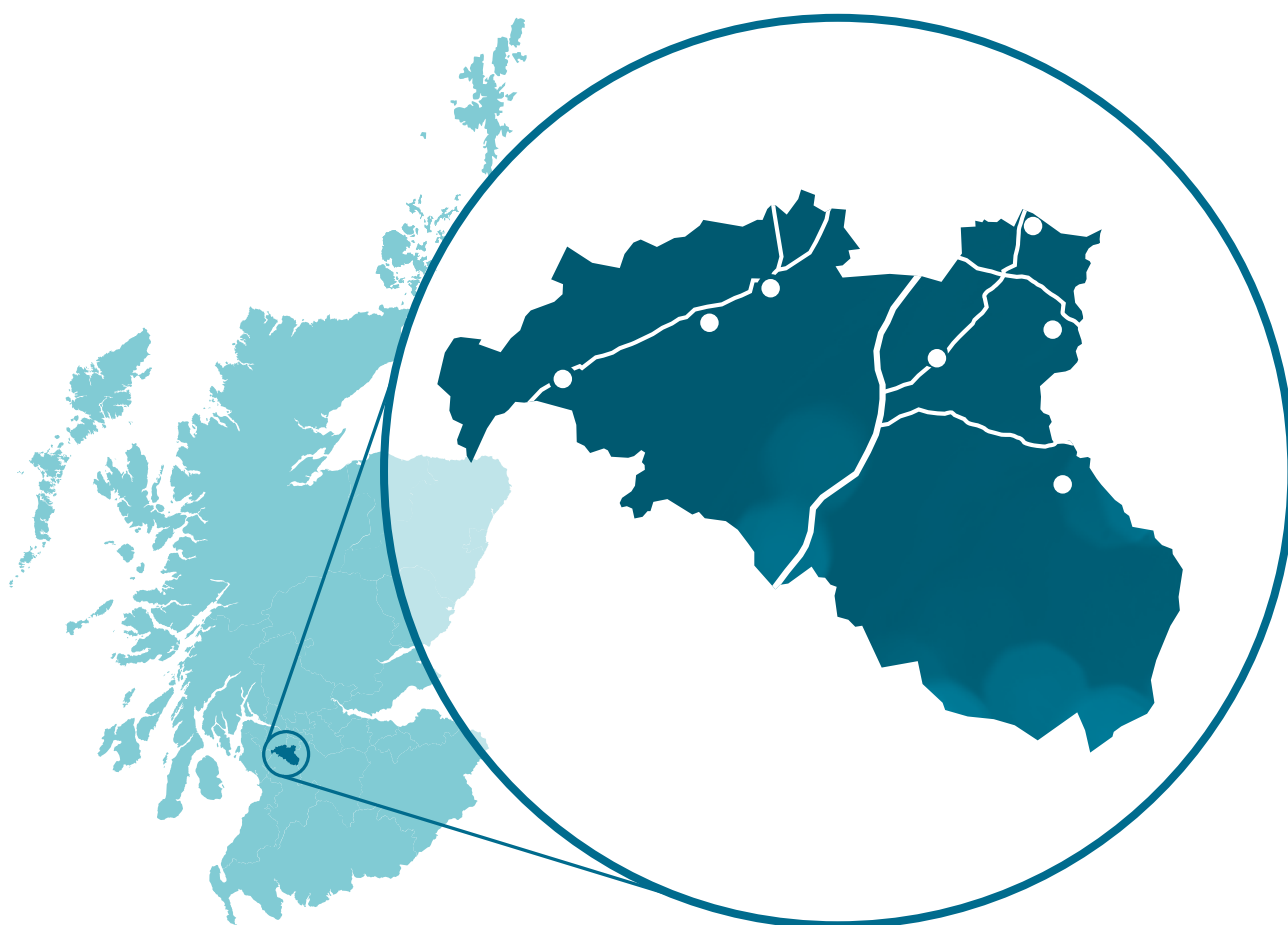


Best Value Assurance Report

# East Renfrewshire Council



ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

Prepared by Audit Scotland  
November 2017


# The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. We hold councils in Scotland to account and help them improve. We operate impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and we meet and report in public.

We expect councils to achieve the highest standards of governance and financial stewardship, and value for money in how they use their resources and provide their services.

Our work includes:

- securing and acting upon the external audit of Scotland's councils and various joint boards and committees
- assessing the performance of councils in relation to Best Value and community planning
- carrying out national performance audits to help councils improve their services
- requiring councils to publish information to help the public assess their performance.

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PDF download



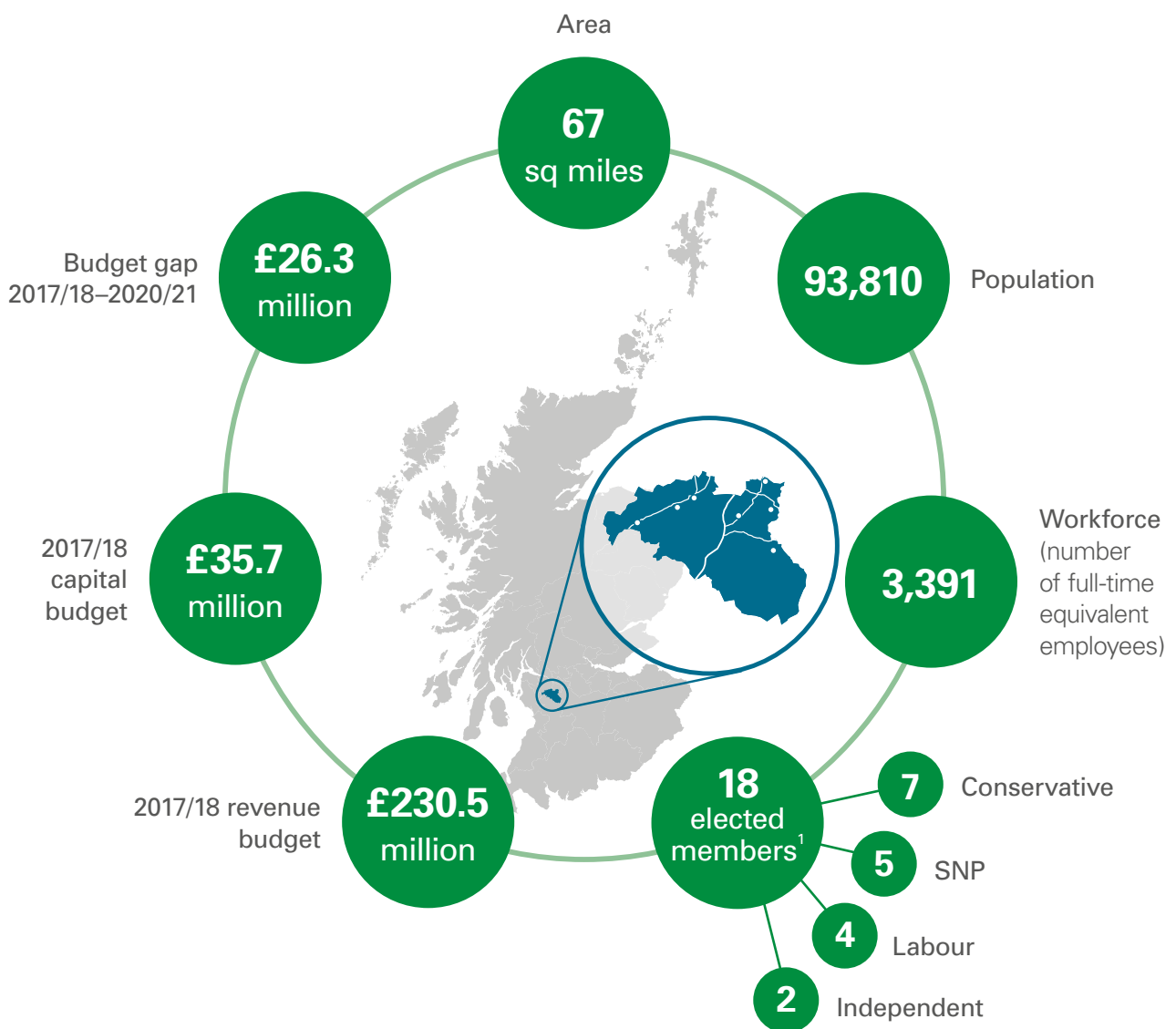
Web link



## Exhibit data

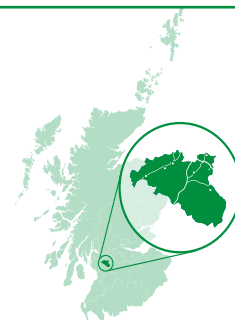
When viewing this report online, you can access background data by clicking on the graph icon. The data file will open in a new window.

# Key facts



Note: 1. Following the local government elections in May 2017, the council is run by a coalition administration comprising the SNP, Labour, and one Independent member.

# Commission findings



- 1** The Commission accepts the Controller of Audit's report on the audit of Best Value in East Renfrewshire Council. We endorse the recommendations set out by the Controller of Audit in his report and expect the council to act upon them.
- 2** We are encouraged that the council has continued to perform well since the last Best Value audit in 2005. The council's clear vision and priorities have ownership and visibility with its staff and community planning partners. Such priorities are largely, but not uniformly, reflected in good service performance.
- 3** We note that the council is now amid a period of accelerating change. It is crucial that elected members play a more prominent role in leading this change. Good relationships with officers are a positive feature, but member decision-making needs to be more prominent and transparent, and supported by more robust scrutiny.
- 4** There is scope for improved budgeting and financial control: a budget which better reflects spending is a necessity for the council in making the difficult decisions that will be needed in future. Such a budget needs to be supported by a more strategic resource planning framework which brings together financial, asset, workforce and service planning.
- 5** We note the importance that the council places on involving communities and seeking user views on service options. The council should continue the work with its partners in developing more fruitful and interactive engagement with communities and seeking positive outcomes.
- 6** We use these findings to encourage the council to strengthen its position. In line with our new approach to auditing Best Value, the Controller of Audit will monitor progress through the annual audit and update the Commission accordingly.

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# Audit approach

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**1.** The statutory duty of Best Value was introduced in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The audit of Best Value is a continuous process that forms part of the annual audit of every council. Audit conclusions are reported each year through the Annual Audit Report, addressed to the Controller of Audit and the councillors. In addition, the Controller of Audit will present a Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) to the Accounts Commission at least once during the five-year audit appointment for each council. This is the first BVAR on East Renfrewshire Council, under the revised arrangements.

**2.** This report seeks to provide the Accounts Commission with assurance on the council's statutory duty to deliver Best Value, with a particular focus on the Commission's Strategic Audit Priorities covering:

- the clarity of council priorities and the quality of long-term planning to achieve these
- how effectively councils evaluate and implement options for significant changes in delivering services
- how effectively councils ensure that councillors and officers have the right knowledge, skills and time to lead and manage delivery of council priorities
- how effectively councils involve citizens in decisions about services
- the quality of councils' public performance reporting (PPR) to help citizens gauge improvement.

**3.** We are looking for councils to demonstrate Best Value by showing continuous improvement in how they deliver on their priorities. The pace, depth and continuity of improvement are key to how well councils meet their priorities in future. In this report, we show how we assessed East Renfrewshire Council's improvement over time and our conclusions are reflected in the [Key messages \(page 8\)](#).

**4.** Our audit approach is proportionate and risk-based: it reflects the context, risks and performance of an individual council. It also draws on information from audit and scrutiny work conducted in previous years. In keeping with this approach, we did initial work to define the audit's scope. Most of the evidence-gathering occurred between January 2017 and the local government elections in May 2017, although we have included some more recent developments.

**5. Exhibit 1** shows the key areas we focused on for this council. We:

- interviewed councillors, senior officers and partner organisations
- observed a range of council, Cabinet, committee and board meetings
- reviewed documents and performance data
- conducted focus groups with councillors and officers.

## Exhibit 1

### Key areas of focus for our audit



Vision and target outcomes – what the council is trying to achieve



Performance – how well the council is progressing towards its vision and outcomes



Planning of resources: finances, workforce and assets – to support its performance



Community engagement – so residents are heard in service design and delivery



Arm's-length external organisations' governance arrangements – so organisations are clear about their role and expectations of their performance



Shared services – how the council works with other bodies to deliver services



Self-evaluation – how the council assesses itself and plans for the future



Plans for transformation – such as ways to provide services more effectively

Source: Audit Scotland

**6.** This report reflects the work done on the key areas noted above. It covers a number of Best Value characteristics included in the statutory guidance, but does not cover them all. As part of the annual audit, future work will include follow-up on the findings from this report and more detailed audit work on other Best Value areas, as appropriate.

**7.** We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation and assistance provided to the audit team by all councillors, officers and the council's partners during the audit.

