

Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2022

Questions for Elected Members

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

The checklist captures a number of questions for elected members to consider and relates to our Local Government in Scotland Overview 2022. It is designed to support elected members in scrutinising and understanding how well their council is planning recovery and renewal.

Questions for Elected Members to consider	What do I know	Do I need to ask any further questions
<p>Leadership – planning, strategy and improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does my council have clear plans for recovery and renewal, that outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it needs to do in the short, medium and longer term • the outcomes it will achieve • and the investment needed? 2. Is my council together with our partners, reviewing and aligning strategic plans and priorities (including Local Outcome Improvement Plans) to deliver recovery and renewal? <p>Has it consulted with communities on these priorities?</p> 3. Do recovery plans for my council consider key themes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ways of working • Inequalities • Education recovery • Economic recovery • Climate emergency • Health and wellbeing – community and workforce 		

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Leadership – planning, strategy and improvement (Continued)		
<p>4. Has my council considered the Scottish Government National Recovery Plan and Programme for Government as part of the refresh of its strategic plans and recovery plans?</p> <p>5. Does my council have clear plans for restarting paused, closed or reduced services for dealing with any service backlogs caused by the pandemic?</p> <p>6. Do I know how my council is learning lessons from the pandemic response and evaluating new service models to inform improvement and drive recovery and renewal? Am I assured my council is building on innovations made during the pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting vulnerable groups • Working in partnership • Faster decision-making • Delivering services differently – e.g. digital • Working differently – remote and hybrid <p>7. Do I know how well my council uses data and what plans it has to develop data skills, data standards and data tools?</p>		
Leadership Skills		
<p>8. Is my council clear on what leadership skills are needed to drive forward recovery and renewal, and are there arrangements in place to deliver these?</p>		

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Leadership Skills (Continued)		
<p>9. Am I aware what succession planning arrangements and leadership development arrangements are in place for the council management team? Am I satisfied these are appropriate?</p> <p>10. Do I have access to training and learning materials that meet my needs as an elected member? Have I taken up available opportunities that will assist me in being effective in my role?</p>		
Governance		
<p>11. Do I have access to clear, timely, and sufficiently detailed information that allows me to carry out my governance and scrutiny role?</p> <p>12. Do I have a clear picture of where my council is in terms of recovery and renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new service demand, unmet needs, and what backlogs exist? • What changes to services have taken place and what impact assessments have been carried out for changes that have continued or are proposed? <p>13. Am I satisfied that the governance arrangements in place in my council offer sufficient transparency and opportunities for public participation?</p> <p>14. Do I understand what my responsibilities are when serving on external bodies (eg, ALEOs) and joint boards or committees?</p>		

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Governance (Continued)		
15. Am I familiar with the Councillors Code of Conduct for elected members?		
Finance		
16. Am I clear about the financial challenges facing the council and how they are being managed?		
17. Has my council developed longer term financial plans that clearly link to recovery plans?		
18. Does my council have clear and robust plans in place for the management of reserves?		
Workforce		
19. Does my council have detailed corporate and service workforce planning in place? Have these plans been updated to reflect the impact of Covid-19? Do these include plans for managing impact of pandemic on staff wellbeing?		
20. Does my council understand any specific areas of skills shortages that risk delivery of its objectives? Eg social care, facilities management.		
Meeting local needs		
21. Does my council understand the changing demographic profile, poverty levels, and cost of living increases in our council area and how this will impact on demand for council services?		

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Meeting local needs (Continued)		
<p>22. Does my council have data and an understanding at a local level of the impact of the pandemic on different groups, in particular how inequalities have been exacerbated?</p> <p>23. Does my council have plans in place to address these unequal impacts?</p> <p>24. Does my council have plans in place to address key priorities and areas of reform, including social care and climate change?</p>		
Community empowerment and collaboration		
<p>25. How well is my council involving communities and citizens in driving recovery plans and reshaping services? What needs to improve?</p> <p>26. How well is my council collaborating with local partners including the third sector in planning and delivering services?</p>		