



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

Best Value Audit Implementation Plan

Progress Update

February 2022



- The last update on progress of the Best Value Audit Implementation Plan was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in February 2021. The update at that time focussed on a succinct group of actions. This update considers the full suite of 40 actions associated with the Best Value Audit Implementation Plan.
- Following recommendations from Audit and Scrutiny Committee, End Dates for actions have been reviewed and amended where applicable.
- The update was presented and discussed with the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on 02 February 2022.
- Best Value Audit Implementation Plan Timeline:

29/07/2020	15/09/2020	28/09/2020	27/01/2021	08/02/2021	02/02/2022	14/02/2022
Corporate Management Team	APWG	A&S Committee	Corporate Management Team	A&S Committee (Report on exception – only certain indicators included as requested)	Strategic Leadership Team	A&S Committee



- **Two years have passed since the introduction of the BV Audit Implementation Plan, during which time the organisation has faced unprecedented challenges and we cannot ignore the impact these challenges have had on progress of this plan. With that said, we have continued to make some progress.**
- **As the impact of these challenges begin to ease, there is opportunity to re-evaluate the action plan and ensure we remain realistic and balanced around what can be achieved. For example, Councillor CPD actions will be significantly progressed following the May elections.**
- **There are two key projects currently underway within the organisation that will address key recommendations of the Best Value Audit report:**
 - **The refresh of the Council Plan will ensure the organisation remains focussed on the key priorities for the Scottish Borders. Future Council Plans will be developed through greater engagement with stakeholders – promoting a sense of stakeholder ownership for its delivery. The key priorities for the organisation will be regularly reviewed and refined, which in turn will help to develop a culture of continuous improvement .**
 - **A review of the organisation's performance management approach will ensure services adopt a consistent, more frequent approach to self-evaluation, benchmarking and service planning. The performance management review will also strengthen the quality and relevance of not just Member and Public performance reporting, but also the performance monitoring practices of our services to ensure future planning is based on evidence.**
- **With this in mind, to ensure clarity of expectations and ongoing alignment with the strategic priorities for the organisation, future progress of our response to the recommendations set out in the Best Value Audit Report will be monitored through progression of the Council Plan. Best Value is now at the forefront of decision-making and will continue to influence future discussions.**

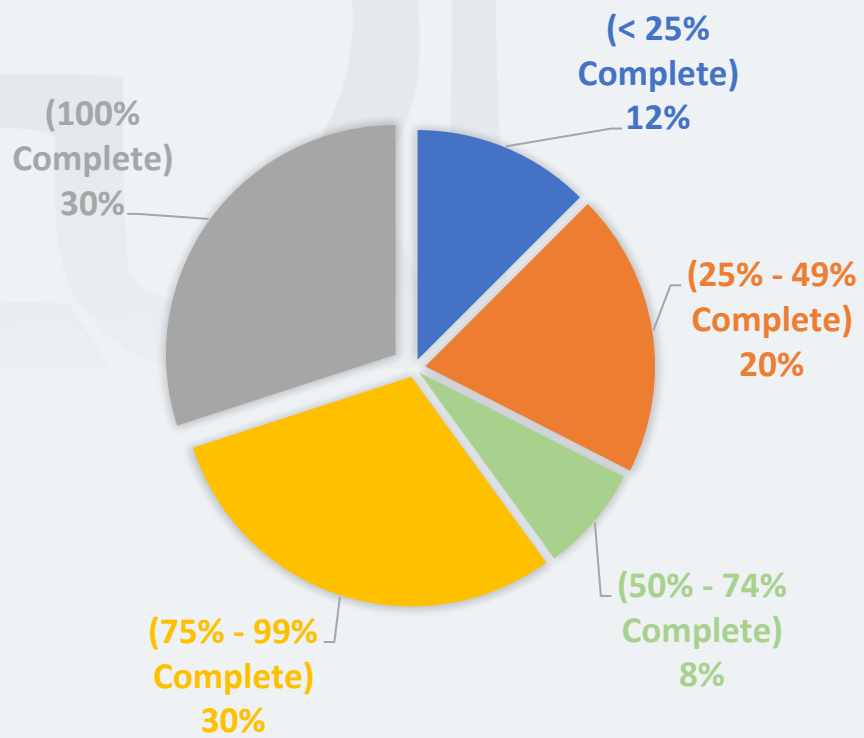
NEXT STEPS

- **Future progress will be determined by the progression of the Council Plan priorities.**

