
Report to Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 29th January 2026

Subject: Statutory Report: Best Value in Clackmannanshire Council – Action Plan Update

Report by: Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report updates Council on the progress made against the agreed action plan developed in response to the four key recommendations set out in the statutory Best Value report for Clackmannanshire Council, published in September 2024.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Council notes and comments on, as appropriate, the progress of the Action Plan (Appendix A).

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The Best Value thematic work on 'Leadership of the development of new local strategic priorities' was presented to Council on 29 August 2024 as part of the Annual report to those charged with Governance and the Controller of Audit for Financial Year ended 2022/23.
- 3.2. The Controller of Audit's Statutory Report was presented to Council in November 2024 and included a proposed action plan which Council agreed.
- 3.3. The Action Plan was intended to build on our foundations to further improve the Council's well established transformation processes.
- 3.4. Clackmannanshire Council is committed to continuous improvement and is acting on the recommendations made by the Accounts Commission.
- 3.5. The Statutory Best Value Report for Clackmannanshire Council contained the following four recommendations, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Best Value Recommendations

| Statutory Best Value Improvement Action | Status |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. The leadership (both political and officer) has been effective in setting clear priorities; it now needs to ensure it has the capacity and capability to deliver them. | ONGOING |
| 2. The Council should urgently develop a medium-term financial strategy to set out how it intends to achieve financial sustainability. | COMPLETE |
| 3. It is critical that the Council develops detailed plans at pace, with robust benefits realisation tools to demonstrate that it is achieving its intended outcomes. | ONGOING |
| 4. The Council should review its capital budget setting and monitoring arrangements to ensure it sets realistic budgets with clear timelines and a clear linkage to Council priorities. | COMPLETE |

3.6. Appendix A provides a more detailed update on each of these four Best Value recommendations / improvement actions.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

4.1 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 *Financial Details* – there are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

5.4. *Staffing* - no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1 Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(2) Council Policies

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Complies with relevant Council Policies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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8.0 Impact Assessments

8.1 Have you attached the combined equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty and fairer Scotland duty? (All EFSIAs also require to be published on the Council's website)

Yes

8.2 If an impact assessment has not been undertaken you should explain why:
There are no direct impacts resulting from the contents of this report.

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

- Appendix A Statutory Best Value Report in Clackmannanshire Council – update for 29th January 2026.

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

- [Annual report to those charged with Governance and the Controller of Audit for Financial Year Ended 2022/23, approved by Clackmannanshire Council on 29th August 2024](#)
- [Statutory Report: Best Value in Clackmannanshire Council – Action Plan, approved by Clackmannanshire Council on 28th November 2024](#)

Author(s)

| NAME | DESIGNATION | TEL NO / EXTENSION |
|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Fi Grinly | Strategy & Performance Adviser | |

Approved by

| NAME | DESIGNATION | SIGNATURE |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nikki Bridle | Chief Executive |  |

