

# Clackmannanshire Council

## Assurance and Improvement Plan Update

### 2012–15

#### Introduction

1. The first Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) for Clackmannanshire Council was published in July 2010. That document set out the planned scrutiny activity for the council for the period April 2010 to March 2013 based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN) made up of representatives of all of the main local government audit and inspection agencies.
2. The aim of the shared risk assessment process was to focus scrutiny activity where it is most needed and to determine the most proportionate scrutiny response over a three year period. The AIP gave an overview of the information that informed the risk assessment and showed how this links to the proposed scrutiny response.
3. The local area network met again in November 2010 to update the AIP for the period 2011-14. The AIP Update was published in May 2011.
4. This report is the result of the shared risk assessment which began in November 2011. The update process drew on evidence from a number of sources, including:
  - The annual report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2009/10 from the council's appointed external auditors.
  - The council's own performance data and self-evaluation evidence.
  - Evidence gathered from Education Scotland, Social Care Social Work Improvement Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence).
5. The outcomes of that exercise are contained in this short report which summarises changes to risk assessments and proposed scrutiny responses. Appendix 1 to this report sets out a timetable for proposed audit and inspection activity between April 2012 and March 2015 which reflects the revised and updated scrutiny risk assessment.

## Summary

6. Overall, there are no significant concerns about Clackmannanshire Council's overall performance. There continues to be areas of strong performance. The council continues to have a clear vision and direction for its work and a number of improvement activities are already underway and progressing well. In addition, there have been a number of significant changes in Clackmannanshire Council this year. A new Chief Executive was appointed in September 2011, replacing the previous post holder who had been in the council for two years. The new Chief Executive has been employed by the council for over 20 years. She has a very good understanding of the work of the council and her transition in to this new role has been smooth. It is too early to determine the impact of this appointment on the work of the council. In January 2012, there was a change in the political leadership of the council to SNP. It is too soon to determine any impact of this change. The LAN will continue to monitor progress and developments in the council. The council has put in place shared services across education and social work, in partnership with Stirling Council. Stirling Council leads on education across both areas and Clackmannanshire council leads on social work for both councils. At the Chief Executive's request, the council has commissioned an external review in to aspects of childcare. So far, good progress has been made in appointing two new heads of joint services and senior teams to take this forward. The council has begun to take forward developments in aspects of their corporate functions including HR and IT where these are directly affected by the shared service development. This work will be ongoing and the LAN will continue to monitor progress. Over a period of time, positive progress has been made in the areas of social services, however, there remain areas for further improvement. As a result of the risk assessment carried out by the LAN, limited scrutiny activity has taken place over years 1 and 2 of the AIP. Taking account of the changes currently underway in the council, no significant additional scrutiny has been identified for year three of the AIP (2013 – 14).
7. Clackmannanshire continues to face acute financial challenges but continues to respond well. There is a very strong commitment from officers and members to improving the work of the council. The Clackmannanshire Improvement Model continues to be a key driver in the council's approach to improving its outcomes. The council has continued to build on the improvements in areas such as governance, accountability and scrutiny with key developments in rolling out Scrutiny reviews in areas of priority, for example financial resilience. Training and development for officers and members has been a priority in implementing this work. Both Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council continue to work closely on both the strategic and operational plans for shared services and have ensured appropriate arrangements for governance and accountability. In taking this forward, agreement has been reached to continue to develop and embed this aspect of shared services before exploring any other areas. This will be reviewed and evaluated both by the council and by the LAN in due course

