

**Item 9 - Question Time**

To the Leader of the Council

“What progress has the Administration made towards the implementation of an effective project management system for the Council?”

Response to Mr G Phillips

At Resources Committee on the 25th November 2015 Members approved a Project Management Governance Policy. This policy proposed a corporate approach to project management governance and provides assurance to Members that processes and controls are in place to ensure successful project delivery within the Council. The policy came into full effect from April 2016 and is applicable for all Services, with regular reporting being presented to members for their review at committee for the Capital Programme, Transformation Programme and in relation to ICT Service Projects. This has resulted in stronger project management arrangements now being in place across all Services and in particular in relation to major projects.

The Policy provides a framework for accountability and responsibilities, ensuring that project decision making is robust, logical and that projects provide value to the organisation. It offers a mechanism for ensuring that accurate and appropriate project status reports are presented regardless of the Service running the project or the type of project. Projects are managed using a number of appropriate systems such as SharePoint, MS project and MS office products

The Policy is built on the following elements:

- Key principles - the basic rules that affect all projects and a definition of the project life cycle;
- Structure, Accountability and Responsibilities - who does what and what role they play in project governance;
- Governance process (Checkpoints) - defines the trigger points for mandatory governance checks on project status and the evidence required from a Project Sponsor for governance approvals;
- Project Reporting and Standard Processes – defines the reporting requirements and the acceptable way of working within the governance framework. It also defines the other processes that are generic to all projects within the Council. This includes processes that were identified within the Audit & Scrutiny report as requiring attention.

Service Directors are Accountable for the management and reporting of projects under their control to members at Strategic Committees in line with the Governance

controls which form the Policy. Members will also have the opportunity to review project compliance with the Policy at future Audit and Scrutiny committees.

The new policy was implemented from April 2016 and, as with all new Highland Council Policies, it will be reviewed after 12 months to check adherence to the policy and review any new areas of best practice for inclusion into the policy.