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| Recommendation: | 1. The leadership (both political and officer) has been effective in setting clear priorities; it now needs to ensure it has the capacity and capability to deliver them. |
| Status: ONGOING | |
| <p>The Council has reaffirmed its priorities through the Be the Future Transformation Programme and is actively strengthening its capacity and capability to deliver them. This includes refining the Target Operating Model (TOM), developing a Strategic Workforce Plan, investing in digital transformation, leveraging additional inward investment, and pursuing collaborative approaches to ensure resilience and sustainability.</p> <p>The Be the Future Transformation Programme, established by Council in 2018, is an ambitious response to delivering service and financial sustainability. It enjoys cross-party support, and progress reports are presented at every Council meeting cycle. The programme is underpinned by Organisational Development and the Target Operating Model (TOM) framework.</p> <p>The TOM is well-developed and is currently being refined to inform the 2026/27 Budget. Alongside this, the Council is developing a Strategic Workforce Plan, which will align with TOM work. A workforce development update will be presented with the budget in February 2026, setting out progress toward a timely and relevant workforce plan.</p> <p>To deliver priorities effectively, the Council is investing in key enablers and partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Mixed Economy Resourcing Model: Supports transformation delivery, comprising a core PMO team, £1.8m capital resource for permanent and fixed-term roles, and access to revenue funding via the Transformation Fund delegated to the Chief Executive. • Digital Transformation: A five-year Digital Roadmap, detailed in the Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS), sets out plans to modernise services, improve data use, expand automation and AI, and build a modern digital workplace. This will support better decision-making, strengthen partnerships, and empower communities through tools like citizen data portals and online engagement platforms. • Collaborative Approaches: The Council is working with Falkirk Council and others to explore shared service delivery for financial sustainability. Following a joint Discovery Project, priority service areas (e.g., HR, payroll, procurement, regulatory services, Additional Support Needs, and Social Care) will move into a design phase from December 2025 with detailed business cases being prepared. Up to £2 million Invest to Save funding has been secured to resource this work without impacting service budgets. • Capacity Benchmarking: Trueman Change Investment has undertaken benchmarking reviews to inform redesign work linked to the TOM. • Workforce Resilience: Long-term absences are being addressed through Maximising Attendance procedures, supported by a dedicated Absence Compliance Officer (in post since late 2024). Recruitment challenges for specialist roles (e.g., qualified accountants) remain, but efforts include agency engagement and collaboration discussions with other councils. • Fraud Prevention: Additional resource for a Fraud Officer was approved in the 2025/26 Budget to strengthen anti-fraud and corruption measures. | |

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The transformation programme is supported by a range of reforms and strategies that are creating conditions for change and delivering a radical shift towards a preventative and relational model of public services:

- Values-Based Leadership in partnership with Scottish Government, Hunter Foundation, and Columba 1400 is embedded enabling practitioners to move from service-specific boundaries to addressing the interconnected challenges that communities experience.
- The Family Wellbeing Partnership continues to leverage additional funding, while the associated Transformation Space is driving innovation, partnership, and investment to deliver the Be the Future vision. It is aligning public, private and community efforts for long term impact, pioneering new funding and delivery models in collaboration with the third sector, external funding partners. In line with the Public Service Reform Strategy (2025), the approach shifts the emphasis to prevention and early intervention, reducing demand for costly crisis services, designing services around people's needs, and through integrated funding and joined up approaches, promotes a more efficient and sustainable model. By taking an outcomes-based approach, the focus is on what is actually changing for people and communities, as they are increasingly involved in co-design the solutions. Collaboration with Community Planning Partners is gaining pace and focus aligning around outcomes rather than organisational governance and mandates. There is already evidence around - Whole Family Support, Child Wellbeing, Community Justice, Employability, Mental Health and Wellbeing - that these approaches are having a significant positive impact on areas including Domestic Abuse, Diversion from Prosecution, Reducing Isolation and Enhanced Wellbeing.
- Clackmannanshire has made a long-term commitment to Keeping The Promise which involves transformational change across Children's Services and beyond. Children's Services have been redesigned and the integration with other services has been strengthened. There is a much greater focus on early intervention and family support, and building joined up services around what children and families need, rather than what has traditionally been provided, so helping families keep together where safe and appropriate, reducing the need for children to enter care. Data shows that this is already having a significant impact, with fewer children entering care, a decrease in children being looked after, and a fall in Child Protection Register cases.
- Work has begun on "Reimagining Social Care" across Adults, Children's Justice, and Education, with a strong focus on how the benefits of a new Social Work Management System can be optimised to manage demand and signpost people to appropriate supports. The programme aims to improve workforce productivity, improve assessment to delivery turnaround, improve access to service provision, and strengthen accountability and responsibility across teams.

These approaches combined are projected to deliver improved long term, sustainable outcomes for the people of Clackmannanshire. In addition, the return of this investment, from cost avoidance and reducing demand for services, should be projected across the public sector as a whole with benefits expected to other areas such as health and police. Clackmannanshire has led the way in pioneering these approaches, demonstrating how the recommendations of the Chistie Commission can be implemented on the ground.

