North Lanarkshire Council
Report

Audit and Scrutiny Panel

☐ approval ☒ noting **Ref** LJ/SL **Date** 22/09/21

P075.1: Review and refresh of the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework

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Executive Summary

Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel will recall that to meet the Best Value duty the council must ensure arrangements are in place to secure *continuous improvement in performance* for all the functions and activities undertaken to deliver services and improve outcomes. Being self-aware and undertaking a structured programme of self-evaluation underpins the duty to secure continuous improvement, and good practice suggests local authorities adopt a single strategy for improvement when implementing self-evaluation.

A 12-week programme to assess the 25 ambition statements in The Plan for North Lanarkshire was underway in March 2020 when the pandemic hit. The subsequent impact and implementation of council and service recovery plans meant the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework was assessed and assigned a timescale for recovery of end March 2021. The 12-week programme therefore became impracticable and unable to be resourced and did not progress further as planned.

The development of the Programme of Work for 2021/22 and the commitment therein (i.e. *P075.1: Strategic oversight and accountability*) to ensure the five supporting frameworks remain aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire, meant that a review and refresh of the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework provided the opportunity to reframe self-evaluation within the context of the updated Programme of Work, the changes to the council's operating model (set out in the Delivering for Communities report), and the ongoing challenges and complexities within today's local government environment.

This report therefore presents the Audit and Scrutiny Panel with the updated Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework along with the rolling review programme for 2021 and 2022. This includes specific self-evaluation exercises recommended through Internal Audit work. The Framework is specifically designed to be strategic but lite touch, and consistent but flexible enough to ensure that self-evaluation exercises are specifically tailored to the function or activity being evaluated and designed within the context of that operating environment. The standardised process outlined has been developed to focus reflection and evaluation at a strategic level to enable the council to gain a comprehensive picture that informs improvement in line with the long-term strategic vision.

This programme will be updated as new evaluations are identified and kept on an annual review and refresh programme to ensure the Framework, and supporting Assessment Process, remain fit for purpose and support enhancements to the delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the long-term ambition set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Audit and Scrutiny Panel:

(1) Note the contents of this report and accompanying appendices,
(2) Note the refreshed Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme and the requirement therein to ensure that self-evaluation identifies areas for improvement which are focused on, and contribute to, delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire,
(3) Note the challenge and scrutiny role of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in line with their responsibility to provide an independent review of the council's governance, risk management, performance, and control frameworks, and
(4) Note the next steps.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	All ambition statements

1. Background

1.1 Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel will recall the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework is one of the five inter-related corporate frameworks (Policy, Governance, Performance, Self-Evaluation, and Programme and Project Management) designed to assess the success of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and monitor delivery of the Programme of Work, while ensuring each stage of delivery towards achieving the overall ambitions is appropriately planned, guided, implemented, and governed.

1.2 To ensure these frameworks remain aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work, a regular review and refresh programme for each is a specific requirement within the Programme of Work for 2021/22 (i.e. *P075.1: Strategic oversight and accountability*).

1.3 The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work provide the strategic framework for self-evaluation purposes, with alignment to the 25 ambition statements enabling the relationship between strategy and delivery to be assessed in order to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement that can be fed back into the decision making process.

1.4 A 12-week self-evaluation programme to assess the 25 ambition statements was scheduled to take place from February to May 2020. At the time that the country moved into lockdown in March 2020, and home working became the default position where possible, step 2 of the 4 steps in the 12 week programme was underway. A progress update in this respect was provided to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in September 2020.

1.5 The subsequent impact of the coronavirus pandemic and implementation of council and service Recovery Plans (whereby the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework was assessed and assigned a timescale for recovery of end March 2021) meant implementing the 12-week programme became impracticable and unable to be resourced, and therefore did not progress further as planned.

1.6 Notwithstanding the recovery priorities, the council maintained its commitment to self-evaluation during 2020/21 by undertaking an exercise to assess the council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. This self-evaluation exercise was structured around a set of criteria and assessment statements developed independently by the Improvement Service. This exercise captured lessons learned from the pandemic to support the council through the recovery and renewal planning processes, and to move to a platform of stability from which available resources were able to be redirected to fulfil the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

1.7 An Internal Audit was subsequently carried out on the council's COVID-19 response. This audit was categorised as offering *substantial assurance* with only one area for improvement identified, which was implementing an action plan to record and track progress in respect of lessons learned. An action plan was subsequently implemented and is being monitored by the Silver Group.

1.8 The council's commitment to self-evaluation and progress in terms of implementing the recommendation from the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) - i.e. *improvement plans arising from self-evaluation exercises should include measurable actions and clear deadlines* - was recognised by Audit Scotland in their interim management report for 2020/21 which was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in June 2021. While this assessment found that *reasonable* progress had been made to implement the BVAR recommendation, it did not consider the progress to be *good*, or the action to be *complete*.

1.9 Being self-aware and undertaking a structured programme of self-evaluation underpins the duty to secure continuous improvement. As such, self-evaluation continues to be considered by the Accounts Commission as one of the fundamental principles when auditing Best Value in local government. By applying rigorous self-evaluation, it is considered that local authorities will be able to use assessments of how well resources have been used, and what performance levels have been achieved, in order to focus on where improvement is most needed to help deliver on priorities and improve outcomes for people in local communities.

1.10 The national Best Value guidance, updated in March 2020, includes a requirement for councils to be able to demonstrate that self-evaluation activity is rigorous and transparent.

1.11 As Members will recall, the council was in year three of the five-year national Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) review programme which concluded with publication of a positive report for North Lanarkshire Council in May 2019. Due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, this national programme was expanded from five to six years, to be completed by autumn 2022. A new approach to auditing Best Value in councils will come into effect as part of the next five-year audit appointment term from September 2022. The current five-year audit appointment was expected to end in 2021 but was extended by one year in light of the impact of the pandemic.

1.12 The ongoing national focus on auditing Best Value in local government - and the move to the integration of auditing Best Value within the council's external auditors Annual Audit Report (AAR) process - have further necessitated the review and refresh of the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme.

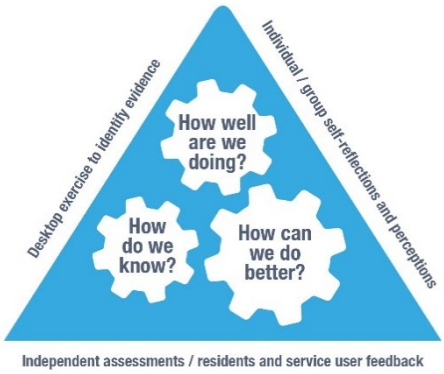
1.13 In addition, a number of recent Internal Audit recommendations have referenced the requirement for a self-evaluation exercise to be carried out on a particular function or activity (i.e. the Data Governance Board, Corporate Management Team, and

Community Boards). These recommendations have been agreed by management in their audit responses.

