

# Peer Review Framework

Self-evaluation is becoming an increasingly popular and critical element of Scottish local government's performance improvement agenda. The Crerar Review recommended a move towards more outcome focused self-assessment, and this will support the ongoing development of outcome and performance driven Single Outcome Agreements.

With the principles of self-evaluation at its core, the Peer Review Framework is one tool which will help councils drive forward change and continuous improvement in the delivery of their services. Peer Reviews will identify both where a service is doing well and areas where improvements could be made.

One of the key strengths of the Peer Review Framework is the inclusion of officers from other local authorities, and potentially other public organisations, in the Peer Review Team which undertakes the review of the service. These officers will bring to the review their excellent working knowledge of the legislative and policy context within which the service being reviewed operates, giving the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review Team a high degree of legitimacy.

The Peer Review Framework provides an effective process by which the service being reviewed can drive forward change, achieve Best Value and improve its efficiency. It will also contribute to the promotion of a culture of excellence in Scotland's public services, through the sharing of best practice amongst organisations participating in a Peer Review.

## What is a Peer Review?

Peer review processes have become an established part of the public sector improvement agenda in recent years. The peer review model supports the improvement process within a local authority by:

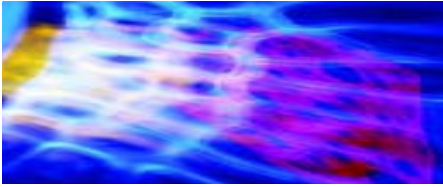
- providing a 'critical friend' assessment of a service;
- identifying areas for improvement within the service;
- supporting change and improvement within the service; and
- facilitating the exchange of ideas and good practice.

**A peer review is not an inspection or audit of a service - it is a supportive review process designed to help identify areas for improvement and to aid a service's capacity to change.**

## What are the objectives of a Peer Review?

A peer review assesses a service against four key areas: leadership and governance, stakeholder management, performance management and organisational development.





The objectives of a peer review are to:

- review key 'business' processes;
- assess the strategic and operational management of the service;
- assess the role of performance management; and
- assess organisational development practices.

### Who carries out a Peer Review?

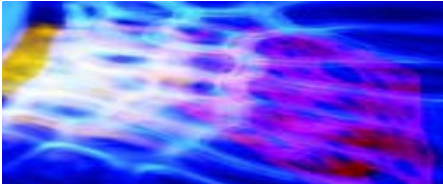
A peer review combines analytical and consultancy expertise of the Improvement Service with the wealth of talent and expertise within Scottish local government, and potentially the wider public sector.

The review is carried out by a Peer Review Team, which is independent of the team responsible for the development and delivery of the service being reviewed. The Peer Review Team will consist of consultants from the Improvement Service and Peer Reviewers - these could be officers from the local authority undertaking the review, other local authorities or other public organisations, who have relevant expertise in the service under review.