The Council's work is already delivering measurable benefits:

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- Education: Bucking the national trend on the poverty-related attainment gap in key areas, above national positive destinations Academy, Zero Exclusions for 6 years, higher than national average levels for Early Literacy.
- Continued fall in suicide rates in young people, with zero deaths recorded for the first time in 11–25-year-olds, the lowest in Scotland.
- Children's Services: Less children entering care, 94% of families supported by Early Help avoid escalation to statutory social work,
- Justice Services: Fall in domestic abuse rates, fall in rape/sexual assaults,
- STRIVE Evaluation: Independent review shows significant savings across partners by cost avoidance and preventing statutory interventions.
- Sector Leadership: Clackmannanshire is recognised for its wellbeing economy approach and strong focus on community wealth building; and leading on Whole Family Support and the pooling of funding from local authority, government, third sector, independent funders, and the private sector.

The Council has streamlined its planning and reporting framework:

- Scotland's first Wellbeing LOIP replaces the Corporate Plan.
- Ten statutory plans consolidated into one Community Wellbeing Plan, with further integration planned.

Transformation priorities were reviewed and reaffirmed during Covid, despite capacity pressures, to ensure resilience and readiness for emerging challenges. This reflects a conscious decision to maintain momentum and invest in prevention and early intervention, recognising that benefits take time but are already evident.

The Council has an embedded and continuous leadership approach through the Senior Leadership Forum and Team Leaders' Forum, which provide opportunities for collaboration, networking, and development for key management cohorts. Building on this, the tender process for new leadership programmes is being finalised, with a full procurement exercise launching in December 2025. These programmes will be developed alongside work on the Target Operating Model (TOM) to ensure future leadership competencies align with the Council's new way of working.

To achieve our goals, plans must also anticipate and mitigate challenges that could hinder progress, such as inadequate workforce planning. The Council has an effective risk management approach in place to identify such factors and take appropriate action to safeguard the success of initiatives.

Evidence:

- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 12 December 2024 – Interim Workforce Strategy Update](#)
- [Report to Council – 30 January 2025 – Be the Future Update – Asset Strategy \(and reference to other transformation project updates, including Asset Strategy and Learning Estate Strategy\)](#)
- [Report to Council – 27 February 2025 – General Services Revenue and Capital Budget 2025/26 \(referencing Be the Future Target Operating Model: Corporate Priorities 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A and additional staff resources.\)](#)

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- [Report to Council – 26 June 2025 – Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) (also reference to lobbying activity)
- [Council Report – 26 June 2025 – Be the Future: Clackmannanshire Transformation Space Update](#)
- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 28 August 2025 – Risk Strategy Annual Report](#)
- [Report to Council – 27 November 2025 – Be the Future Update: Digital and Data Transformation](#)
- [Report to Council – 27 November 2025 – Transformation through Collaboration](#)

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| Recommendation: | 2. The Council should urgently develop a medium-term financial strategy to set out how it intends to achieve financial sustainability. |
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Status: COMPLETE

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was formally presented and approved by Council in June 2025. It consolidates information from multiple sources, including Annual Budget Reports, Budget Strategy Updates, Budget Context and Outlook Reports, Be the Future updates, and the Investment Strategy. The MTFS provides a comprehensive view of the risks and challenges facing the Council over the medium term and sets out how these will be managed.

The MTFS demonstrates how the Council intends to achieve financial sustainability by building on:

- Robust financial management foundations.
- A proven track record of delivering savings.
- Strong partnership working and collaboration.
- Innovative service design and delivery under the Be the Future Transformation Programme and Target Operating Model (TOM)

The strategy adopts a three-pronged approach:

1. Reducing expenditure
2. Maximising income
3. Transformational redesign

It also details ongoing activity, including collaborations, transformation projects, and digital innovation.

The MTFS explicitly recognises pressures on service delivery and workforce capacity. It commits to:

- Targeted investment in critical service areas
- Workforce planning aligned with transformation priorities
- A shift from reactive to preventative service models

Funds have been earmarked to support transformation activity through the Be the Future Programme, delegated to the Chief Executive. Bids for these funds are overseen by the Strategic Oversight Group and monitored by Elected Members via the Be the Future Board.

The Council ensures strong governance through:

- Six-monthly reporting to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on improvement recommendations from Internal Audit and AGS processes.