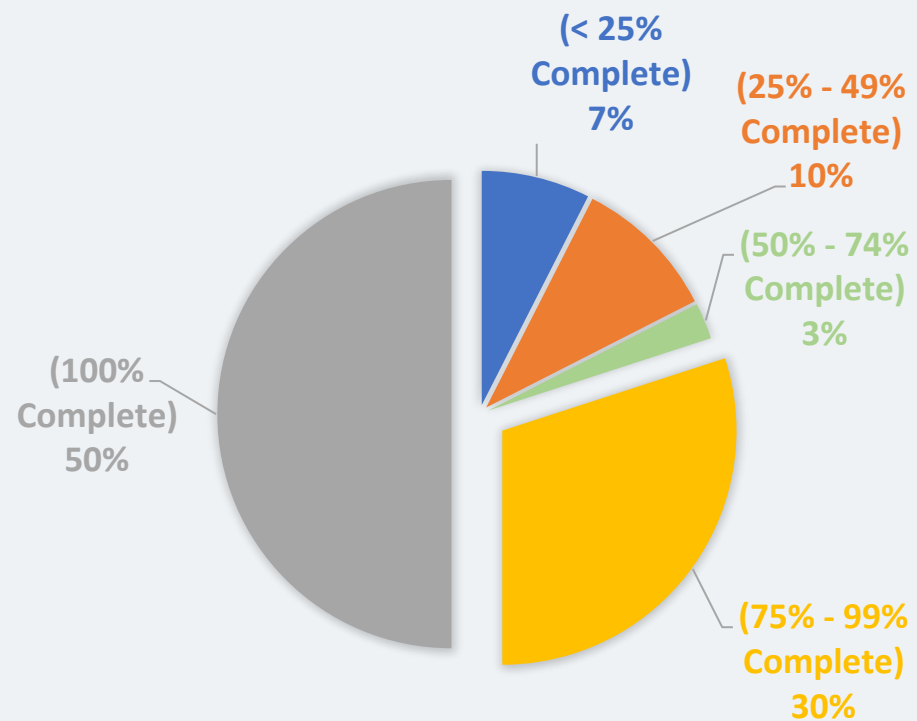


PROGRESS ROUND UP OF ALL 40 ACTIONS

Progress at 08/02/2021



Current Progress





AMENDED ACTIONS

As mentioned, a lot has happened since the BV Implementation Plan was developed. Therefore, 3 actions have been updated to ensure the focus of the activity remains relevant and geared towards delivering on the council's priorities:

No.	ORIGINAL ACTION	AMENDED ACTION	JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
23	Hold 2 CMT meetings per quarter in council premises out with HQ.	Undertake regular large briefing sessions with managers from across all council services & use Yammer as a platform for council wide staff engagement sessions with members of SLT (rolling programme)	There is a need to reflect upon the changing landscape of how we communicate within the organisation following our advancements with digital technology in response to home working.
24	Develop a communications plan for staff engagement and undertake a structured survey of all staff using the online survey tool.	Develop a communications plan for staff engagement and undertake a structured survey of all staff using the online survey tool. Building upon the regular staff engagement and survey work during covid, maintain regular contact with all staff on key corporate issues.	This action has been updated to ensure the organisation continues to learn from and exploit opportunities brought about by the pandemic.
36	Align the approach & sequencing of performance monitoring for Executive Committee, Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Team's, incorporating a programme of service level deep dives.	Align the approach & sequencing of performance monitoring for Executive Committee, SLT and Directorate Management Team's, incorporating a programme of service improvement deep dives.	Adapting the phrasing of 'service level deep dives' to 'service improvement deep dives' ensures clarity and improved focus of deep dives. Focussing on what needs to improve better supports the organisational culture of continuous improvement.



