

AUDIT OF BEST VALUE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Approved by full council on 26 June 2008

Every council in Scotland is subjected to an audit of best value and community planning by Audit Scotland, in principle every three years. Aberdeenshire Council's first audit was undertaken in 2007. The report of the audit was published on 20 June 2008 together with the findings of the Accounts Commission for Scotland, who Audit Scotland report to. The report can be found on the Audit Scotland web site at:

http://www.accounts-commission.gov.uk/docs/local/2008/bv_080620_aberdeenshire.pdf

and on the council's web site at:

http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/about/performance_reports.asp#Audit.

The report recommended fourteen priority areas for improvement. The council accepted all the recommendations on 26 June 2008. To make sure it took effective and timely action it also agreed this improvement plan.

The plan sets out for each priority area:

- the intended outcome of the work – why the council is doing it and what impact it expects it to have
- the detailed actions required to achieve the intended outcome
- the lead officer responsible for each action
- when it will be completed by
- what resources it needs to complete the action – staff time, budget and so on. If the needs were not known when the plan was agreed this is stated
- the relationship to existing actions. This ensures there are no gaps, overlaps or ambiguities in relation to any other action already in hand.

Progress on each action will be monitored by the council at its formal meetings every six months, starting on 22 January 2009. The monitoring reports will be public and available on the council's web site at:

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees/search.asp?comtype=Aberdeenshire+Council>

In addition the political group leaders and the council management team will receive interim monitoring reports every three months. The council's external auditor will also use the plan as a basis for checking the council's progress.

Further information can be obtained from:

Head of corporate policy and improvement
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

01224 664059

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Priority area No. 1 Establish an integrated framework to coordinate continuous improvement, setting priorities, managing review processes, implementing changes and evaluating impact

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
<p>The Council has a single continuous improvement framework co-ordinated by Councillors which drives significant and measurable improvement throughout the organisation. It is integrated with the planning and performance management frameworks, sets the priorities for improvement and manages how improvements are made. All agreed improvements are implemented and their impact evaluated.</p>	<p>Action 1.1 Confirm the overall aims of improvement in the council</p>	<p>Continuous improvement manager</p>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
	<p>Action 1.2 In the context of the agreed overall aims for improvement in the council, complete a review of all the council's approaches to improvement in order to define the role, if any, of each in the council's single continuous improvement framework, the review to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeenshire improvement model/EFQM and related quality assurance systems • kaizen – blitz, team kaizen, 5S, value stream mapping, future proposals • best value reviews • structure and modernisation reviews • options appraisal • benchmarking • other relevant activities e.g. audit studies 	<p>Continuous Improvement Manager</p>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
	<p>Action 1.3 Agree a new single continuous improvement framework for the council that ensures the intended outcome for continuous improvement in the council will be met</p>	<p>Continuous Improvement Manager</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>Staff time</p>

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Priority area No. 1 Establish an integrated framework to coordinate continuous improvement, setting priorities, managing review processes, implementing changes and evaluating impact

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
	Action 1.4 Implement all elements of the continuous improvement framework	Continuous Improvement Manager	March 2009	To be confirmed – see Priority area No. 2
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> Any remaining action required from best value sub-committee agreement to a continuous improvement framework. Recommend those actions (if any) are superseded by Priority area No. 1				

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Priority area No. 2 Ensure sufficient capacity exists to implement the council's improvement agenda effectively

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council's continuous improvement framework is resourced and implemented.	Action 2.1 Define resources required to implement the council's continuous improvement framework, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff – expertise and time • training • documentation • budget • ICT • other resources. 	Head of Corporate policy & improvement	December 2008	Staff time
	Action 2.2 Ensure any additional resources required to implement the council's continuous improvement framework are budgeted for	Chief Executive	February 2009	To be determined
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> None known				

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Priority area No. 3 Ensure that senior managers focus more on strategic issues and overall performance

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The implementation and performance management of the Council's Strategic Priorities drives the business of the Council Management Team. The team takes time on a regular basis to consider longer term strategic issues and reports its finding and recommendations for action to councillors.	Action 3.1 Agree and implement updated purpose and roles for management team, its different types of meeting and its members, together with an annual programme of meetings.	Chief Executive	August 2008	Staff time
	Action 3.2 Review progress of management team against the intended outcome of Priority area No. 3, report conclusions to policy and resources committee and make any adjustments required.	Chief Executive	August 2009	Staff time
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> None.				