## National risk priorities

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

- **The protection and welfare of vulnerable people (children and adults) including access to opportunities:** This is an area of uncertainty. The council is strongly committed to the protection and welfare of vulnerable people. Fostering and Adoption services were inspected in August 2011 with a positive outcome. There are some staffing changes planned in this area. In addition, the council's approaches to child protection received a positive inspection in 2010. A Children's and Young People's Integrated Service Plan has very recently been approved by the Council and this provides a framework for taking forward all aspects of the council's work in this area and will be supported by a local implementation plan. The council's approach to developing a shared approach to the strategic management of its education and social work services with Stirling Council continues to present the opportunity to strengthen capacity and improve services to vulnerable groups. The process of managing change carries with it important risks and whilst at a strategic level the council are aware of this and managing jointly, recent scrutiny activity carried out by the Care Inspectorate identified that the impact on staff and on service users remains uncertain. The LAN will continue to maintain an overview of this area and the Care Inspectorate will continue to be involved in monitoring the progress of actions plans that resulted from recent scrutiny.
- **Assuring public money is being used properly:** There are no significant scrutiny risks. The council continues to ensure that this national risk priority is at the core of their work. Ongoing improvements have been made to how the council approaches governance and financial scrutiny following the restructuring undertaken last year. Strengthening the challenge and scrutiny aspects have been key developments and have resulted in robust action plans. The council is well placed to continue to develop its approaches in assuring public money is being used properly. Deloitte, the council's appointed auditors will continue to assess progress in this area as part of the annual audit programme and will review the council's process for developing and monitoring its corporate, directorate and saving plans.
- **How councils are responding to the challenging financial environment:** All councils continue to face significant financial challenges in the ongoing economic climate and this is likely to increase in the next few years. As a result, this continues to be an area of uncertainty. Clackmannanshire Council is focusing on the development of saving plans across all service lines in order to meet its strategic objectives. These plans are currently in place and will be further developed in the coming years. In addition, the council has taken forward significant work in the area of finance for example in close monitoring and evidencing of savings achieved, regular budget strategy refinements and updates to Council and a strong focus on reducing debt through Finance and Investment Strategies. Therefore, the LAN assessed that there is no significant risk in the council's approach to managing their budgets and planning for the financial uncertainty. Clackmannanshire Council will face increasing cost pressures in coming years which may impact on the maintenance of services at the current level. Deloitte as external auditors will review these plans and how these are to be monitored to ensure that the Council is meeting its strategic objectives.

9. The LAN is committed to maintaining its engagement with the council between now and the next SRA/AIP refresh so that we can retain an overview of how the council is managing its response to the significant financial challenges that it and all other Scottish public bodies face.

## Areas of unchanged scrutiny risk assessments

10. This update focuses predominantly on those areas assessed as being uncertain or having significant risk. However, in the interest of providing a broader view of the council's overall risk assessment, it is important to highlight those areas that were previously assessed as having no significant risks which, based on additional evidence in the current year, continue to be so.

Area	R/A/G	2011/12 Update
Education	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards in some areas. Still room for improvement, especially in attainment measures. Ongoing shared services development is progressing as new teams are established and new approaches are developed. Overall there are no significant scrutiny risks.
Social work services	Area of uncertainty	Whilst positive progress has been made within social work services there remains areas for continued improvement. These have been identified through the recent Initial Scrutiny Level Assessment and through other scrutiny carried out over the last 2 years. In particular, the service requires to strengthen assessments of risk, and needs and improve plans for children. Given the early development of Shared Services, it is not yet possible to measure the impact of this development and this aspect remains an area of uncertainty. The LAN will continue to monitor this area.
Housing	No significant risks	Good progress across a range of areas and high customer satisfaction. Remains areas for improvement around levels of homelessness and temporary accommodation.
Corporate services	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving in this area. Appropriate systems in place for managing the shared services work.
Environmental services	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards
Regulatory services	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards in this area.
Cultural services	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards in this area.
Roads and street lighting	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. The council has maintained the condition of its roads.

Area	R/A/G	2011/12 Update
The area has a positive image and attracts people and business	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Overall satisfaction rates with Clackmannanshire as a place to live have improved.
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive.	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Work ongoing to address anti-social behaviour incidents.
Vulnerable people and families are supported	Area of uncertainty	Please see earlier comments under Social Work Services. Performance management and social work capacity remain challenges for the council and there continues to be areas of uncertainty. There is an expectation that a new manager for fostering and adoption services will be appointed. The LAN will monitor this area.
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	Areas of uncertainty	Some improvements in attainment but more needs to be done. There are some uncertainties around the management and future development of Community Learning and Development and outcomes in this area. Positive destination figures fell in 2011 to below the national average. The LAN will monitor this area and aspects will be part of the progress report requested from the council.
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Improvements in community perceptions.
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Healthier theme indicators are improving and there are improvements in health education in schools. More still needs to be done to improve overall health.
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards
Public services are improving	No significant risks	Performance is positive with the majority of indicators improving on last years figures and meeting or exceeding targets. Both overall experience of public services, and satisfaction with how well public agencies are working together have significantly improved.
Vision and strategic direction	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. New Chief Executive recently appointed and Shared Service development ongoing
Leadership and culture	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. A key focus for the council in developing people and culture.
Partnership working and community leadership	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Positive partnerships with Stirling Council and within Clackmannanshire including third sector organisations. Findings from the joint inspection of services to protect children and young people in Clackmannanshire were generally positive. Chief officers were working well together to promote effective partnership working.
Governance and accountability	No significant	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards The Council's proposed governance strategy is innovative in Scotland and builds well on the improvements that have already been made in recent years.