Audit Recommendation: *Embed a culture of Continuous improvement by implementing a corporate approach to self evaluation and benchmarking*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
1	Adopt PSIF as a corporate approach to self evaluation where no service-specific model is already in place. Ensure read-across with all services.	31-Oct-22	Clair Hepburn	67	Jason McDonald	100%	Whilst we have an agreed model that should be consistently used across all services, regular use and improvement from this needs to be more firmly established as part of regular service planning. This will all now form part of a refocussed approach to performance and service improvement across SBC.
2	As part of regular Strategic Leadership Team performance monitoring, review service self-evaluation arrangements, including use of peer evaluations.	31-Dec-22	Clair Hepburn	67	Jason McDonald	75%	As Action 1. This will be promoted and undertaken as part of the new performance and service improvement approach, and will also include the use of LGBF data for comparisons with other authorities.
3	Incorporation of self-evaluation and benchmarking data into annual planning process, ensuring learnings inform planned actions.	31-Oct-22	Clair Hepburn		Jason McDonald	75%	As Action 1. This will be addressed through the Performance Management Review where there will be an expectation for services to monitor benchmarking data more frequently throughout the year. Self evaluation will be incorporated as part of Service Planning.
4	Review content of customer satisfaction surveys, engaging with partner organisations/providers as required, to maximise opportunities for insight and ensure appropriate questioning & results analysis in future Scottish Borders Household Surveys.	31-Oct-22	Jenni Craig	62	Erin Murray	75%	Throughout 2021 a total of 30 consultations took place via Citizen Space, resulting in over 21,000 responses from citizens. These consultations included the 20mph Public Consultation, Christmas School Holiday proposals, National Entitlement Card Consultation and the Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 Early Engagement Survey . Discussions are ongoing to determine how best to proceed with this as part of our recovery to ensure timely and relevant customer engagement.



Audit Recommendation: *Seek to improve partnership working with NHS Borders in order to support the strategic objectives of the Integration Joint Board*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
5	Bring together a joint approach to transformation and evaluation process across the organisations.	30-Jun-22	C Hepburn / C Myers	112 – 116	Clair Hepburn	25%	A piece of work has been done previously to look at how Transformation would be considered through the IJB. Both organisations have been focussed on other priorities over the last 2 years. This will now be picked back up with the Chief Officer for Scottish Borders H&SCP.
6	Raise visibility of key policies and decisions across respective governance groups including Executive Management Team and Strategic Leadership Team. -	31-Mar-22	Chris Myers	112 - 116	Graeme McMurdo	100%	Linked to action 10. A range of Governance issues are increasingly being discussed at the H&SC Joint Executive Team, in turn raising visibility of these across respective governance groups.
7	Explore co location and shared services opportunities as part of Fit for 2024 and corresponding NHS programmes.	30-Sep-22	John Curry	112 - 116	John Curry	25%	In January 2022, SBC began the development of an estates strategy. This is due to conclude at the end of March and will be presented to the new administration in Summer 2022. This will provide an evidence based road map, linked to the Council Plan and Service Needs providing a consistent framework for how we manage and maintain our estate and how we focus capital investment priorities. Alongside this, SBC are progressing with the place making approach which seeks to work with communities and partners to make access to public services easier. These two specific workstreams are expected to realise opportunities for co-location and shared services with a number of public sector partners. Discussions continue with NHSB and the new Earlston Primary School project includes the provision of a new GP surgery. A planning application for this project was submitted at the end of 2021.



	ACTION	Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
8	Enhance governance arrangements and clarity of role of respective partnership groups including IJB Board , Executive Management Team and Strategic Planning Group. - transformation & performance resets. - improving quality and availability of reports outlining proposals to enable these groups to plan and take decisions more effectively.	30-Jun-22	Chris Myers	112-116	Graeme McMurdo	90%	As Action 10. Governance changes proposed include the creation of a 'Future Strategy Group' to report into the Strategic Planning Group. The FSG will develop Directions and manage the work associated with the delivery of the new Strategic Developments. Other governance changes include: - the work of the SIP Oversight Board is realigned to the Audit Committee rather than directly reporting to the IJB. - the Audit Committee to oversee a rapid review of the Terms of Reference and a self-assessment of the IJB Committees to ensure that the IJB and these Committees are able to continue to effectively function in the context of the significant level of work required, in line with the IJB's duties outlined in the Act.
9	Develop a model for localities that adopts a single structure for the management and provision of joint health and Social services.	31-Mar-22	Chris Myers	112 – 116	Clare Richards	100%	Locality model (CAHs, What Matters Hubs, Daily huddles and Weekly Community Meetings) is in operation across the 5 localities with business manager support in place. NHS attendance at daily huddles has been low. Approval was given by the SBC/NHS board to discuss the option to move the daily huddles to a virtual ward model - two workshops have been arranged and cancelled due to low NHS acceptances. This is now sitting with the NHS to lead. There has been no agreed vision to move to joint H&SC staff structures.
10	Ensure a joint financial and service plan that is fully endorsed by respective partners is prepared for IJB on an annual basis.	30-Jun-22	Chris Myers	112 – 116	Graeme McMurdo	100%	Directions Policy now in place from IJB. Commissioning decisions are now costed. Agreement of the 22/23 budget is awaited. This approach will continue in future years..



