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## FOREWORD

### Foreword by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

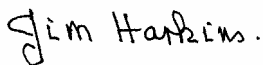
We are a successful Council. Since reorganisation in 1996, we have focused our efforts on regenerating our communities, promoting social inclusion and delivering high quality, cost effective services that meet the needs and growing expectations of Renfrewshire residents.

We continually seek out opportunities to improve performance and deliver effective, efficient services. Our Reaching Renfrewshire Strategy, Customers Matter, School Estate Strategy which includes a large PPP, redevelopment of our care homes, Planning for Change, formation of the Leisure Trust are all good examples of how we are achieving this objective. We have made significant progress improving all our services and details of our performance and achievements are set out in this submission.

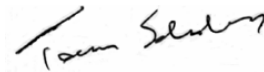
We have embraced Best Value and the whole thrust of our extensive challenging service review programme has been directed at achieving significant improvements in the level of service being provided to our customers. Our drive to improve the way we provide services is evidenced by the extent of external accreditation that we have gained across all our services. – Charter Mark, Investors in People and ISO9001:2000 – are only some of the quality awards that we have won. In particular, we believe that our success in achieving such wide coverage of Charter Mark is testament to the high quality of our front line services.

While we have significant achievements to our credit there still remains much to be done. Our customers expectations and our determination to deliver high quality, modern, accessible customer focused services which offer Best Value lie at the heart of everything we do in Renfrewshire. We recognise that we have to continue to improve and demonstrate improvement and the ways in which we will do this are detailed in our Improvement Plan and in each of the Service Performance Profiles.

We have a culture of improvement in Renfrewshire where we seek out best practice and apply it to our services. We will use this Best Value audit to help us identify and review any areas across the Council where we can improve still further.



Councillor Jim Harkins  
Leader of the Council



Tom Scholes  
Chief Executive

## INTRODUCTION

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 established Best Value and Community Planning as statutory duties for local authorities. To assess how well this responsibility is being discharged, the Accounts Commission introduced new arrangements to audit Best Value. This involves a team from Audit Scotland visiting each Council every three years to conduct a Best Value audit. Renfrewshire Council is one of 11 Councils that are being audited in 2005. This document is part of our submission for the audit. We believe it represents a fair and balanced assessment of how Renfrewshire Council is delivering Best Value across all services.

Our submission consists of four sections:

**Section 1** provides the context for the submission. It outlines a profile for Renfrewshire with information on the key socio economic characteristics and issues that impact on the delivery of services in the area. Our ten strategic objectives with achievements against each of them and details of our political and management structures are included. This section contains a broad overview of our performance management system and a summary of how we are responding to the Modernising Government agenda.

**Section 2** covers our self assessment against the ten Best Value criteria. The more complex criteria have been broken down into sub-themes and for each theme and sub theme we summarise how we perform, set out our key strengths and signpost the core evidence that supports our assessment. For each Best Value criterion we identify a number of operational areas which we believe are examples of best practice. All of these examples have been written up as short best practice notes which are available as part of our evidence. We conclude each criterion with a series of actions setting out how we intend to continue to improve our performance.

**Section 3** covers the departmental service performance profiles which follow a standard style. Each profile starts with a service statement covering the scope, challenges and priorities for the service. A review of how the service has been challenged follows – all the Best Value service reviews, external audit and scrutiny inspections and quality accreditations – highlighting the improvements and benefits resulting to service users from the review activity. Each profile contains a summary of how the service consults with stakeholders and how this customer feedback has been used to shape service delivery. As with the Best Value criteria, each profile contains examples of best practice and a range of actions that will be taken to improve the service. The profiles conclude with an overall assessment of performance. In each case we believe we provide high quality, efficient and effective services. Annex 1, which contains all the statutory and local performance indicators with trend information and future targets for our services, supports this assessment.

**Section 4** sets out a draft Improvement Plan for the Council. In addition to these high level tasks, each performance profile also includes a comprehensive list of operational improvement actions that will be implemented as part of the Improvement Plan for the Council.