

Report to:	Senior Management Team (SMT)
Report by:	Erin Gray, Head of Policy and Information (HOPI)
Meeting Date:	12 May 2021
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Improving Authority Practice: Our Strategic Approach 2020-2024 - key document (VC149975)
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	Improving Authority Practice: Our strategic approach 2020-2024 DRAFT (VC 148508)

Purpose of report

- To present the proposed new key document 'Improving Authority Practice: Our strategic approach 2020-24' ('the strategic approach') for consideration and approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the Scottish Information Commissioner ('the Commissioner').

Recommendation and actions

- I recommend that SMT:
 - approve the attached proposed key document 'Improving Authority Practice: Our strategic approach 2020-2024'
 - the key document 'C2 Developing Public Authority FOI Practice: Strategic Approach 2016-2020' is superseded by (i) above
 - agree the recommendations set out in the "Publication" section below.

Executive summary

- The Commissioner has to date traditionally had a document which sets out further detail and context for planning of internal operational activity regarding improving authority FOI practice. These documents provided further detail than it is possible to set out in a strategic plan on this area, and inform the related activity set out in annual operational plans across the relevant years. Prior to 2016 this took the form of an 'FOI Learning and Development Strategic Framework', and since then, the 'Developing Public Authority Practice: Strategic Approach 2016-2020' key document performed this function.
- Since the active period of the 2016-2020 strategic approach is now complete, a replacement has been prepared – with the proposed title 'Improving Authority Practice: Our strategic approach 2020-24'. This document sets out detail on the Commissioner's proposed approach to improving authority practice during the lifespan of the Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2020-24, and will inform and shape relevant content in the Commissioner's annual operational plans during this time period. The document includes a description of key themes and priorities, methods, and detail on impact sought and measurement.
- The content of this document is intended to align with and enhance relevant contributions made to the impact of the Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2020-2024, annual operational plans, Performance and Quality Frameworks, and all other related documents. It will be used regularly by the Policy and Information Team to assist planning, conducting and monitoring of relevant activity.

Risk impact

6. The Commissioner is the regulator of FOI in Scotland and has functions and duties to fulfil.
7. The strategic approach is a mechanism used to ensure public authority practice is developed and maintained in compliance with FOI legislation and good practice, and supports mitigation of relevant existing strategic and operational risks.

Equalities impact

8. There are no direct equalities impacts arising as a result of the recommendations in this report.

Privacy impact

9. There is no new direct privacy impact arising from this committee report or from the document submitted for approval. Where any individual activities related to improving authority practice are planned or designed in line with the strategic approach, related privacy impacts will be considered.

Resources impact

10. Development of this strategic approach, and the activities set out within it, will be conducted within existing operational resources.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

11. Supporting public authorities to develop their FOI practice contributes to achievement of the Commissioner's strategic and operational plans. Specifically, the following strategic objectives in the Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 are directly relevant:
 - enable and support high standards of FOI policy and practice (Strategic objective 2)
 - develop Scottish public sector culture and practice where the proactive disclosure of information is routine and valued (Strategic objective 3)
 - influence and support the development and strengthening of Scottish FOI law and practice (Strategic objective 4)
 - be recognised as an organisation of independent and trusted experts that is run efficiently, governed effectively and is open and transparent (Strategic objective 6)

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

12. The document submitted for approval would become a new key document if approved, and would be published on the Commissioner's website.
13. The key document 'C2 Developing Public Authority FOI Practice: Strategic Approach 2016-2020' would be deleted, as the new document supersedes it.

14. The new strategic approach will be subject to a formal review in January 2023 (so any changes required prior to the end of the time period it covers may be made), but it may be updated before that in the light of any significant changes, as required.
15. I am the responsible manager for the documents, and SMT the approver.

Consultation and Communication

16. The document has been prepared in consultation with the SMT and members of the Policy and Information team.
17. If approved the final version will be shared on the relevant section of the Commissioner's website.

Publication

18. I recommend that this committee report is published in full.
19. I recommend that the attached paper is withheld in full on the basis that it is exempt from disclosure under section 27(1) of FOISA (Information intended for future publication): the document will be published once the necessary key document actions have taken place and the document is in its final form (such as with finalised document control sheet).