

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2021

BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN SIX MONTHLY UPDATE

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 Full Council is requested to note the progress in terms of implementing the Best Value Action Plan.

2 Recommendations

Full Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and provide comment on progress in terms of implementing the Best Value action plan (attached as Appendix 1 to this Report).**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 On 22 October 2020 the Accounts Commission published the Best Value Assurance Report for Aberdeenshire Council. The Report was considered by Full Council at its meeting on [19 November 2020](#).
- 3.2 An action plan setting out the Council's proposed actions to progress recommendations in the Report was approved by Full Council in November 2020.
- 3.3 It was agreed that an update on progress against the action plan and any ongoing best value audit activity relating to the Council would be reported to Full Council on a six-monthly basis by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.
- 3.4 Full Council considered the Best Value Action Plan at its meeting on [29 April 2021](#) during which Members noted that a number of actions that were about to become overdue.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Following the meeting of Full Council on 29 April, a significant amount of work was undertaken to ensure that overdue actions were completed and the plan attached at Appendix 1 shows that the number of overdue actions has reduced to zero. All other actions are now in progress.
- 4.2 Members will note that one of the in progress actions is due to be complete on 30 November. The action is currently on track to be completed by the deadline.
- 4.3 Significant work has been undertaken by Officers since April to ensure that actions have been completed. The impact that the actions have had on communities has been included where this is available in Pentana.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 This report helps deliver all six of the Council's Strategic Priorities

Pillar	Priority
<i>Our People</i>	<i>Education</i> <i>Health & Wellbeing</i>
<i>Our Environment</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i> <i>Resilient Communities</i>
<i>Our Economy</i>	<i>Economy & Enterprise</i> <i>Estate Modernisation</i>

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			x
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing			x
Town Centre First			x

5.3 An integrated impact assessment is not required because the report is to present the Best Value action plan update to Full Council and there will be no differential impact as a result of the report on people with protected characteristics.

5.4 The following [Corporate Risks](#) have been identified as relevant to this matter:

- ACORP001 – budget pressures
- ACORP002 – changes in government policy, legislation and regulation (including Education reforms and potential impact on integration of children' services; Brexit)
- ACORP004 – business and organisation change (including ensuring governance structures support change; managing the pace of change)
- ACORP006 – reputation management including social media
- ACORP007 – social risk (e.g. population changes, poverty and social inequality, demographic changes, crime and anti-social behaviour)

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Council is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of the general provisions conferred by the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the endorsement and approval of corporate plans which are not delegated to any of the Council's appointed Committees. Where substantive decisions are required in terms of the action plan these will be reported to the relevant Committee, or to Full Council where appropriate.

Ritchie Johnson, Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Fiona McCallum, Business Strategy Manager
Date 3 November 2021

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1: Best Value Action Plan 2020 extracted 3 November 2021

BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN GENERATED 3 NOVEMBER 2021					
Year	Plan	Number of actions	Complete	In progress	Overdue
2020/21	Best Value Action Plan 2020	29	27	2	0

