WORKING WITH PARTNERS
AND COMMUNITIES TO
MAKE LIFE BETTER

south AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Service and Improvement Plan
2017 - 2018

Policy and Performance

Appendix 1: Detailed Service and Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 The Policy and Performance 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 how the Service relates to the Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategic outcomes 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 presents 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 The Policy and Performance Service is responsible for:
- Strategy and Research
- Equalities
- Performance Management
- Public Affairs including internal and external communications
- Intranet, and website
- Graphic design, branding and marketing
- Business Improvement
- Programme Management Office

2.2 Policy and Performance is a central support service within the Chief Executive's Office that works collaboratively across every Council service.

2.3 We work to support colleagues to deliver the best possible services, ensuring they have the research and intelligence to inform decision-making; a quality performance management framework to monitor performance and ensure we deliver best value; and the advice, guidance and support to help them mainstream equalities and meet their statutory duties.

2.4 We also support improvement and transformation across the Council, providing strategic change and project management support as required; and help shape and deliver the Council's key messages and communications to protect and enhance the Council's brand, image and reputation.

2.5 These services are provided within an overall net revenue budget for the service of approximately £0.9million for 2017/18, and are delivered utilising a workforce of 26 FTE. Further details of the revenue budget are set out within Appendix 3.

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.

3.2 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:

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3.3 **QI 1.1 Improvements in performance: Evaluation – Good**

- Performance information for Policy and Performance demonstrates significant progress against all identified improvement projects, the implementation of the Communications Strategy and almost all of our Service Improvement Plan objectives, despite limited quantitative data. Further work needs to be undertaken to develop additional quantitative and qualitative data to support the triangulation of evidence and to demonstrate trends.

- The service has successfully supported - on a collective basis - a wide variety of projects and initiatives such as the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the ongoing Review of Residential Care for Older People. There has been input from all elements of the service and improved joint working across the service to maximise the support provided and to help service colleagues achieve the best possible outcomes.

- The Business Improvement Team have completed 19 projects of various sizes, identifying cost avoidances of over £2.5 million during its two year programme. A new cohort is currently being recruited to support the Transform South Ayrshire programme and Services.

- The Council website achieved an increased rating of 3 stars in the most recent SOCITM report through the action plan implemented by the web team. The website also recorded a number of significant successes in recent months with the introduction of dedicated web sections for major events such as The 145th Open at Royal Troon and the Scottish International Airshow, which generated significant traffic to the Council and partner websites. These included, for the first time, the use of traffic and travel 'storymaps', which were viewed more than 15,000 times between these two events and were considered an innovative and effective way to communicate this important information.

- The introduction of new formats for the weekly communication emails to staff and elected members, together with the revised format of the online Chief Executive's update and briefings for elected members, have all generated positive feedback.

- Relationships with media contacts are increasingly positive, helping to enhance the Council's profile and increasing the level of uptake of positive, proactive news releases, which exceeded their target and showed year-on-year growth.

- Performance reporting on SIPs and the Council Plan has been simplified and enhanced through exception reporting and the introduction of the web browser version of Covalent. There is greater awareness amongst officers of the importance of narrative standards and the significance of evaluatory updates within the Council's performance framework.

- The positive contribution of research continues to grow, as seen in the update of the South Ayrshire Profile, support to the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the on-going development of the corporate research group.

- Our provision of Equality Impact Assessment training to 50 staff throughout the Council was positively evaluated, as has been the fortnightly information provided to services through the Equalities Champions network. These have both helped to ensure that the Council considers equality impacts within decision-making processes. A member seminar on Transgender issues, which was part of a series of events that we arranged, was also positively evaluated. The seminar enabled the Council to demonstrate leadership in promoting awareness of challenges faced by people with protected characteristics.

- The Council's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Reports 2015-2016 demonstrated improved opportunities for people to participate in shaping services; improved knowledge and understanding of diversity crime and gender-based violence; improved accessibility to Council buildings and public spaces; and improved opportunities for people to access services and participate in community life.

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3.4 **QI 2.1 Impacts on Service Users: Evaluation - Good**

- Internal service users are well informed, advised and supported through the provision of a wide range of communication, equalities, performance and research services.

- Communications are delivered through an increasing range of media, helping to engage with a wide range of audiences and accommodating a diversity of requirements.

- However, the extent to which service users actually feel that they have fair and equal access to our services is not known.

