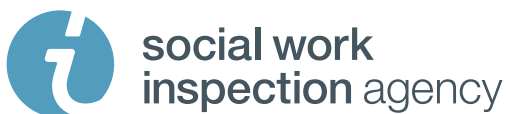


Shared risk assessment: Assurance and improvement plan 2010–13

Aberdeen City Council



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1. Introduction

The Assurance and Improvement Plan

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) is the product of a collaborative approach adopted by the following scrutiny bodies operating in Aberdeen City Council:
 - Audit Scotland
 - Care Commission
 - HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)
 - Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)
 - Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA)
 - Henderson Loggie, local appointed auditors.
2. The AIP sets out the planned scrutiny activity for Aberdeen City Council for the period April 2010-March 2013 based on our scrutiny risk assessment of the council. The scrutiny activity is proportionate to the assessed scrutiny risks.

Why have we prepared this AIP?

3. The overall objectives of this collaborative approach are to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of scrutiny work and minimise the impact of scrutiny activity on the council. This will be achieved by:
 - Jointly identifying and monitoring key scrutiny risks through the sharing of intelligence and information.
 - Coordinating the timing and approach of our audit, inspection, regulation and improvement support activity.
 - Drawing on, and taking account of each other's work to avoid duplication of effort.
 - Building on each other's work to maximise its value.
4. The AIP draws on a number of sources of information, including:
 - the audit of Best Value and Community Planning in Aberdeen City Council
 - the annual audit report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2008/09
 - the council's own self-evaluation and supporting evidence
 - customer and user satisfaction data
 - reports and data from HMIE, SWIA, SHR and the Care Commission (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence).

What do we mean by scrutiny risk?

5. All local government scrutiny bodies have agreed the definition of shared risk assessment as:

'A joint approach using key information about local government to plan scrutiny activity that is proportionate and based on risk'

6. In assessing risk we consider the scale or impact/seriousness of an issue and the likelihood of its occurrence. A serious issue, well managed by the council may not represent a high risk. We also identify areas of uncertainty where insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement, where the evidence is unclear or where the impact of any action taken by a council to address an area of concern is unclear.

7. Serious concerns identified through the shared risk assessment may include areas where the available evidence indicates that:

- Performance is poor, slipping or not improving.
- Service or outcome standards are unacceptable.
- Improvement is not on track to achieve a target.
- Locally agreed priorities do not reflect evident and pressing need.
- Insufficient account is being taken of inequality.
- Insufficient account is being taken of people whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who are at risk of avoidable harm.
- There are question marks about the sustainability of current performance or the achievement of improvements.
- Processes to support continuous improvement are not well established or are ineffective.

8. We recognise that risk levels will change as significant events occur and as councils take action to address identified risks. Scrutiny bodies, through local area network contacts, will maintain awareness of activity, including unit level inspection. As new information comes to light the Local Area Network (LAN) lead, in consultation with other LAN members will update the AIP as appropriate. LAN members will draw any significant matters to the attention of the LAN lead as they arise. The LAN lead will determine what action should be taken in terms of initiating contact with other LAN members.

9. The council is expected to initiate contact with the LAN lead where significant events occur that are likely to influence scrutiny activity. Councils are encouraged to maintain contact with LAN leads to discuss any concerns arising from the AIP or any joint scrutiny activity.

What does proportionate scrutiny mean?

10. When considering the appropriate level of scrutiny activity for each council we consider the following points to ensure that is proportionate:
- Is scrutiny activity the best driver for improvement?
 - If so, how can we tailor that activity to the areas where it will have the most impact?
 - How can we tailor that activity in terms of its frequency, intensity and scope?
 - What is the minimum level of scrutiny required to provide assurance to the public?
 - How can we work together to minimise the impact of the scrutiny activity on the council?

Baseline scrutiny activity

11. The focus of the AIP is strategic scrutiny activity, that is scrutiny activity which is focused at corporate or whole service level, but there will also be baseline scrutiny activity at unit level ongoing throughout the period of the AIP. This will include, for example, school and residential home inspections. Scrutiny bodies also reserve the right to make unannounced scrutiny visits. These will generally be made in relation to care services for vulnerable client groups. The annual audit of local government also comprises part of the baseline activity for all councils and this includes work necessary to complete the audit of housing benefit and council tax benefit arrangements. HMIE, through the District Inspector, will continue to support and challenge education services regularly and as appropriate.

Ongoing engagement between the LAN and the council

12. The LAN will be having ongoing engagement with the council throughout the year to ensure that it maintains an overview of performance and risks. This will enable the LAN to refine its scrutiny risk assessment when necessary and deliver proportionate and risk-based scrutiny responses.

2. Summary

Overall scrutiny risk assessment

Aberdeen City council has faced significant problems in the past in relation to its leadership, management and service performance, and has been subject to a high degree of scrutiny and inspection activity over recent years. Evidence now shows an improving leadership and performance picture and although the council still faces some important challenges, it is well aware of what these are and is managing the risks appropriately. As a result the targeted scrutiny activity set out in the AIP reflects this self awareness and ongoing management of the high risk areas.

13. The aim of the shared risk assessment process is to focus scrutiny activity where it is most needed and to determine the most proportionate scrutiny response over the next three years. The AIP gives an overview of the information that informed the risk assessment and shows how this links to the proposed scrutiny response.

Outcomes

14. The council is making good progress in delivering its local outcomes around prosperity and jobs, safety, transport and connections, climate change, regeneration and health. As a result we will not be undertaking any scrutiny activity in these areas.
15. Progress is less apparent in relation to lifelong learning, particularly around attainment levels, and also in relation to children and young people. Whilst improvements have been made in the leadership and management of services for children, at the time of the 2009 joint interim follow-through inspection it was too early to evaluate the impact of these on outcomes for vulnerable children. To assess progress in these areas HMIE will undertake follow through inspection activity of the education service in Year 1 of the AIP. HMIE will also undertake a joint child protection inspection in March 2011 as part of the ministerially directed second cycle of child protection inspections.

Services

16. The performance of the council's services is variable. There are some areas of good and or improving performance including housing management, environmental services, libraries, and enterprise, planning and infrastructure. There will be no scrutiny activity in these areas.
17. In education, attainment levels remain a concern and there are weaknesses in quality assurance. Within the housing services there is no up date information around gas safety and homelessness performance. Although the social work service shows progress following the critical SWIA inspection report, there remain significant challenges in the services provided to children and weaknesses in social work data quality. Our scrutiny activity will focus on these areas to provide assurance of continued improvement.

Corporate assessment

18. Following the very critical 2008 Best Value audit report, the council produced a Corporate Improvement Plan. This plan covers the management of financial resources and assets; efficient, effective and responsive services; managing people; communications; responding to external audit and inspection; and improving capacity, accountability and performance. This plan is subject to annual monitoring through the baseline annual audit process.
19. Our corporate assessment shows a mix of areas where there is good progress and some areas where further work is needed to provide assurance on the council's progress. For those areas of uncertainty, the majority are subject to ongoing monitoring through the baseline annual external audit.
20. A key strategic risk is financial sustainability. In year 2 of the plan we will ask the council to provide the LAN with a self-evaluation of their strategy for financial sustainability. The council remains involved in a major programme of change and improvement. Some focused Best Value work will be undertaken in year 3 in order to allow new arrangements to embed and evidence to become available on their impact on performance and outcomes. These areas include governance, elected member scrutiny and their leadership of and support for the council's improvement agenda, performance management, improvement and people management. As part of this work we will also ask the council to demonstrate how they ensure the competitiveness of their services.

