Examples of potential outputs

Self-assessment checklist for councillors (illustrative)

1. We published our report, *Improving administrative justice in councils*, on XX June 2015. This checklist accompanies that report and sets out some issues that elected council members may wish to consider in relation to administrative justice in their own council. Elected council members should assess themselves against each statement and identify what actions the council needs to take forward. They may wish to apply this checklist annually to review progress.

2. Copies of the national report can be downloaded from our website

Questions for elected council members to consider	Assessment	Required actions
Councillors role in administrative justice governance		
Is there a committee with specific responsibility for administrative justice in the council? If not has the council identified which committees have a role in monitoring administrative justice.		
Do the committees I am a member of have any specific responsibilities for administrative justice?		
Am I clear about the principles of good administrative justice and my role in monitoring the council's performance?		
Do I have a good understanding of the main administrative justice systems in the council, including potential legislative changes and the key processes involved?		
Do I have access to, and take-up, training and development opportunities about administrative justice?		
The council's administrative justice goals and objectives		

Do I have a good understanding of the council's plans to improve administrative justice processes?		
Performance management		
Does the committee with a remit for administrative justice and other appropriate committees receive regular reports on: (a) the performance of each system where decisions are made that effect members of the public: (b) administrative justice outcomes including progress against: • the council's own key performance measures for administrative justice? • the time taken to make decisions • the number of avoidable errors made in each system • the number of complaints about each system • the number of complaints upheld • the time taken to resolve complaints • The savings achieved by getting decisions right first time based on robust information and calculations? • The non-financial benefits of improved decision making • comparative performance against similar councils?		
Do I challenge officers on the performance information presented to me where it is unclear or where it indicates poor performance?		
Promoting and sharing best practice		
Does my council play an active role in relevant networks and national working groups to gather and promote best practice in administrative justice?		

Using a risk assessment based approach

3. This method is uses the principles of risk management as a way of prioritising the administrative justice processes worthy of scrutiny. It uses the probability of error in the administrative process with the consequences of that error to assign a weighting or relative priority to each process. Managers could take this weighting into account when prioritising action to improve processes. The examples in the exhibits below are for illustrative purposes to promote discussion.

Exhibit : Probability of things going wrong with administrative process

Description	Level	Frequency	Description
Frequent	1	One in 10 cases	Happens continuously
Probable	2	1 in 10 to 1 in 100	Occurs frequently
Occasional	3	1 in 100 to 1 in 1000	Occurs occasionally
Remote	4	Less than one in 1,000	Occurs rarely

Exhibit : The consequence of errors in process

Description	Level	Result	Examples
Catastrophic	1	Could result in death or disability, Losses exceeding £1 million or irreversible environmental damage.	Error in prisoner parole process leading to law-breaking, eg severe assault. Poor planning decisions, eg building in a floodplain leading to severe losses.
Critical	2	Could result in severe injuries/illness or loss of educational opportunities. Losses exceeding £100,000 or reversible environmental damage.	Poor additional support needs decisions resulting in person suffering from significantly reduced life chances.. Poor planning decisions, eg siting of sewage facilities
Severe	3	Could result in illness, lost days at work, of over £10,000. Going against regulations, causing environmental damage.	Eg Delayed/poor licencing decisions. Poor housing benefit decisions.

Marginal	4	Could result in losses of under £1,000 pounds, additional demands on the service or wasted time.	Missed bin collections. Misapplied parking fines.

4. Weightings can then be applied to each to prioritise action, for example, for probability, frequent = 4, probable = 3, occasional = 2, remote = 1. These is multiplied by similar severity criteria to create a weighting of the importance of taking action to each administrative process.

Exhibit: Relative priority for taking action

	Catastrophic = 4	Critical = 3	Severe = 2	Marginal = 1
Frequent = 4	16	12	8	4
Probable = 3	12	9	6	3
Occasional = 2	8	6	4	2
Remote = 1	4	3	2	1

Decision tree (to follow)

5. This can be used to describe a system. Costs and throughput can also be attached to the exhibit