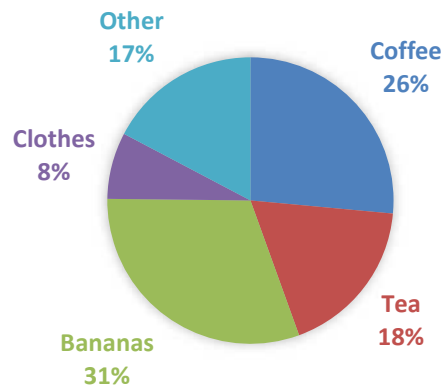
		dunassets.org.uk /		Trade products from local shops. Raise awareness in businesses of the ethos of Fair Trade including the Fair Trade premium and the effect on local communities in developing countries.
September 2017	Autumn Event		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
February 2018	Fairtrade Fortnight		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
May 2018	World Fair Trade Day		Press Release/Social Media	A worldwide festival of events celebrating Fair Trade as a tangible contribution to the fight against poverty and exploitation, climate change and the economic crises.
Summer 2018	Fair Trade presence at Kirkintilloch Canal Festival		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
Summer 2018	Fair Trade presence at town Gala Days		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
September 2018	Autumn event		Press Release/Social Media	5 Key Messages
December 2018	Fair Trade Zone renewal			Celebrate Achievements

Appendix 2 - Fair Trade Survey Results

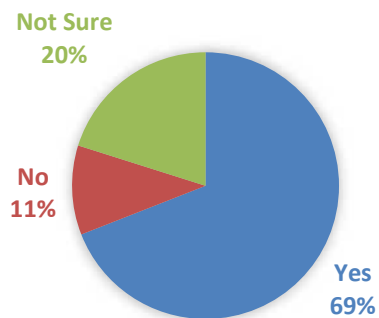
Do you ever purchase Fairtrade products?



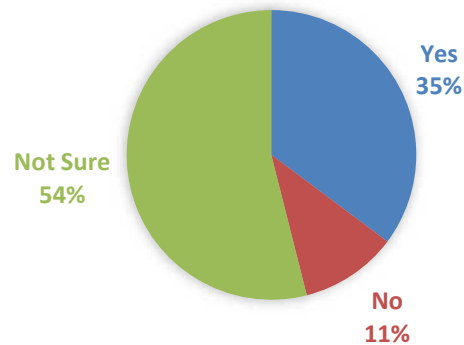
Fairtrade Products Purchased



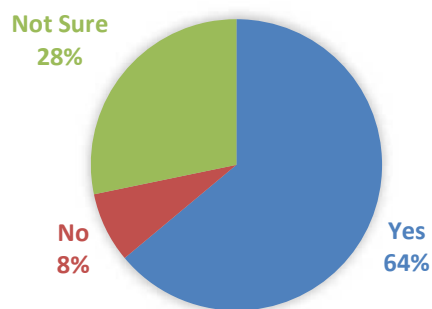
Do you know where to go to purchase Fairtrade products in Renfrewshire?



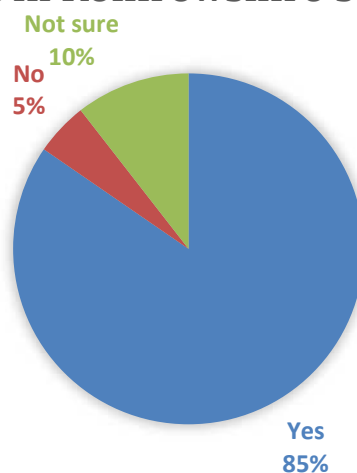
Do you think there is a good selection of Fairtrade products in Renfrewshire?



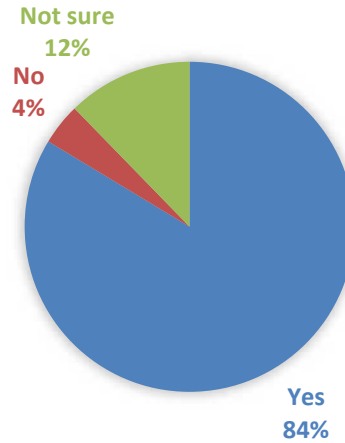
Do you think towns in Renfrewshire should all be Fairtrade towns?



Do you think Fairtrade should be taught in Renfrewshire schools?



**Do you think Renfrewshire Council
should purchase Fairtrade products
where possible?**



**Do you think Renfrewshire Council
does enough to promote Fairtrade?**