1.14 This report therefore presents the Audit and Scrutiny Panel with the refreshed Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling programme of review for 2021 and 2022. This aims to formally deliver on the BVAR recommendation to ensure the council complies with the requirements of Best Value and Good Governance and, more importantly, ensure a mechanism is in place to assess the council's functions and activities and identify areas for improvement within the context of delivering the Programme of Work and fulfilling the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

2. Review and refresh of the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework

Framework



2.1 In its simplest form improvement starts with the question *How well are we doing?* Self-evaluation helps to answer that question and those that flow from it, i.e.

- *How do we know?* - What evidence is there to support the view of how well we are doing?
- *How can we do better?* - What are we going to do now?

2.2 The council's Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework (included at Appendix 1) focusses on these three questions. In doing so it also incorporates a degree of triangulation by including ways to cross check results from multiple sources. This aims to increase the reliability and validity of the findings, help to gain a wider understanding of complex issues, and ensure more complete results.

2.3 In this respect incorporation of audit and inspection work (carried out by the various inspection bodies, e.g. the Care Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Education, Scottish Housing Regulator, etc), and recommendations arising from the external auditor's Annual Audit Report (AAR) and Internal Audit programme of audit work are a key requisite of any self-evaluation exercise the council undertakes.

Non-negotiable standards

2.4 The Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework adopts the same set of five non-negotiable standards as the Strategic Performance Framework, although these have been reframed within an improvement context. These are designed to ensure consistency across the five inter-related corporate frameworks (Policy, Governance, Performance, Self-Evaluation, and Programme and Project Management), but more importantly ensure that self-evaluation activity identifies areas for improvement that are focused on, and contribute to, delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

2.5 The set of five non-negotiable standards are designed to ensure that self-evaluation exercises undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and the rolling review programme are:

- **Aligned** - to The Plan for North Lanarkshire so that improvement actions contribute to the achievement of the council's long-term vision. Improvements should also

be focused, where appropriate, on enhancing the supporting processes, plans, policies, and strategies designed to deliver the services and improved outcomes that will achieve the long-term vision.

- **Consistent** - so there is a clear understanding of the purpose and benefits of each self-evaluation exercise that is undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme. Integrating recommendations arising from local and national audit and inspection work into the council's self-evaluation review programme will ensure as comprehensive a picture as possible is attained to inform the identification of areas for improvement and future decision making.
- **Transparent** - ensuring that progress made against the implementation of the improvement actions is widely reported, understood, and acted upon to support the council's governance arrangements and help build credibility, reliability, and a common understanding of the benefits of self-evaluation in securing continuous improvement. Self-evaluation needs to be robust enough to provide assurances to a range of internal and external stakeholders.
- **In context** - ensuring that self-evaluation exercises are tailored to the function or activity being evaluated (whether that is an ambition statement, service, project, or group). Identifying the context and any constraints, within which the self-evaluation exercise is to be undertaken, is a key step in the process in order for improvement plans to be able to demonstrate the resultant impact on local people and communities.
- **Balanced** - to ensure any self-evaluation exercise undertaken is proportionate to the resources expended, outcomes expected, scale of the function or activity being evaluated, and the associated risks. The outputs must tell a balanced narrative that identifies aspects of good practice as well as areas for improvement.

Assessment criteria and statements

2.6 The assessment criteria within the council's Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework aligns to the seven Best Value themes and the national guidance which was updated in March 2020:

1. Vision and leadership
2. Governance and accountability
3. Effective use of resources
4. Partnerships and collaborative working
5. Working with communities
6. Sustainability
7. Fairness and equality

2.7 The good practice statements within each of the Best Value themes (shown in Appendix A) form the basis for self-evaluation exercises undertaken across the council in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme.

2.8 It should be noted however, that no self-evaluation exercise will include all statements; each exercise will comprise a small subset of statements that best reflects the function or activity being assessed and the context and operating environment of that function or activity, and that are most appropriate to delivering the desired outcomes.

Assessment process

2.9 Where national frameworks already exist (e.g. the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) *Financial Management Code*, Education Scotland's *How good is the learning and development in our communit*y, and the Care Inspectorate's *Self-evaluation for improvement*), these will be used to inform the selection of

assessment statements for the self-evaluation exercise. This will avoid duplication and ensure the council's self-evaluation exercises are focused on gaps and what improvement is needed locally. Similarly where relevant good practice guides and/or checklists already exist (e.g. produced by the Improvement Service or Audit Scotland), these will be taken into consideration and used or aligned accordingly.

2.10 While the council's Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework is aligned to the refreshed Best Value guidance, well-established principles from national self-assessment frameworks (such as those for European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF)), have shaped the councils' methodology in terms of undertaking self-evaluation exercises. Key features of this are detailed within Appendix 1. This includes:

- The role of a Champion for each self-evaluation exercise which, for the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework rolling review programme, is a member of the Corporate Management Team.
- The strategic oversight role of the Corporate Management Team in line with their remit to consider matters which are corporate or cross-service in nature, to maintain oversight and monitoring of strategic performance across the organisation, and to maintain strategic oversight and direction of the council's Programme of Work and The Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- The challenge and scrutiny role of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in line with their responsibility to provide an independent review of the council's governance, risk management, performance, and control frameworks.

Rolling review programme

2.11 Appendix B outlines the programme of self-evaluation exercises to be undertaken during 2021 and 2022 along with indicative timescales. The commitment in terms of time and knowledge required from the various stakeholders in each self-evaluation exercise is also highlighted. This programme will be updated as new evaluations are identified and kept on an annual review and refresh programme to ensure the Framework, and supporting Assessment Process, remain fit for purpose and support enhancements to the delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the long-term ambition set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Next steps

2.12 The next steps will involve scoping and preparation work to develop a more detailed evaluation specification for each of the self-evaluation exercises (in line with the review programme and timetable in Appendix B). Championed by identified members of the Corporate Management Team, self-evaluation exercises will be facilitated by the Strategy and Performance team in Business Solutions to ensure the five non-negotiable standards are consistently applied across the rolling review programme. Where identified as appropriate for certain self-evaluation exercises, external facilitation will be provided by the Improvement Service to ensure that independency of approach.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty

3.1 There is no requirement to carry out a Fairer Scotland Duty or equality impact assessment based on the recommendations in this report.

3.2 Fairness and equality are cross cutting themes in the national Best Value guidance and

as such are considered "*integral to all of the functions and activities carried out by a local authority to deliver good outcomes and achieve Best Value*". As such, these cross cutting themes will feature in every self-evaluation exercise undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme.

4. Impact

4.1 **Financial impact**
None identified.

4.2 **HR policy / Legislative impact**
None identified.

4.3 **Technology / Digital impact**
None identified.

4.4 **Environmental impact**
None identified.

4.5 **Communications impact**
None identified.

4.6 **Risk impact**
Implementation of a corporate approach to self-evaluation through the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and the rolling review programme ensures the council fully complies with Best Value and Good Governance requirements. This approach also contributes towards the mitigation of the risks on the Corporate Risk Register for *Governance, Leadership, and Decision Making* and *Managing Strategic Change.*

5. Measures of success

5.1 The key measure of success will be in securing continuous improvement in performance through self-evaluation that is focussed on what the council ultimately aims to achieve.