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# Key messages

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- 1** The council's clear vision and strategic direction reflect its knowledge and understanding of the area. The vision is well supported by councillors, officers and the council's partners.
  - 2** Councillors should have a more transparent and active role in scrutiny and challenge of decisions. They should have greater oversight of the transformation of the council. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) provides clear direction and leadership to the council, and there are good working relationships between councillors and the CMT.
  - 3** Under the council's Public Services Excellence programme during 2009-15, there was a steady pace of change. Since 2015, the council has developed a more ambitious programme of business transformation, and the scale and rate of change have increased significantly. This presents risks to the capacity of the workforce and continuing service provision. Increasing demand from growing numbers of children and older people is already placing pressure on council services.
  - 4** The council continues to perform well. Children's services and education continue to improve from an already-high level. Other council services' performance is more varied, partly reflecting the council's range of policy priorities. Results from the Citizens' Panel indicate that most residents are satisfied with services.
  - 5** The council has a well-established approach to partnership working. There are good working relationships with the Culture and Leisure Trust; well-established arrangements for integrated health and social care services; and promising examples of joint working with other public bodies.
  - 6** The council is in a strong financial position, with high levels of reserves and low levels of borrowing. However, it consistently underspends its revenue budget, generating high levels of unplanned year-end balances. It forecasts it will need to save over £26 million from its budget by 2020/21. Options for achieving these savings have been developed by officers. Consultation with councillors, staff and the public begins in October 2017.
  - 7** The council faces a period of accelerated change against a backdrop of demanding budget reductions and ambitious organisational development. A better view of council-wide progress in delivering its change programme is required, together with a fully integrated approach to financial and service planning. The council needs to consider different models of service delivery as part of its business transformation programme, to secure Best Value.
-



# Part 1

## Does the council have clear strategic direction?



### The council has a clear vision and strategic direction for serving East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire is a diverse area facing a range of challenges, including demographic change.

The council's clear vision and strategic direction reflect its good knowledge and understanding of the area, and are supported by councillors and officers.

The council uses a cabinet system of administration, with good relations between councillors and officers. Councillors should take a more transparent and active role in scrutiny of decisions and overall progress. A large proportion of scrutiny occurs informally outside established committee structures.

The Corporate Management Team provides clear direction and leadership to the council, with effective working relationships among its members.

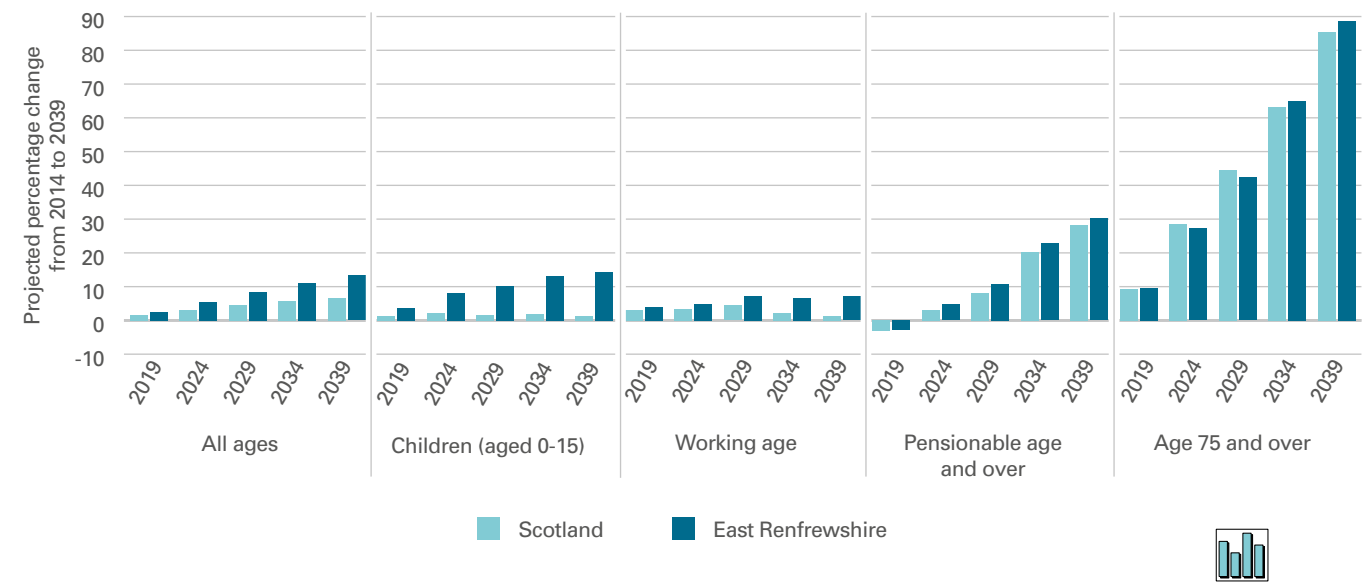
### East Renfrewshire is a diverse area facing a range of challenges

**8.** East Renfrewshire is located to the south of Glasgow and has a population of around 94,000. With five electoral wards, it is one of the smaller Scottish councils in population terms (23rd out of 32) and area (28th) but has one of the higher population densities among councils (9th) and an ethnically diverse population.<sup>1</sup> Most of East Renfrewshire is rural land and the remaining area comprises mainly residential suburbs.

**9.** Although East Renfrewshire is a relatively prosperous area, it does have pockets of deprivation. Eight of the 122 data zones (population units) across East Renfrewshire are among the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> The council continues to address deprivation-related issues, for example through focused activity by the education service and engagement with community bodies.

**10.** Demographic changes will boost demand for many of the council's services. The council's overall population is forecast to rise by 13.3 per cent during 2014-39, around twice the Scotland average rate of 6.6 per cent ([Exhibit 2, page 10](#)). This has implications for a raft of services that cater for a broad section of the public, including waste management and roads maintenance. Over the same period:

**Exhibit 2**  
**Projected population changes in East Renfrewshire by age group until 2039**  
The numbers of children and older people are expected to increase significantly.



Source: National Records of Scotland

- The number of children is forecast to rise by 14.4 per cent compared to 1.4 per cent for Scotland – affecting services such as school education.
- The number of people aged 75 or over is forecast to rise by 88.6 per cent compared to 85.4 per cent for Scotland – affecting health and social care services for older people.
- The number of people of working age is forecast to rise by 7.1 per cent compared to 1.2 per cent for Scotland – affecting numerous local issues including demand for housing and transport.

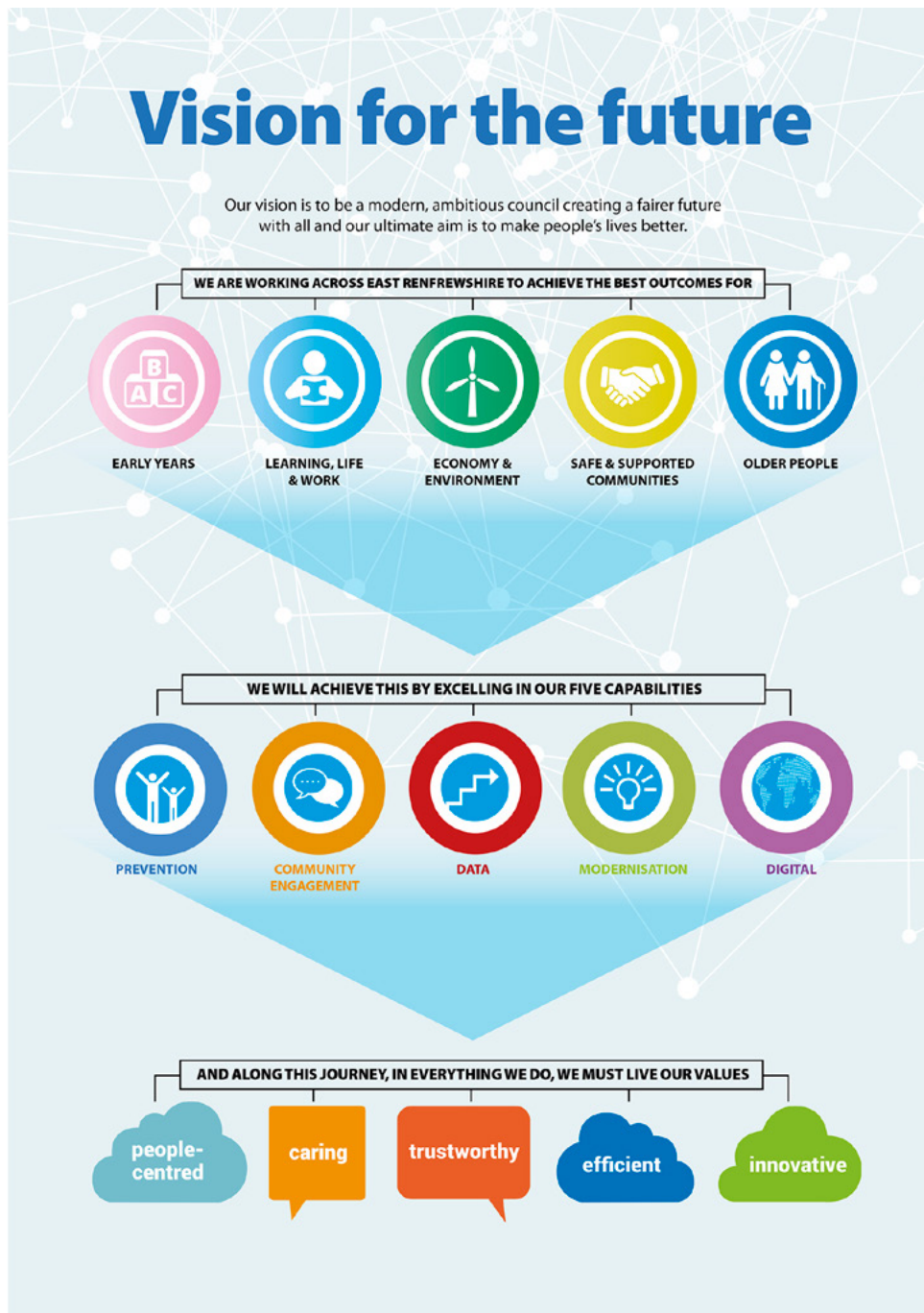
**The council’s clear vision and strategic direction are widely supported**

- 11.** All councils operate in an increasingly demanding environment. Difficulties include a long-term decline in their revenue funding; an ageing population; and the rising scale of these and other challenges. Policy and legislative changes also place demands on councils and change how they work. It is more important than ever that a council sets a clear, affordable strategy and targets effort on priorities, reviewing all options for doing things differently in the future.
- 12.** East Renfrewshire Council’s corporate vision is to be ‘*A modern, ambitious council, creating a fairer future with all*’. This aspiration is supported by a coherent framework of five strategic outcomes, five capabilities and five values – all of which have been informed by a thorough understanding of the area’s diverse communities ([Exhibit 3, page 11](#)). The vision is widely supported within the council. It has cross-party support from councillors plus support from staff and trade unions. The council’s community planning partners – such, as the Police, NHS and Fire and Rescue services – share the council’s vision and priorities and have a common understanding of its ambitions, activity and how services will be delivered.

## Exhibit 3

### Vision for the future

The council aims to achieve outcomes across five areas, through five capabilities and five values.



Source: East Renfrewshire Council

**13.** The council has effective systems and structures that help it deliver its vision. It is embedded in the council's ethos, management and plans, including its application within departments and services; the individual performance review and development (PRD) and assessment of officers; and arrangements for reporting corporate performance. The council's Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) for 2017-20 systematically maps each strategic outcome to a set of 'intermediate outcomes', 'critical indicators' and 'targets'.<sup>3</sup>

**14.** There is a high level of staff buy-in for the corporate vision. In the latest council-wide staff survey, 91 per cent of respondents were '*clear what is expected of me at work*' and 76 per cent of them agreed with '*I believe my manager supports me well when change is happening*'. The survey response rate improved from 47 per cent of staff in 2014 to 56 per cent of staff in 2016. Practical steps have been taken by the council to engage potentially hard-to-reach groups in the vision, including employees who normally work in school dinner halls or outdoors.

