

WORKING WITH PARTNERS  
AND COMMUNITIES TO  
MAKE LIFE BETTER



# Service and Improvement Plan 2017 - 2018

Legal and Democratic Services



## **Legal and Democratic Services' Service and Improvement Plan 2017-18**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Legal and Democratic Services' Service and Improvement Plan covers the period 2017-18 and sets out what we intend to achieve over the next year based on the financial and other resources available to us.
- 1.2 This plan identifies anticipated challenges for the coming year and how we aim to meet them. It sets out the Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategic outcomes as they relate to Legal and Democratic Services, and assesses how well we have performed in delivering our objectives in the past using the 'How Good Is Our Council?' framework as a self-evaluation toolkit. This information is then used to formulate actions and measures to track both service delivery and improvement. We have agreed challenging targets for the service in order to continuously improve the way we work and to take account of the views and needs of our customers.
- 1.3 Although the next year present challenges, by planning and monitoring our progress we aim to contribute to the achievement of the Council's Plan 2016-18 and the Single Outcome Agreement 2013/23.

### **2. Profile**

- 2.1 Legal and Democratic Services continues to provide advice and support to Elected Members, Services and the Council, through a range of support services, and also provides certain front-facing services, to deliver the Council's agreed strategic objectives, as detailed below:
  - Legal services and advice for Council and all Services.
  - Licensing services to the public (Liquor, Gambling and Civic Government).
  - Democratic and committee services, covering all Council meetings, Panel meetings and working groups.
  - Support for Elected Members, including the Civic Office.
  - Responsibility for County Buildings, including the mail room and the print room.
  - Management of Elections.
  - Records and information management and security, including corporate responsibility for Freedom of Information, Data Protection and complaints.
  - Registration of births, deaths and marriages.
  - Ayrshire Archives and Council archives, including the public facility at Auchincruive.
  - The Scottish Local Family History Centre, based at the Town Hall.
  - Strategic procurement, including support for procurement across all Council services and governance of all Council and collaborative procurement.
- 2.2 These services are provided within an overall net revenue budget for the service of £3.2million for 2017-18, and are delivered utilising a workforce of 77 FTE. Further details of the revenue budget are set out within Appendix 3.

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### **3. How are we doing?**

3.1 As a Council we are working to implement the 'How Good is our Council' framework' and over the last year this has continued to be reflected within our Leadership Engagement events. During 2016-17 each service made a robust evaluation of two of the Quality Indicators (QIs) within the framework, namely QI 2.1 Impacts on Service Users and QI 5.4 Improving the quality of services to stakeholders. The 2015-16 evaluation against Q1.1 Improvements in Performance has also been reviewed and revised. The overall evaluations against each of these QIs and the supporting narrative summaries are set out below:

#### **3.2 QI 1.1 Improvements in performance: Evaluation – Good**

- Recognising that there are diverse services areas across the Legal and Democratic Service, and that some areas are further ahead than others in terms of gathering data on which to base self-evaluation, our self-assessment of our improvements in performance is that we are currently "Good" in this area. All teams are actively considering suitable new key performance indicators to measure future service performance going forward.
- The Procurement team completed the 2016 Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme and scored in the highest band possible for a local authority in Scotland. This external assessment result highlights the improvements made within the last 12 months to build on the service that is provided.
- Legal Services have made progress towards developing a performance management strategy for the Legal Service that will set clear aims and objectives tied to the wider ambitions of the Council. Also recently completed the third annual client satisfaction survey, and the results continue to demonstrate a high level of performance and clear improvement against local targets set in our Service Improvement Plan.
- Information collected for Licensing Services continues to clearly show a very high level in service performance. A positive trend against these performance measures can be identified and indicates continued improvement in service delivery.

#### **3.3 QI 2.1 Impacts on Service Users: Evaluation - Good**

- Recognising that there are diverse services areas across the Legal and Democratic Service, and that some areas are further ahead than others in terms of gathering data on which to base self-evaluation, our self-assessment of our impact on service users is that we are currently "Good" in this area. All teams are actively developing existing feedback mechanisms or in the process of creating new ones and are reviewing feedback to improve service delivery. Reviews of processes that impact service users as well as monitoring performance are widely used across Legal and Democratic Service.
- The Procurement team utilises a tendering process which promotes fair and equal treatment for all suppliers and also provides a consistent approach regarding internal service users. There is also a process for advertising and monitoring both low and higher value contracts that is applied consistently to all departments within the Council – this is done through Public Contracts Scotland website.
- Procurement also make use of a contract and supplier management process that collates the views of stakeholders both internally and externally to ensure compliance and customer satisfaction. This enables us to capture view and drive improvements in the services we receive from contractors and suppliers.
- In Legal Services service users are given an opportunity each year (2014 and 2015) to express their views and feedback on the level and areas of service provided by Legal. 98% of service users in 2015 were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall standard of legal services provided (up from 91% in 2014).

