

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 25 August 2015

BY: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan to the Council for approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is recommended to:
- a) note the update report on the 2014/15 Council Improvement Plan (Appendix 1)
 - b) approve the 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan (Appendix 2).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The annual Council Improvement Plan is based on improvement actions drawn from a range of self evaluation activities and external audit and inspection reports including:
- the self-evaluation for improvement to excellence process (How Good is Our Council?) carried out by all services
 - the Corporate Governance Self-evaluation, (Audit & Governance Committee, 19 May 2015)
 - Audit Scotland's Overview of Local Government in Scotland (Audit & Governance Committee, 19 May 2015)
 - the auditor's interim audit report (Audit & Governance Committee, 19 May 2015)
 - Audit Scotland's Local Scrutiny Plan (East Lothian Council, 21 April 2015).
- 3.2 The Council Improvement Plan also includes action points from the previous year's Plan that are have been continued or carried forward. Appendix 1 provides a monitoring report on progress in achieving the actions from the 2014/15 Council Improvement Plan. All of the 11 action points have either

been completed or are due to be completed. However, five actions are being continued into the 2015/16 Plan.

- 3.3 The 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan includes only eight action points, significantly fewer than previous years' plans. The improvement actions which have been carried out over the last three years have addressed the weaknesses that have been identified in previous self-evaluations.
- 3.4 All of the eight actions in the 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan have been identified through the review of the How Good is Our Council self-evaluations completed by each service in spring 2015. These are 'corporate/Council-wide' actions. Improvement points from self-evaluations relating to individual services are not included in the Council Improvement Plan as they will be included in Service and Business Plans.
- 3.5 This year's Council Improvement Plan does not contain any specific actions arising from the Corporate Governance Self-evaluation, the Overview of Local Government in Scotland, the auditors' interim audit report or the Local Scrutiny Plan. The auditors' report and the Local Scrutiny Plan both provide assurance that there are no major concerns about the council's governance and performance management arrangements.
- 3.6 Implementation of the 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan will be assured via ongoing internal monitoring of progress on key actions points by the relevant lead officers and Depute Chief Executives. Monitoring reports on progress with implementing the Plan will be made to the Council Management Team and the Audit and Governance Committee.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 One of the four areas of focus of the Council Plan 2012-2017 is *Growing the Capacity of Our Council* which has one specific outcome: *We deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible*. All the improvement points in the 2014/15 Council Improvement Plan will contribute to growing the capacity of the Council to meet this outcome.
- 4.2 The 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan supports four of the principles that underpin or influence the Council Plan:
 - Services built around people and communities
 - Effective, efficient and excellent services
 - Working together to achieve outcomes
 - Prioritising prevention and promoting equality
- 4.3 In accordance with the principles of Best Value the Council strives to pursue 'continuous improvement' and seeks to deliver services in as effective and efficient way as possible. The recommendations arising from Council's self-evaluations, review and inspection work identified above help to inform the Council's pursuit of 'continuous improvement' through the adoption and implementation of the 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan.

4.4 The 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan will assist the Council in demonstrating that it is achieving Best Value. It will provide the necessary focus to improve key areas of the Council at a corporate level, thus aiding delivery of the Council Plan. Moreover, it will support East Lothian Council in its constant striving for continuous improvement, to continue improving the quality and delivery of its services and to meet the Council Plan outcome: *'We deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible.'*

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – none.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16; report to East Lothian Council, 21st April 2015

7.2 Corporate Governance Self-Evaluation and Annual Governance Statement 2015; report to Audit & Governance Committee, 19th May 2015

7.3 An Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2015 (Accounts Commission, March 2015); report to Audit & Governance Committee, 19th May 2015

7.4 Interim Audit report, Year Ended 31 March 2015; report by KPMG to Audit & Governance Committee, 19th May 2015

7.5 Appendix 1: 2014/15 Council Improvement Plan Final Monitoring Report

7.6 Appendix 2: 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan

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DATE	27 th July 2015

Appendix 1: 2014/15 Council Improvement Plan: Monitoring Statement (July 2015)

2014/15 Council Improvement Plan

We deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible

	ACTION	LEAD SERVICE	TIMESCALE	UPDATE
1	Develop toolkit for self-evaluation of strategic partnerships	Communities and Partnerships	Completed	The East Lothian Partnership undertook a strategic self-assessment supported by the Improvement Service. The toolkit used for this self-evaluation can be adapted for use by other strategic partnerships. Work is also underway to develop a self-evaluation framework for the Children's Strategic Partnership.
2	Scrutiny training for PPRC Members	Council Resources	Autumn 2015	An elected member survey was conducted in December 2014 to identify training needs. The survey has contributed to the development of the elected members' briefing programme for 2015 which includes a session on Performance Management to be held in August 2015.
3	Review and revise the Improvement Framework and make more effective use of benchmarking, develop guidance and training on the use of benchmarking, Best Value reviews and options appraisal	Communities and Partnerships	Completed. The framework should be reviewed annually	The Improvement Framework has been reviewed. The Council is participating in several benchmarking exercises based on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and carried out a charges benchmarking exercise. A template for undertaking Best Value Reviews, including options appraisal has been completed.

