



**SELF ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Report by Chief Executive

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform the Comhairle of the completion of the Self-Assessment of Information Management using Audit Scotland Best Value Toolkits.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Based on corporate needs going forward and in anticipation of the Comhairle's Audit of Best Value the current programme of self-assessments for 2019/20 were adapted to include Audit Scotland's Best Value toolkits whilst still following the PSIF ethos. The full programme of 18 themed self-assessments have now been rolled out across the Comhairle, some of which apply to only one service area whilst others are cross cutting.
- 2.2 The self-assessments relating to Information Management has now been completed. Overall the evidence indicates that acceptable standards are being achieved.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
  - (a) **note the responsible persons and timescales in the Appendix to the Report; and**
  - (b) **approves the recommendations detailed in paragraph 8.1.**

Contact Officer: Carmen Macdonald, Organisational Development Officer  
Appendix: BVAR Self-Assessment Recommendation Summary  
Background Papers: None

## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Financial	The Comhairle is under a legal duty to set a balanced budget and in doing so must plan to secure best value.
Legal	Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 , to plan to secure Best Value.  The Comhairle has a statutory duty of community planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
Staffing	There are no staffing implications associated with this Report
Assets and Property	There are no asset and property implications associated with this Report
<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Risk	There are no risk implications associated with this Report
Equalities	In achieving Best Value, the Comhairle must be able to demonstrate compliance with all statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.
Corporate Strategy	By use of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) since 2015, the Internal Strategy and Organisational Change Team provide a robust approach to continuous improvement to support performance management and continuous improvement through business planning to work towards the outcome of strategic priority <i>“4.1.1 - The Comhairle has achieved a systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness that aligns strategy, people and processes and the service provided is high quality, continually improving and cost effective.”</i>  Under the Corporate Strategy 2020-2022: Recovery and Renewal, the Comhairle aims <i>“to promote and support community ownership, empowerment and resilience, capitalising on our natural and cultural assets, to improve population stability and balance”</i> .
Environmental Impact	There are no environmental impact implications associated with this Report
Consultation	There are no consultation implications associated with this Report

## BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The statutory duty of Best Value was introduced by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Best Value is about ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. Audit Scotland developed Best Value toolkits, although primarily designed as an audit tool, they are recognised as a useful tool when carrying out organisation reviews and provide a set of questions against which an organisation can assess its Best Value arrangements.
- 5.2 Based on corporate needs going forward and in anticipation of the Comhairle’s Audit of Best Value the current programme of self-assessments for 2019/20 was adapted to include Audit Scotland’s Best Value toolkits whilst still following the PSIF ethos. The full programme of 18 themed self-assessments have now been rolled out across the Comhairle, some of which apply to only one service area whilst others are cross cutting.
- 5.3 A total of 14 self-assessments have now been completed; the Appendix to the Report provides a full summary of the resulting recommendations. A recurring corporate theme is emerging relating to the

Comhairle's ability to demonstrate outcomes and impacts for service users. This area for improvement is links to several recommendations and should be a corporate priority moving forward.

- 5.4 The current programme of self-assessments supports organisational wide continuous improvements at a strategical level. Services are encouraged to continue this work by developing an operational and systematic approach to monitoring and evidencing best value out with the corporate programme of self-assessments.
- 5.5 As part of the roll out an inter-departmental Best Value Action Plan (BVAP) working group was established with the aim of supporting the identification of readily available high-level corporate evidence. Members of the BVAP working group are liaising with Directors and Heads of Service to collate information. In order to streamline the process a specific online shared drive has been created to support the storing and sharing of information. The Organisational Development Team provide support and guidance as required.

## **DETAIL**

- 6.1 The theme of Information Management aims to evaluate how well public bodies manage the information they hold and how effective internal information system are. The theme comprises of three high level questions both with seven sub question. The key findings are detailed below under the relevant subheadings.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### Is the importance of information management recognised by management and members?

- 7.1 The first set of questions aim to identify if the importance of information management is recognised by management and members. The importance of information management is recognised across the Comhairle. There is a named Data Protection Officer, and an Information Security Management Group has been formed comprising of several senior members of staff.
- 7.2 There is an overarching ICT Strategy in place in addition to an Information Security Policy, Records Management Policy and a Security Policy for Laptops and Portable Devices.
- 7.3 Challenge on information management is undertaken across levels of management, through the employee forum, during Internal Audit reviews in addition the formal Committee Structure evidences a further level of independent challenge.

### Are information systems secure and maintained?

- 7.4 The second set of questions aims to identify how information systems are maintained and how secure they are. There is an Information Security Policy and a Records Management Policy in place which set out the responsibilities relating to information security. Information inventories do exist but tend to be maintained at a departmental level rather than corporately.
- 7.5 The importance and legalities relating to data protection is covered in the staff induction procedure. Information Security training is available to all employees. Authorisation procedures are in place to ensure that employee have the relevant level of authorisation on corporate information systems.
- 7.6 Data is backed up on a nightly basis and held for 6 months in an offsite data centre. Business Continuity plans are in place to meet the organisations disaster recovery requirements. Risk registers are also completed at service level across the organisation.

### Does information management and technology support effective service delivery?

- 7.7 The third set of questions aims to identify how information management and technology support effective service delivery. Information is shared across the organisation and with stakeholders as required and in line with the required legal standards. Performance is monitored on a regular basis with progress reports submitted to Committee quarterly.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Based on the information received through this self-assessment exercise and taking account of the evidenced strengths and weaknesses, it is recommended that the priority area for corporate improvement focuses on refreshing the ICT Strategy and thereafter reviewing the effects the change from office to home working environments may have on information security to ensure the integrity of corporate information in a home working environment moving forward.
- 8.2 It is also recommended that an area for future development include reviewing methods to further develop employee training to raise awareness of the importance of, and legal requirements relating to, information security.