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Priority area No. 4: Ensure that priorities and plans are clearly articulated and resources allocated accordingly.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
<p>The Council's Vision, Community Plan and Strategic Priorities drive all Council plans. The plans inform and reflect the Council's budget. All Council plans are recorded on the Initiatives System. Plans are reviewed and monitored in a systematic way. Plans take account of performance information, and feedback from customers.</p>	<p>Action 4.1 Implement all documented plans that form part of the revised strategic plans framework. (Strategic Priorities, Local Community Plans, Service Reports, and Head of Service Work Programmes).</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Development (Housing and Community Care)/ Policy Manager</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
	<p>Action 4.2 Implement policy-led budgeting.</p>	<p>Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
	<p>Action 4.3 Rollout the Initiatives System across all Services.</p>	<p>Policy Manager</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
	<p>Action 4.4 Implement systems and processes to ensure that all relevant planning information (national priorities, local priorities, service performance information, improvement actions and customer feedback) is captured in a timely and consistent way and informs the Council's priorities.</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Development (Housing and Community Care)/ Policy Manager</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p><u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> Actions 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4 were agreed as part of the Corporate Plans Kaizen implementation plan. The dates proposed here would supersede any previously agreed dates.</p>				

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Priority area No. 5: Members and Senior Managers to use the performance management framework to support improved management and scrutiny of overall performance.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
Members and Senior Managers receive timely, appropriate and regular summary performance reports, and have the opportunity to view more detailed performance information. Performance information is used to ensure accountability, identify areas for improvement, and help establish future priorities.	Action 5.1 Improve the current arrangements for reporting performance indicators to committees ensuring better links with the strategic plans framework (see priority area 4). Incorporate Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) comparators into strategic monitoring reports.	Head of Policy/ Policy Manager	October 2008	Staff time
	Action 5.2 Develop a clear programme of performance monitoring reporting for Corporate Management Team, Service and Area Management Teams that links to the strategic plans framework.	Head of Policy/ Policy Manager	December 2008	Staff time
	Action 5.3 Implement a revised Employee Development and Review Scheme (EDRS) ensuring better links with the strategic plans framework, alignment to performance management framework, and emphasising the accountability of individuals and teams in delivering the Council's priorities and objectives.	Head of Development and Training	December 2009	Staff time
	Action 5.4 Implement Councillor access to the Initiatives System	Policy Manager	August 2009	Staff time

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Priority area No. 5: Members and Senior Managers to use the performance management framework to support improved management and scrutiny of overall performance.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
	Action 5.5 Provide training to all Councillors and senior managers on using the Initiatives System to monitor performance against agreed plans.	Policy Manager	August 2009	Staff time
<p><u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget for performance management software (subsume into Action 5.1). Action 5.3 was agreed by Management Team at Videoconference on 27 February 2008. • Review of EDRS approved by Management Team in February 2008: aligned to performance management work being led by Head of Policy 				

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Priority area No. 6: Develop an overall people strategy, improving corporate workforce planning and employee development.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council has an integrated approach to workforce management. All the necessary strategies, policies and procedures are in place and action plans are implemented to ensure that the Council is able to recruit, retain, develop, lead and motivate employees. The contribution of all employees is recognised as key in achieving the delivery of excellent services.	Action 6.1 Develop a comprehensive Workforce Strategy.	Head of Personnel	January 2009	Staff time
	Action 6.2 Establish a systematic approach to workforce profiling, planning and development	Head of Personnel	March 2009	To be determined
	Action 6.3 Establish a short term Cross Service Working Group to develop workforce planning implementation plans and determine resource requirements to deliver agreed plans.	Head of Personnel	December 2008	To be determined
	Action 6.4 Review priorities within the Recruitment Action Plan and re-focus resources accordingly.	Head of Personnel	November 2008	Staff time
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Priorities C15 re: the best workforce • P&ICT Service Plan core activities 1.1 relates to Workforce Strategy, 2.2 and 2.3 relates to Recruitment Strategy, 9.1 and 9.2 relate to the development of a corporate development and training plan and the establishment of lastminutetraining.com website • Recruitment Strategy and Action Plan agreed by Policy & Resources on 8 June 2006 				