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- A new One Plan, One Report model (Wellbeing Plan) for people-related services has been introduced for integrated outcomes reporting within the People directorate. This reflects frameworks such as the Improving Outcomes Framework for Whole Family Support, Tackling Poverty and the Accountability and Assurance Framework for the Verity House Agreement.

This integrated approach is being extended across most Council areas, supporting a whole-system model in initiatives like STRIVE, Family Wellbeing Partnership, Employability, and Homelessness Prevention.

Clackmannanshire Council works collaboratively with HSCP partners and has supported the development of a robust Recovery Plan for the Integrated Joint Board (IJB). This includes transparent due diligence on proposals to address the IJB overspend for the 2024/25 outturn and the proposed 2025/26 Budget.

Evidence:

- [Report to Council – 27 February 2025 - Budget Context and Outlook Report](#)
- [Report to Council – 20 March 2025 – Integrated Joint Board Budget](#)
- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 17 April 2025 – 2023/24 Corporate Performance](#)
- [Report to Council – 26 June 2025 – Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)
- [Report to Council – 21 August 2025 – Community Wellbeing Plan 2025-2026](#)
- [Report to Council – 2 October 2025 – Integrated Joint Board Budget \(Update\)](#)
- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 30 October 2025 – Council Financial Performance 2025/26 as at June 2025](#)
- [Wellbeing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-34](#)

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| Recommendation: | 3. It is critical that the Council develops detailed plans at pace, with robust benefits realisation tools to demonstrate that it is achieving its intended outcomes |
| Status: ONGOING | |
| <p>The Benefits Realisation Plan and Framework have been agreed by Council, following detailed discussions with the Council Leader and the Be the Future Board (open to all Councillors). The framework sets clear parameters for measuring benefits and establishes methods—both qualitative and quantitative—at project level.</p> <p>The next step is to map existing organisational measures to the outcomes of the Be the Future Programme, enabling benefits to be tracked against investment and impact. These measures will be collated and reported annually, with the first report due this year. This work is included in the data insights pipeline to ensure all relevant data sources are captured and the best indicators identified at project, thematic, and programme levels.</p> | |
| <p>The framework operates across three tiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project level (e.g., standalone evaluations for STRIVE and Family Wellbeing Partnership) • Thematic level • Overall programme level <p>The Council secured £1 million from the Scottish Government's Invest to Save Fund to accelerate the shift to preventative public services. A Transformation Space has been established to address siloed funding, using a unique model that combines public, third sector, and private funding. In line with Christie Commission principles and the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform Strategy 2025, this approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift spend upstream toward prevention. • Reduce demand and overall service costs. • Improve outcomes for communities. <p>Reports presented to Council in March and June 2025 outlined this new approach, which seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver community voice-led system transformation. • Demonstrate agile and impactful funding flows. • Build community wealth and a wellbeing economy. • Create a single reporting framework accepted by partners and relevant to communities. | |

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- Leverage additional funds into the community.

Strategic outcomes for this model align with priorities in the Wellbeing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) approved by Council in October 2024, supporting the Community Planning Partnership's ambition to put communities at the heart of planning.

There is an increased focus on the Community Planning Partnership (Alliance) in tackling silo working and delivering Whole Family Support. Strategic partners—including Police Scotland and NHS Forth Valley—are actively exploring enhanced planning and reporting to accelerate early intervention and prevention, lifting more families out of poverty through wraparound support.

Place Services are in the process of developing a “One Plan” like the Wellbeing Plan undertaken by the People directorate. This will assist the Place directorate in coordinating a range of strategic returns and plans in one place, whilst focusing on outcomes.

