

An overview of local government in Scotland 2015

Self-assessment tool for councillors



This self-assessment tool is designed to help councillors review progress in implementing the recommendations in our report, [An overview of local government in Scotland 2015 \[PDF\]](#). They should consider each issue listed and decide which statement most accurately reflects their current situation. This approach will enable them to identify what actions need to be taken.

The last column in the checklist can be used to record sources of evidence, supplementary comments to support the assessment or to highlight actions to take forward.

Issue	Assessment of current position (continued)					Comments
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes in place but needs improving	Yes in place and working well	Not applicable	
Skills and expertise (paragraphs 97 to 99 [PDF])						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors review and update their own training needs and identify areas where they require further training. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors work together with officers to ensure the council provides or arranges relevant training for them in appropriate areas, including assessing financial and service performance. 						

Issue	Assessment of current position (continued)					Comments
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes in place but needs improving	Yes in place and working well	Not applicable	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors ensure they get support from officers when they identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. 						
Financial and performance information (paragraphs 90 to 96 [PDF] )						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are working to improve the way they report financial and performance information to councillors to make it clearer and easier to understand. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers provide councillors with relevant, up to date performance data, including benchmarking the council's performance with other relevant organisations or services. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers report performance information to the public in a way that helps them understand the council's performance. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers make councillors aware of future funding gaps and provide them with information to help make decisions on how to close the gaps. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers make councillors aware of changes to the proportion of the council's budget that will be required to repay debt. 						

Issue	Assessment of current position (continued)					Comments
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes in place but needs improving	Yes in place and working well	Not applicable	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers make councillors aware of the financial impact of national and local policies (eg, taxes on land and buildings transactions, waste disposal to landfill and the implications of the Smith Commission agreement). 						
Using local data and working with communities (paragraphs 53 to 61 [PDF] )						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council uses local socio-economic data and works in close co-operation with service users to understand their needs, explore ways of meeting them, and deliver the services. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers make councillors aware of population trends in the area and the implications for service demand and capital budgets. 						
Service delivery options (paragraphs 62 to 68 [PDF] )						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is reviewing all practical options for delivering services in new ways to help save money and improve services. It is identifying the benefits and risks of each option and monitoring the impact of the option chosen, including the risks associated with change 						

Issue	Assessment of current position (continued)					Comments
	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes in place but needs improving	Yes in place and working well	Not applicable	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors are aware of what actions the council has taken so far to make savings and the extent of staff reductions to date, and the impact of these on service delivery. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is investing in preventative approaches to help manage future demand for services 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has a comprehensive workforce strategy to help plan and manage the impact of staff reductions 						
Financial planning (paragraphs 69 to 73 [PDF] )						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has financial plans for the short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 years). 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategies set out financial commitments, identify problems with affordability of services and allow members to understand whether the financial position is sustainable over an extended period. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's budget targets resources effectively at its priorities, including shared priorities identified with partners in the Single Outcome Agreement 						

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	No action needed	No but action in hand	Yes in place but needs improving	Yes in place and working well	Not applicable	
Governance arrangements (paragraphs 74 to 89 [PDF] )						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council reviews governance arrangements following significant changes in staff, management or political structures. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's senior management team has the skills and capacity to provide effective leadership and management of finances, services and improvement programmes. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors understand the role and statutory responsibilities of the S95 officer, the monitoring officer and the chief social work officer. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scrutiny or audit committee has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a chair who is not a member of the political administration – clear terms of reference – adequate support and access to independent advice – members who have the necessary skills and training. 						