







Scrutiny tool checklist for councillors



This scrutiny tool captures a number of potential questions for councillors and relates to our report [Local government in Scotland: Challenges and performance 2018](#) . It is designed to provide councillors with examples of questions they may wish to consider to help them better understand their council's position and to scrutinise performance.

How well informed am I?		
Questions for councillors to consider	What do I know?	Do I need to ask any further questions?
Community empowerment (paragraphs 7 to 12) 		
How are you involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services that suit local need?		
Does your council have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future? What is your role as a councillor in this?		
Training for councillors (paragraphs 13 to 16) 		
Do you know what training is available to help you fulfil your duties?		
Does the training meet your needs? If not, do you know who to speak to?		
Factors affecting demand for services and council funding (Exhibit 1 and paragraphs 24 to 33) 		
Have you considered how policy and legislative change will affect how your council operates?		
Have you considered the demographics of your council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?		


How well informed am I?

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Financial planning (paragraphs 34 to 38) 		
Does your council have medium and long-term financial plans in place?		
Does your council link budgets to plans and outcomes and report on these?		
Making savings and generating income (paragraphs 39 to 51) 		
Does your council have the right structures in place to ensure that all your efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?		
How is your council looking to maximise income?		
Does your council compare its policies and priorities to raise income with other councils?		
Does your council have an organisation-wide workforce plan? Does it contain information about the numbers, costs, and skills of the actual and desired workforce?		

How well informed am I?

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Transformation (paragraphs 52 to 65) 		
Does your transformation strategy contain plans for truly transformational change? Will it improve services and save money?		
Have you invested in the right resources for your transformation strategy to achieve its planned savings?		
Does your council have the necessary governance structures to effectively oversee and monitor its transformation activity?		
What is your council's risk appetite for transformational change? Are risks properly monitored?		
What will the financial repercussions be for your council if your transformation strategy fails to meet its savings targets?		
Does your council follow the core principals for successfully planning digital projects outlined in our <i>Principles for a digital future</i>  published in May 2017?		

How well informed am I?

Questions for councillors to consider	What do I know?	Do I need to ask any further questions?
Service performance and performance reporting (paragraphs 66 to 95) 		
How well does your council report performance to local communities? Is there a link to priorities and budgets in your performance reporting?		
Have you considered what lessons you can learn from other councils who are delivering services well?		
Do you know the impact of spending reductions on the services your council provides?		
How can you better engage with local communities to understand why public satisfaction is declining?		
How are your council and IJB managing demand for social care services? What preventative measures are available in your council?		
Do you know how budget cuts have affected your smaller services?		



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