### There is a long-standing Cabinet system of administration

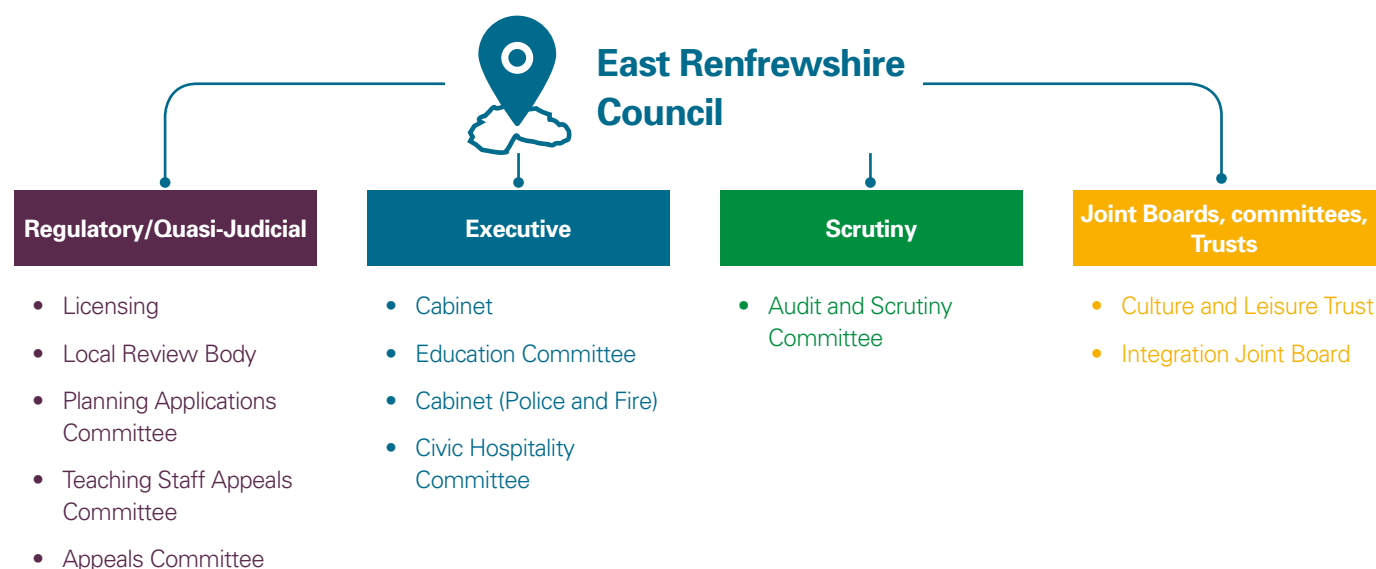
**15.** The council has five electoral wards. At the local government election in May 2017, the total number of councillors decreased from 20 to 18 owing to ward boundary changes. Of the 18 councillors, seven had not previously been in this role. The SNP-Labour coalition administration has retained a cabinet system.

**16.** East Renfrewshire Council adopted a cabinet system in 1999 and revised its arrangements in 2001. In 2012, the council extended the system to provide for scrutiny of the Police and Fire & Rescue services. Two opposition councillors are in the extended cabinet for this purpose. In a relatively small council, a cabinet can streamline business management by reducing the number of committees required. [Exhibit 4](#) illustrates the council's key decision-making structures.

## Exhibit 4

### Key decision-making structures

The Cabinet has an important role in the council's executive functions.



Source: East Renfrewshire Council

**17.** The Leader of the council chairs the main Cabinet (referred to simply as the 'Cabinet' from here on) and is its lead on finance. In May 2017, the number of Cabinet members decreased from eight to six due to the reduced total number of councillors. The two Cabinet roles lost were the former Corporate Services Convener, whose responsibilities now sit with the Leader, and one of the two former Environment Conveners. The council delegates extensive powers and a substantial workload to the Cabinet, including:

- overseeing the running of the administration
- preparing major new policy options for approval by the council
- approving all other policy and strategy proposals
- reviewing reports on the council's performance.

**18.** We found respectful, effective working relationships between political parties in the previous Council, in the months running up to the May 2017 election. Its stable ruling coalition of Labour and SNP councillors operated throughout their five-year term of office, and there remains considerable consensus on local priorities, particularly education. We observed official business in meetings being conducted respectfully.

**19.** Public services are delivered through three council departments: Corporate and Community Services; Education; and Environment. In addition, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) delivers all local health and social care services – for children, families, adults and older people. The HSCP is a partnership between East Renfrewshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The HSCP's Chief Officer is also a member of the council's CMT.

### **Working relationships among councillors and senior officers are constructive**

**20.** The CMT provides clear direction and leadership, with effective working relationships among its members. Councillors said they had good access to officers and respected their professionalism. Working relationships between senior officers and councillors are respectful and constructive. The small number of councillors helps to facilitate communication among councillors and officers. It is too soon to gauge the nature of working relationships among the councillors elected in May 2017. Some returned councillors now have different roles, to which they will need to acclimatise.

**21.** There is good support by officers for councillors. The council tailored support to councillors' individual needs and published records of their development activity online for transparency. An officers' working group made comprehensive arrangements for newly elected councillors' induction and ongoing development.

### **There is scope for councillors to improve transparency of decision-making and to be more actively engaged in scrutiny**

**22.** There is frequently limited debate by councillors at meetings of the council and the Cabinet. Scrutiny by councillors often takes place outwith established meeting structures, through informal meetings with officers, and presentations and verbal updates to councillors. This reduces the transparency of councillors'

challenge and decision-making. Councillors should provide greater challenge and scrutiny, particularly during this period of significant change in the council and the need to secure savings from either reductions in the workforce, cuts in services or the successful delivery of the business transformation programme.

**23.** To ensure relevant councillors are circulated Council, Cabinet and committee meeting papers in advance, the council circulates early drafts to relevant chairs and convenors, and members of the opposition. Councillors can discuss the draft papers with officers before finalised papers are circulated.

**24.** There are no opposition councillors in the Cabinet, although they can publicly 'call in' a Cabinet decision for review by the full Council or through the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The procedure only applies to final Cabinet decisions and is rarely used. Cabinet papers can at times be lengthy and while councillors said they had become accustomed to locating key information, they saw potential benefits from officers providing them with more concise, focused material. Greater scrutiny would help ensure that council business is clear and accessible to the public, and strengthen the council's democratic accountability.

### **More regular and focused reporting to councillors on the transformation programme would improve councillors' ownership and oversight of the council's progress**

**25.** The CMT acts as the strategic programme board for the council's transformation and change programme (Modern Ambitious Programme, MAP). The board delegates responsibility for delivering on service-level MAP projects to each department and each has its own vision, based on the corporate 'Vision for the Future'. Each department also has a corresponding service review programme. The number of change programmes across the council has increased significantly, with nearly all services being subject to review.

**26.** Formal reports on the council's business transformation programme are not regularly prepared for councillors. Such reports would inform the difficult decisions that they will need to make about how to reconcile increasing demands on services with mounting financial pressures.

# Part 2

## How well is the council performing?



### The council continues to perform well

The council prioritises the education service, which continues to improve from an already high level. The performance of other council services is more varied.

The last survey of the council's Citizens' Panel found that 79 per cent of residents were satisfied with council services.

Self-evaluation and performance management arrangements are well established but service plans could improve.

The council regularly monitors its performance and reports its performance to the public in a range of ways.

### The council's performance is good overall

**27.** The council has performed at a high level for many years, particularly in education. The Accounts Commission's recent report, [Local government in Scotland: Performances and challenges 2017](#) , March 2017, noted that councils' performance over the last five years has generally been maintained or improved.

**28.** East Renfrewshire Council matches this trend and has shown sustained or improved performance on the majority of Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators over the past six years. The LGBF helps councils to assess their performance relative to other councils'. [Exhibit 5 \(page 16\)](#) illustrates the council's performance on a range of indicators. Of the indicators in this exhibit, performance on education-related indicators and the level of household waste that is recycled saw the largest improvements.

**29.** However, one indicator declined significantly in performance, counter to the national trend. The proportion of people aged 65+ with intensive needs who receive care at home declined significantly over the past six years. This indicator measures the extent to which the council is maintaining people with intensive needs in the community, and gives an indication of how it is progressing with the policy goal of shifting the balance of care.<sup>4</sup>

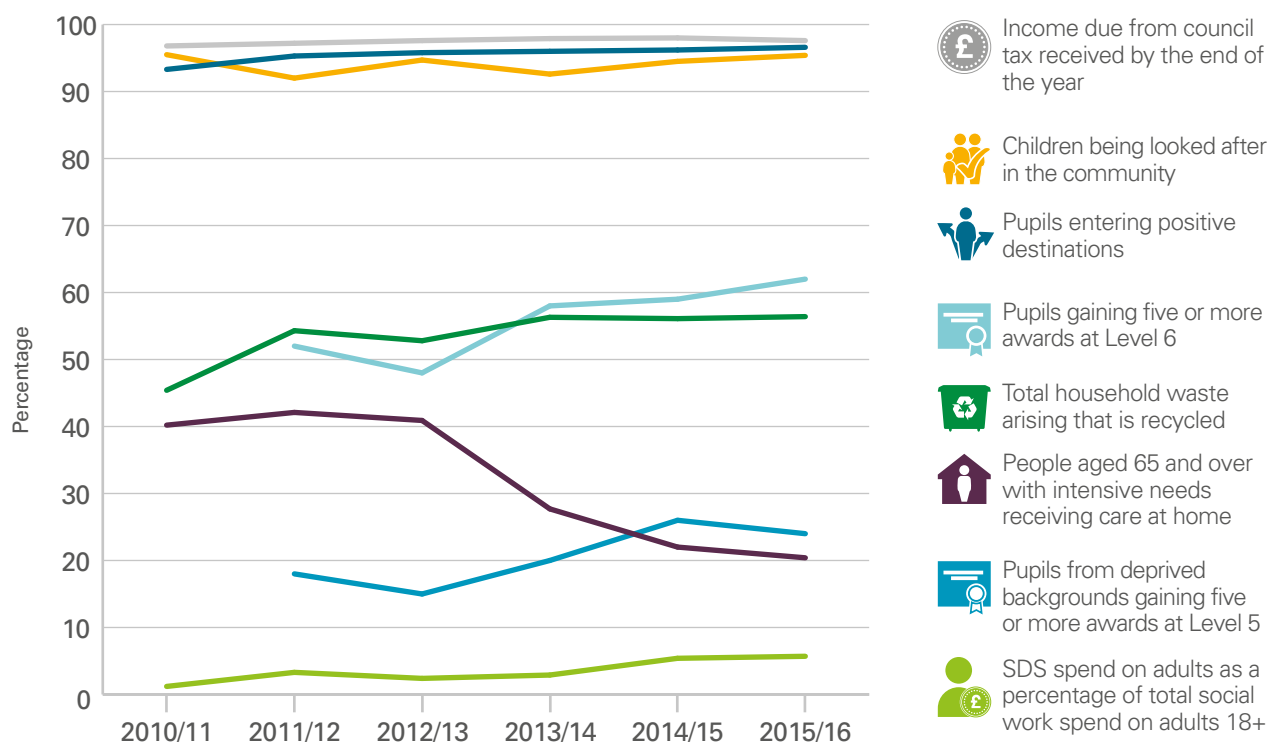
**30.** The HSCP has focused on re-ablement and on reducing the need for ongoing dependence on services, and the rate of delayed discharges is among the lowest in Scotland. However, this has not yet translated into a shift in the balance of care for those who do require intensive support. The council and HSCP need to ensure that, where possible, support is provided to those who do have ongoing intensive needs to help them remain at home.



## Exhibit 5

### Performance on selected indicators, 2010/11 to 2015/16

The council's performance was maintained or improved on most indicators but there was a significant decrease in the proportion of people aged 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home.



Note: SDS = Self-directed Support.

Source: Audit Scotland; and *Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2015/16*, Improvement Service



**31.** East Renfrewshire Council has performed at a high level for many years, across a range of indicators. The rate of improvement varied widely, with many already highly-performing indicators improving further—particularly in children's services and education, where East Renfrewshire remains one of the best performing councils in Scotland.

**32.** However, across all service areas, the number of indicators in the top two quartiles (better than half of Scottish councils) decreased slightly between 2011/12 and 2015/16. Taking all 32 councils and indicators for which comparable data were available in or across 2011/12 and 2015/16:

- The number of indicators on which the council was placed in the top two quartiles decreased from 67 per cent to 63 per cent.
- The number of indicators in the third quartile remained at 20 per cent.
- The number of indicators in the bottom quartile increased from 13 per cent to 17 per cent.



## Exhibit 6

### Performance relative to the Scottish average and relevant family group, 2015/16

East Renfrewshire Council performed comparatively well on most indicators.

