

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

approval noting

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Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) - update on implementation of the eight recommendations

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Executive Summary

Members will recall the Accounts Commission's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for North Lanarkshire Council was published by Audit Scotland in May 2019.

In this report the Accounts Commission commended the ambitious and well-articulated vision of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and recognised that realising this vision would lead to significant regeneration and change in North Lanarkshire, an area with some acute socio-economic challenges. The Accounts Commission also noted they were pleased to report that the council has progressed since the previous Best Value audit in 2008.

Eight recommendations for improvement were identified in the BVAR; an update on work undertaken to implement these was reported to the Policy and Strategy Committee in September 2019. This also aligned the BVAR recommendations with the relevant Programme of Work element or supporting framework (i.e. Strategic Policy, Performance, Self-Evaluation, and Governance Frameworks).

This report provides Members with an update on progress, as at February 2020. This further consolidates the improvement actions within the Programme of Work to strengthen a corporate and integrated approach to improvement that supports delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The opportunity has also been taken to advise Members of the forthcoming update to the statutory Best Value guidance and the changes to the national Best Value audit process in the future.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Note the contents of this report,
 - (2) Note the information provided in Appendix 1 to update on progress made to implement the BVAR recommendations,
 - (3) Note the consolidation of all BVAR recommendations within elements of the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*, and
 - (4) Approve the incorporation of all future updates on the BVAR recommendations into the reporting timetable for the respective Programme of Work element.
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The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition statement All ambition statements

1. Background

1.1 Members will recall the Accounts Commission's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for North Lanarkshire Council was published by Audit Scotland in May 2019. This outlined eight recommendations for improvement (as noted below).

- 1) Revised strategies, policies and plans should be developed to deliver the programme of work that underpins the council's ambitious vision, based on its five priorities.
- 2) Workforce plans should be finalised to set out the current and future workforce requirements of the council and evidence how this supports other strategies.
- 3) The council should complete the Investors in People programme as planned and determine how it will maintain staff engagement.
- 4) The council and its partners should develop locality plans for the 16 planning priority areas.
- 5) The council should investigate and better understand the reasons for falling satisfaction levels, particularly for care services, and whether they can apply learning from the high satisfaction levels in housing.
- 6) The council should implement the recently approved Performance Management Framework and reporting schedule to support the delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and its scrutiny by members.
- 7) Performance information on the council's website should be kept up-to-date to improve accountability to the public.
- 8) Improvement plans arising from self-evaluation exercises should include measurable actions and clear deadlines.

1.2 In line with legislative requirements, the BVAR was presented to the full Council meeting in June 2019. This outlined the next steps in terms of progressing the improvement actions to be taken in response to the eight recommendations.

1.3 The eight recommendations were reflective of a snapshot in time (i.e. April 2019) and, as such, work was already underway to progress the improvement actions by the time the BVAR was published.

1.4 This work either aligned directly to a Programme of Work element or one of the four complementary frameworks (i.e. Strategic Policy, Performance, Self-Evaluation, and Governance Frameworks). Members will recall these frameworks are designed to enable a regular structured approach to assessing progress, measuring success, and identifying (where necessary) areas requirement improvement in order to support delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and maintain statutory Best Value requirements and good governance principles.

1.5 An update on progress to implement the eight recommendations was reported to the Policy and Strategy Committee in September 2019. This report showed the alignment of the BVAR recommendations with the relevant Programme of Work element or supporting framework.

1.6 Throughout 2019, and in 2020 to date, services have continued to ensure that reports

are submitted to the respective committee in line with the agreed Programme of Work timetable. A large volume of information has been conveyed through the Programme of Work reports to committee, allowing many decisions to be made that have enabled development and delivery of the supporting projects, activities, and services.

