



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Joint Report by Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

PURPOSE OF REPORT To provide an update on the work of the Continuous Improvement Sub-Committee.

COMPETENCE

- 1.1 There are no legal, financial, equality or other constraints to the recommendations being implemented.

SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting on 11 February 2015, the Comhairle considered a Report suggesting a revised approach to Continuous Improvement which proposed a move from the self-evaluation of *How Good is our Council?* to the self-assessment framework of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) adopted by most Scottish local authorities to facilitate benchmarking. The Comhairle agreed this approach and also agreed to apply programme and project management principles to the delivery of the Comhairle's efficiency agenda. The Continuous Improvement Sub-Committee applies project management principles and performs a scrutiny role on behalf of the Comhairle.
- 2.2 The Sub-Committee received training in the PSIF model of self-assessment from the Improvement Service in April 2015 and Project Management training from CIPFA in August 2015. The Sub Committee held its second business meeting on 25 January 2016 and the minute appears as a concurrent item details of the issues discussed are provided in the body of the Report.
- 2.3 A key stage has been reached in relation to scrutiny of the Comhairle's budget efficiency programme with a number of elements within work packages and some work packages as a whole being categorised as amber. An updated risk report was considered at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 7 September 2016 and this risk report is the subject of a concurrent report to this Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
- (a) **note that the self-assessment exercise on Criterion 4(b)2 'Managing Financial Resources' has concluded with a recommendation for the development of Interplan's risk management module to incorporate departmental operational risk registers for improved monitoring and reporting;**
 - (b) **note that the Sub-Committee has considered Project Highlight Reports in relation to year 1 efficiency projects (2016/17) and considered work packages for year 2 efficiency projects (2017/18);**
 - (c) **note that the Sub-Committee received a presentation in relation to the Carbon Management Tool as requested at the meeting of 18 May 2016; and**
 - (d) **note progress in relation to the time recording and door security project.**

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SELF - ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The Sub Committee considered a Report in relation to the progress and conclusion of the latest self-assessment exercise. The cross cutting theme of 'Managing Financial Resources' was approved as a self-assessment to be undertaken in 2016/17 using PSIF and it is closely related to the themes explored by the Accounts Commission. This was selected as an overarching corporate theme to provide insight into how departments are preparing to deliver services with the ongoing challenge of reducing budgets. It also explores how risk assessment is being incorporated into the evaluation of option appraisals.
- 4.2 The final PSIF Report identified risks relating to service delivery particularly the effect on the quality of service delivery and the ability to perform statutory functions. Controls that are being considered to mitigate these risks include service review and redesign and continuous monitoring and reporting. The review also found that services ensure employees are sufficiently skilled to meet the changing demands of the service through corporate policies, such as the staff development and appraisal process; training plans; skills gap analysis & workforce planning and also a programme of development, including partnership working.
- 4.3 The review highlighted that an increased focus on business plan actions may have to be taken resulting in less time being spent on other ad-hoc activities.
- 4.4 Based on the information received through the self-assessment exercise, taking account of the evidenced strengths and weaknesses, the area for recommended improvement is focused on the development of Interplan's risk management module to incorporate departmental operational risk registers for improved monitoring and reporting.
- 4.5 The next self-assessment exercise approved for 2016/17 is Criterion 3 'Measuring Employee Performance'.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Sub-Committee considered Project Highlight Reports for year 1 (2016/17) and year 2 (2017/18) projects of the Budget Efficiency Programme with specific focus on the updated risk assessment associated with each of the projects. The Sub-Committee considered the implications of those projects highlighted as being unlikely to deliver the required savings, Streamlining Community Support; Consultancy and Insourcing; and Surplus Assets. It was proposed that further improvement projects would be required to ensure budget efficiency targets were met.
- 5.2 The Sub-Committee received a presentation in relation to the Carbon Management Tool as requested at the meeting of 18 May 2016. The presentation aimed to inform discussion on the utilities project, which is required to make a 10% efficiency saving by 2018. The presentation highlighted that although the Comhairle has reduced its carbon management emissions and is projected to reduce carbon emissions further, this does not necessarily equate to a reduction in utilities costs.
- 5.3 The Sub-Committee finally noted that the Time Recording and Security System project had progressed with system configuration, training and testing however there has been time slippage regarding the purchase and printing of new cards.