	Indicator	East Renfrewshire Council	Scotland	Family group	% point change (2010/11-2015/16)
Family group based on levels of deprivation	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 6 or higher <sup>1</sup>	62%	33%	Performance ranges from 28% to 62%	East Renfrewshire 10% Scotland 7% Family group range: 2% to 12%
	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 5 or higher <sup>1</sup>	24%	15%	Performance ranges from 10% to 38%	East Renfrewshire 6% Scotland 5% Family group range: 0% to 9%
	SDS spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+ <sup>2</sup>	6%	7%	Performance ranges from 3% to 8%	East Renfrewshire 4% Scotland 5% Family group range: 1% to 8%
	Percentage of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home	20%	35%	Performance ranges from 20% to 44%	East Renfrewshire -20% Scotland 2% Family group range: -20% to 16%
	Percentage of children being looked after in the community	95%	90%	Performance ranges from 71% to 95%	East Renfrewshire 0% Scotland -1% Family group range: -6% to 3%
	Percentage of pupils entering positive destinations	97%	93%	Performance ranges from 90% to 98%	East Renfrewshire 3% Scotland 4% Family group range: 2% to 6%
Family group based on population density	Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year	98%	96%	Performance ranges from 94% to 98%	East Renfrewshire 1% Scotland 1% Family group range: 0% to 2%
	The percentage of total household waste that is recycled	56%	44%	Performance ranges from 44% to 59%	East Renfrewshire 11% Scotland 6% Family group range: -2% to 23%

Notes:

1. 2011/12 to 2015/16.

2. Self-directed support (SDS) allows people to choose how their support is provided, and gives them as much control as they want of their individual budget.

Source: Audit Scotland; and *Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2015/16*, Improvement Service

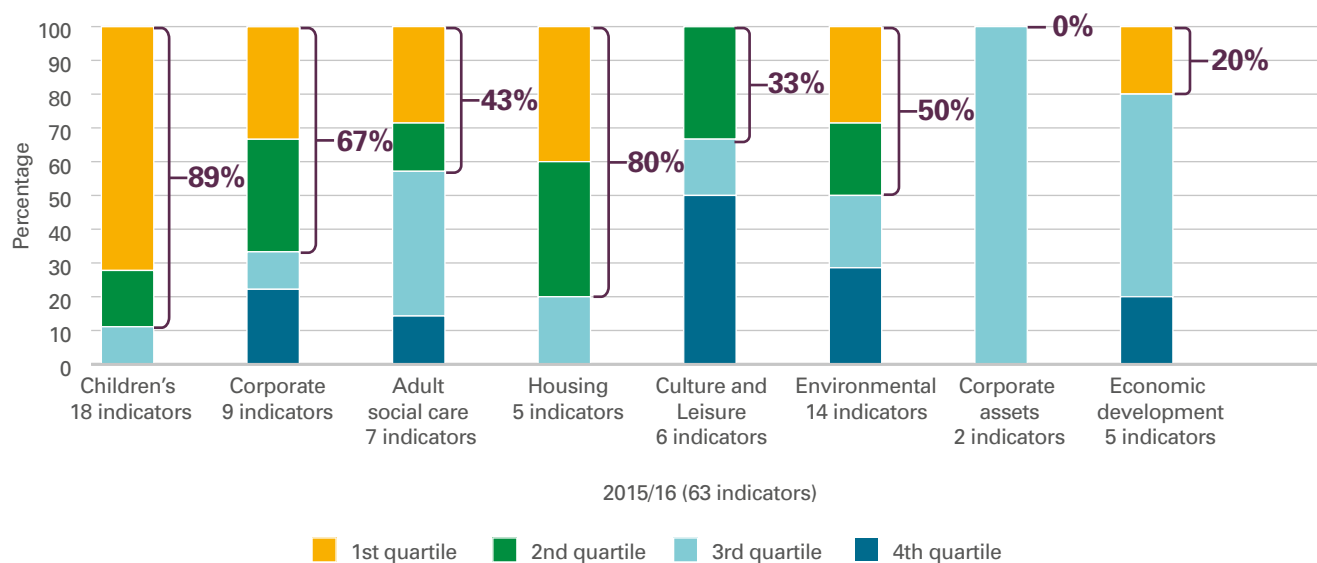
**33.** The LGBF can be used to assess a council within a 'family group' of comparable councils and to learn lessons that may improve its performance. Within its family groups, East Renfrewshire Council performed well above average in many areas in 2015/16 ([Exhibit 6, page 17](#)). Family groups are based on levels of deprivation for performance relating to children, social care and housing. Population density is used to group councils for comparisons of their performance on environmental, culture and leisure, corporate, and economic development indicators.

**34.** The council performs well on most LGBF indicators. [Exhibit 7](#) shows the proportion of LGBF indicators in each quartile, by service area, showing all indicators with data available for 2015/16. This is a larger number of indicators than the analysis on page 16, which includes indicators with data available for both 2011/12 and 2015/16.

## Exhibit 7

### The council's performance by service area, 2015/16

The proportion of the council's performance indicators in the top two quartiles varied widely.



Notes: 1. Children's Services includes education. 2. 'Corporate' includes indicators of sickness absence; council tax collection; spend on support services etc. Corporate Assets includes indicators on the suitability and condition of council buildings. 3. The first quartile contains the best performing councils.

Source: Audit Scotland; and *Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2015/16*, Improvement Service



**35.** In 2015/16, 59 per cent of the council's indicators performed better than half of Scottish councils, with 24 per cent of indicators in the third quartile and 17 per cent in the bottom quartile. Some services performed particularly well, such as children's services (including education), corporate management and housing.

**36.** Some services performed less well compared to other councils, including certain services within the council's strategic priorities – such as culture and leisure; adult social care and economic development. Environmental indicators were a mixed picture, with an equal number of indicators in the top two and bottom two quartiles. To some degree, performance reflects corporate spending priorities.

## Education and children's services continue to improve from an already high level

**37.** There is long-standing, cross-party support for the education service, which has been allocated over half the council's revenue budget for many years, largely due to the high proportion of children in the area compared with other councils. Councillors prize education's role in providing young people with a springboard for a full and economically active life.

**38.** Since August 2014, four primary schools, one secondary and one special school have been inspected by Education Scotland. All have been positive inspections with none resulting in any follow-through activity. In all schools with the exception of one primary, the evaluations have been good or better. Two schools were evaluated as sector-leading and the majority of evaluations from all inspections were rated very good or excellent.

**39.** The Care Inspectorate assessed eight local authority nurseries and three partnership nurseries between 1 March 2016 and 1 March 2017. Almost all local authority establishments were evaluated as very good or excellent across the four themes of Care and Support, Environment, Staffing, and Management and Leadership. Almost all partnership providers were graded good or very good.

**40.** In March 2017, Education Scotland reported on the council's Educational Psychology Service (EREPS). It concluded that the director and her senior leadership team demonstrated 'very strong leadership' of EREPS, with high expectations of performance and for continuous improvement.

**41.** A joint inspection in 2014 of Services for Children and Young People in East Renfrewshire, led by the Care Inspectorate, found that effective parenting support available to all families was successfully targeting more vulnerable families. It found that the Integrated Children's Services Planning was highly effective and across nine quality indicators, three were found to be excellent, four were very good and two were good.

**42.** Closing the attainment gap between children from deprived parts of East Renfrewshire and the area as a whole is a particular priority. Since 2011/12 the attainment gap for secondary school leavers has narrowed, showing the council is making good progress towards this goal. [Case study 1 \(page 20\)](#) describes the council's progress on closing the gap.

## Performance in other services is more varied

**43.** East Renfrewshire Council is the social landlord for 2,973 council homes.<sup>5</sup> When the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) assessed the performance of all social landlords, it found that East Renfrewshire Council did not always provide temporary accommodation when required. SHR will engage with the council about this during 2017/18.<sup>6</sup>

**44.** In December 2015, the SHR upheld a complaint by the East Renfrewshire Tenants' and Residents' Federation as a Significant Performance failure (SPF).<sup>7</sup> The Federation had complained to the SHR about the council's engagement and consultation with tenants' and their representative bodies. The Cabinet approved amendments to the council's Customer Engagement and Tenant Participation Strategy in February 2016. In 2016/17, the council and tenants developed an

## Case study 1



### Educational attainment is very good and continues to improve, including in the most deprived areas

The performance of pupils gaining five or more awards in both Level 5 and 6 or above is the highest in Scotland overall and second highest for pupils in areas of deprivation. The attainment gap for pupils in deprived areas, achieving Level 5 or above, fell by nine percentage points between 2011/12 and 2015/16. The gap remained relatively steady, although with some fluctuations, for Level 6 during the same period. At a school level, small numbers of pupils can have a disproportionate effect on performance statistics.

Over the same period, the total tariff for secondary school leavers in the most deprived areas increased by 28 per cent while the total tariff for pupils in the least deprived areas increased by four per cent – showing that the attainment gap had narrowed. This can partly be attributed to the fact that the total tariff for the least deprived pupils was already the highest in Scotland, with significantly less scope for improvement.

The narrowing attainment gap for S4 pupils reflects the council's clear strategy and effective planning framework for education. The Education Department's vision *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences* signals its ambition for all children, young people and adults using education services.

- A well-established annual cycle of activities involves the central education department, quality improvement officers and schools. Head teachers are empowered to drive improvements within their schools; meet regularly with their peers; and share best practice among schools.
- Additional resources have been allocated to schools to tackle the lowest performing 20 per cent of learners, staffing structures based on poverty, and pupils with Additional Support Needs.
- Well-established performance management and reporting arrangements are in place. Analysis of comprehensive performance information at council and school levels is used to set targets and improve performance by enabling schools to provide tailored support to those requiring it most.
- The council conducts baseline assessments of pupils in P1, followed by standardised testing in P3, P5, P7 and S2. Less able pupils are identified quickly so that they can be provided with tailored support.
- Secondary schools adopted a 33-period week in 2006. This has enabled them to maximise teaching time and deliver curricular benefits, such as more time for PE.

Source: *Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2015/16*, Improvement Service; East Renfrewshire Council

action plan to address the issues raised by the SHR, and improvement actions were programmed for 2017-18. SHR will monitor the council's progress, with the agreed rent-setting process under-way with tenants – the first major piece of work on the agreed action plan.

**45.** The council has improved road maintenance in recent years, particularly in the classified network where the council is now performing at or above the Scottish average. Despite these improvements, performance is still relatively poor for unclassified roads, with 45 per cent in need of repair. [Case study 2 \(page 21\)](#) explains how the council is working to improve performance on this issue.

## Case study 2



### The council has budgeted an extra £1.6 million for roads maintenance in 2017/18 but most of the backlog remains

The council's road network overall was at position 25 out of 32 councils in 2016. The council has prioritised roads and footpaths in response to Audit Scotland's reports on *Maintaining Scotland's roads* and feedback from the Citizens' Panel, which placed roads among the top priorities for residents.

Over the period 2010-16 there was a slight improvement across the four classes of roads (A, B, C and unclassified) in East Renfrewshire, with the largest improvements in the percentage of B class roads requiring maintenance.

East Renfrewshire was ranked second best in Scotland in 2015/16 for the percentage of A class roads requiring maintenance, approximately equivalent to the Scottish average for B and C class roads and below the Scottish average for unclassified roads. However, unclassified roads make up around 80 per cent of all roads in East Renfrewshire.

The backlog figure at the end of financial year 2016/17 was £26.3 million for roads only, excluding footpaths. The council provided an additional £1.6 million in 2017/18, covering both roads and footpaths, to focus on residential and unclassified roads. This funding will address some of the backlog but clearly a significant amount will remain. A service review is under-way to investigate ways of reducing the backlog, including potential sources of funding.

Source: Audit Scotland and East Renfrewshire Council

## Most residents are satisfied with council services

**46.** The council established a Citizens' Panel in 1998 to gauge public opinion. Its 1,200 members are a sample of local residents recruited by an independent contractor to be representative of local communities. Each year, the council surveys the panel on issues such as residents' priorities; satisfaction with services; and proposed developments. Results are used by the council to inform planning and investment decisions and published online. Panel members receive an annual newsletter on the council's response to survey findings.

**47.** The Citizens' Panel survey in 2016 found that 79 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the council's services – five per cent more than in the previous year's survey and the council's highest result so far. The survey results showed that most major services were rated positively, including some that 90 per cent or more of respondents described as 'good' or 'very good':

- education – nursery, primary, and secondary (91-100 per cent)
- public parks and open spaces (96 per cent)
- theatre/arts (93 per cent)
- Customer First – a one-stop shop for customer service (92 per cent)
- libraries, recycling (both 90 per cent).

**48.** Health and social care is a council priority yet had a weaker rating, with 67 per cent of respondents describing the services as 'good' or 'very good'.

**49.** Panel members were asked what changes would make the biggest improvement to their quality of life. Their top three suggestions were:

- roads, transport, parking, infrastructure (68 per cent of respondents)
- quality of local environment, preserving open spaces (35 per cent)
- shops, facilities, leisure activities (34 per cent).

**50.** By contrast, eight per cent of respondents chose health and social care and seven per cent chose education.

**51.** In addition to the Citizens' Panel survey, the council obtains feedback on its performance from other sources including correspondence, complaints and suggestions; tenants' groups; and community bodies.