Audit Recommendation: *Improve how the Community Planning Partnership involves communities and the third sector, through greater involvement in local decision making and by accelerating implementation of the Community empowerment act*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
11	Work with the Improvement Service and Scottish Gov't to provide guidance and support to gain insight into best practice in the implementation of the community empowerment act.	30-Jun-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	80%	Ongoing - CEA information now appears on every Area Partnership Agenda, and features on SBC website Scope of the CPP Review was approved and a Self Assessment workshop was held on 17 Jan 2022. A draft Improvement Plan will now be considered by the Joint Programme Board on 9 Feb, and the aim is that this will be presented to the CPP Strategic Board on 3 March 2022. The next APR due to Scottish government in Summer 2022 - this along with the participation and asset transfer report will feed in to the Scottish Government national report.
12	Conduct a review of the operation of local area partnerships to inform the development of enhanced local decision making service provision and the allocation of resources.	31-Mar-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	100%	Council approved recommendations on 27 08 2020, and a further update will go back to Council before March 2022 Review has been completed, and officers are now undertaking research of best practice across Scotland in order to present recommendations. Next step is to update Council.
13	Use the experience of the budget consultation process 2020/21 to develop the approach to mainstreaming participatory budgeting. Work with communities to identify priority areas within current budgets. Evaluation of Localities Bid Fund to be undertaken.	31-Mar-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	90%	Evaluation of Locality Bid Fund 1&2 as well as the Community Fund was received by Council 27.08.2020. Covid-19 has delayed the progress of mainstreaming Participatory Budgeting, although there has been a strong focus on this work in order to try and achieve the 1% target for 2021/22. JCraig chairs PB Strategic Group that meet monthly, and an officer group has also been established that reports in to that monthly. An update report will be presented to Council as part of the Budget process on 22 Feb 2022.



ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
14	Promote the #your part campaign to recognise the contribution of communities.	31-Oct-21	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	100%	<p>Letters have been sent out & comms on website from Chief Exec thanking communities for playing their part during CV-19.</p> <p>Paper has been considered by SLT re the contribution of volunteers during pandemic, and communities are currently being consulted in relation to what might be appropriate to mark the contribution of volunteers. Report back to SLT potentially end of Feb.</p> <p>Services are using on Yammer - Comms on social media, etc.</p>
15	Undertake an organisational review under Fit for 2024 of how to best develop community capacity in the 3rd sector and localities.	31-Mar-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	80%	<p>9 enagement officers have been appointed across the organisation focussed on developing community capacity and place making. There are ongoing discussions between senior managers in relation to maximising the benefits these posts bring</p> <p>5 community assistance hubs were set up during pandemic and these are going to be continuing. Weekly and fortnightly meetings with third sectors and partners are being held in each of the localities.</p>
16	Review Community Plan and Action Plan to ensure actions align to 2020 Strategic Assessment.	31-Mar-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	75%	A review has begun in relation to the SB CPP, with a workshop held and a draft Improvement Plan developed with assistance from the Improvement Service
17	Agree Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Performance Management Framework through CPP Joint Programme Board and CPP Strategic Board.	30-Sep-20	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	100%	<p>Complete - approved at CPP Strategic Board on 10 09 20. To be refreshed/revamped for future performance reporting</p> <p>To be revised following refreshed key priorities and action plan</p>
18	Completion of Locality Plans ad Action Plans.	30-Sep-20	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	100%	Approved by CPP Strategic Board 10 09 20



ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	Service Lead	% COMPLETION	NOTES
19	Promote stakeholder engagement through Area Partnerships and community engagement events, with training around leadership/national standards of engagement.	30-Jun-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	60%	Virtual Area Partnerships have now commenced. Engagement training still to be agreed and undertaken.
20	Community Empowerment Act to become standing agenda item at Area Partnerships with information to raise awareness and provide support to Communities. Research to be undertaken on SBC performance relative to other authorities.	31-Dec-20	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith / Jenny Wilkinson	100%	Will always be part of agenda. Research re SBC performance been done, SBC is comparative to others (North Ayrshire / D&G regarding our approach). Action complete although work will continue as BAU.
21	Develop regular reporting of progress on Community Engagement across the whole council, for inclusion in reports to members and CPP Strategic Board.	31-Mar-22	Jenni Craig	133 - 144	Shona Smith	0%	Delayed due to CV-19.



Audit Recommendation: *Establish a structured programme of ongoing staff consultation and Engagement*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	SERVICE LEAD	% COMPLETION	UPDATE
22	Continue the process of engagement sessions with staff under the Fit for 2024 programme.	30-Jun-20	Clair Hepburn	36 - 37,	Jason McDonald	100%	Well established part of the FF24 programme process. Extensive staff engagement has taken place particularly with H&SC staff, staff across A&I and staff in business Support/customer services.
23	Undertake regular large briefing sessions with managers from across all council services & use Yammer as a platform for council wide staff engagement sessions with members of SLT (rolling programme)	30-Jun-20	Jason McDonald		Jason McDonald	100%	SLT have started a series of senior manager meetings on Yammer. This has been supplemented with Senior Manager visits to frontline depots and other sites to ensure engagement and interaction with frontline staff. This will continue to evolve and it is hoped that the roll out of technology to all staff will further assist this engagement.
24	Develop a communications plan for staff engagement and undertake a structured survey of all staff using the online survey tool. Building upon the regular staff engagement and survey work during covid, maintain regular contact with all staff on key corporate issues.	31-Oct-22	Clair Hepburn	153 - 154	Iain Davidson	80%	Several staff surveys have been undertaken through out the course of the CV-19 pandemic. A programme of Senior Manager sessions is now underway using Yammer. The development of the refreshed Council Plan and Performance Management approach will ensure continued engagement with staff of key council priorities. These refreshed approaches will need time to bed in and become part of the ongoing organisational culture. A formal communications plan is to be developed.



Audit Recommendation: *Update its people plan for 2017 -21 and ensure longer term workforce plans are reflected in service and financial plans*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	SERVICE LEAD	% COMPLETION	NOTES
25	Launch a new appraisal process for staff based on the updated competency framework.	31-Mar-20	Clair Hepburn	90 – 92, 149	Erick Ullrich	100%	Launched 08/06/2020
26	Ensure each department has a 5 year people plan which aligns with the corporate plan and Fit for 2024 principles.	30-Apr-22	Clair Hepburn	90 – 92, 149	Erick Ullrich	80%	People plans are being revised for each service which will reflect the new Council corporate plan and revised transformation plan due later this year.
27	People planning to be undertaken using a consistent approach as part of Fit For 2024, taking into account Fit for 2024 design principles, staff turnover, succession planning, talent management and future operating models.	31-Dec-20	Clair Hepburn	90 – 92, 149	Erick Ullrich	100%	New integrated People/ Financial/ Transformation planning document has been finalised and rolled out. This incorporates FF24 principles, staff turnover, succession planning, talent management and future operating models.
28	Ensure that resourcing of Fit for 2024 does not adversely impact on business as usual service delivery. Rebalance senior portfolios or use of secondments, backfill, recruitment and/or consultancy as appropriate.	31-Dec-20	Jason McDonald	35	Jason McDonald	100%	With the exception of new Chief Executive, CMT roles are occupied with full time officers.