- 1.7 Moving forward, it is important that elements in the Programme of Work (and its supporting policies and plans), and all recommendations for improvement continue to align. This will enable a consistent focus that supports services to prioritise work and optimise resources in order to support delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- 1.8 This report provides Members with an update on progress, as at February 2020. This further consolidates the BVAR recommendations within the Programme of Work to strengthen a corporate and integrated approach to improvement that supports delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

2. Alignment of continuous improvement activity

- 2.1 The purpose of the national BVAR process is to provide the Accounts Commission (the local authority watchdog) with assurance on a *“council’s statutory duty to deliver Best Value ... by showing continuous improvement in how they deliver services. The pace and depth of this improvement indicates how well councils will meet their priorities in the future”*.
- 2.2 Statutory Best Value guidance, which contains further details in respect of the information in paragraph 2.1 above, has been in place since the introduction of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; it remains as relevant and important now as when it was introduced.
- 2.3 Since this time though, a range of significant legislative and policy developments have taken place and the public service delivery landscape (within which councils now operate) has changed significantly.
- 2.4 For this reason, the language and context within which the Best Value guidance is set has been updated (this follows work between Cosla, the Scottish Government, Audit Scotland, Trade Unions, and other partner organisations). The Accounts Commission are currently consulting with all stakeholder groups prior to finalisation and publication.
- 2.5 Similar to the original document, the revised Best Value guidance supports a *“corporate approach to continuous improvement”* and recognises the need for the council to *“agree on how the key elements of Best Value will contribute to achieving the commonly agreed local priorities and outcomes. These include securing continuous improvement particularly for those services aligned to the local authority’s priorities”*.
- 2.6 To date, the council’s approach to continuous improvement has been consistent in terms of aligning continuous improvement activities with the strategic vision and direction (i.e. The Plan for North Lanarkshire) and the roadmaps that connect strategy to delivery (i.e. the Programme of Work).
- 2.7 This has eradicated overlap and potential duplication, and facilitated a one council approach to improvement that supports delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Progress update on implementation of the eight BVAR recommendations

- 2.8 Following on from the update report presented to committee in September 2019; the

information presented in Appendix 1 of this report provides Members with an update of progress made in implementing the eight BVAR recommendations.

- 2.9 The information in Appendix 1 summarises the work undertaken to date and outlines future plans with timescales and responsibilities, where appropriate. Integration with the respective elements in the Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond is referenced to further consolidate improvement actions and delivery plans in support of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Next steps

- 2.10 Following approval of the accompanying Programme of Work report at Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2020, all BVAR recommendations will be consolidated within elements of the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*. Future updates will therefore be provided in line with the approved Programme of Work reporting timetable.

Future national Best Value audit process

- 2.11 Work to revise the statutory Best Value guidance includes plans to produce no further BVARs after all 32 councils have undergone the process once during the five year period from 2017 to 2022. Rather, each council's external auditors will seek to integrate Best Value within their annual audit process. Published BVARs (not just the recommendations themselves) will be used as the baseline for assessing progress in delivering Best Value.
- 2.12 Members should therefore be aware that Audit Scotland will continue to keep many aspects of Best Value under review for the remainder of their audit term, i.e. until the new five year external auditors' appointment in October 2021.
- 2.13 Through this process Audit Scotland will continue to provide the required assurances to the Accounts Commission in terms of the council's ability to demonstrate Best Value.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty

There is no requirement to carry out a Fairer Scotland Duty assessment for this report.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to carry out an Equality Impact assessment for this report.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial impact

There is no financial impact.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative impact

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced the duty of Best Value; this requires that councils "*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance*".

4.3 Environmental impact

There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

4.4 **Risk impact**

Risk will continue to play a key role when auditors are determining their annual audit plans. As such, work is ongoing to ensure performance information, evidence, and risk management complement each other and contribute to informed decision making, forward planning, and identification of areas requiring improvement.

5. **Measures of success**

- 5.1 Measures of success include demonstrating continuous improvement in outcomes and service delivery in line with the ambition statements set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire, and evidencing a positive impact on the people and communities of North Lanarkshire as a result of the resources expended.
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6. **Supporting documents**

- 6.1 North Lanarkshire Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR):
- on the council web site <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/bestvalue>
 - on Connect <http://connect/BVAR>
- 6.2 Appendix 1 - Update on the implementation of the BVAR recommendations



Katrina Hassell
Head of Business Solutions

Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR)

Update on recommendations

BVAR recommendation 1: Revised strategies, policies and plans should be developed to deliver the programme of work that underpins the council's ambitious vision, based on its five priorities.

The council's Strategic Policy Framework was approved at committee in September 2018. This framework incorporates the high level strategies, policies, and plans that underpin delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and supporting Programme of Work.

The Strategic Policy Framework is supported by a rolling Programme of Review to 2021. Regularly monitoring and evaluating the range of supporting strategies, policies, and plans ensures services and activities remain aligned to The Plan.