National risk priorities

21. A number of core national risk priorities will be applied to all 32 councils. These are:

- The protection and welfare of vulnerable people including:
 - Children.
 - Adults in need of support and protection.
 - Older people.

These areas are covered in the council's defined outcomes and social work service area. We have identified a high scrutiny risk area in respect of children and young people and the related areas of social work services, social work service data quality, the balance of care, and learning disability services. Specific targeted scrutiny activity is proposed in these areas.

- Assuring public money is being used properly - Financial control is much improved since the first Best Value audit. The council has taken difficult decisions in implementing plans to address its financial challenges and adopted an improved budget process. The financial statements for 2008/09 showed better than expected outturn and efficiency savings are almost double national targets. However we have identified the council's financial strategy as an area of uncertainty as it considers financial re-alignment and service re-design. This area forms a key strand of the of

Henderson Loggie's baseline annual audit activity and in addition we will ask the council to provide us with a self-assessment of their financial strategy in year 2 of the plan of work.

- The impact of the greater financial pressure faced by councils associated the current economic climate - the impact of the recession means all councils face financial constraints. Aberdeen City Council faces significant budget reductions in real terms. The outlook for 2011/12 to 2014/15 indicates a 12.8 per cent budget reduction, the impact on the council equating to a £95.6 million reduction. However, given the significant financial issues faced by the council in recent years, it has had to respond to fiscal constraints prior to the impact of the recession being felt. The council has taken an outward looking, regional approach to managing the impact of the recession on the local economy, and internally it has taken difficult decisions in implementing plans to address its financial pressures. The council is committed to developing a 5-year costed business plan over the next nine months and has established a project team including external support. The LAN is confident that the council is doing all that could be reasonably expected in managing the effects of the recession and we have assessed this area as low scrutiny risk. However Henderson Loggie will assess this as part of the baseline annual audit process and will also form part of the focused Best Value work in year three of the AIP.

Summary of planned scrutiny activity

22. The planned activity for Aberdeen City Council as described throughout the text is detailed in Appendix 4. In summary this includes:

Specific work:

- Year 1 – Focused information gathering related to learning disability services, children's services, the balance of care, quality assurance and data quality.
- Year 1 – Follow through education inspection activity.
- Year 1 – Work to form a clearer picture of homeless performance and housing asset management.
- Year 2 – Evaluate the council's self-assessment of their financial strategy.
- Year 3 – Targeted Best Value corporate assessment work (including self-assessment of competitiveness).

On-going work:

- The Care Commission and HMIE will continue to undertake ongoing inspection work at establishment level.
- HMIE, SWIA and SHR will continue to monitor risk through the link inspector role.
- Henderson Loggie will continue to monitor finance, governance and accountability matters as part of the annual audit process.

- Ongoing monitoring of the risks identified within this report by the appropriate scrutiny body will inform future risk assessments and the levels of scrutiny activity.

National work:

- SHR - surveys of progress on Scottish Housing Quality Standards and 2012 homelessness targets will take place in the third quarter of 2010/11.
- SWIA - will undertake a pilot inspection of prison social services provision within Aberdeen prison in 2010.
- HMIE – Joint Child Protection Inspection (March 2011).
- Care Commission – inspection of fostering and adoption services (March 2011)

3. The council's context

23. Aberdeen City Council area has a declining population. Projections suggest that by 2024 the overall population will have fallen by 23 per cent compared with no overall change in the population of Scotland as a whole. The decline in the number of children and working age adults is predicted to be particularly marked, while the increase in the number of older people is likely to be less marked than for Scotland over the same period. These demographics present particular challenges for the council in building sustainable communities.
24. The working population in Aberdeen is relatively affluent with average weekly earnings well above Scottish average and claimant unemployment well below. In addition, Aberdeen has a lower than average percentage of people who are permanently sick or disabled. However, nine per cent of the city's population lives in the most deprived 15 per cent of Scottish data zones and the city experiences the second highest level of recorded crime in Scotland. This has implications for the council in tackling these local challenges in partnership with other public sector bodies.
25. The council has been subject to a significant amount of scrutiny work in recent years. HMIE published a report on the educational functions of the council in May 2007. The planned revisit to the council in 2009 was postponed due to the significant structural changes underway. However, a commitment was made to revisit the council and report on progress. In addition the SWIA published a performance inspection report in June 2008 and HMIE published a child protection inspection report in November 2008. Both reports were largely critical.
26. Audit Scotland's Best Value audit report of Aberdeen City Council in May 2008 described a council that faced extremely serious challenges and one that had much to do to create a culture consistent with delivering continuous improvement. The council's financial situation was precarious and while there were some areas that demonstrated good service performance, there were significant weaknesses in major services.
27. The Accounts Commission's public hearing confirmed the Best Value report and found that the council lacked a full appreciation of the seriousness of its situation. The Commission was concerned that leadership was not as effective as it should have been, organisational structures were not fit for purpose, scrutiny was ineffective and there was poor staff morale.
28. However, a number of significant changes have been made by the council over the last 18 months:
 - the appointment of a new chief executive in December 2008
 - the implementation of a new management structure and management team
 - the introduction of clearer lines of accountability
 - improved political decision-making processes

- effective engagement with an external support group to help build improvement capacity within the council
 - movement towards a more stable financial position.
29. In addition, a Best Value follow-up audit, an interim child protection report in June 2009, and a SWIA inspection in July 2009 found a positive direction of travel and strong evidence of the impact of the new corporate leadership. Both reports found the actions taken to date provided a solid foundation to support ongoing improvement, although both reports acknowledged that the full impact of the improvement activity has yet to be seen.
30. Since that time the council has continued in its improvement efforts, including strengthening its approach to corporate working, corporate planning and self-evaluation, as well as implementing further radical structural change.
31. Our overall risk assessment of Aberdeen City Council reflects these improvements, the council's strengthened self-awareness, and the long-term nature of its improvement plans.

Self-evaluation

32. The LAN has confidence in the council's high degree of self-awareness. In the last few years the council has undergone an intense amount of scrutiny, with the result that the members and new management team have a keen awareness of what needs to improve. The council has a comprehensive Corporate Improvement Plan in place and demonstrates a clear route map to better services and financial management.
33. The council's self-awareness coupled with the improvement plans they have in place means that we are assured that the council is managing its improvement agenda effectively. As a consequence the focus of our work will be on where there is greatest need for public assurance of improvement and where it can best support the council in improving its services. It is not clear to what extent the senior management team's self-awareness and commitment to improvement is reflected throughout the organisation, so in year 3 of the plan we intend to undertake some work to assess staff engagement and views, including the council's own feedback from staff, as part of some targeted Best Value corporate assessment work. However, this work will not be necessary should the council's own staff survey in the intervening period provide sufficient evidence.