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Priority area No. 7: Ensure a robust approach to asset management, taking key decisions on the utilisation of assets for future investment.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council has an approved Asset Management Plan that supports and informs the investment decisions necessary to ensure that its assets are fit for purpose and support the delivery of its Strategic Priorities	Action 7.1 Individual Service Strategies endorsed by Council	Director of Transportation & Infrastructure	June 2008	Staff time only
	Action 7.2 Detailed five-year Capital Programme and indicative 10-15 year Programme approved by Council	Director of Transportation & Infrastructure	June 2008	Staff time only
	Action 7.3 Finalised Asset Management Plan publicly available and on Council web site	Director of Transportation & Infrastructure	October 2008	Staff time only
	Action 7.4 Negotiate with Scottish Government regarding additional funding for key projects for 2010/11 and beyond	Director of Finance	April 2009	Staff time only
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Priorities 2007-11 Corporate Improvement “Managing our buildings and facilities – continue the improvement of Asset Management to support and improve investment decisions” • Single Outcome Agreement C16.1 “Managing our Buildings and Assets” 				

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Priority area No. 8: Embed an effective approach to risk management.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council has: Service and Corporate Risk Registers in place, which identify the major risks to the Council; Risk Action sheets exist for Community Planning; Integrated Emergency plans; effective response and recovery plans for Business Continuity, which are regularly exercised and tested; and these are all reviewed and challenged on a regular basis.	Action 8.1 Review the strategy for risk management, specifically looking at its integration into Service management systems.	Risk Management Adviser	December 2008	Staff time
	Action 8.2 Review the Community Planning Risk Action sheets.	Risk Management Adviser	December 2008	Staff time
	Action 8.3 Develop an Action Plan and set up a programme of monitoring and auditing the Risk Registers.	Risk Management Adviser	October 2008	Staff time
	Action 8.4 Develop/formalise Emergency Plan Profiles for each Service providing clarity of roles for response.	Risk Management Adviser	October 2008	Staff time
	Action 8.5 Develop, implement and maintain Business Continuity plans, ensuring arrangements are in place to continue critical service delivery functions with potential major causes of failure and the impact of any loss or disruption identified and recorded.	Risk Management Adviser	March 2009	Staff time

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Priority area No. 8: Embed an effective approach to risk management.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
	Action 8.6 Ongoing training and exercising of key Council employees and others with designated duties.	Risk Management Adviser	January 2009	Staff time
<p><u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appointment of a Risk Management Adviser (RMA) in April 2008 is enabling the above work to pick up a faster pace, with Service Management Teams reviewing Risk Registers and beginning to formalise plans for Emergency situations & Business Continuity. • Risk Management training is being incorporated into the Councillor training programme. • Actions already against identified risks within Service Risk Registers • Actions within Emergency Planning Service Plan Profiles • The P&ICT Service Plan 7.1 relates to supporting the Council with Risk Management, Emergency Planning & Business Continuity. 				

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Priority area No. 9: Ensure elected members provide more active leadership of community planning and work more closely with partners in doing so.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The future direction of Community Planning in Aberdeenshire is owned by our elected members. It forms the basis for our Partnerships.	Action 9.1 – Review the structure and effects of Community Planning activity in Aberdeenshire	Independent review reporting to Chief Executive	October 2008	Review time
	Action 9.2 Review the governance relationship of Community Planning and Partnership activity related	Director of Law & Administration	October 2008	Staff time
	Action 9.3 Conduct Councillor training in hands on development of their role in Community Planning governance	Head of Development and Training	April 2009	Staff and Member time
	Action 9.4 – Agree updated actions for Community Planning in Aberdeenshire in the light of the Single Outcome agreement development	Head of Policy	April 2009	Staff time
	Action 9.5 – Review progress with the Local Community Plans and make process improvements to align these with the Single Outcome Agreement	Buchan Area Manager	April 2009	Staff time (Links to 4.1)
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> Scheduled review activity by Community Planning Partnership Autumn 2008				