6. Supporting documents

6.1 Appendix 1 - Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework
- Appendix A: Assessment criteria and statements
- Appendix B: Rolling review programme

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The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework

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Document control

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Revision history

Number	Originator	Date	Description
Original framework created	Linda Johnston	2019	-
1.0	Linda Johnston	June 2021	Annual review

Document approvals

Number	Governance group	Date
Original document created	Policy and Strategy Committee	2019
1.0	Audit and Scrutiny Panel	September 2021

Strategic alignment

The Plan for North Lanarkshire Programme of Work Strategic Policy Framework Strategic Governance Framework Strategic Performance Framework Programme and Project Management Framework

Next review date

Review date	June 2022

Table of contents

	Page number
Introduction ……..	4
The duty of Best Value ……...	5 - 6
- Statutory framework ……...	5
- Scope of the national guidance ……..…	5
- The role of self-evaluation in continuous improvement …….……....	5-6
Self-Evaluation in North Lanarkshire Council ……..	7 - 11
- Continuous improvement …….……..	7
- Non-negotiable standards …...…….……	7-8
- Self-evaluation ……...	8
- Assessment criteria and statements ……..…	8-9
- Assessment process …….....	9-11
Appendix A: Assessment criteria and statements …….	12 - 19
Appendix B: Rolling review programme …….....	20 - 22

Introduction

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets the long-term strategic direction for the council, partners, and other stakeholders and, most importantly, for each unique local community and the people who *Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit* within North Lanarkshire. It's a Plan with a shared ambition of inclusive growth and prosperity for all and a fairer distribution of wealth across all local communities.

The long-term ambition of The Plan for North Lanarkshire coupled with the fast moving, unpredictable, and increasingly challenging and complex local government environment, means planning and change are constantly evolving and ongoing visibility into all programmes of work and their interconnections is essential.

The Programme of Work process provides a clear roadmap for work across council services and with partners. It allows for plans of action to be developed that inform the projects, activities, services, technologies, and resources that need to be harnessed in order to seize the most and best opportunities to deliver on the long-term strategy, while achieving value for money in the here and now.

Key to assessing the success of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and monitoring delivery of the Programme of Work (while ensuring each stage of delivery towards achieving the overall ambitions is appropriately planned, guided, implemented, and governed) are five inter-related corporate frameworks:

- Strategic Policy Framework
- Strategic Governance Framework
- Strategic Performance Framework
- Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework
- Programme and Project Management Framework

To ensure these frameworks remain aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programme of Work, all five are on an annual review and refresh programme. This also helps the council to ensure it is proactive in responding to social, economic, and environmental trends and changes in legislation and governance, as well as the broad range of national policy changes and new developments.

The council's **Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework** is set out within this document.

To meet the Best Value duty the council must ensure arrangements are in place to secure *continuous improvement in performance* for all the functions and activities undertaken to deliver services and improve outcomes for local communities. Being self-aware and undertaking a structured programme of self-evaluation underpins the duty to secure continuous improvement, and good practice suggests local authorities adopt a single strategy for improvement when implementing self-evaluation.

How self-evaluation has been developed in North Lanarkshire Council is set out on pages 7 to 10 of this document. This outlines the assessment criteria and statements used by the council, and the standards which are applied to self-evaluation to ensure alignment with The Plan for North Lanarkshire so that improvement actions appropriately contribute to the achievement of the council's long-term vision.

The ten step assessment process on pages 10 and 11 of this document provide a consistent framework for undertaking self-evaluation exercises that also allows for flexibility in adapting the methodology to ensure evaluation takes place within the appropriate context, meet the needs of the operating environment of the function or activity being evaluated, and achieves the desired outcomes.

Key strategic oversight roles are also highlighted on page 10 - for the Corporate Management Team in terms of performance monitoring and the strategic direction of the council's Programme of Work and The Plan for North Lanarkshire - and for the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in line with their responsibility to provide an independent review of the council's governance, risk management, performance, and control frameworks.

A rolling review programme is set out on pages 20 to 22. This outlines the programme of self-evaluation exercises to be undertaken during 2021 and 2022 along with indicative timescales. The commitment in terms of time and knowledge required from the various stakeholders in each self-evaluation exercise is also highlighted. This programme will be updated as new evaluations are identified and kept on an annual review and refresh programme to ensure the Framework, and supporting assessment process, remain fit for purpose and support enhancements to the delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the long-term ambition set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The duty of Best Value

Statutory framework
The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced a statutory framework for Best Value within local government in Scotland. This outlined the requirement of local authorities to secure Best Value by making arrangements to secure *continuous improvement* in performance for all the functions and activities undertaken to deliver services and improve outcomes for local communities.

In making arrangements to secure *continuous improvement*, local authorities are required to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained between quality and cost. In maintaining this balance, local authorities must ensure their functions and activities take into account economy, efficiency, and effectiveness:

- Economy - minimising the cost of resources used or required (inputs).
- Efficiency - the relationship between the output from services delivered and the resources to produce them.
- Effectiveness - the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes).

Best Value also requires local authorities to ensure their functions and activities meet the equal opportunities duties and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. As cross-cutting themes, these are integral to a local authority delivering good outcomes and achieving Best Value.

Scope of the national guidance
National Best Value guidance has been in place since 2004; this has identified a range of Best Value characteristics which have helped local authorities develop arrangements that demonstrate continuous improvement in performance.

The Best Value guidance applies to other bodies as required by Section 106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, notably health and social care integration joint boards and other joint committees or boards, that are subject to the same statutory Best Value duties as local authorities and, as such, the guidance requires to be interpreted and applied accordingly.

Other devolved public bodies, such as the NHS, are not directly covered by the 2003 Act. They are, however, under a similar Best Value duty, which is set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual, and a statutory duty under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000) to use their resources economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Since 2003, the enactment of other key legislation has had a significant impact across Scotland, extending the requirements of Best Value beyond local authorities. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 has resulted in the integration of health and social care, while the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has strengthened the statutory base for community planning, and for involving and engaging communities in planning and decision-making about things that matter to them.

The national Best Value guidance was therefore updated in 2020 to reflect the significantly changed policy and public service delivery landscape within which local authorities now operate.

The role of self-evaluation in continuous improvement
The Accounts Commission - the public spending watchdog for local government, responsible for holding councils in Scotland to account and helping them to

improve - considers that being self-aware and undertaking a structured programme of self-evaluation underpins the duty to secure continuous improvement. As such, self-evaluation is considered to be one of the fundamental principles when auditing Best Value in local government. By applying rigorous self-evaluation, it is considered that local authorities will be able to use assessments of how well resources have been used, and what performance levels have been achieved, in order to focus on where improvement is most needed to help deliver on priorities and improve outcomes for people in local communities.

Self-Evaluation in North Lanarkshire Council

Continuous improvement
To comply with the duty of Best Value and *make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance*, good practice suggests councils adopt a single strategy for improvement when implementing a programme of self-evaluation.

This will ensure that insights gained from the programme of self-evaluation - into what works, where problems have arisen or unintended consequences have been identified, where there have been unanticipated results, or where there are areas of good practice - can be used to make judgements on the quality, value, and importance of the function or activity being evaluated.