Six monthly update reports have been provided to the Corporate Management Team and Policy and Strategy Committee. The Audit and Scrutiny Panel has also maintained a strategic overview of this framework.

The latest report to committee, in September 2019, states that all 31 strategies in the Framework were on a timetable for review (or development) in 2019. This excludes some longer term partnership strategies, such as the ten year Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy which is due for review in 2020.

A number of the 31 policies in the framework comprise *sub* policies. Work to further develop sub policies is underway and several have been approved, such as the Single Use Plastic Action Plan which is a sub policy of the Environment Strategy. Work with services will ensure the sub policies are on a timetable for review and adhere to corporate guidelines to ensure the success of the relevant parent policy. A six monthly update report, along with the timetable for review of sub policies, is scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee in June 2020.

Effective delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire depends on policies and plans to be developed, communicated, and deployed. Key to the success of this is ensuring that policies and plans take account of the internal and external influences in which the council, and its range of partnerships, operates. Policy development and implementation should be responsive to the needs of communities, citizens, and service users so that plans and priorities for action are informed by an understanding of those needs. For this reason the evaluation criteria within the council's Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework comprises six areas, this includes *policy development and implementation*.

Findings from the Self-Evaluation programme for 2020, which is being undertaken against the 25 ambition statements in The Plan for North Lanarkshire, will be incorporated into future developments of the Strategic Policy Framework and the Programme of Work, as appropriate.

The evolving nature of the Programme of Work means that services continually pause, review the latest position, consider the interconnections between all elements, and recalibrate as required to ensure continued alignment of plans, activities, and resources in order to effectively deliver on The Plan for North Lanarkshire. Many cross service Programme of Work elements are at varying stages of development and delivery, such as digital transformation and development of the town/community hubs, these will have a significant impact on council policies and services and will require changes to be made as each Programme of Work is finalised and implemented.

The Strategic Policy Framework itself (and specific policies within this Framework) have

been integral elements within the Programme of Work for 2019; the Framework will therefore remain in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*.

For this reason, the BVAR recommendation will be ongoing and the Strategic Policy Framework will continue to operate concurrently with the Programme of Work. Work will be ongoing to evaluate the impact of the Programme of Work on the Framework, and make certain that all council policies remain on a regular programme of review to ensure they continue to align with, and enable, the required resources and working practices needed to facilitate delivery of the shared ambition.

Lead responsibility: Head of Business Solutions

BVAR recommendation 2: Workforce plans should be finalised to set out the current and future workforce requirements of the council and evidence how this supports other strategies.

A workshop session on *Building a Workforce for the Future* was held with the extended Corporate Management Team in September 2019. This highlighted the challenges facing the council (such as the changing economy and pace of change, including digital transformation, which is driving new business models and therefore a demand for upskilling and retraining), the priorities for 2019/20, and the workforce planning process. This session was run in tandem with a review of *Employability* (an element in the 2019 Programme of Work, P024). This provided an overview of current strengths and challenges, and key influences and drivers, which will shape future employability activity and programmes.

This session focused on workforce planning in two service areas - waste solutions and adult social care. This summarised the process undertaken to date to develop workforce plans and outlined a range of workforce profiles (i.e. age, salary, service, gender, grade) developed to do this, the transformation of the services over recent year, the requirements of new service models, and the development of career pathways.

Detailed workforce plans are nearing completion for these two service areas and the first, for waste solutions, is scheduled to be presented to the Environment and Transportation Committee in cycle 2 of 2020.

The workforce plans for the rest of the services are scheduled to be presented to the respective service committee by September 2020. These plans take into account the specific impact on the workforce of individual service programmes of work that are aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire, as well as council wide programmes such as Digital NL.

In February 2020, Corporate Management Team subsequently approved a new Employability model and Workforce for the Future Strategy 2020-23. These are scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2020.

The new Employability model aims to directly contribute to the delivery of the Workforce for the Future Strategy 2020-23. To do this, it outlines Phase 1 priorities and deliverables and contains an action plan for the next 12 months with lead responsibilities and timescales identified.

The Workforce for the Future Strategy 2020-23 document contains a forward plan for 2020-23. This plan focuses on the next phase of work to ensure that the council's activities, and those of arm's length external organisations and strategic partners, are fully aligned to address current and future economic opportunities and maximise employment and career progression for employees, young people, and all working age adults across North Lanarkshire's communities. Under the strategic theme of *Work Here*, the Workforce for the Future programme of work will focus on advancing progress across the full spectrum of workforce and employability activities currently undertaken by the council and with partners.