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV1 Reviewing its priorities and outcomes and including SMART measures and targets so that progress can be easily demonstrated.	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	31-Mar-21
BV1.1 Cllrs will agree a new set of Priorities	Completed	100%	Andy Kille		Cllrs agreed a new set of Priorities in July 2020	01-Mar-21
BV1.2 Agree a new Council Plan	Completed	100%	Andy Kille		New Council Plan agreed by cllrs in Sept 2020.	01-Mar-21
BV1.3 Develop Directorate and Area Plans that include SMART measures, targets and actions to demonstrate how the council will deliver on its priorities.	Completed	100%	SLT	Debbie McGilvray; Gillian Milne; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	Business Services have completed all tasks in relation to this Action. The BS Directorate Plan and associated Directorate Action Plan have both been approved at BS Committee on 25 February 2021 and 10 June 2021 respectively. Action is 100% complete for Business Services.	31-Mar-21
BV2 Improving its approach to performance management	In Progress	95%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Nov-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV2.1 Develop and implement a new performance management framework	Completed	100%	Kate Bond	Fiona McCallum	The Performance Management Framework was approved by Full Council on 24 June. Sessions have been presented to all DMTs and offered to all service management teams. Work is progressing in conjunction with Learning & Development to create a general awareness course for employees, with other modules being developed for line managers to encourage conversations at all levels of the organisation. The performance management framework outlines how our performance management supports a culture of continuous improvement within our Council in order to provide the best outcomes for people in our communities.	30-Apr-21
BV2.1 Develop and implement a new performance management framework	In Progress	90%	SLT	Ritchie Johnson	LGBF included in Directorate Plan reports to Policy Committees May/June 2021. Updates due in Nov 21 in terms of progress / performance reporting.	30-Nov-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV2.3 Develop a new programme supporting continuous improvement across all services in conjunction with the Improvement Service	Completed	100%	Kate Bond; Jim Savege	Donna Redford	Continuous improvement framework approved by Strategic Leadership Team on 30 June 2021 and discussed with Directorate Management Teams during July 2021.	30-Jun-21
BV2.4 Regular performance reporting to Policy and Area Committees	Completed	100%	SLT	Gillian Milne; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	All Directorate and Area Plans have now been approved by the relevant committee. All performance measures to demonstrate success with delivering the Council priorities through the Directorate and Area Plans have also been approved by the relevant committee. The performance measures will allow the impact on communities of the delivery of our priorities to be demonstrated. The first round of reporting to committee on performance will take place between November 2021 and January 2022 and this will cover the reporting periods Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2021/22 (April to September 2021). Thereafter performance reports will be presented to committees on a six-monthly basis. Each report will include a summary of progress with the actions set out in the Directorate or Area Plan along with the agreed	30-Apr-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					performance measures. In this way committees can hold services accountable for progressing actions and performance. The range of performance measures that will be reported to each Committee will evolve over time based on feedback from Elected Members and Chief Officers.	
BV3 Implementing an effective Council-wide approach to self-evaluation including robust arrangements for monitoring agreed actions	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Sep-21
BV3.1 Review and develop the self-evaluation process	Completed	100%	Kate Bond	Fiona McCallum	The Audit Committee at its meeting on 16 September agreed to implement the Public Service Improvement Framework self-evaluation model across the organisation. A training session is being held with relevant officers on 14 October 2021 and a pilot self-evaluation will be identified at that session. Robust self-	30-Sep-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					evaluation allows us to demonstrate where we are doing well and where we need to improve, to ensure that we are delivering our commitment to improving services.	
BV3.2 Embed the key actions arising into a corporate improvement plan	Completed	100%	Kate Bond	Fiona McCallum	Complete. The Corporate Improvement Plan is developed and is to be presented to SLT on 13 January 2021 and Audit Committee on 4 February with quarterly updates being provided thereafter.	31-Dec-20
BV4 Reviewing the scrutiny arrangements to ensure that there is sufficient public scrutiny and that it effectively supports continuous improvement	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Jul-21
BV4.1 Undertake a review of scrutiny arrangements	Completed	100%	Karen Wiles	Ruth O'Hare	At its meeting on 17 September 2021 the Procedures Committee considered the outcome of the review of scrutiny arrangements and agreed an action plan, which included a review of the Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Guidance in Part 4A of the Scheme of Governance, changes to the language in reports on scrutiny matters and additional training for Elected Members and officers. The Committee	30-Jun-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					therefore agreed that this action could be concluded. The renewed approach to scrutiny brought about by the review will assist Elected Members in carrying out their scrutiny role effectively, ensuring improvements to service delivery can be identified and implemented for the benefit of communities.	
BV4.2 Develop a systematic programme of scrutiny with a key focus on outcomes and improvements and the impact of scrutiny actions on service delivery to align with the seven principles in the Code of Corporate Governance	Completed	100%	Karen Wiles	Ruth O'Hare	<p>At its meeting on 17 September 2021 the Procedures Committee considered the outcome of the review of scrutiny arrangements and agreed an action plan, which included a review of the Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Guidance in Part 4A of the Scheme of Governance to outline a process for programming scrutiny activity for Committees, with monitoring and reporting on actions and improvements arising therefrom. The Committee therefore agreed that this action could be concluded.</p> <p>The renewed approach to programming scrutiny brought about by the review will assist Elected Members in carrying out their scrutiny role effectively, ensuring improvements to service delivery can be</p>	30-Jul-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					identified and implemented for the benefit of communities.	
BV4.3 Put in place a programme of cllr training to support improved scrutiny at all levels	Completed	100%	Karen Wiles	Ruth O'Hare	<p>At its meeting on 17 September 2021 the Procedures Committee considered the outcome of the review of scrutiny arrangements and noted the training that had already been implemented for Councillors through a series of face to face sessions and an ALDO module. The Committee further agreed an action plan including a series of drop in sessions for Members on the actions arising from the review, including the review of the Scrutiny at Aberdeenshire Guidance, and noted the inclusion of scrutiny training in the induction programme for new Cllrs in May 2022. The Committee therefore agreed that this action could be concluded.</p> <p>The existing and future training for Elected Members will assist them in carrying out their scrutiny role effectively, ensuring improvements to service delivery can be identified and implemented for the benefit of communities.</p>	30-Jun-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV5 Improving the performance of key services including education attainment and housing relets	In Progress	91%			RECOMMENDATION	31-Mar-22
BV5.1 Develop improvement plans based on performance of key services, aligned to Directorate Plans. Initially focusing on housing re-lets and povertyrelated educational attainment	Completed	100%	SLT	Kay MacDonal d; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	Re-let plan in place and performance being monitored. Performance improvements will become more visible as we emerge from Covid 19 restrictions and move back to routine allocation of properties. Progress discussed with Audit Scotland 28/06 who appeared content with actions and progress to date.ECS NIF plan demonstrates our plans to deal with poverty related educational attainment.	31-Dec-20
BV5.2 Housing re-lets: review all policies/procedures and implement improvement action plan	Completed	100%	Rob Simpson	Andrew Mackie; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	As noted in previous updates, the new void procedure has been completed, and the updated lettable standard has been implemented across the whole of Aberdeenshire. Relets within Sheltered Housing units have now resumed, meaning that implementation is now complete across all Housing stock. Aberdeenshire Council is moving to a Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) model of housing provision, which will require a modification of the void procedure to take	31-Dec-20