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Priority area No. 10: Systematically review the competitiveness of Services across the Council

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
<p>The Council is confident that all trading activities provide best value to Aberdeenshire Council, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering • Housing Repairs • Roads Operations • Building Cleaning • Vehicle Maintenance • Leisure Management • Grounds Maintenance 	<p>Action 10.1 Determine timetable for Service reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prioritise reviews - determine review process - appoint lead officer for each review 	Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)	June 2008	Existing staff resources
	<p>Action 10.2 Determine output measurements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify qualitative measures - identify quantitative measures 	Lead Officer for each review	September 2008	Existing staff resources
	<p>Action 10.3 Appraise Service Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake SWOT analysis of the Service - Examine performance standards and productivity levels - benchmark the Service - examine financial performance within the Service 	Lead Officer for each review	June 2009	Existing staff resources
	<p>Action 10.4 Examine options for delivering the Service</p>	Lead Officer for each review	June 2009	Existing staff resources
	<p>Action 10.5 Develop Improvement Actions</p>	Lead Officer for each review	September 2009	Existing staff resources

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Priority area No. 10: Systematically review the competitiveness of Services across the Council

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
	Action 10.6 Monitor and Review the outcome of each Service review	Lead Officer for each review	September 2010	Existing staff resources
	Action 10.7 Complete a review of activities to identify those that could be considered trading activities in terms of relevant legislation.	Chief Accountant	March 2009	Existing staff resources
	Action 10.8 Complete an assessment of any additional trading activities identified.	Lead Officer for each review	September 2009	Existing staff resources
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Value Review of the Catering Service is already underway. • The Council has an established review process for assessing best value for all services. • Modernisation Reviews of each service • Criteria for identification of Statutory Trading Accounts 				

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Priority area No. 11: Take a more systematic approach to efficiencies, linking this to the overall management of continuous improvement.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council has a rigorous and coordinated approach to the identification of efficiencies, which is clearly linked to the management of continuous improvement.	<p>Action 11.1 Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create efficiency budgets per Service • Create link between Corporate Finance and lead officers for the following continuous improvement initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Procurement ○ Absence Management ○ Asset Management ○ Shared Services ○ Customer First Modernisation ○ Kaizen & Other Continuous Improvement Reviews • Create Service baseline information and establish measures for setting targets for continuous improvement activities • Report cash/non cash efficiencies from continuous improvement activities 	Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)	September 2008	Existing staff resources
	<p>Action 11.2 Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and implement Joint Procurement Strategy • Develop system for tracking and reporting benefits • Complete the roll out of Oracle i-procurement to all services. 	Head of Procurement	September 2008 September 2008 March 2010	Full staffing complement

Relationship to existing committed actions: Linked to other actions arising from the Best Value Audit.

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Priority area No. 12: Increase the pace of improvement of customer services, including use of new technologies.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The number of Council services delivered by the Contact Centre will be quadrupled; a rationalised network of over-the-counter facilities will be enhanced and delivered to a common high standard; and the Council website will continue to be recognised as the best Council site in Scotland delivering a compelling user experience supporting widespread use of self-service transactions.	12.1 The programme of transferring services to the Contact Centre will continue, including the complete re-engineering of back-office processes, with 5 services due to be delivered by December 2008 and a further 7 on an accelerated target of March 2009.	Customer Services Manager	March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time from Services during implementation phase • 2 more Development Assistants in the Customer Service Team • Transfer of staff and/or budget from Services
	12.2 Transfer of responsibility for general enquiries to the Customer Services Manager and a review to take place of the standards of service provided to bring these into line with those currently existing within the Telephone Contact Centre.	Customer Services Manager	September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retraining requirement by Customer Service Team. • Capital investment in a second Contact Centre incl. equipment, etc.