This, in turn, provides the evidence that can be fed back into the decision making process in order to facilitate the highest possible level of quality and accountability in service delivery and/or secure the approaches and resources required to deliver on local priorities and contribute to the achievement of the council's long-term vision (while maintaining Best Value in performance).

Non-negotiable standards
To support the achievement of a single strategy for improvement, a set of five non-negotiable standards are in place within the council. These are designed to ensure consistency across the five inter-related corporate frameworks (Policy, Governance, Performance, Self-Evaluation, and Programme and Project Management), but more importantly ensure that self-evaluation activity identifies areas for improvement that are focused on, and contribute to, delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The set of five non-negotiable standards are designed to ensure that self-evaluation exercises undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme are:

Figure 1:
Five non-negotiable standards

- **Aligned** - to The Plan for North Lanarkshire so that improvement actions contribute to the achievement of the council's long-term vision. Improvements should also be focused, where appropriate, on enhancing the supporting processes, plans, policies, and strategies designed to deliver the services and improved outcomes that will achieve the long-term vision.
- **Consistent** - so there is a clear understanding of the purpose and benefits of each self-evaluation exercise that is undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme. Integrating recommendations arising from local and national audit and inspection work into the council's self-evaluation review programme will ensure as comprehensive a picture as possible is attained to inform the identification of areas for improvement and future decision making.
- **Transparent** - ensuring that progress made against the implementation of the improvement actions is widely reported, understood, and acted upon to support the council's governance arrangements and help build credibility, reliability, and a common understanding of the benefits of self-evaluation in securing continuous improvement. Self-evaluation needs to be robust enough to provide assurances to a range of internal and external stakeholders.
- **In context** - ensuring that self-evaluation exercises are tailored to the function or activity being evaluated (whether that is an ambition statement, service, project, or group). Identifying the context and any constraints, within which the self-evaluation exercise is to be undertaken, is a key step in the process in order for improvement plans to be able to demonstrate the resultant impact on local people and communities.

- **Balanced** - to ensure any self-evaluation exercise undertaken is proportionate to the resources expended, outcomes expected, scale of the function or activity being evaluated, and the associated risks. The outputs must tell a balanced narrative that identifies aspects of good practice as well as areas for improvement.

Self-evaluation

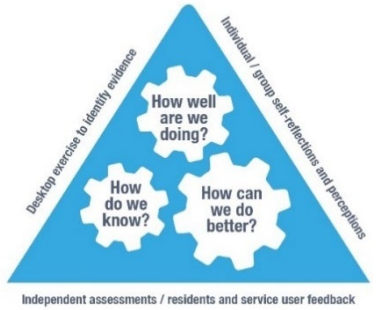
In its simplest form improvement starts with the question *How well are we doing?*

Self-evaluation helps to answer that question and those that flow from it, i.e.

- *How do we know?* (i.e. What evidence is there to support the view of how well we are doing?)
- *How can we do better?* (i.e. What are we going to do now?).

The Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework adopted by the council focusses on these three questions.

Figure 2:
Self-Evaluation model



In doing so it also incorporates a degree of triangulation (as depicted in figure 2) by including ways to cross check results from multiple sources. This aims to increase the reliability and validity of the findings, help to gain a wider understanding of complex issues, and ensure more complete results.

In this respect incorporation of audit and inspection work (carried out by the various inspection bodies, e.g. the Care Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Education, Scottish Housing Regulator, etc), and recommendations arising from the external auditor's Annual Audit Report (AAR) and Internal Audit programme of audit work are a key requisite of any self-evaluation exercise undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme.

Assessment criteria and statements

There are many self-evaluation models (with varying assessment criteria, statements, and evaluation techniques) in operation across the public and private sectors. For council led self-evaluations, local authorities across Scotland have adopted the model (or a local variation of the model(s)) that best fits with their council's strategic planning and governance arrangements, and their operating environment.

In North Lanarkshire this is the Best Value guidance itself. Updated in 2020, the seven themes that support Best Value in line with the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 reflect the significantly changed policy and public service delivery landscape within which local authorities now operate. Local authorities are required to demonstrate a focus on continuous improvement in performance around each of these seven themes:

1. Vision and leadership
2. Governance and accountability
3. Effective use of resources
4. Partnerships and collaborative working
5. Working with communities
6. Sustainability
7. Fairness and equality

For each theme, a range of good practice statements outline what constitutes Best Value in local government; these are outlined in Appendix A.

Assessment process

The council's Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework is aligned to the seven Best Value themes and supporting good practice statements shown in Appendix A. These statements form the basis for self-evaluation exercises undertaken across the council in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme. It should be noted however, that no self-evaluation exercise will include all statements; each exercise will comprise a small subset of statements that best reflects the function or activity being assessed and the context and operating environment of that function or activity, and that are most appropriate to delivering the desired outcomes.

Where national frameworks already exist (e.g. the *Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy* (*CIPFA*) *Financial Management Code*, Education Scotland's *How good is the learning and development in our communit*y, and the Care Inspectorate's *Self-evaluation for improvement*), these will be used to inform the selection of assessment statements for the self-evaluation exercise. This will avoid duplication and ensure the council's resources are focused on gaps and what improvement is needed locally. Similarly where relevant good practice guides and/or checklists already exist (e.g. produced by the Improvement Service or Audit Scotland), these will be taken into consideration and used or aligned accordingly. Where appropriate for certain self-evaluation exercises, external facilitation will be provided by the Improvement Service to ensure that independency of approach.

The methodology used to undergo self-evaluation exercises loosely take into account the key elements from the frameworks for European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF). The key features of this approach include (but are not restricted to):

- **Implementation of a Champion** - to provide leadership, commitment, motivation, and recognition to the introduction and execution of the self-evaluation exercise. To communicate the purpose and the benefits, and to challenge resistance. To ensure resultant improvement actions are valid and used to inform improvements to what the council ultimately aims to achieve. In the council the role of Champion is assumed by a member of the Corporate Management Team.
- **Management of the process** - to ensure there is a Champion and clear ownership of the process and to work with the Champion to optimise the benefits and results. To produce the project plans and develop and facilitate the exercises, secure the resources, arrange appropriate training, and ensure consistency and alignment with the council's strategy.
- **An assessment team** - to contribute their time, knowledge, and expertise to the self-evaluation exercise and play an active role in the improvement process. To understand and then communicate to others the purpose and benefits of self-evaluation.
- **Context mapping** - to ensure a clear understanding of the operating environment of the function or activity being evaluated and ensure clarity in terms of the scope and boundaries of each exercise.
- **Evidence** - to ensure decision making in terms of areas for improvement are informed by clear and tangible evidence, which is attained through an initial desktop exercise and/or online survey or discussion session.
- **A consensus session** - to ensure the assessment team have the opportunity to discuss and reach a collective agreement on the evidence presented, the scores achieved through the self-evaluation exercise, and the aspects of good practice and areas for improvement to be reported on.
- **Planning and prioritisation** - to identify areas where improvement should be made and ensure clear priorities for action are established. To ensure improvement plans are developed in line with SMART principles, follow a one council approach, and are aligned to the ambitions set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