- Levels of satisfaction with our services are generally high, as evidenced through surveys, for example 72% of Councillors agreed that they get good information on service performance, and through positive feedback from services, senior officers and external agencies on specific reports, initiatives, projects and workshops.

- However, only 32% of residents feel the Council is good at communicating services, compared to a Scottish average of 46%, showing we have scope for improvement.

- Council services and external stakeholders such as the South Ayrshire 1000 and the Equality and Diversity Forum have good opportunities to engage and influence service development.

- However, there is scope to improve the comprehensiveness and robustness of our engagement across our range of stakeholders, to explore and evaluate their views more fully, to help inform and prioritise future development.

3.5 **QI5.4 Improving the quality of services to stakeholders - Good**

- The service follows the structured Council wide approach to quality assurance and improvement. This engages effectively with a range of key officers across the service to help ensure that projects are delivered to time and that anticipated outcomes are realised.

- Robust scrutiny of a range of areas of performance is offered by both Members and the Corporate Management Team, there being scope to more formally reflect and learn from this.

- Outcomes and feedback are measured and sought, but coverage across the service could be improved. Having done this, formal evaluation could then be more structured.

- Planning for improvement and monitoring of progress is effectively structured and well developed, but could be better informed following on from the above.

- Reporting of progress is effectively delivered to a number of key stakeholders, particularly those internal to the Council. However, there is scope to expand the current coverage and dialogue, as part of helping to improve the quality of service for all stakeholders.

3.6 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 Service:-

- Promote the services, skills, knowledge and expertise that we can offer to our stakeholders and develop co-ordinated responses that reflect their specific requirements.

- Develop a range of feedback methods to gather information on stakeholder satisfaction and the difference the Service is making and make use of these to drive improvement.

- Continue to refine our approaches to communications to ensure that South Ayrshire residents are well informed about Council decisions, policies, services and activities.

- Support the Council to identify and take forward refreshed strategic priorities and translate these into a new Council Plan and a challenging and innovative service review and transformation programme.

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

- A new approach to auditing Best Value has been introduced, which focuses on the clarity of the Council's priorities and our planning to achieve these; how we are evaluating options for significant change to service delivery; how we ensure we have the necessary leadership and management skills; how we involve our citizens in decision making; and the quality of our public performance reporting. The Service has a key role in supporting the Council in developing these arrangements, evaluating their effectiveness and demonstrating that the Council is meeting its duty of Best Value.

- Ensuring meaningful and accurate reporting of the contribution of Ayrshire Roads Alliance and the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnerships to the achievement of Council objectives remains an area of ongoing development.

- A continually changing national policy environment. Many aspects of public sector reform impinge on strategic planning and performance management for the Council including Equalities legislation, Health and Social Care integration, Welfare Reform, the Community Empowerment Act and the development of a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Localised Plans targeted at reducing inequalities. We need to ensure that we effectively interface with these developments and see how the Service can help support and shape their development in a holistic manner.

- People are increasingly consuming information and news in a number of different ways, and we need to ensure we can deliver a public affairs service that meets these needs, potentially moving away from some of the more 'traditional' means of communication.

Internal

- New Councillors following the elections in May 2017 will bring fresh training and support requirements. The new Council may also have a different dynamic and priorities that are likely to require core policies and documents to be reviewed, including the Council Plan.

- Determining the resources required for the Business Improvement Team post April 2017, considering what skills are required to work in conjunction with the Project Management Office and the Graduate Interns on the Transform South Ayrshire Programme.

- Workload planning and prioritisation for a relatively small service which often has to respond to unforeseen demands. Aligned to this, ensuring information is shared that allows us to promote the Council, its policies, services and facilities as well as manage issues that could impact on the Council's reputation.

Opportunities

- Build on the existing successful social media platforms to increase the Council's presence and share in conversations about the Council.

- Maximise the use and visibility of the Council brand to ensure there is a clear link between the service provider and the service delivered to help build reputation.

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.

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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:

- Minimise the impact of inequalities
- 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

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 then 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.

- **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. In terms of this 2017-18 SIP, we have used the February 2017 service 'away day' to refine the initial proposals of managers and to ensure buy in and commitment amongst staff to addressing the programme for the year ahead.

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 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 one year course of the plan.

8. Governance

8.1 This Service and Improvement Plan will be subject to approval by Members as part of the agreement of the Council Plan. Monitoring will take place at Policy and Performance SMTs and at team meetings involving all staff. Progress will be updated through Covalent on a six monthly basis to allow formal review and reporting. It will inform the Council's year end Annual Performance Report and Public Performance Reporting.