Continuing to operate in tandem, the Workforce for the Future Strategy, and Employability action plan, will remain a key element in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*. Joint working groups and a cross service board are being established to ensure that the programme is a fully integrated end to end approach, beginning in schools and progressing to early careers and eventually full employment.

Lead responsibility: Workforce for the Future - Head of People and Organisational Development / Employability model - Head of Planning and Regeneration

BVAR recommendation 3: The council should complete the Investors in People programme as planned and determine how it will maintain staff engagement.

The 2019 Programme of Work for *Employee engagement and wellbeing* (P064) includes the council wide roll out of the Investors in People (IiP) framework, alongside continued development of the next phase of Review and Recognition, and employee wellbeing provisions (under the banner of NL Life).

An update report to the Finance and Resources Committee in November 2019 set out the progress to date in terms of implementing the IiP programme. This also includes a forward plan of activity for 2020 and beyond to ensure employee engagement and sustainable performance continues to be driven across the council.

Progress to date is summarised below:

- The council's employee engagement plan is fully aligned to the IiP framework.
- The Workforce for the Future Strategy has employee engagement embedded within its five strategic workforce priorities.
- Over the last 12 months a rolling programme of IiP assessments have been undertaken across all services.
- Services formerly referred to as Enterprise and Housing Resources and Social Care achieved IiP accreditation in 2017, with Infrastructure and the Chief Executive's Office achieving accreditation in 2018.
- To complete the programme, the Education and Families assessment is underway and scheduled to be finalised by March 2020.
- The council is working towards achieving full council recognition against the standard in 2020.
- In Developing the Young Workforce goals, and the Employability review, the council was also assessed against the IiP framework. This was successful and resulted in a *standard award* accreditation in recognition of practices and pathways that have positive outcomes for young people. An improvement plan is being developed and will be implemented from April 2020. A number of actions have already been taken forward such as increased use of social media platforms, outreach activity, and enhancing resources and signposts with the council's youth work team.

From improvements identified in previous IiP assessments, five priority areas of focus have been identified for 2019/20 and beyond. This will enable consistent action to be taken across services so that work can be focussed towards achieving a high level of accreditation. The priority areas are:

- 1) Leaders clearly communicate the organisation's vision and supporting behaviours.
- 2) Enhance our leadership capability to engage and develop high performing teams.
- 3) Continue to improve internal communication and feedback channels.
- 4) Build and develop our council wide approach to reward and recognition.
- 5) Develop and roll out approaches that promote improved employee health and wellbeing.

The Education and Families iP baseline assessment is nearing completion; results are expected to be shared with the Corporate Management Team in March 2020. This will complete the roll out of the iP framework enabling full accreditation to be attained at a council level. The focus will then be on working with services to improve performance against the framework and drive increased levels of staff engagement.

The council's programme of employee engagement will continue in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*. With significant programmes of change and transformation impacting across the council, it is critical that a consistent focus is maintained on engaging and supporting the wellbeing of employees.

Lead responsibility: Head of People and Organisational Development

BVAR recommendation 4: The council and its partners should develop locality plans for the 16 planning priority areas.

The Programme of Work for community engagement (P057) was considered by the Youth, Equalities, and Empowerment Committee in August 2019. This saw the approval of *Community Matters - a Framework for Working with Communities*. This sets out an approach to working with communities that underpins delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Following discussions at Corporate Management Team in August 2019, it was agreed the development of Locality Plans should be aligned with the eight Vision Plans being developed as part of the 2019 Programme of Work (P020) for town centre and community regeneration.

Local people and communities have a significant part to play in developing and delivering the priorities within The Plan. It is therefore important that they are involved in decisions that affect them and there is an effective and ongoing mechanism of engagement that allows local people and communities to contribute to the development and delivery of local regeneration projects and future services.

Since this time, work has continued at pace to progress the regeneration of North Lanarkshire, and proposals to allow the next steps to progress are the subject of a report (*One Place - One Plan*) scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2020. This includes a realigned model of locality partnerships and a range of engagement techniques and tools that will enable local priorities and circumstances to be reflected, while aligning feedback to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work.

Subject to approval of the aforementioned report, the subsequent community engagement model and development of Locality Plans will both be elements in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*. Locality Plans are scheduled to be reported to the Community Empowerment Committee in cycle 3 of 2020.