This has been complemented by two key strategic oversight roles:

(1) The strategic oversight role of the Corporate Management Team in line with their remit to consider matters which are corporate or cross-service in nature, to maintain oversight and monitoring of strategic performance across the organisation, and to maintain strategic oversight and direction of the

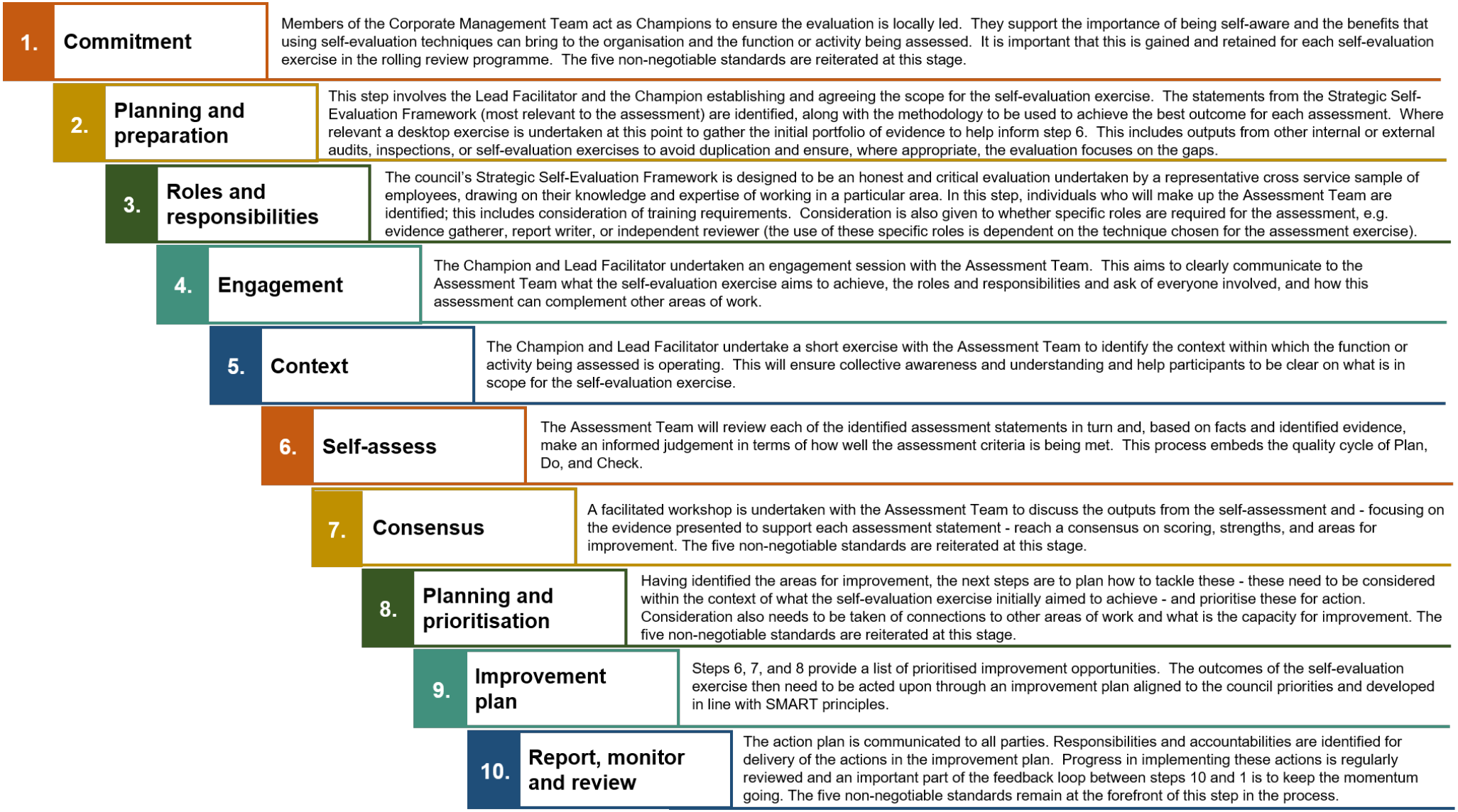
council’s Programme of Work and The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

(2) The challenge and scrutiny role of the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in line with their responsibility to provide an independent review of the council's governance, risk management, performance, and control frameworks.

Using these key features, the council’s assessment process comprises 10 steps (as shown in figure 3 on page 11). While these 10 steps provide a consistent and standardised approach to undertaking self-evaluation in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme, each step can be customised in order to best meet the needs, operating environment, and desired outcomes of the function or activity being assessed.

Appendix B outlines the programme of self-evaluation exercises to be undertaken during 2021 and 2022 along with indicative timescales. The commitment in terms of time and knowledge required from the various stakeholders in each self-evaluation exercise is also highlighted. This programme will be updated as new evaluations are identified and kept on an annual review and refresh programme to ensure the Framework, and supporting assessment process, remain fit for purpose and support enhancements to the delivery of the Programme of Work and achievement of the long-term ambition set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Figure 3:
10 steps in the assessment process



Appendix A: Assessment criteria and statements

The seven Best Value themes and supporting good practice evidence statements from the national *Best Value: Revised Statutory Guidance* document (Scottish Government, 2020) provide the framework that provides the basis for the council's self-evaluation exercises undertaken in line with the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework and rolling review programme.

It should be noted however, that no self-evaluation exercise will include all statements; each exercise will comprise a small subset of statements that best reflects the function or activity being assessed and the context and operating environment of that function or activity, and that are most appropriate to delivering the desired outcomes.

BEST VALUE THEME: **1. Vision and leadership**

Effective political and managerial leadership is central to delivering Best Value, through setting clear priorities and working effectively in partnership to achieve improved outcomes. Leaders should demonstrate behaviours and working relationships that foster a culture of cooperation, and a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:
1.1 Members and senior managers have a clear vision for their area that is shared with citizens, key partners, and other stakeholders. **1.2** Members set strategic priorities that reflect the needs of communities and individual citizens, and that are aligned with the priorities of partners. **1.3** Effective leadership drives continuous improvement and supports the achievement of strategic objectives.	**a.** The local authority's vision for its area is developed in partnership with its citizens, employees, key partners and other stakeholders. **b.** Members set strategic priorities that contribute to achieving the local authority's vision, reflect the needs of communities and individual citizens, and are aligned with the priorities of partners. They take decisions that contribute to the achievement of those priorities, in particular when allocating resources and in setting and monitoring performance targets. **c.** The local authority's vision and strategic priorities are clearly communicated to its citizens, staff and other partners. **d.** Strategic plans reflect a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of the local authority's priorities and the long-term sustainability of services. **e.** Service plans are clearly linked to the local authority's priorities and strategic plans. They reflect the priorities identified through community planning and show how the local authority is working with partners to provide services that meet community needs. **f.** Priority outcomes are clearly defined, and performance targets are set that drive continuous improvement in achieving those outcomes. **g.** There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance that enable the taking of informed decisions and the measuring of impacts and service outcomes. **h.** There is a corporate approach to continuous improvement, with regular updating and monitoring of improvement plans. **i.** The local authority and its partners agree on how the key elements of Best Value will contribute to achieving the