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					account of these changes. Work on this update has been completed, with the CBL model now due to go live in August.	
BV5.3 Housing re-lets: 50% reduction in time to re-let	In Progress	50%	Rob Simpson	Andrew Mackie; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	<p>Aberdeenshire Council's overall average days to relet void properties for the year to date is 89.9 days to the end of Quarter 2. This represents an increase compared to the end of Quarter 1, taking an average of 93.7 days to relet properties in Quarter 2, compared to 85.9 days in Quarter 1. As previously discussed, Sheltered Housing properties remain a particular challenge in bringing down the average days to relet, taking 190.1 days on average to relet in Quarter 2, compared to 73.2 days for mainstream properties during the same period. The main driver of this ongoing challenge is the Pandemic, which resulted in void Sheltered Housing properties being unlettable for most of the last 18 months. While the letting of these properties has now resumed, a combination of low demand for certain schemes and delays due to the Pandemic mean that they have a significant detrimental impact on overall performance.</p> <p>As previously noted, this indicator only</p>	31-Mar-22

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					takes into account properties at the point they are let, which means that an increase is to be expected as these properties are let, and represents a positive step in clearing the backlog of vacant properties. However, it will take some time to clear this backlog, meaning that these properties will have a significant negative effect on our relet time indicator.	

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					<p>While Sheltered Housing is a significant factor, the average time taken to relet mainstream properties has also increased modestly, from 70.5 days in Quarter 1 to 73.2 days in Quarter 2. The main driver of this increase is changes in the Buchan area, where it is difficult to let long-term voids in particular drove up the average time to relet. Again, this can be seen as a positive outcome, but it does have an impact on our relet times in the shorter term. However, even taking these mitigating factors into account, void performance remains significantly above the target laid out by this action. This reflects the position across Scotland, where most Local Authorities have experienced a significant increase in void relet times due to the Pandemic. The wider context of the Pandemic and its effects on housing providers across Scotland mean that it will not be possible for Aberdeenshire Council to achieve the improvements identified by this action in the required timeframe. It is likely that Sheltered Housing voids in particular will continue to affect performance for the rest of the year and potentially into next year, based on current void levels and turnover in this type of property. Similarly, the</p>	