## **Legal and Democratic Services' Service and Improvement Plan 2017-18**

- Service users are kept up to date in relation to services that are provided by Legal, and are encouraged to actively feed in to the development of our Service area in order to ensure that needs across the Council are being met. The feedback from service focus groups, given in respect of the range and value of services provided by Legal, is very positive.
- On top of the South Ayrshire Way standards that are common across the Council, the Legal Service has identified key areas of service performance for on-going monitoring. Legal Services are developing processes with managers from key client groups with a view to monitoring and maintaining the quality of our service delivery, in addition to joint evaluation of inter-service working relationships and identifying areas for improvement.

### **3.4 Q15.4 Improving the quality of services to stakeholders: Evaluation - Good**

- Performance against aims, objectives and targets is formally evaluated at 6 monthly SIP progress update meetings across Legal and Democratic Services. Areas of under-performance or those requiring attention are identified and feed in to future improvement work. We are developing an increased culture of on-going review and challenge, which is supported by our self-evaluation practices and the work we have undertaken in relation to HGIOC.
- In Procurement the team make use of a Lessons learned shared document – kept as a master file accessible to all who could benefit from it e.g. how a particular tender exercise was conducted – what would be done better next time around. This document serves as a list of improvement points for the service and what actions are taken to implement these improvements. The most recent score for the Procurement & Commercial Improvement Assessment was 70% - the highest banding possible for a local authority and was a reflection of these improvements.
- Making use of and monitoring Key Performance Indicators as well as recording actions in relation to these indicators ensure that service levels are maintained at a high level. Regular status update reports are circulated to stakeholders and both individual and stakeholder meetings are arranged where appropriate.
- Participation in external assessments and benchmarking exercises helps the Legal and Democratic service to monitor the standard of service delivery with an external view point as well as feedback gathered internally. These assessments and exercises allow a comparison to with other participating authorities.

3.5 Areas identified for improvement are being taken forward both within this Service and Improvement Plan, within the supporting Team Plans and through the Performance and Development Review process. The following is a brief summary of key areas for improvement from this latest evaluation which have been prioritised within the Legal and Democratic Service:-

- Roll out policies, best practice and guidance notes in all areas of the Public Records (Scotland) Act
- Keep working practices for delivery of services under review and adapt as necessary in line with feedback from our teams and service users, as well as from our observation of practices within other service areas and local authorities
- Identify additional key performance indicators within all services

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### **4. The challenges we face.**

4.1 The challenges we face as a Council and a Partnership have been explored in detail within the Council's Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement.

4.2 The principal challenges we face as a service over the course of this plan are:

#### ***External***

- Health and Social Care integration and other public sector reform will generate changes to our current working practices and provision of support to other services.
- Changes to legislation including Registration legislation, Alcohol and Civic Government Licensing legislation and Procurement legislation will occur throughout the life of this plan. These will require to be responded to throughout the life of the plan.
- Implementation of the Public Records (Scotland) Act will require the creation, and submission to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland, of a Council Records Management Plan which will have implications for records management across all Council services.
- Changes in legislation for the conduct of elections and referendums following review by the Law Commission.

#### ***Internal***

- Supporting the delivery of alternative service delivery models – for example, shared services, leisure trust, etc.
- The Registration and Archives service will be required to relocate whilst maintaining an internal service to client departments and delivering a front line Archives and Registration service.
- Responding to the requirements, priorities and timescales of other Council services.

#### ***Opportunities***

- To improve the standards of record keeping across the organisation which in turn will improve efficiencies, reduce costs and provide re-assurance to the wider community.
  - To build on the previous successful joint working with tourism, culture and heritage colleagues, to increase revenue.
  - Peer support opportunities to assist in developing service support (for example, election management and public sector reform)
- 4.3 Our responses to these challenges and our review of how we are currently doing are reflected in our detailed planning to deliver on the Council's Strategic Outcomes.