4. Delivering outcomes for communities

Outcomes

Aberdeen City Council is making good progress in delivering its local outcomes of prosperity and jobs, safety, transport and connections, climate change, regeneration and health and social care. As a result we will not be undertaking any additional scrutiny activity in these areas but will monitor progress through the baseline annual audit. Progress is less apparent in relation to learning and services for children and these areas correspond to council service areas where we have identified we need to undertake some targeted scrutiny work.

Prosperity and jobs

34. The recession means all councils facing difficult challenges in terms of local prosperity and employment levels. However, the council and its partners can show that deprivation and unemployment are lower than the Scottish average, there are more jobs in the area and median gross weekly earnings are higher, with fewer people on benefits. In addition, Aberdeen City has much higher figures than average for businesses registering for VAT.
35. Aberdeen City Council is part of a regional partnership, Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) Board alongside Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, and Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. The board has developed an action plan to support businesses, economic development and growth in order to mitigate the effects of the recession on the region. We have assessed this area as low scrutiny risk as we do not have any concerns about the council's approach and progress in this area. We will not be undertaking any scrutiny activity.

Health and social care

36. The council and its partners face some difficult challenges in relation to addressing the underlying causes of health inequalities in the city but is generally making good progress across a range of fronts. Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are above the Scottish average, breastfeeding rates are increasing, deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) and all cancers in Aberdeen are reducing, delayed discharges have been reduced to zero, and the percentage of older people with intensive care needs receiving services at home has increased.
37. However, Aberdeen City performs less well than Grampian as a whole with a continuing strong correlation between areas of deprivation and early deaths from CHD and cancers. Admission to hospital for alcohol misuse is also higher than average, but even more pronounced for drugs misuse. Aberdeen City has the fourth highest rate for teenage pregnancies. The partnership is aware of these issues and is working to reduce these health inequalities so we assess this area as low scrutiny risk. We do not plan any further scrutiny activity.

Lifelong learning

38. Attainment is not improving and in many cases is declining. Schools have not achieved authority targets for 5 to 14 reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years and attainment in all measures are below comparator results. Over the last five years the rate of change in key measures in secondary attainment have been in the bottom 25 per cent in relation to comparator and national averages. The council has not met 2007/08 and 2008/09 targets for the percentage of young people achieving qualifications in English and mathematics. Although the number of looked after young people achieving at least SCQF level 3 English and mathematics in 2008/09 increased significantly but is still short of single outcome agreement (SOA) target.
39. The council has also not met its targets in relation to the number of adults receiving support with literacy and numeracy, and the number of adults involved in family and community based learning. We assess this area as high scrutiny risk and we plan to undertake a follow through inspection of education, focused on those areas for improvement, to assess progress.

Children and young people

40. The council received critical inspection reports from both SWIA and HMIE in 2007 and 2008. Although some progress has been seen since that time, some issues are still apparent. For instance, some children still experiencing a delay in being provided with suitable alternative care arrangements when it was no longer safe to remain at home. Social work staff are finding it difficult to maintain contact with children looked after further away from home and to support contact between children and their families.
41. The council is in the process of a significant redesign of social work services. Progress has been made in developing processes and systems, and managerial changes are in train. The council knows what needs to be done and has some plans in place but the risks to vulnerable children remains high. We have assessed this area as high scrutiny risk and HMIE intend to undertake a follow through inspection to identify progress in addressing the main points for action and areas where there has been continuous improvement.

Community safety

42. The council and its partners are making good progress in delivering their objectives around community safety. There has been a steady reduction in the number of incidences of vandalism, malicious damage or malicious mischief, the number of violent crimes and sexual crimes, the numbers of persistent young offenders, and recorded willful fire raising incidents. As a result we assess this area as low scrutiny risk and do not plan to undertake any scrutiny activity in this outcome area. However, it should be noted that Grampian Police and Joint Board will be subject to a Best Value audit in 2010, and this work is likely to assess the impact of partnership working in this area.

Homes

43. The council has consistently failed to meet its targets for the number of affordable houses developed in the area over recent years. Key challenges facing the council include the availability of affordable land, investment constraints around infrastructure and access to Affordable Housing Investment Fund. There have been significant changes since 2006 which have had an impact on the deliverability of the target. The Devanha programme for the city was originally 681 units, this is now likely to deliver 560 units with a considerable number of these falling out with the 2006/2011 timeframe. The Donside development was originally identified as 365 units but this has now been reduced to 209 which will not be delivered in the reporting period. However, the council's new build programme will help to offset some of these losses. The council are well aware of this issue and are taking all reasonable steps within its control. We assess this area as low scrutiny risk and plan no specific activity but will monitor progress against this outcome through the baseline annual audit.

Regeneration

44. The impact of regeneration work is typically not measureable in the short term. However, the council and its partners can demonstrate continued activity in this outcome area. HMIE inspections continue to produce positive assessments of community learning and development work by the council. The council has established a Housing New Build Project Board to progress the delivery of new council houses for the city and has been successful in attracting £1.95 million towards supporting the first phase of the new build programme. Via the Fairer Scotland Fund Board, new programmes of work have been agreed in relation to tackling poverty through improved financial inclusion services, employability and health services alongside continued support for community and neighbourhood based initiatives located in priority regeneration neighbourhoods. We assess this area as low scrutiny risk and do not plan to undertake any scrutiny activity in this area.

Transport and connections

45. Similar to Scottish averages, 61 per cent of all respondent to the Scottish Household Survey in Aberdeen city were satisfied with public transport. There are no specific concerns however, there are long-term strategic challenges in terms of the road network which might be impacted upon by the council's financial situation. This area is low scrutiny risk and progress will be monitored through the baseline annual audit.

Environment

46. The council and its partners are making good progress in relation to the environmental targets. The council is on target for reducing its carbon footprint, ecological footprint and improving the home energy rating of council stock. This is a low scrutiny risk area and we do not plan any scrutiny work in this area.

Services

The performance of the council's services is variable. There are some areas of good and or improving performance including housing management, environmental services, libraries, and enterprise, planning and infrastructure. In education, attainment levels remain a concern and there are weaknesses in quality assurance. Within the housing services there is no up date information around gas safety and homelessness performance. There remain significant challenges in the services provided to children and weaknesses in social work data quality. Our scrutiny activity will focus on these areas to provide assurance of continued improvement.

Housing and environment - housing

47. There is evidence of improvement in performance across a number of aspects of the council's housing service including housing repairs, the management of voids and the management of rent arrears. Other performance indicators remain around average.
48. However, some important gaps remain in local performance data, home safety and some aspects of homeless performance. The council did not meet its own target for the provision of temporary accommodation and the council still relies heavily on bed and breakfast accommodation. Although there are some indications of progress. In terms of progress towards the 2012 target the council exceeded its interim target of 82 per cent of households being assessed as in priority need, achieving 87 per cent. However, it is still failing to meet its statutory duty for provision of temporary accommodation the council has a greater awareness of its temporary accommodation needs. The planned homelessness re-inspection was previously deferred and so there is limited up to date intelligence on the service overall. At inspection in 2005 the gas safety service was found to be poor with no policies and some appliances not checked for four years. The council subsequently introduced policies on gas safety. We assess these areas as high scrutiny risk and plan to undertake some scrutiny activity around both the homelessness service and housing asset management.