Area	R/A/G	2011/12 Update
	risks	
Performance management	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards. Ongoing work on the CIM ensuring strong approach being developed across the council. Performance information from the SOA and SPIs found that the Council's current performance is largely improving across key services.
Customer focus and responsiveness	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards – genuine attempts to engage individuals and communities in consultation.
Risk management	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards – further work ongoing to take this forward through the CIM
Use of resources (all areas)	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards overall. Strong leadership in this area and improved scrutiny arrangements which are enabling the council to assess their strengths and areas for development in a range of areas.
Equalities and Sustainability	No significant risks	Positive progress in maintaining and improving standards – no further new evidence

## Changes to 2011/12 risk assessments

11. The following table relates to risk assessments that have been changed from the 2011/12 AIP Update.

Area	2011/12 Risk Assessment	2012/13 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
Our communities are safer	Area of uncertainty	No significant risks	Performance has improved in this area and there are now no significant risks. Performance has been significantly positive in community satisfaction with how agencies are tackling crime and the fear of crime.
ICT	No significant risks	Area of uncertainty	The council has taken forward work recently on refreshing the ICT Strategy in conjunction with the review of the ICT asset plan. In addition, the council is currently resolving ICT issues that have emerged through the shared services as ICT systems used by each council are different and these now need to be aligned as appropriate. In addition the council recognises that the IT system used by housing needs to be updated. This presents some uncertainty in terms of the impact of these developments and the LAN will continue to monitor this area.
Managing people	Strategic – areas of uncertainty  Operational – scrutiny risks	Area of uncertainty	The council is developing further its approaches to managing people in the areas of education and social work specifically as a result of the move to shared services. A number of changes are proposed or already underway. At this stage, it is not yet possible to judge the impact of this on how well the council manages its people. The LAN will continue to monitor this area.

## Scrutiny plan changes

12. A number of changes to the scrutiny plans are proposed in response to the progress the council has made in a number of important areas and also in light of the ongoing organisational changes that are taking place within the council.
13. Education Scotland (formerly HMIE) planned scrutiny work in education, specifically in relation to attainment, in the 2010/11 AIP. This work was postponed owing to the major change programme going on in the council in education. This has now been further reviewed in light of the aforementioned new developments. The District Inspector will work with the Head of Joint Services for education and the Assistant Heads of Education in supporting and challenging Clackmannanshire to improve. In addition, the council will be asked for a report on progress in raising attainment by October 2012.
14. Targeted work was planned for 2012/13 to assess the impact of the Transformation Programme in embedding performance management throughout the council in securing improved services and better outcomes. Given the ongoing development of shared services and positive progress in the council, this work will no longer take place. The LAN will continue to monitor progress and will consider carrying out possible scrutiny in relation to the Shared Services agenda across Clackmannanshire and Stirling in 2013/14.
15. The Housing Benefits Performance Audit planned for 2011/12 will now take place in 2012/2013. This work will be undertaken as part of the annual local audit and in partnership with the local auditor.
16. There will be a focused follow up audit to Audit Scotland's national report "Maintaining Scotland's roads: a follow up report" (published February 2011). This is not specific to the council but is a planned follow up review across all Scottish Local Authorities.