4	Introduce Combined Impact Assessment and process for monitoring the needs of minority and vulnerable groups	Communities and Partnerships	To be carried forward as the implementation of the new impact assessment will not take place until autumn 2015	A draft Combined Impact Assessment toolkit has been prepared jointly with Midlothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian. Roll out of the new impact assessment will commence in autumn 2015 following further analysis of the approach.
5	Prepare and implement Records Management Plan setting out arrangements for management and retention of records in line with requirements of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011	Council Resources	Completed	The Records Management Plan was adopted at the 28 October 2014 Council meeting.
6	Work with partners to develop and implement the Children's Services inspection Improvement Plan	Children's Wellbeing	Completed	The Improvement Plan has been approved and is being implemented by the new Children's Strategic Partnership.
7	Review and develop elected members' training and briefings including briefing on Capital Investment Strategy and development issues arising from Councillors' responses to a survey based Audit Scotland Overview of Scottish Local Government Councillors' Checklist	Communities and Partnerships / Council Resources	Completed	See 2 above A follow up survey of elected members' training and development needs will be carried out in December 2015.
8	Implement the action plan based on the Investors in People Improvement Plan and Workforce Development Plan	Communities and Partnerships	Completed	The key actions from the Investors in People assessment are reflected in the Workforce Development Plan.
9	Review and revise the staff communications plan to ensure staff are fully informed and	Communities and	Completed. Actions are to	A review of staff communications has been carried out but actions to improve staff engagement have

	engaged	Partnerships	be carried out in autumn 2015 to allow for completion of One Council Workshop programme	<p>been delayed due to ongoing service review activity and to take account of the outcome of the One Council workshops This will now be implemented in autumn 2015.</p> <p>A key part of the engagement with staff over the next year will be the roll out of a series of 'One Council – Working Together' workshops which started in February 2015.</p>
10	Implement the Web Development strategy to provide a more responsive and effective Council website that will support more 'self-service' activity by council service users	Communities and Partnerships	To be completed in 2016	<p>The Web Development Strategy has been agreed to produce a new website using Responsive Design to suit a range of devices, replace existing website self-service functions with improved self-service facilities and extend self-service capability to other services and provide improved on-line booking and payments facilities.</p> <p>Implementation was delayed due to difficulties arising in system integration. A new project plan which has addressed these difficulties has been agreed for implementation starting in Autumn 2015. In the meantime work is progressing to develop and improve the Council's internal Intranet facility.</p>
11	Further develop the Council's service planning process moving towards three-year service planning linked to financial planning based on staff and stakeholder engagement	Communities and Partnerships	Completed	A three-year service planning framework linked to financial planning and How Good is Our Council self-evaluation with staff and stakeholder engagement has been developed. This will be rolled out for use by all services over the next year.

Appendix 2: 2015/16 Council Improvement Plan

2015/16 Council Improvement Plan

We deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible

	ACTION	LEAD SERVICE	TIMESCALE	SOURCE
1	Review and develop elected members' training and briefings including development issues arising from Councillors' training and development needs survey based Audit Scotland Overview of Scottish Local Government Councillors' Checklist	Democratic Services/ Communities and Partnerships	March 2016	Self-evaluation and continued from 2014./15 Plan
2	Review and revise the Improvement Framework and make more effective use of benchmarking, Best Value reviews and options appraisal	Communities and Partnerships	December 2015	Self-evaluation and continued from 2014./15 Plan
3	Introduce the new Integrated Impact Assessment framework that has been prepared jointly with Midlothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian; including provision of guidance, training and support for services	Communities and Partnerships	December 2015	Self-evaluation and continued from 2014./15 Plan
4	Implement staff communications plan to ensure staff are fully informed and engaged; including identifying ways to recognise and celebrate excellent performance and employee achievement	Communities and Partnerships	December 2015	Self-evaluation and continued from 2014./15 Plan
5	Implement the Web Development strategy to provide a more responsive and effective Council website that will support more 'self-service' activity by council service users – 'Channel Shift'	Communities and Partnerships	March 2016	Self-evaluation and continued from 2014./15 Plan
6	Develop a process/ programme for reviewing and evaluating Council policies and strategies to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant	Communities and Partnerships	March 2016	Self-evaluation

7	Implement the revised Personal Review and Development scheme in all services	Communities and Partnerships	March 2016	Self-evaluation
8	Review the Council's community engagement strategy to reflect the new duties and responsibilities from the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	Communities and Partnerships	December 2015	Self-evaluation