	commonly agreed local priorities and outcomes. These key elements include the need to: • secure continuous improvement, in particular for those services aligned to the local authority's priorities • provide customer- and citizen-focused public services, which meet the needs of diverse communities • achieve the best balance of cost and quality in delivering services (having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equalities) • contribute to sustainable development • encourage and support innovation and creativity **j.** Members and senior managers communicate the approach to Best Value methodically throughout the local authority in terms that are relevant to its staff and set out clear expectations of them. The local authority has a positive culture in which its people understand its vision and objectives and how their efforts contribute to their achievement, and they are engaged with and committed to improvement. **k.** Members and senior managers are self-aware. They commit to training and personal development to update and enhance their knowledge, skills, capacity, and capabilities to deliver Best Value and perform their leadership roles, and they receive sufficient support to do so. **l.** Leadership is effective and there is good collaborative working. Members and senior managers have a culture of cooperation and working constructively in partnership, informed by a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and characterised by mutual respect, trust, honesty and openness and by appropriate behaviours.
BEST VALUE THEME: **2. Governance and accountability** Effective governance and accountability arrangements, with openness and transparency in decision-making, schemes of delegation and effective reporting of performance, are essential for taking informed decisions, effective scrutiny of performance and stewardship of resources.	
Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:
2.1 A clear understanding and the application of the principles of good governance and transparency of decision-making at strategic, partnership and operational levels. **2.2** The existence of robust arrangements for scrutiny and performance reporting. **2.3** The existence of strategic service delivery and financial plans that align the allocation of resources with desired outcomes for the short, medium, and long terms.	**a.** Members and senior managers ensure accountability and transparency through effective internal and external performance reporting, using robust data to demonstrate continuous improvement in the local authority's priority outcome measures. **b.** Management information and indicators that allow performance to be assessed are widely and consistently used by the local authority. Senior management regularly receives information that is used to inform members about performance. **c.** Performance is reported to the public, to ensure that citizens are well informed about the quality of services being delivered and what they can expect in future. **d.** Learning from previous performance, and from the performance of other local authorities, informs the review and development of strategies and plans to address areas of underperformance. **e.** Key organisational processes are linked to, or integrated with, the planning cycle; these include strategic analyses, stakeholder consultations, fundamental reviews, performance management, staff appraisal and

	development schemes, and public performance reporting. **f.** The local authority has a responsible attitude to managing risk, and business continuity plans (including civil contingencies and emergency plans) are in place to allow an effective and appropriate response to planned and unplanned events and circumstances. **g.** Key discussions and decision-making take place in public meetings, and reasonable measures are taken to make meeting agendas, reports and minutes accessible to the public, except when there are clear reasons why this would be inappropriate. **h.** The local authority's political structures support members in making informed decisions. **i.** The scrutiny structures in the local authority support members in reviewing and challenging its performance. **j.** Members and senior managers promote the highest standards of integrity and responsibility, establishing shared values, mutual trust and sound ethics across all activities. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that members and staff comply with relevant codes of conduct and policies. This includes ensuring that appropriate policies on fraud prevention, investigation and whistleblowing are established and implemented. **k.** Members and senior managers understand and effectively communicate their respective and collective roles and responsibilities to members and staff. They understand that effective delegation enables and supports the local authority's ability to achieve Best Value. **l.** An information governance framework is in place that ensures proper recording of information, appropriate access to that information including by the public, and legislative compliance. **m.** Technological innovation and digital transformation are promoted and used to ensure accessibility of performance information and public accountability. **n.** Members and employees across the local authority understand and implement their responsibilities in relation to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. **o.** There are clear governance and lines of accountability when delivering services via a third party, and there is evidence of the application of the principles within the Following the Public Pound guidance (https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/um/pg_code_guidance.pdf) when funding is provided to external bodies.
BEST VALUE THEME: **3. Effective use of resources** Making the best use of public resources is at the heart of delivering Best Value. With clear plans and strategies in place, and with sound governance and strong leadership, a local authority will be well placed to ensure that all of its resources are deployed to achieve its strategic priorities, meet the needs of its communities, and deliver continuous improvement.	
Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:
3.1 It makes best use of its financial and other resources in all of its activities. **3.2** Decisions on allocating resources are based on an integrated and strategic approach, are risk-aware and	Staff **a.** A workforce strategy is in place that sets out expectations on how the local authority's staff will deliver its vision, priorities and values. **b.** The strategy is translated into workforce plans, covering employee numbers, skills, knowledge, competencies and organisational structures, that demonstrate how staff will be deployed to deliver the services planned for the

evidence-based, and contribute to the achievement of its strategic priorities. **3.3** It has robust procedures and controls in place to ensure that resources are used appropriately and effectively and are not misused. **3.4** It works with its partners to maximise the use of their respective resources to achieve shared priorities and outcomes.	future. Plans are regularly reviewed at appropriate intervals according to a clear review cycle. **c.** All employees are managed effectively and efficiently and know what is expected of them. Employee performance is regularly assessed through performance appraisal, with individuals and teams being supported to improve, where appropriate. **d.** Members and senior managers understand and demonstrate that effective delegation is an important contribution to the local authority's ability to achieve Best Value. **e.** The contribution of staff to ensuring continuous improvement is supported, managed, reviewed and acknowledged. **f.** The local authority demonstrates a commitment to fairness, equity and safety in the workplace; it adopts relevant statutory guidance through progressive workplace policies and a commitment to best practice in workplace relationships. **g.** Leaders ensure that there is the organisational capacity to deliver services through effective use of all employees and other resources. They communicate well with all staff and stakeholders and ensure that the organisation promotes a citizen- and improvement-focused culture that delivers meaningful actions and outcomes. <u>Asset management</u> **a.** There is a corporate approach to asset management that is reflected in asset management strategies and plans, which are subject to regular review. **b.** There is a systematic and evidence-based approach to identifying and managing risks in relation to land, buildings, plant, equipment, vehicles, materials and digital infrastructure. **c.** The local authority actively manages its asset base to contribute to its objectives and priorities. **d.** Fixed assets are managed efficiently and effectively, taking account of availability, accessibility, safety, utilisation, cost, condition and depreciation. <u>Information</u> **a.** Information is regarded as a strategic resource and is managed accordingly. **b.** There is a clear digital strategy in place, which includes resilience plans for information systems. **c.** Information is shared appropriately, and the local authority seeks to develop data compatibility with its partners. <u>Financial management and planning</u> **a.** There is clear alignment between the local authority's budgets and its strategic priorities. **b.** Regular monitoring and reporting of financial outturns compared with budgets is carried out, and corrective action taken where necessary to ensure the alignment of budgets and outturns. **c.** Financial plans show how the local authority will fund its services in the future. Long-term financial plans that include scenario planning for a range of funding levels are prepared and linked to strategic priorities. **d.** An appropriate range of options is considered when taking decisions, and robust processes of option appraisal and self-assessment are applied. **e.** The local authority has clear plans for how it will change services and realise efficiencies to close future budget gaps. **f.** Members and senior managers have a clear understanding of likely future pressures on services and of how investment in preventative approaches can help alleviate those pressures, and they use that understanding to inform decisions. **g.** Financial performance is systematically measured across all areas of activity, and regularly scrutinised by