## 5. Council Vision, Strategic Objectives and Strategic Outcomes

5.1 As a Council we are committed to our vision of **“Working with our partners and communities to make life better in South Ayrshire”**.

5.2 The Council's strategic objectives are that **we will work in partnership to maximise the potential of:**

- **Our local economy**
- **Our young people**
- **Our adults and older people**
- **Our communities**
- **Our environment; and**
- **Improve the way that we work as a Council.**

5.3 In pursuit of these, we will directly contribute towards the achievement of the following strategic outcomes:

- Tourism, culture and heritage opportunities are developed and promoted;
- People feel safer;
- Procurement, including commissioning of services and contract and supplier management, that delivers best value;
- Transformational change and improvement driven by a performance improvement culture and self-evaluation, with all services systematically reviewed using a standard methodology every 5 years;
- Information and communications systems and processes that support efficient delivery of front facing and back office services with a focus on digital delivery; and
- Governance arrangements that provide an effective framework for decision making and scrutiny.

## 6. Detailed Plan

6.1 How we intend to contribute to the Council Strategic Outcomes is set out in the detail in tabular form at the end of this document, where we set out the key actions that we intend to take forward and the performance measures and targets that we will use to evaluate our progress.

6.2 These have been specified and sequenced in a manner that will allow us to work effectively and efficiently, making the best use of the resources available to us. They include the improvement activity we have prioritised from our self evaluation and the review activity that we are committed to as part of the Council's systematic review of all services.

6.3 They have also taken account of the following aspects that inform our decision making and help ensure that we take account of the context in which we operate, reflecting what could impact on our plans and what could enrich and add value to how we take them forward:

- **Risk Management** – Risk registers underpin the achievement of the Council's Strategic Outcomes and the pursuit of service specific issues. These help to evaluate and assess the risks we face in delivering our plans, and help us to identify and progress mitigating actions to help ensure their successful delivery. A service specific risk register is in place in support of this plan and is updated on a quarterly basis.

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- **Equalities** – In pursuing our strategies, plans and policies, we undertake Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that we are aware of the equalities impacts, seeking to optimise them and identifying mitigations and further research and actions where necessary.
- **Sustainability** - In pursuing our strategies, plans and policies, we consider the extent to which what we wish to pursue is sustainable and undertake Strategic Environmental Assessments where required.
- **Consultation** – We look to engage with the community and service users in developing our services and plans, and are committed to following best practice as identified within the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

### **7. Resource Management**

- 7.1 Crucial to the achievement of this plan will be ensuring that the appropriate resources are in place to deliver the services and commitments it contains, and that these resources are managed effectively within agreed the agreed budgets and parameters set for them.
- 7.2 The Revenue Budget for the service for 2017-18 is set out in Appendix 3, including specific efficiency and service review commitments that will be delivered over the course of the year.
- 7.3 Particular attention will also be paid to 'continuing to improve procurement', an initial commitment to this having been the identification of a schedule for the service of all those contracts that will require action over the course of the plan.

### **Governance**

- 8.1 This Service and Improvement Plan will be subject to approval by Members as part of the agreement of the Council Plan. Progress will be updated through Covalent on a quarterly basis to allow review and formal reporting. It will inform the Council's year end Annual Performance Report and Public Performance Reporting.

### **Appendices:**

- 1 Detailed Plan Format
- 2 Glossary of terminology and abbreviations used in the Plan
- 3 Revenue Budget for 2017-18, including efficiency and service review commitments

## Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

### 1 Working in partnership to maximise the potential of our local economy

#### SO1.5 Tourism, culture and heritage opportunities are developed and promoted

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD 1 Increase the non statutory income earned by the Registration and Archives Service by building on the previous success of joint working with colleagues in tourism, culture and heritage.</b>	LD 1.2 Relocate the registration and archives services into the same premises to improve the Scottish Local Family History Centre.	Wynne Carlaw	31-Mar-2018	31-Mar-2019	20%	