Housing and environment - environment

49. There are no concerns with performance in this service. Residents' perception of littering is much better than average and satisfaction with street cleaning compares to Scottish average levels. Residents show satisfaction levels with parks and open spaces that are well above average. Performance is above average and improving in dealing with domestic noise complaints. Trading standards performance is around average with significant improvement from last year.
50. Eighty-four per cent of Aberdeen city residents are satisfied with the refuse collection service. The level of municipal waste recycled has increased by 5.6 per cent to 29 per cent in the last year, although still below the Scottish average. In 2010 the council will move to fortnightly collections of general refuse to increase household recycling rates. In addition, a new food waste collection service, designed to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, was introduced in 2009. We assess this area as low scrutiny risk and will not be undertaking any scrutiny work.

Education, culture and sport - education

51. The weaknesses in the education service performance and our scrutiny response is described on page 14 under Lifelong Learning.

Education, culture and sport - culture and sport

52. Performance is mixed in this service. Libraries, museums and the arts performance is generally better than average with museum services well above average and having significantly improved. Satisfaction levels with libraries and with community centres are around Scottish average. However, satisfaction levels with sports and leisure facilities are lower than average and performance in this area is deteriorating. Overall we assess this as low scrutiny risk and do not plan any specific scrutiny work. However the LAN will continue to assess the council's performance reports throughout the period of this plan.

Social care and wellbeing

53. Although significant improvements in the leadership and direction the service are apparent and staff are generally positive about developments arising from improved leadership and direction, there remain some serious service performance challenges for the demand-led social care services. These include the balance of care, services for children and significant weaknesses in social work data quality.
54. The child protection report found that there has been a significant rise in child protection referrals and numbers of looked after children; staff workloads are increasing and staffing is still at a level that does not currently meet demands for service; out of hours service resources are insufficient to respond effectively to the needs of children requiring care and protection at nights or weekends; a joint assessment approach to assessing substance misusing pregnant women has yet to be developed; joint assessments of parenting capacity were not carried out routinely when there were concerns about parental alcohol or drug misuse, mental health or learning disability; the quality of child protection plans is variable; and there remain concerns about a lack of focus on older people's services and addressing the balance of care.
55. We assess these areas to be high scrutiny risk. HMIE will undertake a cycle 2 joint child protection inspection in March 2011 and SWIA will undertake some focused, mainly desk based, work including file reading and information gathering related to learning disability services, children's services, the balance of care, quality assurance and data quality to provide assurance that the council is improving its processes and outcomes in these areas. These two pieces of work offer the opportunity to share evidence and reduce the impact of the scrutiny activity on the council.

Enterprise, planning and infrastructure

56. Overall the service performs well and where some further improvement is required the council has plans in place to address this. The overall percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment, the level of traffic light and street light repairs completions, and pot hole repairs are high. Planning processing time is around average. There is effective partnership working in economic development, with good performance in key areas such as increasing jobs in the renewable energy sector and attracting inward migration. The council has been active in evaluating the needs of local businesses in relation to skills and export issues. We assess this area as low scrutiny risk and plan no scrutiny activity.

5. Corporate assessment

The council has made progress against its Corporate Improvement Plan that it developed following the Best Value audit in 2008 and follow up audit in 2009. This plan is subject to annual monitoring through the baseline annual audit process. However, we plan some targeted Best Value work in year 3 of this plan to assess the impact of the council's improvements

57. Historically, the council has faced significant problems in relation to its leadership, management and service performance, and has been subject to a high degree of scrutiny and inspection activity in the last few years. Since that time the council has continued in its improvement efforts, including strengthening its approach to corporate working, corporate planning and self-evaluation and although the council still faces some high risk issues, it is well aware of what these are and is managing the risks appropriately. The council has in place a Corporate Improvement Plan, covering the management of financial resources and assets; efficient, effective and responsive services; managing people; communications; responding to external audit and inspection; and improving capacity, accountability and performance. It also has a number of lower-level improvement plans that it is currently working to consolidate into a corporate transformation strategy.
58. Our assessment of the corporate criteria shows a mix of areas where there is good progress and some areas where we need to undertake some further work to provide assurance on the council's progress (Appendix 4). The council has made good progress in setting a clear direction and revising its strategic planning framework. The council can demonstrate progress against its community planning and community engagement goals. The council is strengthening its customer focus and its approach to equalities and sustainability is good. Financial control is much improved and the council reports efficiency savings of almost double the national target.
59. We have identified some areas of uncertain scrutiny risk where recent changes provide good foundations for improvement but will take time to become fully embedded within council activity. These include governance arrangements, specifically in relation to member scrutiny; performance management and improvement support; competitiveness of services; a strategic approach to financial re-alignment and service redesign; asset management; and workforce planning.
60. For these areas of uncertainty, the majority are subject to the baseline annual external audit monitoring of the council's Corporate Improvement Plan, however we plan some additional, more detailed work. In year two of the plan we will ask the council to provide the LAN with a self-evaluation of their strategic financial strategy. In year three we will undertake some focused Best Value work to assess the impact of the council's activity in relation to scrutiny, performance and improvement, and the strategic use of resources (financial and asset management, and workforce planning) in respect of their change agenda.

61. Although the council can demonstrate increasing maturity in its ability to make difficult and publicly controversial decisions, the council continues to face significant strategic challenges. The political leadership of the council will need to work effectively with officers to address these. Elected members need to understand the magnitude of the changes required and be fully engaged in linking resources to the ambitions described in the council's change agenda. We identify political leadership to be of uncertain scrutiny risk and plan to include an assessment of the strength of that leadership within the focused Best Value activity planned for year three.

62. The council has a new corporate management team and is in the process of recruitment for the second and third tiers of management. Initial indications are positive in terms of managerial leadership, awareness of and plans to address the challenges faced by the council. It is too early to assess the extent to which this cultural change is reflected throughout the organisation. As a result we will examine this as part of the year three Best Value audit work.