	managers and members. **h.** There is a robust system of financial controls in place that provides clear accountability, stakeholder assurance, and compliance with statutory requirements and recognised accounting standards. **i.** The local authority complies with legal and best practice requirements in the procurement and strategic commissioning of goods, services and works, including the Scottish Model of Procurement (https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/). There is clear accountability within procurement and commissioning arrangements. **j.** There are clear and effective governance and accountability arrangements in place covering partnerships between the local authority and its arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs), including for performance monitoring and the early identification of any significant financial and service risks; there is evidence of the application of the principles of 'Following the Public Pound.' **k.** The local authority has a reserves policy that supports its future financial sustainability, and its reserves are held in accordance with that policy. Performance management **a.** Effective performance management arrangements are in place to promote the effective use of the local authority's resources. Performance is systematically measured across all areas of activity, and performance reports are regularly scrutinised by managers and elected members. The performance management system is effective in addressing areas of underperformance, identifying the scope for improvement and agreeing remedial action. **b.** There is a corporate approach to identifying, monitoring and reporting on improvement actions that will lead to continuous improvement in priority areas. Improvement actions are clearly articulated and include identifying responsible officers and target timelines. **c.** The local authority uses self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. This includes the use of comparative analyses to benchmark, monitor and improve performance. **d.** The local authority takes an innovative approach when considering how services will be delivered in the future. It looks at the activities of other organisations, beyond its area, to consider new ways of doing things. A full range of options is considered, and self-assessment activity and options appraisal can be demonstrated to be rigorous and transparent. **e.** Evaluation tools are in place to link inputs, activities and outputs to the outcomes that they are designed to achieve. There is evidence to demonstrate that improvement actions lead to continuous improvement and better outcomes in priority service areas. **f.** The local authority seeks and takes account of feedback from citizens and service users on performance when developing improvement plans. **g.** Improvement plans reflect a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of the local authority's priorities and the long-term sustainability of services. **h.** Performance information reporting to stakeholders is regular and gives a balanced view of the local authority's performance, linked to its priority service areas. The information provided is relevant to its audience, and clearly demonstrates whether or not strategic and operational objectives and targets are being met. **i.** The local authority demonstrates a trend of improvement over time in delivering its strategic priorities.
BEST VALUE THEME: 4. Partnerships and collaborative working	

The public service landscape in Scotland requires local authorities to work in partnership with a wide range of national, regional and local agencies and interests across the public, third and private sectors.
A local authority should be able to demonstrate how it, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, provides effective leadership to meet local needs and deliver desired outcomes. It should demonstrate commitment to and understanding of the benefits gained by effective collaborative working and how this facilitates the achievement of strategic objectives.
Within joint working arrangements, Best Value cannot be measured solely on the performance of a single organisation in isolation from its partners. A local authority will be able to demonstrate how its partnership arrangements lead to the achievement of Best Value.

Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:
4.1 Members and senior managers have established and developed a culture that encourages collaborative working and service provision that will contribute to better and customer-focused outcomes. **4.2** Effective governance arrangements for Community Planning Partnerships and other partnerships and collaborative arrangements are in place, including structures with clear lines of responsibility and accountability, clear roles and responsibilities, and agreement around targets and milestones.	**a.** Members and senior managers actively encourage opportunities for formal and informal joint/integrated working, joint use of resources and joint funding arrangements, where these will offer scope for service improvement and better outcomes. **b.** The local authority is committed to working with partner organisations to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of its stakeholders and communities. This includes: • scenario planning with partners to identify opportunities to achieve Best Value • collaborative leadership to identify Best Value partnership solutions to achieve better outcomes for local people • proactively identifying opportunities to invest in and commit to shared services • integrated management of resources where appropriate • effective monitoring of collective performance, including self-assessment and reviews of the partnership strategy, to ensure the achievement of objectives • developing a joint understanding of all place-based capital and revenue expenditure **c.** Members and senior managers identify and address any impediments that inhibit collaborative working. The local authority and its partners develop a shared approach to evaluating the effectiveness of collaborative and integrated working. **d.** In undertaking its community planning duties the local authority works constructively with partners to agree a joint vision for the Community Planning Partnership and integrates shared priorities and objectives into its planning, performance management and public reporting mechanisms. Service plans clearly reflect the priorities identified through community planning and show how the local authority is working with partners to provide services that meet stakeholder and community needs.

BEST VALUE THEME: **5. Working with communities**
Local authorities, both individually and with their community planning partners, have a responsibility to ensure that people and communities are able to be fully involved in the decisions that affect their everyday lives. Community bodies - as defined in the Community Empowerment Act 2015 (section 4(9)) - must be at the heart of decision- making processes that agree strategic priorities and direction.

Evidence statements - in achieving	This means that:

Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	
5.1 Early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services. **5.2** A commitment to reducing inequalities and empowering communities to effect change and deliver better local outcomes. **5.3** That engagement with communities has influenced strategic planning processes, the setting of priorities and the development of locality plans.	**a.** Members and senior managers ensure that meaningful consultation and engagement in relation to strategic planning take place at an early stage and that the process of consultation and engagement is open, fair, and inclusive. **b.** Members and senior managers are proactive in identifying the needs of communities, citizens, customers, staff, and other stakeholders; plans, priorities and actions are demonstrably informed by an understanding of those needs. **c.** Communities are involved in making decisions about local services and are empowered to identify and help deliver the services that they need. Suitable techniques are in place to gather the views of citizens, and to assess and measure change in communities as a result of service interventions. **d.** Active steps are taken to encourage the participation of hard-to-reach communities. **e.** The local authority and its Community Planning Partnership work effectively with communities to improve outcomes and address inequalities. **f.** A locality-based approach to community planning has a positive impact on service delivery within communities and demonstrates the capacity for change and for reducing inequality in local communities by focusing on early intervention and prevention. **g.** Members and senior managers work effectively with partners and stakeholders to identify a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of communities in both the short and the longer term. The local authority and its partners are organised to deliver on those priorities, and clearly demonstrate that their approach ensures that the needs of their communities are being met. **h.** The local authority engages effectively with customers and communities by offering a range of communication channels, including innovative digital solutions and social media. **i.** The local authority plays an active role in civic life and supports community leadership.
BEST VALUE THEME: **6. Sustainability** Sustainable development is one of the two cross-cutting themes that a Best Value local authority should fully embrace across all of its activities. Sustainable development is commonly defined as securing a balance of social, economic, and environmental wellbeing in the impact of activities and decisions and seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/) provide a fuller definition and set out an internationally agreed performance framework for their achievement. Sustainable development is a fundamental part of Best Value. It should be reflected in a local authority's vision and strategic priorities, highlighted in all plans at corporate and service level, and a guiding principle for all of its activities. Every aspect of activity in a local authority, from planning to delivery and review, should contribute to achieving sustainable development.	
Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:

6.1 Sustainable development is reflected in its vision and strategic priorities. **6.2** Sustainable development considerations are embedded in its governance arrangements. **6.3** Resources are planned and used in a way that contributes to sustainable development. **6.4** Sustainable development is effectively promoted through partnership working.	**a.** Leaders create a culture throughout the local authority that focuses on sustainable development, with clear accountability for its delivery across the leadership and management team. **b.** There is a clear framework in place that facilitates the integration of sustainable development into all of the local authority's policies, financial plans, decision- making, services and activities through strategic-, corporate- and service-level action. In doing so, the local authority will be able to demonstrate that it is making a strategic and operational contribution to sustainable development. **c.** The local authority has set out clear guiding principles that demonstrate its, and its partners', commitment to sustainable development. **d.** There is a broad range of qualitative and quantitative measures and indicators in place to demonstrate the impact of sustainable development in relation to key economic, social, and environmental issues. **e.** Performance in relation to sustainable development is evaluated, publicly reported and scrutinised.

BEST VALUE THEME: **7. Fairness and equality**

Fairness and equality is one of the two cross-cutting themes that a Best Value local authority should fully embrace across all of its activities. Tackling poverty, reducing inequality, and promoting fairness, respect and dignity for all citizens should be key priorities for local authorities and all of their partners, including local communities.

Evidence statements - in achieving Best Value, a local authority will be able to demonstrate the following:	This means that:
7.1 That equality and equity considerations lie at the heart of strategic planning and service delivery. **7.2** A commitment to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and promoting good relations both within its own organisation and the wider community. **7.3** That equality, diversity and human rights are embedded in its vision and strategic direction and throughout all of its work, including its collaborative and integrated community planning and other partnership arrangements. **7.4** A culture that encourages equal opportunities and is working towards the elimination of discrimination.	**a.** The local authority demonstrates compliance with all statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights. **b.** The local authority is taking active steps to tackle inequalities and promote fairness across the organisation and its wider partnerships, including work and living conditions, education, and community participation. **c.** The local authority and its partners have an agreed action plan aimed at tackling inequality, poverty and addressing fairness issues identified in local communities. **d.** The local authority engages in open, fair, and inclusive dialogue to ensure that information on services and performance is accessible to all, and that every effort has been made to reach hard-to-reach groups and individuals. **e.** The local authority ensures that all employees are engaged in its commitment to equality and fairness outcomes, and that its contribution to the achievement of equality outcomes is reflected throughout its corporate processes. **f.** The local authority engages with and involves equality groups to improve and inform the development of relevant policies and practices and takes account of socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. **g.** The equality impact of policies and practices delivered through partnerships is always considered. Equality impact information and data is analysed when planning the delivery of services and measuring performance. **h.** The local authority's approach to securing continuous improvement in delivering on fairness and equality priorities and actions is regularly scrutinised and well evidenced.

Appendix B: Rolling review programme

The following table sets out the programme of self-evaluation exercises to be undertaken during 2021 and 2022 along with indicative timescales.

It should be noted that the Strategic Self-Evaluation Framework is designed to be strategic but lite touch, and consistent but flexible enough to ensure that self-evaluation exercises are specifically tailored to the function or activity being evaluated and designed within the context of that operating environment. For this reason a more detailed evaluation specification will be developed for each exercise following the scoping and preparation work undertaken by the council's Champion and Lead Facilitator(s).

The key are the bottom of the table (and the length of the coloured block) represents the commitment in time required from the various stakeholders in each self-evaluation exercise.

It is recognised that some ambition statements are cross cutting and, as such, these interconnections will be considered in the relevant self-evaluation.

Function or activity being evaluated	Focus of the assessment	Champion	Reporting in Cycle 4 2021			Reporting in Cycle 1 2022			Reporting in Cycle 2 2022			Reporting in Cycle 3 2022			Reporting in Cycle 4 2022		
			Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Ambition statements	Ambition statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Improve economic opportunities and outcomes	Head of Planning and Regeneration / Head of Housing Property and Projects															
Ambition statements	Ambition statements 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 - Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base	Head of Financial Solutions / Head of People and Organisational Development															
Ambition statements	Ambition statements 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 - Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities	Head of Housing Solutions / Head of Environmental Assets															
Ambition statements	Ambition statements 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 - Support all children and young people to	Head of Education (Central) / Head of Children,															

Function or activity being evaluated	Focus of the assessment	Champion	Reporting in Cycle 4 2021			Reporting in Cycle 1 2022			Reporting in Cycle 2 2022			Reporting in Cycle 3 2022			Reporting in Cycle 4 2022		
			Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
	realise their full potential	Families and Justice															
Ambition statements	Ambition statements 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 - Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities	Head of Education (North) / Head of Adult Social Work															
Strategic / corporate group	Data Governance Board (already underway)	Head of Business Solutions															
Strategic / corporate group	Corporate Management Team	Chief Executive															
Strategic / corporate group	Community Boards	Head of Regulatory Services and Waste Solutions															
Corporate project	Project Management Model (self-evaluation exercise is part of a wider review, so reporting timeframe extended)	Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions															
Corporate approach	CIPFA Financial Management Code	Head of Legal and Democratic Solutions															
Corporate approach	Health and social care integration joint boards (IJBs)	Head of Performance, Planning, and Quality Assurance															

Key:

Management of the processes / Lead Facilitator Strategy and Performance Manager, Business Solutions	***Champion*** Member of the Corporate Management Team	***Assessment team*** Cross service / function representatives	***Strategic oversight*** CMT
Independent Facilitator Project / Programme Manager, Improvement Service			

Ambition Statements:

1. Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth.
2. Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities.
3. Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure.
4. Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit.
5. Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire's economy.
6. Raise attainment and skills for learning, life, and work to enhance opportunities and choices.
7. Enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe.
8. Engage children and families in early learning and childcare programmes and making positive transitions to school.
9. Invest in early interventions, positive transitions, and preventative approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people.
10. Engage with children, young people, parents, carers, and families to help all children and young people reach their full potential.
11. Increase economic opportunities for adults by understanding, identifying, and addressing the causes of poverty and deprivation and barriers to financial inclusion.
12. Ensure our residents are able to achieve, maintain, and recover their independence through appropriate supports at home and in their communities.
13. Improve preventative approaches including self-management and giving people information and choice over supports and services.
14. Ensure the highest standards of public protection.
15. Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities.
16. Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations.
17. Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive.
18. Ensure our digital transformation is responsive to all people's needs and enables access to the services they need.
19. Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves.
20. Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions, and development of services and supports, that affect them.
21. Continue to identify and access opportunities to leverage additional resources to support our ambitions.
22. Facilitate a North Lanarkshire wide approach to asset rationalisation, including with communities and partners.
23. Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition.
24. Review and design services around people, communities, and shared resources.
25. Ensure intelligent use of data and information to support fully evidence based decision making and future planning.