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					<p>ongoing effects of the Pandemic in terms of labour and materials availability will likely have a negative impact on this measure as the year continues. Although the Pandemic has not allowed the Housing Service to realise any improvements with regard to this particular void indicator, there have been some improvements in underlying performance as a result of the ongoing work around voids. Total Void rent loss for Mainstream properties has fallen significantly from £1.75 million in 2019/20 to £1.35 million in 2020/21, and performance for 2021/22 to date suggest a similar total rent loss this year. Similarly, the average time taken to complete works at void properties (excluding temporary accommodation and major works) has reduced from 63.1 days in 2019/20 to 35.1 days in 2020/21, a reduction of over 40%. If these trends continue once the various challenges brought about by the Pandemic are resolved, there will be a significant benefit to our tenants in terms of increased income to the HRA, and a faster turnover of stock will benefit people waiting for housing.</p>	

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
<p>BV5.4 Education: Review of Pupil Equity Funding impact on educational attainment at all levels and identify areas where PEF can be more appropriately targeted to improve outcomes for young people</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>Vincent Docherty</p>	<p>Peter Wood</p>	<p>Complete - data gathering tool has been issued and HTs have returned their submissions to the centre.</p>	<p>31-Mar-21</p>
<p>BV5.5 Education: National Improvement Framework priority 2 (Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people) added to cluster attainment targets linked to the National Improvement Framework Plan for Aberdeenshire</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>Vincent Docherty</p>	<p>Peter Wood</p>	<p>The National Improvement Framework final report has been completed and submitted to ECS LT</p> <p>QIM/QIOs are continuing to work closely with Education Scotland colleagues and our attainment advisor on schools who have a follow through inspection and are therefore part of our intensive support programme. This is currently 'live' school support. QIMs have developed the support programme for schools and this has been agreed by the Chief Education Officer. We await detail from Education Scotland on their proposals for restarting their inspection programme. A general overview has been received from them but more detail is still to follow.</p> <p>HTs have completed their Pupil Equity Funding questionnaire and this has been</p>	<p>31-Mar-22</p>