Appendix 1 Outcomes assessment

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>National and local outcomes Aberdeen City CPP has brought together the Community Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) into one document, called the 'Community Plan update 2008 and Single Outcome Agreement 2008-11'</p>			
<p>Prosperity & jobs</p> <p><i>Previously headed as deprivation, employment and economy:</i> The 2009 Single Outcome Agreement sets the local outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Anchor the Oil and Gas Industry”</p> <p>“Diversify the economy”</p> <p>“Have high quality employment opportunities for citizens.”</p> <p>“Sufficient numbers of skilled people are available to meet the demands of the local economy.”</p> <p>The Council’s Interim Business Plan sets further Local Outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Support the creation of jobs.”</p> <p>“Support a skilled, flexible workforce.</p> <p>“Promote fairness in employment”</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen City Council is part of a regional partnership, Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) Board alongside Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, and Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. The board has developed an action plan to support businesses, economic development and growth in order to mitigate the effects of the recession on the region. • Deprivation is lower than average, with 8.49% of the population living in the most deprived 15% of Scotland. • Unemployment is lower at 2.2%, compared to the Scottish average of 4.7%. • There are more jobs in the area (1.32 jobs per head of working age population compared to 0.84 for Scotland) median gross weekly earnings are 5.0% higher. Fewer people are on benefits. • Aberdeen city has much higher figures than average for businesses registering for VAT. In 2007, there were 58 new registrations per 10,000 adults, compared to the Scotland wide figure of 35 per 10,000 adults. • Whilst the City retains a tight labour market relative to other parts of the country, with steadily increasing average earnings and static levels of unemployment in 2008/09. It is anticipated that there will be increased unemployment in 2009/10 as a consequence of the global downturn in economic activity, with a recovery from 2011 onwards. 	<p>No specific work.</p> <p>Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Health & social care</p> <p><i>Previously headed 'Health'</i></p> <p>2009 Single Outcome Agreement sets the local outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Improve the overall health and wellbeing of the people of Aberdeen City through focusing on the factors that are harmful to health and wellbeing and in particular by supporting those most vulnerable.”</p> <p>“Narrow the gap across the City between those that are experiencing good health and those that are less healthy.”</p> <p>The council’s Interim Business Plan sets further local outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Aberdeen citizens have the emotional and spiritual resilience to enjoy life.”</p> <p>“People are enabled individually, or in groups, to find the right solutions for their own care and support.”</p> <p>“All Aberdeen citizens have improved physical health, in particular those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.”</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p> <p>The council and its partners face some difficult challenges in relation to addressing the underlying causes of health difficulties in the city but is generally making good progress across a range of fronts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are above the Scottish average. • Breastfeeding rates are increasing. • Performance is better than or close to the Scottish average respectively for reductions in deaths from CHD and all cancers. • Improved relationships with health – significant improvements in planning. • There have been improvements in the services to those affected by substance misuse in the city, following a multi-agency inspection of substance misuse services in Grampian in 2007 and a follow-up in 2009. • Number of delayed discharges within the six week delayed discharge planning period reduced to zero and maintained. • Aberdeen rates remain ahead of required HEAT target in relation to number of emergency inpatient bed days per 100,000 population (aged 65+). • The proportion of people (aged 65 +) who are admitted as emergency inpatients 2 or more times in a single year per 100,000 are above the HEAT target, however there is a marginally improving trend. • The 20% reduction in suicide rates required by the HEAT measure has already been achieved with a decrease from 16.1 suicides per 100,000 population in 2002 to 12 suicides per 100,000 population in 2007. • Percentage of older people aged 65+ with intensive care needs receiving services at home increased from 27.4% to 29%, ahead of target. • Number of people waiting for NHS drug treatment in Aberdeen City has reduced from 767 in Q1 2007/08 to 79 Q2 2009/10. • Deaths per 100,000 population by alcohol related diseases is below SOA target. <p>However</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen City performs less well than Grampian as a whole with a continuing strong correlation between areas of deprivation and early deaths from CHD and cancers. • Admission to hospital for alcohol misuse was higher than average, but even more pronounced for drugs misuse, with more than double the admissions to hospital. Aberdeen City has the 4th 	<p>Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>highest rate for teenage pregnancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rate of anti-depressant prescribing is still increasing against a target reduction trend. 	
<p>Lifelong learning</p> <p>Previously headed education, skills and training 7. Making improvements to pupil attainment and promoting lifelong learning</p> <p>The 2009 SOA sets out the following Local Outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Sufficient numbers of skilled people are available to meet the demands of the local economy”</p> <p>“People of all ages take an active part in their own learning to achieve their full potential Learning and training is appropriate and accessible to learner’s needs”</p> <p>“There is a defined, strong intellectual capital base to support our key industries, growth companies, universities and research institutes.”</p> <p>The council’s Interim Business Plan local outcomes are:-</p> <p>“Young people are engaged, involved and achieve to enhance their quality of life and that of their communities”</p>	<p>Significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-14 Attainment – Schools have not achieved authority targets for reading, writing and mathematics over last 3 years. Attainment in all measures are below consortium results. From 06/07 baseline there is no improvement in primary reading and mathematics. Writing has increased by 2%. At S2, 4% increase in reading to 67%, 5% increase in mathematics to 58%, 1% increase in writing to 51%. Secondary Attainment SQA – Over the last five years the rate of change in key measures have been in the bottom 25% in relation to comparator and national averages. 5+ level 4 awards by S4 – position 30th; 5+ level 5 awards by S4 – position 27th significant downward trend; in S5/S6 results were generally below CA/NA in 2009. SOA Attainment measures – Authority has not met 07/08 and 08/09 targets for percentage of young people achieving – Eng and maths at level 3 in S4; Percentage achieving 5+ at level 5 in S4; Percentage achieving 5+ at level 5 in S5. No targets are set for S6. Number of looked after young people gaining qualifications - The number of young people achieving at least SCQF level 3 English and maths in 08/09 increased significantly but is still short of SOA target. As a percentage of those care leavers who are looked after at home gaining English and maths, they are well below the Scottish average. The proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations has remained steady at around 86% between 2006/07 and 2008/09, with around a third of school leavers entering higher education. However, the council has not met its targets in relation to the number of adults receiving support with literacy and numeracy, and the number of adults involved in family and community based learning. A number of important education improvement targets set by the 	<p>HMIE follow through inspection including some support work.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>“People of all ages take an active part in their own learning and achieve their full potential”</p>		<p>council have not been met in 2008/09.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment is not improving and in many cases is declining. • New Director appointed but management team currently being recruited. 	
<p>Children & young people</p> <p><i>Previously headed:</i></p> <p>1. Getting it right for every child / 4. children – healthy minds and bodies /</p> <p>The 2009 SOA sets out the following local outcomes:-</p> <p>“Children and young people enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, with access to sustainable health care and safe and healthy lifestyles.”</p> <p>“All children, young people and their families have access to high quality services, and services provide timely, proportionate and appropriate responses that meet the needs of children and young people and GIRFEC requirements.”</p>	<p>Significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWIA and HMIE inspection reports in 2007 and 2008. • Some children still experiencing a delay in being provided with suitable alternative care arrangements when it was no longer safe to remain at home. • Social work staff finding it difficult to maintain contact with children looked after further away from home and to support contact between children and their families. • Level of risk for determining when children should be looked after away from home was still too variable. • For a few newborn babies of substance misusing mothers, the initial child protection case conference was not held quickly enough to put plans in place before they were born. • The poor quality of delivery of services to children provided by social work, education, police, health and SCRA etc to young people and families at risk was highlighted in 2007 and 2008. The council is in the process of a significant redesign of social work services. Progress has been made in developing processes and systems. Managerial changes are in process. The council knows what needs to be done and has some plans in place but the risks to vulnerable children remains high and continued scrutiny work to monitor progress is required. • The council can demonstrate steady progress in improving the educational attainment of Looked After Children away from home. However, looked after children at home and care leavers – performance remains weak. 	<p>SWIAs 3 monthly meeting with the Director of Social Work will continue.</p> <p>HMIE will undertake a Joint Child Protection Inspection and SWIA will also undertake scrutiny activity to consider the progress made on the issues identified.</p> <p>The timing of which will be defined by key dates in the council’s improvement plan.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>The council's Interim Business Plan sets further local outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Vulnerable children are supported to achieve their full potential.”</p> <p>“People of all ages regularly participate in sporting and cultural activities, maximising the social, educational, health and economic benefits.”</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of new-born children exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks are above the required HEAT target. • Proportion of all 3-5 year old children registered with an NHS dentist has grown in Aberdeen City from 65.6% in March 2007 to 90.8% in June 2009 against a HEAT trajectory target of 72%. • Schools achieving Health Promoting Schools accreditation and implementation of the Schools Health Promotion and Nutrition Scotland Act 97% of schools achieved Health Promoting Status by the end of 2008/09. • Percentage of children undertaking active travel to school was 72.2% compared to 65.3% the previous year and was ahead of target. • % of pre-school education centres and nurseries that receive a positive inspection report 100% achieved in 2009 from HMIE. 95.7% from Care Commission. • % of ante pre-school and pre-school children in part time nursery provision 90.6% of pre-school children in part time nursery provision against a target of 98.4%. 84% of ante pre-school against a target of 74%. 	
<p>Community safety</p> <p><i>Previously:</i></p> <p>2. Violence and disorder</p> <p>The 2009 Single Outcome Agreement sets the local outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Collectively reduce the impact of controlled drugs on community safety by increasing the number of recorded drugs offences, while reducing harm.”</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<p>There has been a steady reductions in the number of incidences of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism, malicious damage or malicious mischief. Incidences reduced in 2008/09 to 4,280 compared to 4,823 the previous year and against a target of 5,005. • The number of violent crimes and sexual crimes. Incidences reduced in 2008/09 to 543 compared to 588 the previous year against a target of 484. • The numbers of persistent young offenders (Aberdeen Youth Justice Audit 2009 is available on request). Number of persistent young offenders reduced from 61 in 2006/07 to 50 in 2008/09 against a target of 49. • Recorded Wilful Fire Raising Incidents. Incidents reduced from 1,200 in 2007/08 to 822 in 2008/09 against a target of 1,119. 	<p>No specific work.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>“Collectively reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour (including racist incidents).”</p> <p>“Collectively reduce the impact of serious and violent crime (including domestic abuse incidents).”</p> <p>The council’s Interim Business Plan sets further local outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Adults, children and young people are protected from abuse, neglect and harm, living within a supportive family setting where possible.”</p> <p>“We will reduce the impact of substance misuse, crime and antisocial behaviour”</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of accidental dwelling house fires. • 64% of adult residents state they feel very safe or fairly safe when walking alone in the local neighbourhood after dark. • The rates of domestic abuse incidents per 100,000 population. Numbers increased to 577 in 2008/09 compared to 513 the previous year and against a target of 512. This reflects positive work to increase reporting. • There had been significant improvements in criminal justice social work services from the SWIA inspection made in 2007 and that in 2009. 	