Lead responsibility: Head of Communities

The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work are supported by four complementary frameworks designed to enable a regular structured approach to assessing progress, measuring success, and identifying (where necessary) areas requiring improvement. These are:

- Strategic Policy Framework, approved at committee in September 2018 - regularly monitoring and evaluating the range of supporting strategies, policies and plans will ensure services and activities remain aligned to The Plan and enable the required resources and working practices needed to facilitate delivery of the shared ambition.
- Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework, approved at committee in February 2019 - asking the questions *How well are we doing? How do we know? and How can we do better?* will enable

- an ongoing assessment of the success of The Plan and Programme of Work and enable a fully aligned programme of improvement.
- Strategic Performance Framework, approved at committee in February 2019 - this comprises a group of performance indicators at three levels and collectively provides an overview of performance to help understand the impact of council activities on improving services and outcomes for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.
 - Strategic Governance Framework, approved at committee in February 2020 - this brings together legislative requirements, governance principles, management processes and a regular programme of review to ensure delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire is supported by excellence in governance, accountability, and transparency.

The following four BVAR recommendations are part of one or more of these frameworks.

BVAR recommendation 5: The council should investigate and better understand the reasons for falling satisfaction levels, particularly for care services, and whether they can apply learning from the high satisfaction levels in housing.

The BVAR reported that “The previous Best Value report in 2008 concluded that customer satisfaction and the council’s approach to customer care had significantly improved. Recent national data shows that satisfaction has declined across Scotland, and this is also the case in North Lanarkshire. Satisfaction indicators presented in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) are based on national survey results such as the Scottish Household Survey. This shows that satisfaction rates in North Lanarkshire declined for all indicators between 2012 and 2018.

While the council’s performance has declined, it is performing better than the Scottish average in five out of the nine satisfaction indicators. However, for three of the nine indicators, the council is ranked amongst the lowest performing councils in Scotland. This includes satisfaction with parks and open spaces and social care.”

To review the information relevant to this recommendation and ensure sharing and implementation of best practice to better understand the reasons for falling satisfaction levels, the Business Solutions team convened a short-life task and finish group.

Running alongside this, the Audit and Scrutiny Panel are currently carrying out in-depth Elected Member reviews on specific areas of activity to be identified by Panel members. The LGBF dataset (which includes the suite of customer satisfaction indicators used in the BVAR) is being used as the basis for identifying areas to be scrutinised. LGBF, and other benchmarking indicators, are integral elements of the Strategic Performance Framework.

Headline results from the short-life task and finish group work found that housing services have a robust and effective programme of tenant participation and engagement in place and regularly obtain and use feedback to inform improvements to services.

Moving forward, the Business Intelligence (BI) Hub, being developed as part of the DigitalNL transformation programme, comprises functionality to enable analysis of feedback for both customers and staff. This will link with the Customer Service Hub to access data and provide insights to support future service delivery.

As the BI and Customer Service Hubs are developed, the methodology accompanying the good practice in housing services will be used to set the principles for customer engagement and analysis to be applied across the council.

Work by the Business Solutions team in respect of this recommendation is nearing completion. A detailed report on the findings is scheduled to be presented to the Corporate Management Team in March 2020 to allow for the relevant management decisions to be made and actioned.

BVAR recommendation 6: The council should implement the recently approved Performance Management Framework and reporting schedule to support the delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and its scrutiny by members.

The Strategic Performance Framework, along with Level 1 indicators and their baseline information, was approved at committee in February 2019.

Following in-depth work with Heads of Service to review their portfolio of performance information at Levels 2 and 3, the detailed Strategic Performance Framework document was approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee in September 2019.

The subsequent reporting arrangements to service committees and the Audit and Scrutiny Panel were approved by the Corporate Management Team in October 2019. This highlighted the work that had been undertaken to map the indicators (levels 1, 2, and 3) to the respective ambition statement and align these to the relevant elements from the Strategic Policy Framework and Programme of Work for 2019.

Thereafter each of the 25 ambition statements was aligned to the appropriate service committee (in line with the Scheme of Administration terms of reference). This provides clear responsibilities for each service committee and ensures a consistent and collective approach towards the scrutiny of performance in line with the ambitions laid out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Five reports were piloted to service committees during cycle 4 of 2019 (Communities and Housing, Enterprise and Growth, Environment and Transportation, Education and Families, and Finance and Resources).