### **Self-evaluation and performance management arrangements are well established but service plans could improve**

**52.** For all councils, it is essential that the impact of planned changes to service outcomes is fully considered and that there are clear links between a council's change programme and its strategic objectives.

**53.** East Renfrewshire Council adopts a risk-based approach to self-evaluation which informs annual service planning. Each service's performance, absence, staff and customer satisfaction data are used to generate a specific risk score and highlight potential areas for improvement. However, despite the council's own comprehensive guidance on service planning, the quality of its service plans needs to improve. There is no evidence of service-level workforce plans or financial plans being aligned to service improvement plans and they contain little financial data or analysis of available resources, to reflect services' strategic context.

**54.** The council's arrangements for measuring and reporting its performance are well established. The majority of performance information is stored in the council's performance management system, Covalent. A variety of performance reports show performance against the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), the council's Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP), include Citizens' Panel results and LGBF data. The reporting arrangements are:

- Every six months, each department's director and the HSCP report their department's performance to the council's Chief Executive.
- The CMT collectively reviews overall council performance and a report is prepared for the Cabinet. The Cabinet receives six-monthly reports on ODP and CPP progress.
- The council's partners review performance on CPP progress at their six-monthly Performance and Accountability Review (PAR).
- Annually, performance is reported to East Renfrewshire Council and the CPP board.

**55.** The council's style of reporting against LGBF indicators is clear. Indicators are grouped under the council's strategic outcomes and graphs showing trends against the Scottish and family group averages are included. Reports highlight what is planned to improve performance and, for each group of indicators, describe the council's strategic policy intention. For example, while the council's cost of waste collection was relatively high in 2015/16 (ranked 21st out of 32 councils), this was a function of the council's focus on improving the recycling of household waste, on which it performed well against other councils (third out of 32 councils).

### **The council provides a wide range of performance information to the public**

**56.** The council has a well-developed approach to reporting its performance to the public. On the council's website, the performance section follows a template recommended by the Improvement Service and hosts a wide range of performance information. It includes mid- and year-end performance reports for the council as a whole, as well as annual performance reports for departments, since 2013/14.

**57.** The council's annual performance reports are designed for the public and are based on a selection of performance indicators intended to give an overview of the council's performance. The public can also view a more comprehensive range of performance information including links to external sites such as the Improvement Service website. Additional documents and information about what specific services are working on are made available online; such as inspectorates' reports, the ODP and relevant updates to the SOA. In addition, performance reports are submitted in public to the Cabinet and the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) every six months; and annually to the Council.

**58.** The council continues to seek ways of improving its handling of PPR. In 2014/15 it posted an animated video instead of a written report, to appeal to a wider audience.<sup>8</sup> The 2015/16 report returned to a written format but further developed the use of infographics. This was developed taking into account feedback from an Audit Scotland PPR evaluation in 2015 and an internal PPR evaluation exercise in 2016, drawing on the Best Value toolkit on PPR.



# Part 3

## Is the council using its resources effectively?



### The council is in a strong financial position but a more integrated approach to resource management is required

The demand for services is rising. The council faces unprecedented financial challenges and forecasts a need to save £26.3 million from its revenue budget in the next three years – 27 per cent more than the previous three years' reported achieved savings. Councillors are considering a suite of savings options.

The council's financial position is strong, with a high level of reserves and a low level of borrowing. It plans to use most of its reserves to support its strategic priorities. However, it consistently underspends its revenue budget compared to original forecasts, resulting in high levels of unplanned year-end balances.

Workforce planning arrangements have clear, strategic links to the council's vision. Work is under way to develop a long-term workforce plan that more clearly links into the overall corporate transformation programme.

Weaknesses in asset management planning have prevented a fully integrated approach to strategic planning and financial management.

### The council is currently in a strong financial position

**59.** In each of the last five years, the council has had between the fifth and seventh highest level of usable reserves to net revenue stream compared to other Scottish councils (excluding Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands). Between 2011/12 and 2015/16, usable reserves increased by around a third – by £16 million to £62 million. Usable reserves in 2016/17 reduced to £54 million due to planned expenditure that was financed from the Capital Reserve ([Exhibit 8, page 25](#)).

The council's policy is to have unallocated General Fund reserves at four per cent of its net budgeted revenue, to provide for unforeseen costs and contingencies. In 2016/17, unallocated General Fund reserves stood at £9.8 million and 4.2 per cent of the net cost of services. Allocated General Fund reserves were £11.6 million at 31 March 2017. The largest reserve within this balance was the Modernisation Fund (£6.7 million). This is used to support the Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP), and projects can bid for monies from the reserve to assist MAP activity.

**60.** Of the £54 million reserves reported at 31 March 2017, around £43 million are statutory reserves or have been ring-fenced for future spending. The largest of the statutory reserves is the Capital Reserve Fund (£19.6 million). The council has increased this reserve in recent years and plans to use funds during 2017/18 to minimise the borrowing required to fund the Capital Programme.<sup>9</sup>



## Exhibit 8

### Usable reserves

The council's Total Usable Reserves decreased from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Description	31 March 2017 £ million	31 March 2016 £ million
Capital Reserve Fund	19.6	28.9
General Fund	21.4	18.9
Repairs and Renewals Fund	9.5	10.5
Insurance Fund	1.9	1.9
Housing Revenue Reserve	1.2	1.4
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>61.6</b>

Source: East Renfrewshire Council

**61.** The capital programme approved by council shows an increase of over 60 per cent in planned capital spend with a further 37 per cent planned in 2017/18. This relates to City Deal projects; the construction of new primary schools; and the development of ICT infrastructure. The Repairs and Renewals Fund was established to enable a continuing programme of repairs and renewals to roads, infrastructure and council property.

**62.** Borrowing has reduced over the past five years and the council has relatively low levels of borrowing and external debt. Its ratio of long-term borrowing and debt as a percentage of its net revenue stream is the lowest of all councils apart from the Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. However, it has proportionally higher levels of PPP debt compared to other councils – the fifth highest of all councils in 2015/16.

**63.** The council has three PFI/PPP contracts for the provision of new schools, school extensions and for the council's share of the Glasgow Southern Orbital Road and the M77 extension. These contracts commit the council to fund the future revenue requirement for the duration of the contracts (25-30 years). In addition, the council is building a new secondary school using the Scotland's Schools for the Future programme's non-profit distributing model. The future revenue commitment to the council over the term of these contracts was £132 million at 31 March 2017 and represents a significant future pressure on budgets. The current PFI/PPP contracts are due to end between 2026 and 2041.

### Expenditure is managed effectively but budgets need to be more realistic

**64.** The council operates a Budget Strategy Group (BSG) comprising all administration councillors. It meets from June to February each year to agree budget priorities and actions. The budget position is monitored by the Cabinet, which reports to the Council. Budget reports provided to councillors are of a good quality and provide helpful narrative on variances.

**65.** However, the council consistently underspends its revenue budgets significantly compared to its original forecasts. This results in high levels of unplanned year-end balances. [Exhibit 9](#) compares balances budgeted at the beginning of the year to be transferred to reserves against the actual transfers made at the year-end. The BSG meeting in June 2017 considered plans to address these underspends. These include reviewing contingency budgets and moving centralised budgets into departments to better reflect spend. The Accounts Commission has reported on the importance of councils' budgets and forecasts reflecting actual spending levels and patterns.

## Exhibit 9

### Transfers to Reserves compared with budgeted transfers

The council has consistently returned higher transfers to reserves than it originally budgeted for.

Year	Actual £ million	Planned £ million	Variance £ million	Reasons for variances reported to councillors
2012/13	9.1	0.7	8.4	Lower than planned redundancy costs Police and Fire reductions in cost Higher Council Tax collection
2013/14	5.3	0.5	4.8	Early action to apply savings measures Higher Council Tax collection
2014/15	4.4	0.1	4.3	Early action to apply savings measures Higher Council Tax collection
2015/16	8.8	1.0	7.8	Savings applied early; reported £3.8m of efficiencies Lower restructuring costs Higher Council Tax collection
2016/17	5.3	0.0	5.3	Loan charges Management of staff vacancies Savings applied early

Source: East Renfrewshire Council

## The council has identified savings options and developed medium-term financial plans

**66.** The council prepares detailed three-year cyclical budgets and its current three-year budget period ends in 2017/18. Planning for the next three-year period is well under way. The council produced its first five-year financial strategy in December 2016, highlighting to councillors the factors affecting the council's finances – such as demographic and legislative, change and budgeting scenarios. An initial assessment of total required savings in the February 2017 long-term financial plan gave a range of savings of between optimistic and pessimistic scenarios of £30.1 million and £44.5 million for the three years beginning April 2018.

**67.** Since then, the three-year savings target has been revised to take account of more recent economic forecasts and updated council income and expenditure assessments. The current three-year savings target has been set at £26.3 million, which reflects the council's most optimistic financial planning scenarios. Budgets

and savings options are currently being discussed at Budget Strategy Group meetings with councillors. Public consultation on budget proposals is expected to begin in early October 2017.

### **The council is improving its workforce planning arrangements**

**68.** The council estimates that to address its funding gap over the next three years, it will need to reduce the workforce by an average of 100 full-time equivalents (FTE) per year. This will partly be offset by a significant growth in the number of early years workers to meet the requirements of the new legislation. The workforce reduced by 524 FTE in the seven-year period 2009/10 to 2015/16, including 170 FTE which transferred to the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.<sup>10</sup>

**69.** *The Workforce planning and strategy 2014-18* links council strategies and the workforce. Workforce is a key priority identified in the ODP and to support this, a diagram has been developed to ensure that the workforce planning and strategy supports the 'modern ambitious council'. A workforce planning report is reviewed by the CMT every six months and a council-wide Workforce Planning Working Group is developing a longer-term strategy. However, there has been no formal report to councillors on the *Workforce planning and strategy 2014-18*.

**70.** The outcome of the council's change programme, and the need to secure significant savings, will impact considerably on workforce planning. The council has started planning for the production of its Workforce Plan for 2018-21, which will link to the council's longer-term savings plans and budgets. The CMT has reviewed initial options for workforce-related savings.

### **Sickness-absence rates are high among non-teaching staff and the council is working to address this**

**71.** The council's sickness-absence rates among non-teaching staff are above the Scottish average and in the bottom quartile for the relevant LGBF indicator. Sickness-absence deteriorated significantly over the period 2011/12-2014/15. There were improvements in 2015/16 and in 2016/17 but the level remains high. Conversely, sickness-absence rates for teachers are among the lowest in Scotland.

**72.** The council actively monitors sickness-absence and has introduced targeted initiatives to reduce levels, including referrals to Occupational Health, employee counselling, mental health training and health checks. In addition, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee receives six-monthly progress reports.

### **The council is sharing, and building on, largely positive staff survey results**

**73.** The council conducts a staff survey every second year, and the 2016 survey had a good response rate of 56 per cent. Results were most positive around the themes of staff believing they are doing meaningful work; belonging to a committed team, and on the management environment.

**74.** While still largely positive overall, survey results were more mixed regarding the council's values and vision; employees' ability to work and grow, and a positive work environment.<sup>11</sup> In particular, only 48 per cent of employees believed action would be taken in response to the survey. Departmental and council-wide improvement actions have been developed in response to the survey feedback.

Examples include: an improved staff reward/recognition scheme; enhanced departmental communication with staff; increased focus in the Performance and Review Development Scheme (PRD) on staff development and use of protected learning time; and structured team sessions looking into council values and aims.

**75.** Results and improvement actions have been communicated to staff through a range of methods using infographics and a *'You said, we did'* format for articles and posters. The council has effectively communicated its vision and strategy to staff. This has been achieved by making links between the council's vision, the ODP and PRD. The council has an overall PRD completion rate of 95 per cent.

### **The council lacks a fully integrated approach to managing its resources**

**The council's approach to asset management has been slow to develop, although it has improved more recently**

**76.** Asset management plans were of a poor standard and did not integrate with either strategic planning or financial budgets. There was no corporate asset plan. A fundamental review of asset management began in September 2015 as part of the council's development of its new operating model. Since then, there has been significant progress:

- A refreshed Corporate Asset Management Group provides strategic direction and includes members from across the council, the Culture and Leisure Trust and the HSCP.
- The development of much-improved asset management plans, along with a Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- The Cabinet will now approve all revised asset management plans. Previously, there had been limited involvement by councillors in asset management planning, with the review of asset plans being delegated to the CMT.

**77.** The council's first long-term capital investment strategy was submitted by officers to councillors in February 2017 to provide a more strategic context to capital plans. These improvements should demonstrate to councillors the contribution made by the council's capital investment programme to the long-term strategic objectives and council vision. The updated asset management plans will further strengthen this plan.