### 4 Working in partnership to maximise the potential of our communities

#### SO4.2 People feel safer

Key Performance Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16 Scottish Ave	2016/17	2016/17	2017/18
	Value	Value		Value	Target	Target
SO4.2 22 Percentage of civic licences granted under delegated powers, issued within 6 weeks of the application	97%	96%	N/A	93%	95%	95%
SO4.2 23 Percentage of reviews regarding personal licences/premises licence heard within 42 days of receipt	100%	100%	N/A	100%	90%	90%
SO4.2 24 Percentage of applications received online	16%	11%	N/A	16%	25%	25%
SO4.2 35 Percentage of taxis failing taxi safety inspection	N/A	N/A	N/A	6%	5%	5%
SO4.2 36 Number of reviews at Regulatory Panel following three failures of the taxi safety inspection	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	3	2

## Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

### 6 Improve the way that we work as a Council

#### SO6.2 Procurement, including commissioning of services and contract and supplier management, that delivers Best Value

Key Performance Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17	2017/18
	Value	Value	Scottish Ave	Value	Target	Target
SO6.2 01 Council's score against the Procurement & Commercial Improvement Programme	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>70%</b>	N/A	70%
SO6.2 02 The percentage of new Council contracts actively influenced by procurement professional	N/A	67%	N/A	<b>74%</b>	70%	70%
SO6.2 03 Percentage of contracts awarded to organisations located within South Ayrshire	34%	34%	N/A	<b>23%</b>	38%	40%
SO6.2 04 LGBF % of procurement spent on local small/medium enterprises	20.5%	17.5%	20.1% 	N/A	20%	22.5%
SO6.2 06 Number of contracts awarded which contain a community benefit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	15
SO6.2 07 Achievement of corporate procurement savings target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£187,000	£187,000

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD 5 Ensure corporate procurement processes are in line with the Procurement Journey</b>	LD 5.1 Embed corporate processes for procurement including contract management	Zoe Fance	31-Dec-2015	31-Dec-2018	50%	
<b>LD 7 Further development of the centre led procurement model</b>	LD 7.1 Create and implement a new procurement structure aligned to service activities	Ralph Riddiough	31-Dec-2016	31-Jul-2017	80%	

## Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

### SO6.5 Transformational change and improvement driven by a performance improvement culture and self-evaluation, with all services systematically reviewed using a standard methodology every five years;

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD 8 Service Reviews - Legal and Democratic Services</b>	LD 8.6 Implementation of Service Review of Democratic Services	Ralph Riddiough	30-Sep-2016	30-Jun-2017	75%	
	LD 8.7 Implementation of Service Review of Legal Services	Ralph Riddiough	30-Sep-2016	30-Jun-2017	75%	
	LD 8.8 Implementation of Service Review of Strategic Procurement	Ralph Riddiough	31 Jul-2017			

### SO6.7 The council's resources are effectively used to transform and deliver customer focused services

Key Performance Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17	2017/18
	Value	Value	Scottish Ave	Value	Target	Target
SO6.8 01 Percentage of registration of births, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships with no errors	99.65%	99.61%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
SO6.8 02 Percentage of customers satisfied with civil marriages/partnership ceremonies	100%	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
SO6.8 10 Percentage of its internal business partners that are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall standard of service provided by the Legal Services team	91%	98%	N/A	100%	93%	94%

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD 9 Ensure legal compliance and efficient use of resources through effective records management</b>	LD 9.3 Roll out policies, best practice and guidance notes in all areas of the Public Records (Scotland) Act	Wynne Carlaw	31-Mar-2018			
<b>LD10 Ensure the provision of supportive and accurate registration service.</b>	LD10.3 Continue to undertake reviews of the appointment system regularly to ensure customer needs are met and staff have time to ensure accuracy	Wynne Carlaw	31-Mar-2018			
<b>LD11 Ensure the provision of a customer orientated service in the provision of civil marriages / partnership ceremonies.</b>	LD11.3 Continue to review survey forms and results and take forward improvements as appropriate and feasible	Wynne Carlaw	31-Mar-2018			

## Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD12 Ensure the Legal Services team adds value to its internal business partners</b>	LD12.2 Review and implement responses from client satisfaction survey.	Karen Briggs	30-Sep-2017			

### SO6.9 Governance arrangement that provide an effective framework for decision making and scrutiny.

Key Performance Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17	2017/18
	Value	Value	Scottish Ave	Value	Target	Target
SO6.9 01 Percentage of Elected Members agreeing that they have good access to training and development opportunities	67%	N/A	N/A	<b>65%</b>	90%	95%
SO6.9 02 Percentage of Freedom Of Information requests responded to within 20 days of receipt	81%	91%	N/A	N/A	92%	94%
SO6.9 03 Percentage of Subject Access Requests responded to within 40 days of receipt (individuals seeking information held about them under the Data Protection Act)	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A	80%	85%
SO6.9 04 LGBF Corporate and democratic core costs per 1,000 population	£29,411	£33,817	£29,978 	N/A	£29,978	£29,978