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Homes</p> <p>3. Affordable housing</p> <p>The 2009 Single Outcome Agreement sets the Local Outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Aberdeen City residents have access to quality, affordable housing.”</p> <p>The council’s Interim Business Plan sets further local outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Support a skilled, flexible workforce.” The number of affordable housing units constructed is one indicator for this outcome.</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has consistently failed to meet its targets for the number of affordable houses developed in the area over recent years. • Key challenges facing the RSL's and the enabling local authority include the availability of affordable land, investment constraints around infrastructure and access to Affordable Housing Investment Fund. • There have been significant changes since 2006 which have had an impact on the deliverability of this target. The Devanha programme for the City was originally 681 units over the period, this is now likely to deliver 560 with a considerable number of these falling out within the 2006 – 11 timeframe. The Donside development was originally identified as 365 units. This has now been reduced to 209 which will not be delivered in the reporting period. • The reduced Devanha programme, changes to the affordable housing policy, reduction in Section 75 Agreements have all had a negative impact in achieving the LHS target however the council's new build programme will help to offset some of these losses. 	<p>National issue. No specific work.</p>
<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Previously headed:</p> <p>5. Regeneration / 8. The continued development of Neighbourhood Planning to deliver quality of life improvements at the local level</p> <p>The 2009 Single Outcome Agreement sets the local outcomes to:-</p> <p>“Neighbourhood planning delivers quality of life improvements at a local level</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIE inspections continue to produce positive assessments of Community Learning and Development work by the council. • However, the council and its partners acknowledge that local Neighbourhood Community Planning processes have not yet delivered the anticipated levels of community engagement and outcomes for local people. Changes to be introduced from April 2010 should address this but these are not yet finalised. • The council has established a Housing New Build Project Board to progress the delivery of new council houses for the city. The Council's re- submission to the Scottish Governments "Kickstart New Build Council House" programme has been successful in attracting £1.95M towards supporting the first phase of the new build programme. • Via the Fairer Scotland Fund Board, new programmes of work have been agreed in relation to tackling poverty through improved financial inclusion services, employability and health services 	<p>Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work.</p>

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>particularly in our most disadvantaged communities.”</p> <p>“Aberdeen City residents have access to quality, affordable housing.”</p> <p>The council’s Interim Business Plan sets further local outcomes as follows:-</p> <p>“Our communities will be strong and resilient”</p> <p>“We work closely with our partners, including local communities, to deliver a single set of outcomes for all the citizens of Aberdeen”</p>		<p>alongside continued support for community and neighbourhood based initiatives located in priority regeneration neighbourhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fairer Scotland Fund Board agreed further grants towards projects in the regeneration priority communities alongside reviewing progress to date. Grants amounting to £168K were awarded to support applications for neighbourhood and community safety initiatives. 	