**78.** A significant backlog of repairs maintenance totals £44 million across property and roads assets. The property backlog amounts to £18 million and the level of spend on property maintenance is below that recommended by the Building Maintenance Institute (£19/m<sup>2</sup> in 2015/16 compared with the benchmark of £23/m<sup>2</sup>). A significant programme of maintenance work is required by the properties owned by the council and occupied by the Culture and Leisure Trust. The council estimates the roads maintenance backlog at £26 million.

**79.** In January 2017, the CMT approved a new approach to managing the use of buildings. This should enable the council to measure the extent to which buildings are used; inform the more effective day-to-day operation of premises; and support the ongoing programme of highlighting any surplus assets that could be either used differently within the council or sold off as surplus assets to generate income. Early work in this area informs planning for expanding nursery provision.

## There is scope to improve procurement performance

**80.** Procurement is a key aspect of corporate financial management and has the potential to make a significant contribution towards a council's corporate savings targets. In 2015, the independent evaluation framework for assessing councils' procurement performance changed. The Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) was replaced by the more stringent Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP), which is applied by Scotland Excel to assess councils' procurement performance.<sup>12</sup> Because the PCA and PCIP are different tools, it is not possible to compare a council's performance between them. After PCIP assessments of 31 councils, East Renfrewshire Council was in the third quartile for its overall performance.

**81.** In March 2017, the Cabinet approved a *Procurement strategy and action plan 2016-18*, which aligns with the PCIP framework. The council's procurement function is now undergoing a service review that encompasses structures, systems, data and processes. The aim is to deliver a more strategic corporate service, supported by systems and information responsive to the council's needs and priorities.

## The process for paying suppliers has been an area of long-standing underperformance

**82.** Paying suppliers' invoices on time has been an issue reported to councillors in the past. The reported average performance for Scotland is that, during 2015/16, 93 per cent of invoices were paid within 30 days. In 2016/17, East Renfrewshire Council only paid 71 per cent of invoices within 30 days and this figure was lower in 2015/16. Councillors raised concerns in 2016 that the council's poor performance could have a detrimental impact on local businesses. The council has taken corrective action including a full review of the 'purchase to pay' processes and centralising the receipt of invoices. Officers acknowledge the service review has been more challenging than they anticipated, particularly given significant staff turnover. Nonetheless, there has been a marked improvement and an average of 86 per cent of invoices were paid on time in the period April 2017 to August 2017.<sup>13</sup>

**83.** There have recently been two major breakdowns in controls in the creditors section. In March 2017, a fraudulent attempt was made to change a supplier's bank account details while the council was introducing the new centralised process for receipt of invoices. The council changed bank account details without suitable validation checks, breaching its procedures. Two invoices totalling £2.3 million were approved for payment but stopped by bank staff who became suspicious and refunded the council. Controls regarding changes to suppliers' bank accounts have since been strengthened.

**84.** Controls over the prevention of duplicate or erroneous payments to creditors have also been weak. Contrary to council procedures, reports produced by the creditors system – which highlights potential duplicate payments – were not adequately investigated by officers. The council's internal audit section has since investigated all possible duplicate payments over the last two years. Around 300 duplicate or erroneous payments with a total value of £330,000 were identified. The council successfully recovered most of this balance and weaknesses in the follow-up of possible duplicate payments have been addressed.

## National targets for expanding early learning and childcare will strain resources

**85.** The Children and Young People's Act 2014 expands a parent's Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement to 1,140 hours per year for every three-and four-year-old and eligible two-year-old, by August 2020. Like all councils, East Renfrewshire was required to submit an implementation plan to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017 – to include details of infrastructure requirements, capital and revenue plans and a workforce plan. The council's plan was approved by its Education Committee on 28 September 2017.

**86.** There are growing numbers of pre-school children in East Renfrewshire. This is partly due to increasing numbers of private housing developments and to the quality of the council's education services being attractive to parents. Existing nursery establishments are already at almost 90 per cent capacity. Demand for local authority nursery places remains high; and is about to increase further.

**87.** The council is considering a range of models for providing parents with 1,140 hours of ELC – likely to involve an extra 1,100 nursery places; ten additional nurseries; and over 200 child development officers. The council is introducing three new nurseries from within its existing resources but plans for seven new nurseries are not yet fully reflected in the council's capital budgets or workforce plans.

**88.** An ELC Expansion Board has been created by the council to take strategic responsibility for the increase to 1,140 hours per eligible child. Four themes will provide a framework for the expansion of provision: Quality, Flexibility, Accessibility and Affordability. Work is to be taken forward in three phases:

- **Phase 1** – by August 2020: the introduction of 1,140 hours, with very limited flexibility and accessibility offered to parents.
- **Phase 2** – by August 2023: provision of 1,140 hours, with increased flexibility and accessibility.
- **Phase 3** – by August 2024: full expansion to offer greater flexibility and accessibility in all ELC establishments.

**89.** It is too soon to gauge whether the council will meet the Scottish Government's target by 2020. The Accounts Commission and the Auditor General will jointly publish a national report on early learning and childcare around February 2018.

# Part 4

## Is the council working well with its partners?



### The council has a well-established approach to partnership working

The council works closely with its partners in the Community Planning Partnership, which recently adopted revised governance arrangements.

There are well-established arrangements for integrated health and social care services; good working relationships with the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust; and promising examples of joint working with other public bodies.

The council has good foundations on which to build its approach to community engagement and participatory budgeting.

### The council works closely with its partners in the Community Planning Partnership

**90.** The council is a key member of East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the council's Leader chairs the CPP's board. Prior to 2008, a Community Plan set out the CPP's vision and plans for East Renfrewshire. Since 2008, the Scottish Government has required each of Scotland's CPPs to have a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for its area. The latest available SOA shows that the CPP's focus on outcomes mirrors that of the council's ([Exhibit 3, page 11](#)) and maps to the Scottish Government's national priorities.<sup>14</sup>

**91.** East Renfrewshire's CPP board provides strategic direction and oversight for the partner bodies' work.<sup>15</sup> Until 2017, the full board met once a year although considerable communication occurred outside formal CPP meetings. In June 2017, new governance arrangements were proposed by the council and adopted by the CPP. From now on, the CPP board will have the flexibility to meet more often.

**92.** The board is supported by the Performance and Accountability Review (PAR) – a group of senior officers, from all CPP partners, which scrutinises performance; identifies where it needs to be addressed; and where partnership working may need strengthened. Twice a year, the PAR reviews performance towards the CPP's target outcomes prior to presenting an annual performance report to the CPP board, including improvement actions where required.

### The Community Planning Partnership generally performs well on its objectives

**93.** Trends over the period 2004/05 to 2014/15 on some community planning outcome indicators show improvement has been slower than for Scotland as



a whole ([Exhibit 10, page 33](#)). Reasons for this are complex and do not necessarily indicate poorer performance by the CPP itself.

**94.** On some indicators, improvement has been slower than for Scotland due to East Renfrewshire already performing at close to 100 per cent, leaving less 'headroom' for improvement compared to other CPPs. Where a council is performing very well on an indicator, diminishing returns mean it can become increasingly challenging to make further incremental improvements while still securing value for money, and reconciling a broad range of policy priorities. This is the case for the percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations. There are also indicators on which the CPP has improved at a faster rate than for Scotland as a whole, such as the percentage of Primary 1 pupils with a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI); pupils' average educational tariff score; residents' median income; and crime rates.<sup>16</sup>

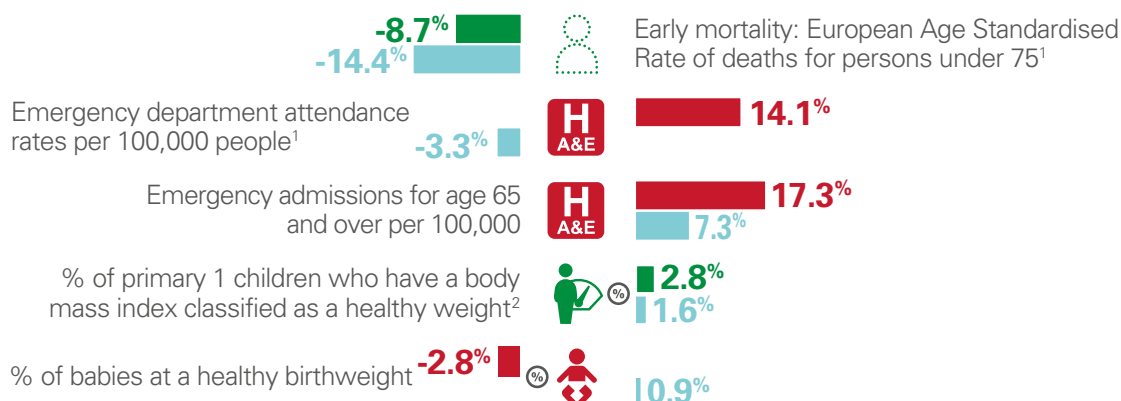
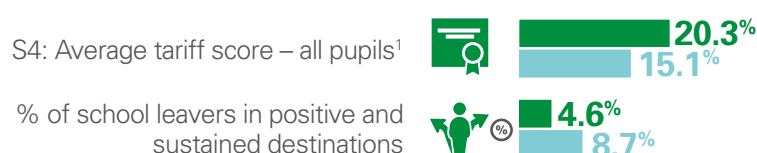
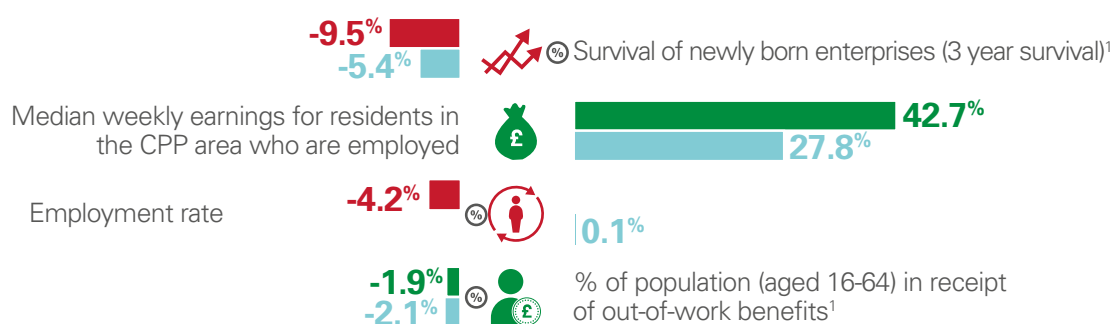
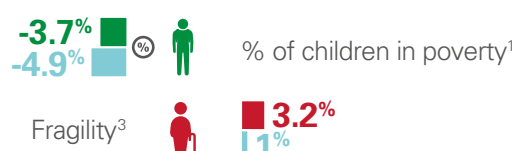
**95.** [Exhibit 10](#) shows that in East Renfrewshire, between 2004/05 and 2014/15:

- The rate of Primary 1 children with a healthy BMI weight increased by 2.1 per cent compared to an increase of 1.6 percentage points across Scotland.
- The number of people receiving out-of-work benefits (aged 16-64) decreased by 1.9 per cent compared to a national decrease of 2.1 percentage points.
- Child poverty in East Renfrewshire decreased by 3.7 percentage points compared to a decrease of 4.9 per cent across Scotland.
- The employment rate in East Renfrewshire decreased by 4.2 per cent while there was an increase of 0.1 per cent across Scotland.
- Emergency admissions for those aged 65 and over per 100,000 population rose by over 17 per cent, more than double the rate of increase across Scotland (7 per cent). East Renfrewshire's high proportion of older people may generate additional demand on some services.
- Emergency department attendance rates per 100,000 population increased by 14 per cent, compared to a national decrease of 3.3 per cent.
- Early mortality rates decreased by 8.8 per cent, compared to a national decrease of 14 per cent. East Renfrewshire still has a lower rate of early mortality compared to the Scottish average.
- The percentage of babies born at a healthy birth weight decreased by 2.8 per cent for East Renfrewshire while there was an increase across Scotland of almost 1 per cent.
- The S4 average tariff score increased by 20.3 per cent, compared to a national increase of over 15 per cent.
- Total crimes per 10,000 population decreased by 53.5 per cent compared to a national decrease of over 44 per cent.
- The number of dwelling fires per 100,000 population increased by 106 per cent, significantly more than for Scotland as a whole, which increased by 12.5 per cent. However, the total number of dwelling fires remains below the Scottish average.



**Exhibit 10****Change in performance for East Renfrewshire Community Planning outcomes**

Improvement in East Renfrewshire has been slower than for Scotland as a whole, but for complex reasons.

**Health****Education****Employment****Environment****Community safety****Other**

■ East Renfrewshire ■ Scotland

(%) Percentage point change – raw data is not available, therefore absolute changes are shown.