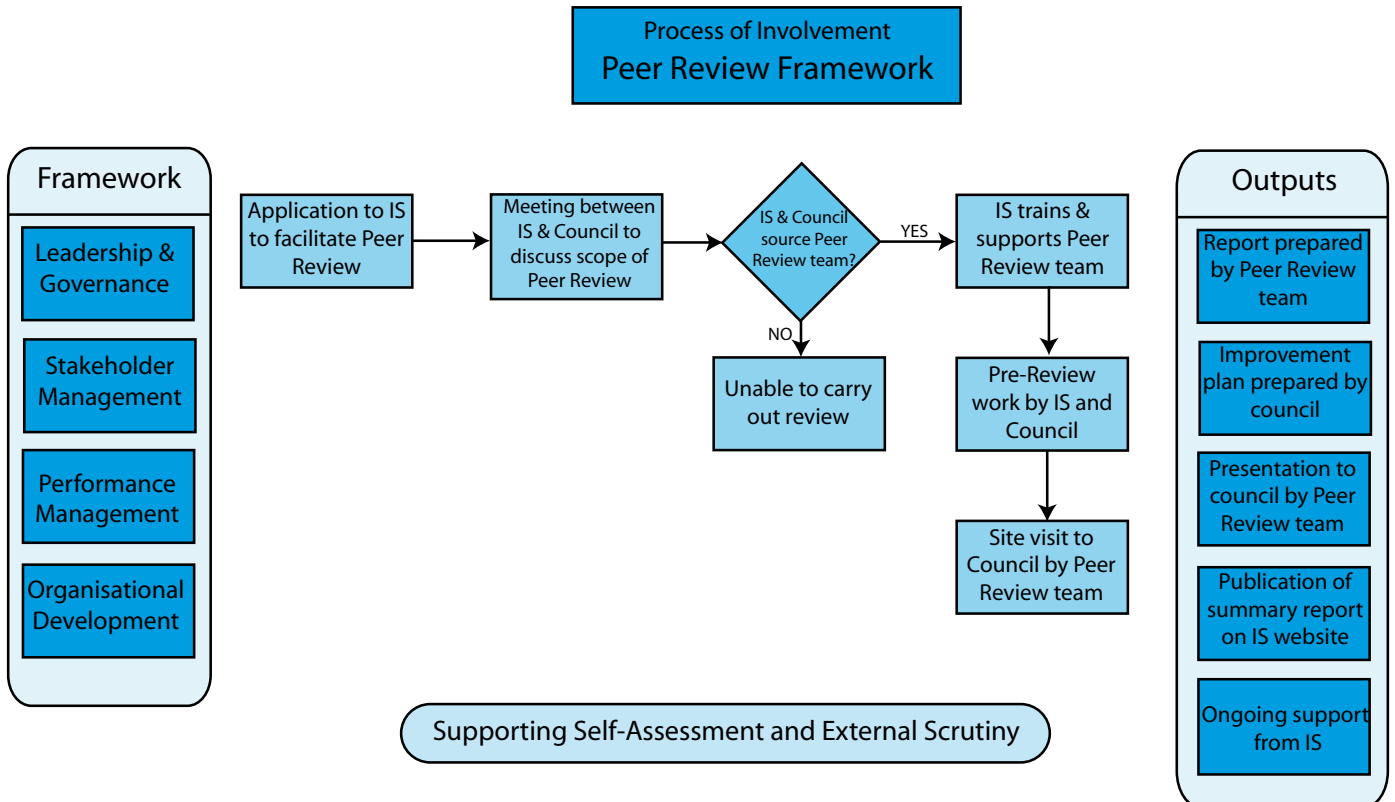
The Peer Reviewers bring to the review their excellent working knowledge of the legislative and policy context within which the service operates, enabling them to make realistic and achievable recommendations.

A consultant from the Improvement Service will be the Peer Review Project Leader and they will have overall responsibility for the peer review. A project manager will also be appointed from the client local authority, to provide support to the Peer Review Team.





## What are the key stages of a Peer Review?



## What are the key outputs from a Peer Review?

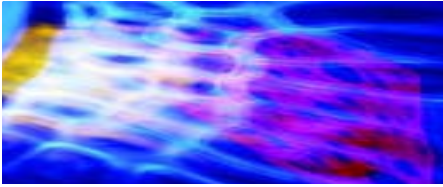
The following key outputs will be delivered by a Peer Review:

- Key review findings from Peer Review team
- Report prepared by Peer Review team, with recommendations for improvement
- Improvement plan prepared by the council
- Presentation to council by Peer Review team, on key findings and recommendations
- Publication of summary report on the Improvement Service's website
- Ongoing support from the Improvement Service to assist the council with the implementation of the review recommendations.
- 12 month evaluation of the impact of the Peer Review on service delivery.

## How much will a Peer Review cost?

In order to comply with directions from the Improvement Service Board, the Improvement Service has to seek appropriate cost-sharing when undertaking work to support an individual local authority. This is simply to enable the Improvement Service to recover its costs for the resources invested in such projects. It is important to note that the Improvement Service will not make a profit.

Cost-sharing will be discussed with the client local authority, once the Improvement Service has a clear understanding of the scope of the peer review.



The client local authority should cover the full expenses of the review team. This should include full overnight accommodation and meal costs, if applicable, during the onsite review period. These expenses will be agreed between the Improvement Service and the client local authority in advance of the commencement of the peer review project.

### **What are the timescales for undertaking a Peer Review?**

The Improvement Service will estimate the duration of the review, once they have met with the council to discuss the scope of the review. A project management approach will be adopted to manage the peer review, which will include timetabling activities and identifying critical points.

### **How quickly will a Peer Review commence?**

Peer Reviews will be programmed into the Improvement Service's operational plan on a first come, first served basis.

### **Who should I contact for further information?**

For further information on the peer review framework, and examples of peer reviews undertaken, access our website [www.improvementservice.org.uk](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk)

If you are interested in undertaking a peer review, or are interested in becoming a Peer Reviewer, please contact:

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