Outcomes	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>6. Transport and connections – improve sustainable travel options / 10. City centre re-development</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to average, in the SHS, 61% of all respondents in Aberdeen City were satisfied with public transport while 17% were dissatisfied. • No specific concerns however, there are long-term strategic challenges in terms of the road network which might be impacted upon by the council's financial situation. 	<p>No specific work.</p>
<p>9. Climate change</p> <p>NO14 – We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production</p> <p>LO14A the impact of council activities on the environment is minimised, including a target of being carbon neutral overall by 2020 and a commitment that all new council developments will be carbon neutral.</p> <p>LO14B Minimise the environmental impact of transport on our community and the wider world.</p>	<p>No significant concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress is on target for reducing the carbon footprint, the ecological footprint and improving the home energy rating of council stock 	<p>No specific work.</p> <p>Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work.</p>

Appendix 2 Service assessment

Service performance			
Housing and environment - housing	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence of improvements in performance across a number of aspects of the council's housing service (housing repairs, management of voids, management of rent arrears, asset management targets not met, aspects of the homelessness service) and some new strategies are in place. • Improved performance in housing repairs, council house void properties and council house sales. • Performance is mixed with tenancy changes much better than average and rent arrears well below, with both improved significantly. Other performance indicators and housing costs remain around average. • Council's performance in rent arrears improving over last 2 years. Good performance in managing empty houses. 	
	Significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, important gaps remain in local performance data, and some aspects of homeless performance and homes safety remain of concern. • The council is failing to meet strategic targets. There are significant issues in relation to homelessness, gas safety and the investment programme. Although there are some indications of progress, including a new appointment in homelessness. • Homelessness re-inspection was previously deferred. • At inspection in 2005 gas safety service was poor with no policies and some appliances not checked for 4 years. During the BV Follow up in 2009 info from the council was that performance had not improved. • The council did not meet its own target for provision of temporary accommodation - target was 274 by 2009, achieved 138. Council still relies heavily on Bed and Breakfast accommodation, although limited breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order. 	<p>Targeted scrutiny work required in year 1.</p> <p>Focused activity to gain a better understanding of performance in homelessness and asset management.</p>
Housing and environment - environment	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents' perception of littering much better than average. • Performance is above average with substantial improvement in domestic noise complaints from last year. • Trading standards performance is around average with significant improvement in trading standards from last year. • 84% of Aberdeen City residents said they were satisfied with 	No specific work

Service performance			
		<p>refuse collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2008/09 figure for municipal waste recycled was 23.4%, however, the most recently reported monthly figure (September 2009) shows an increase to 29% against a target of 27%. • In Spring 2010 Aberdeen City Council will move to fortnightly collections of general refuse to increase household recycling rates • A new food waste collection service, designed to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, was introduced in 2009. • A Waste Strategy is currently out for consultation • 68% of Aberdeen City residents said they were satisfied with street cleaning. Aberdeen City is performing similar to the national average for street cleaning. • 79% of residents in Aberdeen City who had used parks and open spaces were satisfied with parks and open spaces. Significantly more of all residents in Aberdeen City are satisfied with parks and open spaces compared to Scotland overall (68%). 	
Education, culture & sport - education	Significant concerns	<p>See also entry on page 3 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall education performance is too variable in Aberdeen. There are weaknesses in the quality assurance and improvement support arrangements in this service. • Impact of restructuring in this service creates ongoing performance risks. • New management team being recruited. 	<p>HMIe follow through inspection (approximately 1 week) followed by some support work.</p>
Education, culture & sport – culture & sport	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries, Museums & the Arts performance is generally better than average with museum services well above average having significantly improved. • Similar to average, in the SHS, 30% of respondents in Aberdeen City who had used community centres were satisfied with community centres while 4% were dissatisfied. • 52% of residents in Aberdeen City who had used libraries were satisfied which is comparable to Scotland overall (55%). • The council has invested in a number of new facilities such as Aberdeen Sports Village and Transition Extreme. 	<p>No specific work</p>

Service performance			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly less of all respondents in Aberdeen City are satisfied with sports and leisure facilities compared to Scotland overall (50%), while significantly more of all respondents in Aberdeen City are dissatisfied with sports and leisure facilities compared to Scotland overall (8%). Sport & Recreation overall performance is significantly below average and has deteriorated from last year. 	Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work.
Social care & wellbeing	No significant concerns	<p>See also entry on page 4 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant improvements in the leadership and direction of Aberdeen City Council led by the new chief executive and interim director of Social Work and continued by the new director of Social Care and Health. Social work staff generally positive and encouraged by developments arising from improved leadership and direction. Staff being supported better by their managers. There had been significant improvement in criminal justice social work - better management capacity, a clear focus on quality assurance and performance management. The Care Commission have determined that overall ACC individual services are performing at a good level. Areas for improvement are being addressed with the service and the council. 	

Service performance			
	Significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst good progress is being made, significant challenges still remain - balance of care, services for children, progress with redesign of LD services, ICT and significant weaknesses in social work data quality, and the overall sustainability of improvements may be compromised by the significant restructuring of social work services. • Significant rise in child protection referrals and numbers of looked after children. Staff workloads increasing, fieldwork teams particularly and staffing still at a level which does not currently meet demands for service. • Resources social work out of hours service insufficient to respond effectively to the needs of children requiring care and protection at nights or weekends. • A Joint assessment approach to assessing substance misusing pregnant women had yet to be developed. Joint assessments of parenting capacity were not carried out routinely when there were concerns about parental alcohol or drug misuse, mental health or learning disability. Quality of child protection plans variable. • There remains no written commissioning strategy in children's services although significant work has begun on one for adult services • Concerns of lack of focus on older people's services and issues about addressing the balance of care. • Learning disability services need redesign, but it is not evident how this is going to take place. 	<p>SWIAs 3 monthly meeting with the Director of Social Work will continue.</p> <p>HMIe will undertake a joint child protection inspection and the Care Commission will undertake an inspection of fostering and adoption services.</p> <p>SWIA will also undertake scrutiny activity to consider the progress made on the issues identified, the timing of which will be defined by key dates in the council's improvement plan.</p>
Enterprise, planning & infrastructure services	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment at 24.6% at March 2009 ranked 5th among Scottish councils. • The percentage of all traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours at 96.8% for 2008-09, ranked 15th among Scottish councils. • The percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days at 86.3% for 2008-09, ranked 26th among Scottish councils. • The proportion of street lighting columns that are over 30 years old at 27.2% for 2008-09, we were ranked 13th among Scottish councils. This compares with 28.7% in 2007/08 and 38.6% in 2006/07. 	No specific work

Service performance			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pothole repairs completed in target year to date figures show 86.3% Category 1 repairs completed in timescales and 92.5% of Category 2 repairs. • There is effective partnership working in economic development, with good performance in key areas such as increasing jobs in the renewable energy sector and attracting inward migration. • The council has been active in evaluating the needs of local businesses in relation to skills and export issues. • Planning processing time around average. • Overall the service performs well, but with some areas where further improvement is required. The council is aware and has plans in place. 	
Corporate governance		See Corporate Assessment below	

Appendix 3 Corporate assessment

Outcome	Initial Risk Assessment	Evidence/Rationale	What we plan to do
Vision and strategic direction	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has a clear strategic direction as set out in its SOA and corporate improvement plan. These now need to be integrated into a single corporate plan which reflects its current programme of change and transformation (including financial stabilisation). 	No specific work
Leadership and culture	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has taken action to improve and develop the leadership, capacity and culture of the organization and the all-party leadership board has helped to drive forward improvement in the council. However, the impact of significant changes at senior management level are not yet clear at this time and second tier management recruitment in process. 	<p>Focused Best Value work.</p> <p>Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work and monitoring of BV improvement plan.</p>
Planning and resource alignment	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has made good progress in reviewing its strategic planning framework and is in the early stages of implementing a revised planning process. 	Update reports will be picked up through annual audit work and monitoring of BV improvement plan.
Partnership working and community leadership	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council can demonstrate good progress against its community planning goals and is actively seeking to improve local community planning with its partners. Challenge forums had a fit for purpose review in January 2009. 	No specific work
Community engagement	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical neighbourhood structure and close links to communities may be affected by structural changes. Changes to be introduced from April 2010 should address this but these are not yet finalised. Positive engagement in adult support and protection. 	No specific work
Governance	Area of		