## Review of 2011/12 planned scrutiny

17. Education - Education Scotland had originally requested that a report on progress in raising attainment levels through an improvement strategy, be provided in 2011. As a consequence of the organisational changes, including extensive changes to staffing, which were taking place in the education service at that time, this was postponed. Clackmannanshire education service is now included in the joint education service's raising attainment strategy. The District Inspector will continue to support and challenge the education service. The education service will be asked to provide a report on progress in raising attainment in Clackmannanshire for the revised time of October 2012.
18. Best Value Audit of Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service - As part of national audits of Fire and Rescue services across Scotland, a BV audit of Central Scotland Fire and rescue Service and authorities was carried out in May / June 2011 with a report published in July 2011. (Central Fire and Rescue service

serves the population of the Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire council areas). The report found that Central Scotland Fire and Rescue service is effective but more improvement is needed. The report did not identify improvements for individual councils, but the Accounts Commission found “that members of the Fire and Rescue board need to develop their capacity to scrutinise and challenge the service on its strategy and performance” and that “this is an important role for the constituent councils”. As well as the published report, the findings from this audit will form part of a national overview report to be published in 2012.

- 19.** Adoption and Fostering - Whilst the fostering services provides good support to foster carers and a quick response to those enquiring about the service the services need to update foster carers handbook, develop information packs for children and appoint a new manager for fostering and adoption services. The adoption report says that the Adoption agency continues to provide a good service to people interested in adopting children by working effectively with neighbouring councils, they continue to prevent any unnecessary delays for applicants and arranging for them to attend their preparation courses. The service needs to try and recruit more adopters. A new manager for fostering and adoption services has recently been appointed and will lead and have a key role in further developing of fostering and adoption service
- 20.** ISLA (Initial scrutiny level assessment of social work services) - The Care Inspectorate carried out an ISLA between September 2010 and June 2011 using nine risk based questions. Leadership was good and there was evidence of generally positive outcomes. The Clackmannanshire Improvement Model was being adopted as an approach to performance management and quality assurance, and there was evidence of effective partnership working. The need for further improvement was identified in a few areas, including the support and management of staff, the routine sharing of assessments, and the need for policies to be in place to guide the use of risk models across all social work services. As previously mentioned, the development of Shared Services for social work presents an area of uncertainty. At present, arrangements are still new and only just being bedded in, as a result it is too early to measure the impact of this work on those who receive these services. Inspections found that fostering and adoption services were improving it was seen as crucial for the development of the service for clear and effective leadership to be established.



## Scrutiny plans

Scrutiny activity in the shaded rows does not result from the shared risk assessment but is either at the request of the council e.g. supported self-evaluation work or national activity e.g. national follow up work or work requested by Ministers.

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL		2012-13											
Scrutiny activity year 1		Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Audit Scotland: Follow Up Review of Maintaining Roads													
Audit Scotland: Housing Benefits Performance Audit (Date TBC)													
		2013-14											
Scrutiny activity year 2		Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Possible targeted scrutiny around the Shared Services developments and the extent to which they are achieving their desired aims.													
		2014-15											
Indicative scrutiny activity for rolling third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved												
No activity planned													

### Footnotes

- The focus of the AIP Update 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 on-going throughout the period of the AIP. This will include, for example, school and residential home inspections.
- At the request of Scottish Ministers the Care Inspectorate will lead a **Joint Inspection of Children's Services** in each local authority area in Scotland. These inspections will commence in 2012/13 starting with a development site in April/May 2012 and a cycle of inspection of services for children which will report publicly from Autumn 2012. The selection of local authority areas for inspection will be based on intelligence and risk and take account of the Shared Risk Assessment. AN leads will be advised in due course.

- In addition, Audit Scotland will be working with scrutiny partners to pilot an approach to assessing the **delivery of outcomes by community planning partnerships**. Pilot sites will be confirmed with the LAN lead in due course.
- Audit Scotland undertake an annual rolling programme of **thematic performance audits**. The fieldwork sites are identified as part of the development of the scope for each individual audit. Fieldwork sites will be confirmed with LAN leads as each audit is developed.
- The **annual audit** of local government also comprises part of the baseline activity for all councils. In April 2008, the Accounts Commission agreed to a request from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to take over the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate's responsibility for inspecting housing and council tax benefit (benefits) services in Scotland. As Audit Scotland has no inspection function, this '**benefits performance audit**' work has been incorporated into the annual audit of local government. The exact timing of the audits will be confirmed through the LAN lead.
- **Education Scotland**, through the District Inspector, will continue to support and challenge Education Services regularly and as appropriate the **Care Inspectorate** will regulate care services and inspect social work services based on the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 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
- Scrutiny activity in the shaded rows does not result from the shared risk assessment but is national activity e.g. national follow up work or activity requested by Ministers