

East Dunbartonshire Council

Response to the 2015 Follow-Up Audit of Best Value and Community Planning.

East Dunbartonshire Council would like to thank the Accounts Commission and the Controller of Audit for their work in providing an opinion in respect to those targeted areas of Best Value Activity within the Council.

The Council is pleased that both the Accounts Commission and the Controller of Audit reflect on the good standards of services delivered by the Council and the progress made since our previous Best Value Report. The Council continues to work hard to deliver sustainable and improving service levels despite significant financial pressures and the increasing demand for services. Such pressures are acknowledged by the Controller of Audit which is welcomed as it provides important context to the improvement actions and the assessment of how the Council needs to improve.

The Council acknowledges and accepts the findings and improvement actions made by both the Accounts Commission and the Controller of Audit. Our commitment to demonstrating improvements in these areas has been given the highest priority. Reports for the meeting of the Council on the 25 June 2015 reflect this commitment not only providing consideration of the Best Value Report itself but also setting out an important milestone for those issues raised; the Council are due to consider reports on the Council's Annual Accounts including its consolidated financial position, Capital Programme, Workforce Strategy and Transformation Programme. The content of these reports will inform our improvement activities and will be captured in our improvement action plan as demonstration of our ongoing work in these areas.

The Council will continue to work to provide Elected Members with concise information, in plain English that avoids unnecessary detail and supports scrutiny. Whilst this is a difficult balance to achieve the Council acknowledges the comments made and will seek out opportunities to improve the content of its reports whilst continuing to provide sufficient detail. In further support of our Elected Members the Council has engaged with the Improvement Service to support the organisation's development with a view to maximise benefits from new scrutiny arrangements.

We will continue to track progress and evidence our commitment to managing and mitigating the risks identified reporting progress with implementation to Council on a six monthly basis. Similar to the management of other key recommendations made by Audit Scotland we will use our performance management system to provide an evidence of the betterment process in the period leading up to the Controller of Audit's follow up report. Following the publication of the Accounts Commission Findings on the 4th June all recommendations have been allocated to the relevant Director, linked to the Controller of Audit Recommendations and assigned a timeline for improvement. In addition the proposed format of the monitoring report being and initial update will be presented to Council on the 25 June 2015 for Member consideration and approval.

The Council recognises the risks inherent with its transformational programme and the challenge this represents to demonstrate not only the maintenance, but also the improvement in Best Value arrangements. We believe that the above represents a robust baseline from which further improvements will be achieved and represents a positive step towards delivery on the ambitions and commitments of the Council.