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD13 Support Elected Members to fulfil their democratic and leadership role</b>	LD13.3 Continue to develop the Members' portal and systems to manage Members' enquiries to allow full roll out.	Alison Nelson	30-May-2017	30-May-2018	20%	
	LD13.4 Undertake a review of feedback responses from 2017/18 development sessions with a view to improving future programmes, topics and the approach to their provision.	Wynne Carlaw	31-Jan-2018			
<b>LD14 Continue to improve the standards achieved by the Council in relation to FOI requests</b>	LD14.3 Undertake further staff training and awareness of FOI process	Philomena Wilkes	31-Mar-2018			
<b>LD15 Continue to improve the standards achieved by the Council in relation to Subject Access Requests (individuals seeking information held about them under the Data Protection Act)</b>	LD15.3 Undertake further staff training and awareness of Data Protection processes	Philomena Wilkes	31-Mar-2018			
<b>LD16 Deliver effective management of elections on behalf of the Returning Officer</b>	LD 16.3 Deliver the Local Government Election on 4 May 2017	Wynne Carlaw	30-Nov-2017			

## Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
<b>LD17 Regularly review the Council's governance arrangements</b>	LD17.5 Advise and support the Council in relation to the review of its current scrutiny arrangements	Valerie Andrews	30-Jun-2017			
	LD17.6 Undertake annual review of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation	Ralph Riddiough	30-Jun-2018			

## Appendix 2: Glossary of terminology and abbreviations used in the Plan

Term or abbreviation	Explanation
<b>Best Value</b>	The duty of Best Value in Public Services places a statutory duty on local authorities to: Make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and in making those arrangements and securing that balance, Have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements, and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development
<b>EIA</b>	Equality Impact Assessment. A Council agreed approach used to assess the impacts of strategies, plans and policies.
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information (FOI) - The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 give people rights to access information held by Scottish public authorities. Individuals can request any recorded information, in any form and of any age, and all public authorities must respond to these requests.
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent. Used in relation to counting employee numbers.
<b>HGIOC</b>	'How Good is Our Council?' Self-evaluation toolkit based on European Foundation for Quality Management principles.
<b>LGBF</b>	The Local Government Benchmarking Framework brings together a range of information about how all Scottish councils perform, including the cost of services and how satisfied citizens are with them, which is published annually. The framework uses specific indicators to measure how organisations are performing
<b>SAC</b>	South Ayrshire Council
<b>Scheme of Delegation</b>	South Ayrshire Councils Scheme of Delegation details the decision making structure and operational requirements of the Council.
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is of part of the Community Planning Process whereby the Community Planning Partners, including local authorities, agree the strategic priorities for their local area. Partners then deliver these priorities, individually or jointly, focussing on agreed outcomes.
<b>SME's</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are businesses whose personnel numbers fall below certain limits
<b>Standing Orders</b>	Standing Orders are the written rules which regulate the proceedings of the Council.
<b>Procurement &amp; Commercial Improvement Programme</b>	Procurement & Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) is part of the Scottish Governments public procurement reform agenda and guides how local authorities undertake procurement of goods and services

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Term or abbreviation	Explanation
<b>PRSA</b>	Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 - Under the Act Scottish public authorities must produce and submit a records management plan setting out proper arrangements for the management of the organisations records to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland for his agreement.
<b>Quick Quote</b>	Quick Quote is an online request for quotation facility used on Public Contracts Scotland (the single electronic portal where suppliers can bid for public service contracts). It is used to obtain competitive quotes for low value/low risk procurement exercises or procurement mini competitions within framework agreements from suppliers who are registered on the website.

<b>Service Expenditure subjective analysis Legal and Democratic Services</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
Employee costs	3,591,728
Property costs	145,664
Supplies & services costs	195,461
Transport costs	50,597
Administrative costs	420,071
Support Service Costs	0
Payments to agencies & other bodies	25,628
Transfer payments	0
Financing costs	0
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>4,429,149</b>
Income	1,181,169
<b>NET SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,247,980</b>
The service revenue budget is inclusive of additional investment of:	0
The service revenue budget is inclusive of efficiency measures of:	128,894