In line with the Scheme of Administration and their terms of reference, the Audit and Scrutiny Panel maintains strategic oversight of all 25 ambition statements; this approach was approved at the Panel meeting in November 2019. This aims to ensure strategic oversight of performance to help understand the impact of council activities on improving local services and outcomes in line with the 25 ambition statements laid out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The report in November 2019 also presented Members with the initial set of ambition statements and supporting performance indicators, along with the programme of future ambition statements aligned to Audit and Scrutiny Panel meetings. This aligns with the process which Members agreed at this meeting, whereby future agenda items for the scrutiny function of the Panel will be twofold:

- A. Presentation of information and reports aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire, the 25 ambition statements, and the supporting frameworks.
- B. In-depth Elected Member review on specific areas of activity to be identified by Panel Members.

As a result of the performance information considered at the Audit and Scrutiny Panel to date, a number of service areas have undergone scrutiny by Members. Service areas scrutinised include street cleaning, new supply programme, vacant and derelict land, housing property, housing services, trading standards, and environmental health. A follow up report has been considered by the Panel on street cleaning; this provides an update on actions discussed following presentation of the initial performance information.

An integral element of the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond* is ensuring strategic oversight and accountability of the wide range of projects, activities, and services being

delivered in support of The Plan for North Lanarkshire. The four frameworks are fundamental in this process in terms of supporting and enabling delivery of The Plan and ensuring resources and activities are co-ordinated and directed accordingly. As such, an element in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond* will include a review of The Plan for North Lanarkshire that incorporates findings from the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework programme of reviews for 2020, changes in level 1 context indicators, annual performance results, and the updated *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*.

Lead responsibility: Head of Business Solutions

BVAR recommendation 7: Performance information on the council's website should be kept up-to-date to improve accountability to the public.

Work has been ongoing during 2019 to review and update the website. The latest Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) results (published in February 2020) are currently being collated with a view to further updating the relevant website pages during March 2020.

In addition, further work has been undertaken in advance of the launch of the council's new website later in 2020. This has involved reviewing current website content to determine whether it is still relevant and needs to be kept and has resulted in further reconfiguration of the performance web pages.

Further refinement will be required when the new tone of voice document is finalised. There will also be changes to the information architecture and navigation.

Moving forward, the public performance reporting schedule has been integrated within the Strategic Performance Framework and, as reports are produced (e.g. planning performance, standards and quality), the website will be updated accordingly at that time.

Lead responsibility: Head of Business Solutions

BVAR recommendation 8: Improvement plans arising from self-evaluation exercises should include measurable actions and clear deadlines.

The Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework, outlining the programme of self-evaluation for each of the 25 ambition statements, was approved at committee in February 2019.

The fast moving pace of activities and services developed through 2019 to support delivery of the Programme of Work for 2019, and work underway to develop the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*, subsequently required a revised programme to be developed for 2020.

As a result the Strategic Self-Evaluation Programme has been condensed into a 12 week exercise to be undertaken over the spring of 2020. This will see progress against all 25 ambition statements being evaluated and scored against a set of criteria, with an independent verification taking place to ensure fully evidenced improvements are identified.

The evaluation criteria comprises six areas:

- Vision and leadership.
- Policy development and implementation.
- Effective use of resources.
- Partnership and collaborative working
- Process design, maintenance, and improvement.
- Results - impact and outcomes.

Audit and inspection work (carried out by the various inspection bodies, e.g. the Care

Inspectorate, HM Inspection of Education, Scottish Housing Regulator) and the external auditors Annual Audit Report, will be incorporated into the programme for 2020.

This programme, along with the accompanying timetable with clear milestones, responsibilities and dates was outlined to the Corporate Management Team in January 2020. It is expected to conclude in May 2020 with a report to Corporate Management Team identifying the areas for improvement. This will be followed by a development session to identify and agree the improvement actions to be implemented along with timescales and responsibilities.

As noted in BVAR recommendation 6 above, an element in the *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond* will include a review of The Plan for North Lanarkshire that incorporates findings from the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework programme of reviews for 2020, changes in level 1 context indicators, annual performance results, and the updated *Programme of Work for 2020 and beyond*. This approach further strengthens a corporate and integrated approach to improvement that supports the council's long-term vision.

Lead responsibility: Head of Business Solutions