Outcome	Initial Risk Assessment	Evidence/Rationale	What we plan to do
and accountability	uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has implemented a new management structure to improve clarity and accountability and is in the process of improving its governance arrangements to address previous weaknesses in scrutiny and challenge. Improvement of scrutiny was an Accounts Commission finding and key recommendation. Opposition chaired scrutiny panel in place since 2008 but not yet clear to what extent scrutiny influences performance and improvement. The council is in early discussions with its partners on the development of a Total Place approach 	<p>Focused BV work.</p> <p>Ongoing annual audit work.</p> <p>Quality of scrutiny will be assessed through service-based scrutiny work</p>
Public performance reporting	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has the basic building blocks of public performance reporting in place. 	No work
Improvement	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has put in place wide-ranging and significant new arrangements to support improvement. These provide a solid foundation for moving forward but the council needs to ensure that the improvement agenda is owned throughout the organisation. 	Focused BV work.
Performance management	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is making steady progress in implementing a corporate performance management process across all services, but still has work to do to introduce an effective performance culture throughout the organisation. Significant weaknesses in social work data quality covered in service table above. 	<p>Focused BV work</p> <p>The quality of reports and performance information provided to members will be assessed through the targeted service scrutiny work and annual audit work.</p>
Customer focus and responsiveness	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has developed an ambitious vision for customer care, has invested in consulting its citizens and is using this information to improve access to services. It is also strengthening customer care skills among staff. 	No specific work
Efficiency	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council reports achieving almost double the national target for efficiencies in 2008/09 but needs to improve its processes for classifying, calculating and monitoring the efficiencies it achieves. 	<p>No specific work.</p> <p>Will be covered in annual audit.</p>

Outcome	Initial Risk Assessment	Evidence/Rationale	What we plan to do
Competiveness	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council had made limited progress in testing the competitiveness of its services but this is recognized and the direction of travel is now positive with the council building capacity and understanding. 	Year 2/3 request report from council on progress
Risk management	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has a Risk Management Strategy and is making progress across the council. Education, Culture & Sport plans to be finalised in February and Social Care & Wellbeing in March. 	Annual audit will cover 2009/10 risk management action plan.
Financial control	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has taken difficult decisions in implementing plans to address the financial challenges and adopted an improved budget process. Unqualified accounts in 2008/09 and budget on track in year. Has transferred capital funds but now an improving picture of financial health. 	No specific work. Ongoing annual audit.
Financial strategy	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues of financial re-alignment and service re-design. Commitment to zero-based budgeting as yet unproven. 	Year 2/3 – focused work around strategic financial management Ongoing annual audit will monitor
Asset management	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is improving its approach to Asset Management but progress with moving forward some improvement actions has been delayed by management restructuring. Asset management key to service re-design. Initial discussions taking place around school estate – significant numbers have low pupil numbers in relation to capacity. 	Ongoing annual audit will monitor
Managing people	Area of uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is making progress in establishing a strategic approach to workforce planning and developing capacity. However, major structural change will impact on staff morale and engagement. 	Some focused BV work linked to other elements described above including leadership and culture. Use of any council staff survey work

Outcome	Initial Risk Assessment	Evidence/Rationale	What we plan to do
Procurement	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is improving its procurement arrangements, including joint arrangements with a neighbouring council and more effective use of e-procurement. 	No specific work.
ICT	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is making progress in using ICT to improve the accessibility of its services and deliver efficiency savings. (Weaknesses in social work picked up in service scrutiny work). 	No specific work.
Equalities	No significant concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is able to demonstrate a significant improvement in the number of women at senior manager or director level. An increase in ethnic minority applications for employment, attending for interview and also achieving employment at a senior and management level. The Equalities Action Network (EAN), the equality challenge forum for community planning in the city tasked to drive forward the equalities agenda goes beyond the minimum of statutory equality duties and promotes best practice in equality work, extending beyond race, disability and gender to include all equality strands. Members of the LGBT community are represented at the very highest levels of local government through representation across all parties. Community of interest groups are better informed and more able to participate through the support provided by a Development Officer, secretarial support and capacity building/training. Best practice "Equalities Made Simple" guidance which has been produced for front line staff. Successful partnership working with neighbouring councils, the police and the NHS and the voluntary sector to better provide for the needs of Gypsies/Travellers in the Grampian area. Equality Impact Assessment on all budgetary savings proposals are carried out and presented as part of the Budget process. Corporate Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments tool is used to assess impact for all six equality strands. 	No specific work.
Sustainability	No significant concerns	<p>See also environment outcome above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has made good progress in achieving its environmental aims, including significantly reducing carbon emissions. However, it faces significant challenges in securing sustainable approaches to waste management. Social and economic outcome progress also covered in outcomes table above. 	No specific work.

Appendix 4 Outline summary of scrutiny activity

The AIP is a three-year rolling programme.

2010-11 (Year 1)												
Scrutiny activity	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
SWIA – Prison social work services inspection												
HMICS/Audit Scotland – Grampian Police BV Audit												
HMIE – education follow through work			Scoping activity			Evaluation of progress						
SWIA - social work focused scrutiny activity including file reading and information gathering related to learning disability services, children’s services, the balance of care, quality assurance and data quality.								Performance Inspection				
SHR – Focused homeless and asset management work (including gas safety follow-up assurance work)												
Care Commission – Adoption and Fostering Inspection												
HMIE – Joint Child Protection Inspection (Cycle 2)												
Corporate Improvement Plan: subject to annual external audit (Henderson Loggie)	Regular monitoring throughout the year											

2011-12 (Year 2)	
Issues for scrutiny/improvement	Scrutiny bodies/council potential involvement
Shared Risk Assessment/revised Assurance and Improvement Plan	Local Area Network (LAN)
Financial Strategy	LAN (scrutiny and /or supported self-evaluation), Aberdeen City Council (self-evaluation)
Corporate Improvement Plan: subject to annual external audit	Regular monitoring throughout year – appointed external auditor

2012-13 (Year 3)	
Issues for scrutiny/improvement	Scrutiny bodies/council potential involvement
Shared Risk Assessment / revised Assurance and Improvement Plan	Local Area Network (LAN)
Audit Scotland Best Value 2 – targeted corporate assessment work around the council’s change agenda – including leadership, culture, governance arrangements, scrutiny, performance management and improvement, and the strategic use of resources (financial, people and assets).	Audit Scotland/Henderson Loggie
Competitiveness	LAN (scrutiny and /or supported self-evaluation), Aberdeen City Council (self-evaluation)
Corporate Improvement Plan: subject to annual external audit	Regular monitoring throughout year - appointed external auditor