8.2 The work of the Programme Management Office will be evaluated as part of the quarterly reporting to the Service Performance Panel on the Transform South Ayrshire Programme.

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

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4 Working in partnership to maximise the potential of our communities

SO4.3 Minimise the impact of inequalities

Key Performance Measures	2014/15 Value	2015/16 Value	2015/16 Scottish Ave	2016/17 Value	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
SO6.3 01 The proportion of Panel reports meeting the Council's requirements for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments	100%	100%	N/A		100%	100%

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
PP 1 Ensuring equality is fully taken into account in all that the Council does and that we work to reduce inequalities	PP 1.6 Further develop Equality and Diversity partnership working, including an Ayrshire Equalities Partnership.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			
	PP 1.7 Ensure that preparations are made for drafting and reporting on all statutory equality plans, including British Sign Language and Gaelic Language Plan.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			

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6 Improve the way that we work as a Council

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 Performance Measures	2014/15 Value	2015/16 Value	2015/16 Scottish Ave	2016/17 Value	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
SO6.5 09 Proportion of members agreeing that they get good information about which services are performing well and those where improvement is needed (Delivering Good Governance Survey)	21%	N/A	N/A	**72%**	70%	Bi-annual survey
SO6.9 05 Proportion of the Council's Delivering Good Governance Framework that is assessed as fully effective	39%	56%	N/A	83%	72%	89%

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
PP 3 Coordination of the Council's improvement journey	PP 3.2 Continue to support the Best Value Working Group through reporting progress, developing its leadership and identifying future strategy.	Mark Baker	31-Mar-2017	31-Mar-2018	50%	▶
PP 5 Development of the Council's Performance Management arrangements	PP 5.7 Support the Council to identify refreshed strategic priorities and translate these into a new Council Plan.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			
	PP5.8 Refine the Council's Performance Framework to reflect changes to scrutiny arrangements, the development of a new Council Plan, the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and any other requirements of the new Council.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			
	PP5.9 Continue to support the roll out of How Good is our Council, to further embed the use of and quality of our self-evaluation, to help prioritise and drive improvement.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			
PP 7 Lead and support the process of ensuring that all services are systematically reviewed	PP 7.3 Support the delivery of a new programme of service reviews to compliment Transform South Ayrshire (TSA).	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2018			
PP 8 Implement improvement strategy, supporting our services to modernise, using best practice, the appropriate tools, processes and technology.	PP8.6 Support South Ayrshire Goes Digital work stream of Transform South Ayrshire (TSA) by utilising project management to deliver the objectives of the programme.	Caron Bishop	31-Mar-2018			
PP15 Develop arrangements within Policy and Performance that allow improved engagement with stakeholders and which allow the effectiveness of the service to be evaluated.	PP15.1 Promote the services, skills, knowledge and expertise that we can offer to our stakeholders and develop co-ordinated responses that reflect their specific requirements.	Caron Bishop David Sherlock Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			
	PP15.2 Develop a range of feedback methods to gather information on stakeholder satisfaction and the difference the Service is making and make use of these to drive improvement.	Caron Bishop David Sherlock Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			

SO6.8 Information and communications systems and processes that support efficient delivery of front facing and back office services with a focus on digital delivery						

Key Performance Measures	2014/15 Value	2015/16 Value	2015/16 Scottish Ave	2016/17 Value	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
SO6.8 03 Percentage of South Ayrshire residents who feel the Council is good at communicating services (Scottish Household Survey)	44%	32%	46%	N/A	48%	50%
SO6.8 04 Uptake/coverage of proactive news releases across target media	87%	88%	N/A	N/A	85%	87%
SO6.8 05 Rating of Council's website by the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM)	2	3	N/A	2	4	4
SO6.8 06 Percentage of South Ayrshire residents who use local authority website to find Council information (Scottish Household Survey)	25%	46%	30%	N/A	45%	50%
SO6.8 08 Proportion of visits to the Council's website that are generated through social media.	8.9%	7%	N/A	N/A	12%	12%
SO6.8 09 Number of likes/followers across social media platforms	21,337	33,833	N/A	N/A	Increase	Increase

Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
PP 9 Deliver research service to support evidence based decision making	PP 9.6 Develop and implement a framework that allows routine monitoring of how the Council and its services are perceived, that can then be used to help drive improvement.	David Sherlock	31-Mar-2017	31-Mar-2018	55%	▶
PP10 Continue to ensure residents, customers, service users and stakeholders are well informed about Council decisions, policies, services and activities	PP10.3 Explore ways of introducing better customer and audience information and 'insight' into the planning, targeting and measurement of communications activities and campaigns.	Denise Robertson	30-Sep-2015	31-Mar-2018	60%	▶
	PP10.4 Explore ways to enhance qualitative media monitoring data to help inform communication activities that help enhance the brand, image and reputation of the Council and South Ayrshire.	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			
PP11 Work to improve the Council website so it continues to deliver as a hub for information on the Council and provides better online access to Council services	PP11.2 Achieve Plain English Campaign Crystal Mark for website	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2017	31-Mar-2018	40%	▶
	PP11.5 Explore opportunities to introduce more engaging content on Council website and online platforms – for example, through increased use of video and audio content.	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			

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Key Action	Sub-Actions	Managed By	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Progress	Status
PP12 Ensure Council services are supported to deliver accessible, quality marketing and promotional campaigns	PP12.2 Review spending on public affairs activities across the Council	Denise Robertson	31-Jan-2016	31-Mar-2018	55%	▶
	PP12.4 Support the effective and successful delivery of the Transform South Ayrshire programme through the development and implementation of a dedicated communications action plan.	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			
	PP12.5 Deliver effective communications and marketing campaigns that build brand and awareness of the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership.	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			
PP14 Review mechanisms for communicating with key internal groups; elected members, chief officers, office based staff and non-office based staff	PP14.3 Explore and implement options to improve communications with non-office based staff.	Denise Robertson	30-Apr-2016	31-Mar-2018	55%	▶
	PP14.7 Deliver communications and media/social media training workshops, as required, for new administration.	Denise Robertson	31-Mar-2018			

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

Term or abbreviation	Explanation
Best Value	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.
CMT	The Corporate Management Team (CMT) provides corporate leadership and direction and promotes a performance management culture across services driving continuous improvement.
Covalent	Covalent is the council's performance management software and consolidates elements of organisational performance – action plans and projects, KPIs, and strategic and operational risks – to give managers the tools they need to track progress toward completion of the assigned tasks.
DMT	Departmental Management Team
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment. A Council agreed approach used to assess the impacts of strategies, plans and policies.
Health & Social Care Integration	Health & Social Care were integrated under one partnerships bring together NHS and local council care services under one partnership arrangement for each area and legally came into force on April 1, 2016. Working together, NHS and local council care services will be jointly responsible for the health and care needs of patients, to ensure that those who use services get the right care and support whatever their needs, at any point in their care journey.
HGIOC	How Good is Our Council? Self-evaluation toolkit based on European Foundation for Quality Management principles.
ICT	Information Communication Technology
PDR	Performance & Development Review is the Councils process which allows individual employees and those concerned with their performance, typically line managers, to discuss their performance and development, as well as the support they need in their role. It's used to both assess recent performance and focus on future objectives, opportunities and resources needed.
SAC	South Ayrshire Council.
SA1000	South Ayrshire 1000 Forum – a group of 1000 South Ayrshire residents who we regularly survey to ascertain the views over issues and services.
Scottish Household Survey	The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is a survey of households across the whole of Scotland and is designed to provide up to date accurate data about the composition, characteristics and behaviour of individuals and households on a range of issues.
SMART	A term used in relation to commitments in plans, requiring them to be S - specific, M - measurable, A - attainable, R - relevant, T - time-bound.

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Term or abbreviation	Explanation
SOA	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.
Socitm	The Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) is a professional body based in the United Kingdom representing people involved in the leadership and management of IT and digitally enabled services delivered for public benefit.

Appendix 3: Revenue Budget for 2017-18, including efficiency and service review commitments

Service Expenditure subjective analysis Policy and Performance	2017/18 £
Employee costs	901,799
Property costs	0
Supplies & services costs	24,761
Transport costs	1,418
Administrative costs	29,888
Support Service Costs	0
Payments to agencies & other bodies	0
Transfer payments	0
Financing costs	0
GROSS EXPENDITURE	**957,866**
Income	0
NET SERVICE EXPENDITURE	**957,866**
The service revenue budget is inclusive of additional investment of:	0
The service revenue budget is inclusive of efficiency measures of:	25,000