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Priority area No. 12: Increase the pace of improvement of customer services, including use of new technologies.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
	12.3 Investigation of pilot proposal at Gordon House and/or Peterhead for delivery of over-the-counter services on a one-stop-shop basis.	Customer Services Manager	August 2008	Minimal.
	12.4 Agree the basis of a network of over-the-counter contact points for Aberdeenshire. The aim of these will be to deliver customer service on a face-to-face basis to the same standard as that provided to telephone callers from the Fraserburgh Contact Centre.	CRM Project Board	Summer 2008	Nil
	12.5 Provision of a network of face-to-face contact points in line with the above policy.	Customer Services Manager	2009 onwards	Not yet identified.
	12.6 A programme of enhancements and transfers of services to the Council's website will be undertaken over the next 18 months including – interactive road and street light fault reporting; interactive mapping; additional payment facilities; all high volume and/or impact forms and payments; interactive house repair reporting; interactive leisure and learning bookings; interactive waste services	Project Leader, ICT	October 2009	£62,000 already provided for project officer secondment, plus £85,000 for leisure bookings. Additional resources to be identified by Services.
<p><u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> The first action (12.1) is in the Customer Service Team's action plan. Actions 12.3-12.5 appear in the existing CRM vision and associated action plan. Action 12.6 is fully set out in the Gateway Aberdeenshire Strategy 2008/10.</p>				

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Priority area No. 13: Take a more co-ordinated and systematic approach to community engagement activities.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council has a co-ordinated and systematic approach to community engagement and capacity building. Community engagement is increasingly effective and feedback from communities is positive.	Action 13.1 Establish a Short Term Working Group of Council Staff, Community Council Representatives and Community Planning representatives to oversee this Improvement Activity.	Director Education, Learning & Leisure	July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff & Community Council Time • Area Manager & Senior CLD Manager to co-ordinate.
	Action 13.2 Conduct a Kaizen to review existing processes	Area Manager	November 2008	As above plus Kaizen Team input
	Action 13.3 Prepare draft policy, to include national standards of community engagement.	Area Manager	November 2008	Staff time
	Action 13.4 Consult on Draft Policy	Area Manager	April 2009	As above plus Focus Groups
	Action 13.5 Introduce new Policy	Director Education, Learning & Leisure	June 2009	Staff time Training of key staff.
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> Strategic Priorities 2007-2011 Developing our Partnerships.				

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Priority area No. 14: The Council should adopt a more Strategic approach to Financial Management.

<u>Intended outcome</u>	<u>Actions required to achieve the outcome</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>	<u>Completion date</u>	<u>Resource requirements</u>
The Council's budgets are clearly linked to the Council's Strategic Priorities with: a detailed and deliverable revenue budget prepared on a rolling annual basis, covering five years; an outline revenue budget cover a further ten years; and, a detailed, financially deliverable 15 year Capital Plan.	14.1 Develop the current approach to policy-led budgeting to the stage where there is a clear link between budgets and strategic priorities.	Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)	March 2009	Existing staff resources.
	14.2 Extend the three-year rolling budget to cover a five year period and provide indicative revenue budgets for the ten years thereafter.	Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)	September 2009	Existing staff resources
	14.3 Assess the impact of demographic change over the coming 15 year period. Assess the likely trends in grant income and service demands over the same period.	Head of Finance (Accountancy & Corporate)	December 2009	Existing staff resources
	14.4 Prepare a five year Capital Plan for agreement by Policy & Resources Committee.	Director of Transportation & Infrastructure/ Director of Finance	June 2008	Existing staff resources
	14.5 Prepare a detailed Capital Plan for the succeeding period to 2023 for agreement by Policy & Resources Committee.	Director of Transportation & Infrastructure/ Director of Finance	November 2008	Existing staff resources
<u>Relationship to existing committed actions:</u> These action areas are linked to action areas under priority areas numbers 4 and 11 in the Council's response to the Best Value Audit.				