**Notes:**

1. Imputed and projected data have been calculated using different methodologies for different measures where raw data are not yet available.
2. Primary 1 (P1) BMI figures are based on a three-year rolling average.
3. Fragility is a weighted combination of three indicators: depopulation, rural depopulation and the old age dependency ratio.

Source: Audit Scotland; and *Community Planning Outcomes Profile 2014/15*, Improvement Service



**96.** Although outcomes in East Renfrewshire are generally improving, the area continues to face challenges, including issues associated with pockets of sustained deprivation. For example, the area covering Dunterlie, East Arthurlie and Dovecothall has some of the poorest outcomes in East Renfrewshire. The CPP is well aware of these issues and continues to address them.

### **There are well-established arrangements for integrated health and social care services**

**97.** East Renfrewshire benefits from a long-standing, integrated approach to delivering health and social care services, beginning with the formation of the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) in 2006. The East Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) was formed in June 2015 and built successfully on the foundations established by the CHCP and will continue the integration of service delivery under the new governance arrangements.

**98.** The *East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2015-18* sets out the IJB's strategic priorities. An early success has been the construction of the purpose-built Eastwood Health and Care Centre, opened in August 2016, allowing for joint-working among health and social care staff.

### **Governance of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust is sound**

**99.** East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL) is a charitable trust that was established in July 2015. Four councillors are members of the ERCL board. There are good working relationships between the council and ERCL. For example, ERCL's chief executive sits on the council's corporate asset management working group; and also on the CPP's PAR panel.

**100.** A business planning process is outlined in the Services Agreement between ERCL and the council. This agreement vested ERCL with the assets to deliver culture and leisure services on behalf of the council, and it specified that ERCL must present an annual business plan to the council at least three months before the start of the financial year. The business plan is required to:

- identify the projected resources and/or expenditure by ERCL in complying with its contractual obligations to the council
- where ERCL occupies facilities under licence from the council, identify any planned or remedial maintenance to be met from the council's capital plan or revenue budgets
- detail a costed list of new items of equipment that are required to meet ERCL's contractual commitments during the forthcoming year and flag where items are to be procured by the council and/or remain the council's property.

**101.** An effective framework provides for monitoring the quality and standards of ERCL's services, and its financial standing. ERCL's business plan is approved by the council annually and must set out how the trust supports the council in delivering Best Value. ERCL provides the council with its quarterly report, which gives an update on its contribution to relevant outcomes in the CPP's SOA and the council's ODP. Also, ERCL's performance against SOA/ODP targets is monitored by the CPP and council on a six-monthly basis.

## There are encouraging examples of joint working with other public bodies

**102.** Joint working has the potential to reduce a service's costs while also improving quality, and therefore to contribute to budget savings that the council could make. In East Renfrewshire, joint working is in place with various organisations, as exemplified by [Case study 3](#) and [Case study 4](#)

### Case study 3

#### The council works with Glasgow City Council on parking penalty charge notice processing



In April 2012, East Renfrewshire Council's Cabinet agreed that Glasgow City Council would provide back-office support services for penalty charge notice processing when East Renfrewshire Council became a Parking Authority.

Decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) was introduced in April 2013, when the council entered into a three-year contract with Glasgow City Council.

In January 2016, the Cabinet extended the contract for one year, leaving time for a decision to be made about how to procure this service in future. In March 2017, the Cabinet considered that the partnership had been very successful and that continuing the arrangement would secure a wide range of benefits; be more beneficial than undertaking a procurement exercise on the open market; be operated on a not-for-profit basis; and realise community benefits.

Source: East Renfrewshire Council

### Case study 4

#### The council works closely with the Police at multiple levels



The same Chief Superintendent oversees policing in Glasgow City, East Dunbartonshire and also East Renfrewshire – and so can bring insights from outside East Renfrewshire. The officer sits on the council's Police and Fire Cabinet; the CPP board; and CPP partners' chief officers groups that coordinate work on adult protection and child protection. A Chief Inspector is responsible for policing in an area coterminous with the council, helping with communication and discussion of shared interests.

A Sergeant based at Giffnock Police Station line manages a constable who works part-time in the council's HQ and liaises closely with its CPP partners. The same sergeant manages three constables who are each based in a secondary school but work closely with schools across East Renfrewshire.

Each Monday, a meeting between council officers, police officers, and officers from the fire and rescue service focuses on achieving '*Greater Results in Partnership*' (GRIP). GRIP meetings review incidents during the preceding week; live issues; and take pre-emptive measures making tangible improvements to outcomes for local residents. Urgent issues are shared quickly by GRIP team members with relevant organisations, without waiting for the next GRIP meeting.

GRIP team members share a plan for addressing issues such as community safety initiatives, antisocial behaviour and multiple visits by different public bodies to the same address. Targeted action can include a joint letter from a Registered Social Landlord, the Police and the council to a tenant causing problems.

Source: East Renfrewshire Council; Police Scotland

## It is too early to assess the City Deal projects' effectiveness

**103.** City Deals are a UK-wide initiative to provide city regions with the opportunity to deliver infrastructure, innovation and employment projects that improve their economic performance. The UK and Scottish governments both provide funding, with councils contributing additional funding.

**104.** In 2014, East Renfrewshire Council became part of the £1.13 billion Glasgow City Region City Deal, together with seven other councils.<sup>17</sup> In population terms, East Renfrewshire is one of the smaller councils involved in the Deal but has an equal partner role and plays an active part in its governance. It is represented on all the subgroups and leads the infrastructure and assets subgroup. Work has started on the £44 million City Deal investment programme for East Renfrewshire, where the infrastructure investments are anticipated to improve transport links, and lead to job opportunities through business growth and inward investment. The programme comprises three aspects, at different stages of development:

- **Enterprise** – meeting a growing demand for flexible business space, and enhancing business and learning opportunities. Flexible commercial units are now open at Crossmill Business Park and a 17-acre former factory site has been prepared for private investment, supporting business growth and creating employment opportunities. A proposed new business centre at Newton Mearns is an early stage.
- **Infrastructure** – increasing connectivity across the council area by improving road connections between the communities of Barrhead, Newton Mearns and the M77; by constructing a purpose-built railway station and bus interchange at Barrhead South, on the Glasgow to Neilston railway line. There has been slippage in these projects due to ongoing negotiations with third parties such as Scottish Water and Transport Scotland.
- **Leisure** – developing the Dams to Darnley Country Park by 2019. Plans include a visitors' centre, boardwalk and wake park with improved accessibility by road, rail and bicycle.<sup>18</sup> Building starts in 2018.

## The council and its partners are committed to engaging with local communities

**105.** Community engagement is one of the council's five Capabilities in its corporate vision ([Exhibit 3, page 11](#)) and therefore central to its ambitions.

**106.** Over the past three years, council officers have worked with the council's partners to map socio-economic and demographic data about individual communities to better understand their capacity, needs and priorities. This work identified over 800 groups.

**107.** A series of developments has occurred within the last two years. For example, in 2016, the Cabinet approved revised arrangements for community engagement. Also, the council introduced new arrangements for its links with community councils. The council's MAP approved a strategic plan for developing the council's community engagement capability, in March 2017.

**108.** The council uses a number of well-established methods to gather information on the views of the communities it serves—including:

- The Citizens' Panel – which comprises approximately 1,200 people. The council has surveyed the Panel 21 times since establishing it in 1998.
- The Citizens' Space – a public-facing, online consultation hub. Since its launch in 2012, it has published over 360 consultations and received over 32,000 responses. After a consultation, the council publishes a '*You said, we did*' response. For example, a consultation on housing services led to better information being included in a council tenants' newsletter.
- A 'community mapping database' – which features over 500 active community groups and is used to target local engagement; identify community needs; and establish gaps in service provision. The database is available for the public to access if they wish to find local groups in their area.

**109.** Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER) represents voluntary and third sector bodies in the area. A representative of VAER sits on the CPP's board; enables community organisations' views to inform the CPP; and the CPP board's thinking and decisions to be shared with local groups.

### **A new legal framework for community engagement was introduced in 2015**

**110.** The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places new responsibilities on public bodies for interacting with communities. It provides for communities to have a more proactive role and moves the emphasis of community engagement from periodic consultations by public bodies towards enabling communities to participate in bodies' decisions continually, including resource allocations.

**111.** In particular, the act required each of Scotland's 32 CPPs to publish a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) by 1 October 2017. Following engagement with over 2,200 local residents, 'Fairer East Ren' was approved by the council as East Renfrewshire's LOIP on 28 September 2017 and published on the CPP's behalf, with four priority themes: reducing the impact of child poverty; improving employability; improving mental health and wellbeing; and reducing social isolation, loneliness and increasing safety.

**112.** The act requires each CPP to publish more focused 'Locality Plans' for priority communities. In January 2017, the council's Cabinet proposed that, initially, Locality Plans should be prepared for two areas for 2017-27. Both of these areas are within the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland. In each area, the CPP has adopted a community-led model, with a steering group that includes local people.

- Arthurlie, Dunterlie and Dovecothall (the 'ADD2Barrhead' Locality Plan)
- Auchenbach (the Auchenbach Locality Plan).

## **The council has good foundations on which to deliver the aims of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act**

**113.** The council and CPP anticipate continuing to use a range of approaches to engaging and consulting residents. For example, the council plans to use an online budget simulator to help residents understand the council's financial pressures; booklets on the budget-setting process and budget proposals for 2018/19; and 'budget panels' of interested stakeholders to discuss the budget-setting process.

**114.** Fairer East Ren and the two Locality Plans are designed to integrate with other work by the council and its partners, such as the City Deal projects. There has been some early progress with community engagement and participatory budgeting, in which the public help to shape services' priorities. For example:

- Training for the council and its partners on community engagement in general is part of the corporate training programme. Specific training is also available on specialist topics, such as multi-agency work on the mental health of young people. Communities have been given capacity-building training and support to encourage partners.
- The council redesigned its household waste collection service in response to community feedback about the previous arrangements.
- The East Renfrewshire Autism Parents Action Group supports parents with children with autism. The council gave capacity-building support and free lets of meeting space to enable the group to deliver its services.
- The council's Cabinet has approved a participatory budgeting process to distribute £600,000 of repair funding for residential roads. Community participants ranked their top two preferences for their chosen locality.

**115.** The council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) service in Lavern Valley was inspected by Education Scotland during February and March 2017. The inspection found numerous strengths and identified that it would be helpful for the council to further develop and foster a culture of co-production with communities.

**116.** While the CPP's direction of travel is encouraging, it is too early to assess progress against the Fairer East Ren LOIP or the two Locality Plans. Key success factors for the council and its partners could include:

- managing the plans' financial implications
- developing the community engagement skills of staff
- building communities' capacity to engage with public bodies.

# Part 5

## Is the council demonstrating continuous improvement?



### The council faces a period of accelerated change against a backdrop of financial pressures and ambitious organisational development

The council adopted a new approach to business transformation in 2015 because the design of the previous Public Services Excellence programme would not have achieved the necessary increased pace and scale of change. Since then, council reform and development activity has been intensive.

It is still unclear how the business transformation projects will contribute to service improvements and financial savings and it is too early for us to assess whether these will be sufficient. A fully integrated approach to financial and service planning will be essential.

The council recognises the need to consider different models of service delivery as part of its business transformation programme.

There is scope to improve corporate monitoring and reporting of the council's business transformation.

The unprecedented pace and extent of planned changes are likely to place significant pressures on the capacity of staff and the services they deliver.

### The council recognised it needed to transform and accelerate its change programme to meet future challenges

**117.** Our 2005 Best Value audit report found that East Renfrewshire Council demonstrated many of the attributes of a council pursuing Best Value.<sup>19</sup> The operation of the council has continued to improve across some areas that our 2005 audit report identified ([Exhibit 11, page 40](#)).


**118.** The council's Public Services Excellence (PSE) change programme began in 2009. The PSE programme operated for six years and secured annual recurring savings in the region of £4.8 million, of which £2.8 million related to a reduction in the workforce. Over the term of the PSE programme, staff numbers reduced by 283 FTE. The remaining £2.0 million of savings were delivered by approximately 160 projects and initiatives across the council. Key projects included the roll-out of flexible or 'agile' working; the development of online services and the initial stages of a multi-year redesign of the Care at Home service.



## Exhibit 11

### Progress between the Best Value audit in 2005 and this audit in 2017

Good progress in some areas contrasts with slower progress in others.