Evidence:

- [Council Report – 16 May 2024 – Be the Future Update \(Benefits Realisation Report\)](#)
- [Report to Council – 28 November 2024 – Be the Future Update – Communication and Engagement \(Appendix A for Benefits Realisation Plan\)](#)
- [Council Report – 20 March 2025 – Be the Future: Clackmannanshire Transformation Space](#)
- [Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland \(19 June 2025\)](#)
- [Council Report – 26 June 2025 – Be the Future: Clackmannanshire Transformation Space Update](#)
- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 28 August 2025 – Place Services Year End 2024/2025 Business Plan Progress Report](#)

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| Recommendation: | 4. The Council should review its capital budget setting and monitoring arrangements to ensure it sets realistic budgets with clear timelines and a clear linkage to Council priorities. |
| Status: COMPLETE | |
| <p>The Council operates a 20-year rolling investment programme, updated annually and approved as part of the budget-setting process. This programme is prepared in line with the Capital Strategy, detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, which is also approved annually.</p> <p>The Council's previous strategy to reduce debt has enabled significant investments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wellbeing Hub • The Learning Estate Strategy • Digital developments <p>These investments support economic growth and deliver substantial community benefits through a managed process.</p> <p>A dedicated Capital Operations Group oversees capital budget monitoring and review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership: Senior Manager for Transformation and Capital (Chair), Capital Accountant, Chief Finance Officer, Corporate Accounting Team Leader, Capital Project Manager, and project budget holders. • Frequency: Meets every two months. • Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review outturns and update on project phasing or cost changes. ○ Assess new funding bids. ○ Monitor progress on asset sales. <p>In addition, the Senior Manager for Capital and Transformation, supported by the Capital Project Manager and Capital Accountant, meets individually with budget holders to review the capital programme for the upcoming year and consider new bids for inclusion.</p> <p>Capital resourcing is reviewed annually as part of the Capital Budget setting cycle and is aligned with Be the Future corporate priorities. Access to revenue funding through bids to the Transformation Fund must meet the criteria and outcomes of the Be the Future programme.</p> <p>Elected Members have multiple opportunities to scrutinise and challenge officers through:</p> | |
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- Full Council
- Audit & Scrutiny Committee
- Be the Future Board
- Boards established under the 2022 decision-making framework review
- Group Leaders' meetings with the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors.

The Audit & Scrutiny Committee has strengthened its role through:

- Introducing pre-agenda meetings.
- Introducing an annual effectiveness review of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee using the CIPFA Self-Assessment Framework.
- Embedding an Annual Report process (2023/24 report presented Dec 2024; 2024/25 report Oct 2025).

Additional measures include:

- Regular meetings between the Committee Chair/Vice Chair and the Section 95 Officer; and
- Pre-agenda sessions with senior officers, to ensure robust scrutiny.

Beyond formal committees, Elected Members engage through:

- The annual budget-setting process.
- Officer-led budget challenge sessions.
- All-member briefings on key issues (e.g., St Mungo's consultation, Social Work IT system implementation, RAAC updates).

The programme to deliver the Wellbeing Hub and Lochies School is the largest capital investment in recent years. To ensure robust oversight:

- Update papers are presented at every Council meeting.
- Regular briefings are provided at key milestones.

A revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2026-2031 (SHIP) was approved by Council on 2nd October 2025. The SHIP sets out the operational framework and strategic investment priorities for affordable housing development in Clackmannanshire over the next five years, to achieve the outcomes set in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Clackmannanshire's Wellbeing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The LHS is scheduled for review in 2026, informed by the new Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA), which is pending sign-off from Scottish Government.

Statutory Best Value Report in Clackmannanshire Council – update for 29th January 2026**Evidence:**

- [Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 12 December 2024 – Audit & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report Follow Up](#)
- [Report to Council – 30 January 2025 – Housing Revenue Account Budget 2025/26, Capital Programme 2025/26 & Rent Structure Modelling Review](#)
- [Capital Budget: 20-year rolling capital programme within Report to Special Council – 27 February 2025 – General Services Revenue and Capital Budget 2025-26](#)
- [Special Council Report – 27 February 2025 - Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26](#)
- [Council Report – 21 August 2025 – Wellbeing Hub & Lochies School Project Update](#)
- [Minutes of Meeting of the Clackmannanshire Council – 21 August 2025 \(reference to exempt item on Be the Future Update – Replacement Social Work IT System and Reimagining Social Care TOM\)](#)
- [Council Report – 2 October 2025 – Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete \(RAAC\) - Update](#)
- [Council Report – 2 October 2025 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2026-31](#)
- [Council Report – 28 November 2024 – Outcome of St Mungo's Consultation](#)

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