Audit Recommendation: *Support members Continuing Professional Development by tailoring training to meet their individual needs and use technology to make training more accessible*

ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	SERVICE LEAD	% COMPLETION	NOTES
29	Use Improvement Service Member CPD to allow members to evaluate their continuing professional development needs.	31-Mar-20	Jenny Wilkinson	28 - 29	Jenny Wilkinson	100%	All Members offered assessment through the Improvement Service - 5 have taken this up.
30	Undertake a review of induction training with members to establish any gaps.	31-Mar-22	Jenny Wilkinson	28-29	Jenny Wilkinson	10%	Work underway - no report required to Council. Previous programme being reviewed and Members will be invited to contribute.
31	Develop a members section of SBLearn where specific materials linked to Councillor responsibilities could be housed.	31-Mar-22	Jenny Wilkinson		Jenny Wilkinson	0%	Still to have meeting with HR on how best to take this forward - will link in to Members induction and individual Members development plans.
32	Survey with the members to identify skills gaps.	30-Jun-22	Jenny Wilkinson		Jenny Wilkinson	25%	All Members will be surveyed following election in May 2022; survey being developed as part of induction programme.
33	Review the potential for earlier visibility of meeting / Committee content, for members.	31-Mar-22	Jenny Wilkinson	25	Jenny Wilkinson	25%	Work underway with Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer on how best to take this forward

Audit Recommendation:

Ensure performance reports to members and the public are more comprehensive balanced and that they cover service performance and the delivery of the Fit for 2024 programme



ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	SERVICE LEAD	% COMPLETION	NOTES
34	Redevelop the performance management framework to reflect Fit for 2024 priorities and demonstrate best value within performance reporting.	28-Feb-22	Clair Hepburn	71 - 72,	Melanie Hermiston	75%	The reset of the Council Plan will introduce a clearer mechanism for communicating and monitoring the priorities of the Transformation Programme. This will be incorporated in the updated Performance Management Framework as part of the current project to review performance management across the organisation.
35	Ensure that benchmarking data and longer term trend info is included within performance reports and is used to identify improvement priorities.	31-Oct-22	Clair Hepburn	145 – 151,	Melanie Hermiston	100%	Executive and SLT Reporting has been revised to include longer term trends and inclusion of a range of LGBF benchmarking data. Following the review of performance management, there will be an expectation for services to better monitor and analyse benchmarking data more frequently throughout the year. There has been greater engagement in LGBF learning events to support a continued focus on the benefits of benchmarking data.
36	Align the approach & sequencing of performance monitoring for Executive Committee, SLT and Directorate Management Team's, incorporating a programme of service improvement deep dives.	31-Oct-22	Clair Hepburn	152	Melanie Hermiston	80%	Executive and SLT Reporting has been revised to bring consistency of approach closer; however, more work is required to align and calibrate the selection of indicators at the various organisation levels and frequencies (e.g. strategic down to operational). The review of performance management will deliver a model for services to Assess, Act, Monitor, Revise and Learn from performance information. This review will also create a model for identifying areas of improvement through targeted service deep-dives.
37	Ensure performance reports include adequate commentary on reasons for underperformance and actions to address.	31-Mar-20	Clair Hepburn		Melanie Hermiston	100%	Reporting approach updated with greater cohesion around commentaries. Ensuring adequate commentary is included is embedded in the report production process.
38	Develop regular progress reporting on Fit for 2024 for FF24 Board, Strategic Leadership Team and Executive/Public Performance Reporting.	31-Mar-20	Clair Hepburn	154	Jason McDonald	100%	FF24 progress is tracked in the Financial Plan. Project specific highlights are included in Executive and Public reporting.

These are Additional Points added to the Action Plan, out with those highlighted in the Best Value Audit Report.



ACTION		Timescales	Lead Officer	Report Ref	SERVICE LEAD	% COMPLETION	NOTES
39	Ensure relevant officers are reminded of their responsibilities to the council and Arm's Length External Organisation(s) at appointment and on a regular basis thereafter.	31-Mar-20	Jen Holland	123	Jason McDonald	100%	
40	Review Fit for 2024 implementation plans in light of the council's Annual Governance Statement.	31-Mar-20	Clair Hepburn	155-156	Jill Stacey	100%	Internal Audit review of Fit for 2024 Transformation Programme was completed on 27 February 2020 and findings reported to A&SC on 9 March 2020. Progress with the three improvement actions discussed at FF2024 Board on 12 May 2020.