Controller of Audit judgement 		Controller of Audit judgement 	
<b>Vision</b>	The council has a good understanding of its local communities and has a clear vision for meeting their needs. Effective cross-party working and strong corporate leadership has helped it, over several years, to take a proactive and innovative stance and to be seen as a progressive organisation. Its strategic direction is set out in the Community Plan and Corporate Strategy but these are not clearly aligned and do not set out measurable targets.		The council's clear vision and strategic direction reflect its detailed knowledge of the local area and are widely supported by councillors and staff. Overall, there is effective leadership from the council's corporate management team, with some scope for greater monitoring and review at a corporate level, and more active engagement and scrutiny by councillors.
<b>Performance</b>	There is evidence that the council generally provides a high standard of services, as shown in the Statutory Performance Indicators and the recent HMIE report on the Education Department. However, there are areas of underperformance. For example, a recent inspection of the housing service found scope for improvement in a number of areas.		The council continues to perform to a high standard and most residents are satisfied with council services. The performance of most council services is good, particularly in education, but some have room for improvement.
<b>Resources</b>	The council has a history of sound financial management, matching resources to policy priorities and with no audit qualifications or budgetary overspends. Council assets tend to be managed by individual departments but a corporate approach is now being developed to prioritise expenditure on purchases and maintenance.		The council is in a strong financial position but faces much greater demographic and financial pressures than in the past decade. It needs to embed recent improvements in asset management and develop workforce planning to ensure they are fully integrated to strategic and resource planning.
<b>Partnerships</b>	The council has a track record of effective joint working with other public sector and voluntary organisations. It has actively led the establishment and continued development of the CPP and there are examples of joint working by individual departments. There is evidence of a concern among individual councillors and officers that sharing services with neighbouring authorities could undermine the clear identity of a smaller council.		The council works closely with its partners in the CPP, which recently adopted revised governance arrangements. There are well-established arrangements for integrated health and social care services; good working relationships with East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure; and promising examples of joint working with other public bodies. Planned work on community engagement is progressing.

Cont.



Controller of Audit judgement		2005	Controller of Audit judgement		2017
Continuous improvement	<p>The council makes significant efforts to drive continuous improvement in service delivery. While core aspects of BV are well established, these continue to be refined and further developed. Improvements are required in areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater emphasis on outcomes in performance management and scrutiny arrangements.</li><li>• An improved approach to option appraisal including working with other councils.</li><li>• Further improvement in public reporting.</li><li>• Improvement in some aspects of housing.</li></ul>			<p>The council has performed well but faces major challenges. The pace of change has increased markedly since 2015, when the council adopted a new approach to transformational change.</p> <p>There will be significant pressures on the capacity of staff and service delivery. The council recognises the need to consider different models of service delivery as part of service redesign.</p> <p>There have been improvements in the performance of housing services in areas such as rent arrears and housing repairs.</p>	

Note: HMIE is now Education Scotland.

Source: Audit Scotland; and *East Renfrewshire Council: The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning*, Accounts Commission, October 2005

**119.** During the PSE programme, there was a mixed picture of the council reviewing the potential for service redesign or doing things differently, such as outsourcing or creating arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs). Some services have a significant element of private sector provision such as roads repairs, non-housing repairs, parts of homecare and street cleaning. However, some larger-scale in-house services such as facilities management and refuse collection services have not been subject to rigorous option appraisal to ensure Best Value.

**120.** Establishing East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure as a trust was first considered by the council in 2001 and again in 2006, before finally being agreed in July 2015. Options for using a private provider or linking with other councils' leisure trusts were not reported to councillors as part of the decision-making process.

**121.** In May 2013, the council approved a new approach to organisational development introducing the 'five capabilities' that the council believed it needed to excel at to meet future aspirations and deliver outcomes: Prevention, Community engagement, Data, Modernisation and Digital. It recognised that the operating model under PSE would not support the council sufficiently when the scale and intensity of change would need to increase significantly.

### **Since 2015, organisational reform and development activity has been intensive**

**122.** In June 2015, the Cabinet approved plans for a new transformation programme, the Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP). The council envisaged the MAP benefits to include: financial savings; redesigned business processes; improved customer outcomes; and improved job satisfaction for employees. The council believes that MAP will build up a range of enabler projects, such as the new financial accounting system, which can be used as building blocks for service redesigns that will release savings/efficiencies across the organisation.

**123.** In parallel to the MAP work, the council has progressed work on organisational development, ensuring staff were involved in developing the overall council's '*Vision for the Future*' and building up knowledge of the five capabilities so that these can be applied throughout the organisation to drive improvement. In March 2017 an update to the council's '*Vision for the Future*' – Plan of Change and Organisational Development (OD) – was approved by the Cabinet. It set out the council's approach to improvement, ranging from fundamental transformational change and redesign to more systematic continuous improvement through self-evaluation using the 'How Good is Our Service' model. The [Appendix](#) shows key steps in the council's continuous improvement timeline since 2005.

### **Links between the change programme and budgeted savings are unclear and there is no council-wide visibility of change activity**

**124.** The CMT acts as the strategic programme board for MAP work. It delegates responsibility for delivering service reviews and redesigns to each department, with each department having its own strategic vision based on the council-wide '*Vision for the Future*'. Each department also has its own change board to govern its programme of service reviews and change projects.

**125.** Progress against each department's change programme is mainly given through verbal updates to the CMT, with more formal reporting on the allocation of shared corporate resources such as HR and ICT. The CMT does not jointly monitor progress on all aspects of the business transformation programme at a council-wide level. The number of change programmes across the council has increased significantly and nearly all services are subject to review. There is currently no council-wide visibility of all change activity or an overarching view of progress.

**126.** The programme of service reviews and redesigns included in the change programme is expected to make a significant contribution to future savings plans while protecting or improving outcomes for citizens. The programme comprises a mixture of enabler projects and direct service redesigns. Enabler projects should support change and improve efficiency of processes. The council is budgeting to make £9 million savings from business transformation across 2018/19 to 2020/21. It is still unclear how the change projects link to these savings targets.

**127.** The council considers the digitalisation of services is critical to the business transformation programme and aims to develop 'end-to-end' digital processes. The council's plan for becoming a 'digital' organisation focuses on three objectives:

- All services are digital by design and use data analytics.
- The council has a digitally capable workforce and a modern working environment.
- Communities engage digitally with the council.

**128.** It is unlikely that digital ambitions alone will generate the step-change in the scale of savings required within the next three years. Evolving the council into a digital organisation will be a longer-term project. In 2014, the council conducted a detailed review of its ICT services to assess their capability to support the council during a period of large-scale systems development and changes in working practices.

**129.** More recently, the council has appointed a new Head of ICT & Digital Enablement and strengthened controls in areas such as data recovery and information back-up. The Digital Strategy was introduced in February 2017 and a cross-departmental Digital Skills Group established to take it forward. The council has committed around £8 million in its capital programme for future investment in ICT infrastructure and has already made some progress. For example:

- The council's chief executive chairs the Local Government Digital Transformation Partnership, which encourages and facilitates collaboration across Scotland.
- The council's website has retained a top four-star SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Managers) rating since 2013/14.<sup>20</sup>
- The HSCP has used technology-enabled care to help ensure the safety of vulnerable elderly people in their own home.

### **There will be significant pressures on the capacity to deliver change while maintaining services**

**130.** The council is going through a period of unprecedented change. Multiple boards and groups, with overlapping membership, have been set up to advance the council vision and transformation programme. A project management office (PMO) has been in place since 2009 through PSE, and now supports departmental change boards and programmes, working closely with ICT staff.

**131.** The council has recognised that along with digital/ICT/data skills, there is a limited supply of some skills within the council. In response, the PMO also designed and delivered the council's SQA-accredited course in project management and a course in change management, which are building skills in these areas throughout the organisation.

**132.** A key part of the business transformation programme is organisation development (OD). The council has approved an OD Strategy which clearly sets out its ambitions over the next three years. A focused OD work plan is in place and an OD board ensures staff are engaged in the change process and support the council in meeting future challenges; promoting leadership development and developing corporate values.

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# Recommendations

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Councillors should take a more transparent and active role in scrutiny. They should have greater oversight of the transformation of the council.

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The council should adopt a more strategic and coordinated approach to planning and managing corporate resources and transformation programmes, to encompass financial strategies and plans; workforce plans; asset management.

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The council should identify why its revenue budget is consistently underspent, and introduce more realistic budgeting policies and practices which reflect actual spending levels and patterns more closely.

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The council should continue to enhance its engagement with its communities and partners; progress the City Deal; and work with the CPP to implement the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.



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To ensure Best Value, the council should include a wider variety of option appraisals as part of its approach to business transformation and service review.

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# Endnotes



- ◀ 1 *Ethnic group by sex/age; 2011 Census*, National Records of Scotland, March 2014.
- ◀ 2 *SIMD16 council area profile and analysis: East Renfrewshire*, Scottish Government, November 2016.
- ◀ 3 *Outcome Delivery Plan 2017-20*, ERC, March 2013.
- ◀ 4 *LGBF – Technical Detail for Adult Social Care Indicators (page 6)*, Improvement Service.
- ◀ 5 Landlord details for ERC, Scottish Housing Regulator website.
- ◀ 6 [\*East Renfrewshire Council, Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18\*](#) , Audit Scotland, May 2017.
- ◀ 7 *Report to Cabinet: Tenant participation and engagement*, ERC, February 2016.
- ◀ 8 End of year presentation 2015, East Renfrewshire Council, YouTube video.
- ◀ 9 *General fund capital plan 2017/18 to 2024/25*, ERC, February 2017.
- ◀ 10 *Workforce planning and strategy 2014-2018*, ERC, April 2015.
- ◀ 11 *Employee Engagement Survey 2016 Report*, Craigforth, August 2016.
- ◀ 12 *Leading change*, Scotland Excel website.
- ◀ 13 *Update on invoice payments in East Renfrewshire Council*, ERC, August 2017.
- ◀ 14 *Single Outcome Agreement update 2015-16*, ERCPP, May 2015.
- ◀ 15 Community Planning page, ERC website.
- ◀ 16 Audit Scotland and *Community Planning Outcomes Profile*, Improvement Service.
- ◀ 17 *What is a City Deal*, ERC website.
- ◀ 18 *East Renfrewshire City Deal projects*, ERC website.
- ◀ 19 [\*East Renfrewshire Council: The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning\*](#) , Audit Scotland, October 2005.
- ◀ 20 *Better Connected 2016/17: East Renfrewshire*, Society of Information Technology Managers website.

## Abbreviations:

ERC = East Renfrewshire Council.

ERCL = East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

ERCPP = East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.

# Appendix

## Best Value audit timeline



The pace of change started to increase around two years ago.

Event/milestone	
<b>2005-2014</b>	
<b>2005</b>	Audit of Best Value and Community Planning, Audit Scotland
<b>2006</b>	The CHCP between the council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde was established
<b>May 2007</b>	<b>Local government election</b>
<b>Mar 2008</b>	The current chief executive was appointed
<b>Apr 2009</b>	The council adopted the Public Service Excellence model of change management
<b>Oct 2010</b>	The CMT considered a report on 'How good is our service assessment programme'
<b>May 2012</b>	<b>Local government election</b>
<b>May 2013</b>	The council approved an Organisational Development Plan (ODP)
<b>Sep 2013</b>	The CMT agreed leads for 'capabilities'; identified a need for OD resource; next steps
<b>2015-2017</b>	
<b>Jan 2015</b>	The councils in the Glasgow City Region Deal City Deal signed an outcome agreement
<b>Mar 2015</b>	The CMT approved a new change programme and its governance arrangements
<b>Jun 2015</b>	The Cabinet closed the PSE and approved 'A Programme for Our Future Council'
<b>Jul 2015</b>	The East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust was established
<b>Aug 2015</b>	The Cabinet approved the Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP) of change The CHCP became the HSCP, and the IJB went live
<b>Sep 2015</b>	The first MAP board meeting signalled formal closure of the PSE programme
<b>Apr 2016</b>	The MAP board agreed a structure for future MAP board meetings
<b>Jan 2017</b>	The council agreed its approach to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)
<b>Mar 2017</b>	The Cabinet noted progress on the 'Vision for the future', the ODP
<b>Apr 2017</b>	The Cabinet agreed an approach to participatory budgeting
<b>May 2017</b>	<b>Local government election</b>
<b>May 2017</b>	Report to CMT on a council-wide approach to strategic change Report to CMT on a self-evaluation of 'How good is our service?' Report to CMT on workforce considerations
<b>Sep 2017</b>	Briefing for councillors on the MAP
<b>Oct 2017</b>	Deadline of 1 Oct 2017 for all councils to produce their LOIP

Note: ASC=Audit and Scrutiny Committee; CHCP=Community Health and Care Partnership; CMT=Corporate Management Team; HSCP=Health and Social Care Partnership; LOIP=Local Outcome Improvement Plan; PSE=Public Sector Excellence model of change management; SOA=Single Outcome Agreement.

Source: Audit Scotland; East Renfrewshire Council



# Best Value Assurance Report

## East Renfrewshire Council

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats, along with a podcast summary at:

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