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					shared with the Director and marked as complete at Audit Committee	
BV5.6 Fully implement Scottish Government 1140 early learning and childcare (ELCC) strategy	Completed	100%	Anne Marie Davies MacLeod	James Martin; Julia Matthew; Natalie Stewart	Strategy for 1140 has been fully rolled out. All Funded Providers have signed contract that allows them to provide up to 1140 hours. All Local Authority settings are being supported to put in place staffing allocation to deliver 1140. All LA settings will be supporting up to 1140 hours from April 2021.	31-Aug-20
BV6 Continuing to develop its corporate approach to workforce planning	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Sep-21
BV6.1 Implementation of the workforce strategy "Our Future Workforce"	Completed	100%	Karen Wiles	Kay Hopwood	Services have the choice to incorporate workforce planning into service, team and or business plans or they can have a stand alone workforce plan. Workforce Plans (WFP) have been built into Directorate Plans for Business Service and Infrastructure Services and these have been approved by their respective policy committees. ECS Directorate Plan was already approved but Workforce Planning has subsequently been built into the plan. Numerous Service and team workforce plans are currently being developed. A workforce power BI has been developed to provide real time workforce data in order to set priorities	31-Mar-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					and monitor progress. A corporate WFP Tracker is being developed for reporting and monitoring purposes. the "our future workforce" strategy was approved at Business services committee in Feb 2020 and has been embedded into the WFP Toolkit, WFP guidance and resources pack which can be accessed through the AskHR Portal.	
BV6.2 Develop and implement service workforce plans	Completed	100%	SLT	Ritchie Johnson	All services now have high level workforce plans in place through Directorate Plans (AHSCP are covered by national workforce planning requirements). Completion of workforce planning related actions arising from Directorate Plans are progressing in line with target dates. In addition individual service workforce plans and resulting actions are now captured and monitored in Pentana for ease of reporting to officers, committees and trade unions. Whilst there has been slippage in the progress of this element of the programme due to Covid response and the death of the WFP lead in HR the actions are now re-prioritised and progressing again within services. This	01-Sep-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					will provide the authority with a more detailed picture of total workforce numbers, skills and succession in each service area. This is now becoming business as usual and HR will assist services to monitor their workforce planning and outcomes using the workforce power BI that provides up to date workforce data on absence, establishment, recruitment, turnover.	
BV7 Developing SMART criteria to measure the impact working in partnership has on improving outcomes	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Apr-21
BV7.1 Develop and implement new performance measures to support delivery of the CPP LOIP priorities	Completed	100%	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	The CPP Board at its meeting on 15 September 2021 approved the performance management framework including high level performance indicators for each of the LOIP priorities and agreed that this action is complete.	30-Apr-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV 7.1.1 Connected and Cohesive Communities	Completed	100%		Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton; Moyra Stephen	The CPP Board at its meeting on 15 September 2021 approved the performance management framework including high level performance indicators for each of the LOIP priorities and agreed that this action is complete.	30-Apr-21
BV 7.1.2 Reducing Poverty	Completed	100%		Amanda Roe	On 1st April Communities Committee agreed the updated child poverty action plan which has been refreshed to reflect the impact of Covid-19 and the UK's exit from Europe. The plan is a live plan and updates are regularly posted on the Our Aberdeenshire website - https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/reducing-child-poverty/	30-Apr-21
BV7.1.3 Changing Aberdeenshire's relationship with alcohol	Completed	100%			The CPP Board at its meeting on 15 September 2021 approved the performance management framework including high level performance indicators for each of the LOIP priorities and agreed that this action is complete.	30-Apr-21
BV7.2 Develop six Area Delivery Plans which bring together existing local plans	Completed	100%	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	All Area Plans were reported to the six Area Committees, and approved, by 25 May 2021	30-Apr-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV8 Concluding the remaining locality plans as soon as possible	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	31-Mar-21
BV8.1 Finalise Banff and Macduff locality plan	Completed	100%	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	LOIP was approved at CPP Board on 9 June.	31-Mar-21
BV9 Continuing to develop area performance reporting that is timely and relevant at that level	Completed	100%			RECOMMENDATION	30-Apr-21
BV9.1 Develop and implement performance monitoring to support the key deliverables set out in the Area Delivery Plans	Completed	100%	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	Gillian Milne; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	As of 5 October 2021, all six area committees received reports with the Area Performance Framework and the Area Performance Indicators. Area Committees agreed the reporting plan on Area Performance, which includes the wider performance reporting schedule to go to November meeting cycle, Area Plan action plan update in the December meeting cycle and the Area Performance reports using	30-Apr-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
					the Area Performance Indicators in January-March 2022 meeting cycles.	
BV9.2 Regular reporting to Area Committees providing transparency, accountability and ability to underake scrutiny at a local level.	Completed	100%	Angela Keith; David MacLennan; Ann Overton	Gillian Milne; Alan Morris; Trisha Pirie; Neil Watts	Directors and Area Managers have agreed that the directorate leads for performance will implement a reporting schedule commencing October 2021. This reporting will be every six months for each directorate, plus of the reporting the delivery of the actions plan in the Area Plans. The informal sessions about performance with Directorate Management Teams will take place at least annually and extra sessions can agreed. It has been agreed by area committees to be reported to annually in terms of the Scrutiny report, which identifies both formal and informal scrutiny undertaken by the committees.	30-Apr-21

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
<p>BV10 Councillors should take advantage of the training and development opportunities that the Council provides to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their role effectively</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>			<p>RECOMMENDATION</p>	<p>01-Mar-21</p>
<p>BV10.1 All cllrs to ensure that basic CPD requirements are up-to-date</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>Karen Wiles</p>	<p>Kay Hopwood</p>	<p>An Elected Member CPD Focus group took place on 15/02/2021 and proposal has been developed for wider engagement. The proposals outlines solutions for increasing councillor engagement around CPD recognising, attending and recording events and learning. Solutions include annual engagement around the CPD timetable, regular reminders and updates, a dedicated e-learning portal for all Councillors.</p>	<p>31-Dec-20</p>

Action	Status	Progress	Managed By	Assigned To	Latest Note	Due Date
BV10.2 Undertake a review of the current training and development programme	Completed	100%	Karen Wiles	Kay Hopwood	An Elected Member CPD questionnaire was issued in March 2021 and is now complete and analysed. A package of support has been put in place in order to increase EM engagement with CPD. This includes EM ALDO portal, monthly reminder, newsletter, top tips, articles, timetable of events, bi-annual focus group. Outcomes will regularly be monitored by the group and any additional remedies put in place.	01-Mar-21