

East Ayrshire Council

Assurance and Improvement Plan

Update 2013–16

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Introduction

1. The first Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) for East Ayrshire 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 (SRA) undertaken by a local area network (LAN) made up of representatives of all of the main local government audit and inspection agencies. The aim of the SRA 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 LAN met again in November 2010 and in November 2011 to update the AIP. The last AIP Update was published in May 2012 covering 2012-15.
2. This update is the result of the SRA which began in October 2012. The update process drew on evidence from a number of sources, including:
 - The annual report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2011/12 from the council's appointed external auditors.
 - The council's own performance data and self-evaluation evidence.
 - Evidence gathered from Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Housing Regulator (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence).
3. A timetable for proposed audit and inspection activity between April 2013 and March 2016 which reflects the revised and updated scrutiny risk assessment is at Appendix 1.
4. Following feedback about the clarity of the SRA process we have amended our criteria to make it clearer what we mean. Our assessment criteria descriptions used last year have changed from 'significant concerns' to 'scrutiny required'; 'no significant concerns' to 'no scrutiny required'; and 'uncertainty' to 'further information required'

Summary

5. As was the case in the last AIP, there continues to be no specific scrutiny required by the LAN as part of this shared risk assessment process.
6. The LAN identified two areas in the previous AIP where further information was required before we could conclude an appropriate scrutiny response. The LAN has obtained satisfactory evidence in each of these areas as follows:
 - In the last AIP we concluded that we required further information to determine how the council were performing in relation to its corporate objective - "improving health and wellbeing". The council demonstrated through the single outcome agreement annual performance report that progress has been made against a number of identified actions in the improving health and well-being assessment category.
 - We also concluded in the last AIP that further information was required to confirm the council were addressing issues within social work services such as outcomes for some groups of people who use the services, aspects of risk management, strategic commissioning and planning. Work carried out by the Care Inspectorate in 2012 enabled us to conclude that actions were taken by management to address this and would be monitored.
7. The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) risk assessment in 2012/13 identified areas where good progress has been made by the council's housing service and hence no scrutiny risk was identified. However, it also highlighted that further information is required for the management of voids, the sustainability of new tenancies, and the reliability of data used to forecast the ability to achieve Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. This remains the case and these areas will be targeted by SHR for scrutiny work later in 2013 through a self assessment inquiry following further discussion with the Council.

National risks

8. Local councils are operating within a context of significant change as a result of the challenging financial environment and the public service reform agenda, including the review of community planning, health and social care integration, police and fire reform, college regionalisation, and welfare reform. The Local Government Scrutiny Co-ordination Strategic Group is currently considering how audit and inspection arrangements should collectively respond to these significant strategic developments, recognising the increasing importance of partnerships, place and outcomes for Scotland's public services.

9. 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): No scrutiny is required

10. At the request of Scottish ministers, the Care Inspectorate is developing a model of joint inspection of children's services in Community Planning Partnership (CPP) areas in Scotland, in co-operation with other scrutiny bodies (Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and HMICS). These inspections will focus on how well local public bodies (councils, the NHS, police, etc.) are working together to deliver effective outcomes for children and young people. Development work involving Angus Council took place in April/ May 2012. These joint inspections, which will report publicly, began in the autumn 2012.

11. In addition, the Care Inspectorate is working in co-operation with Healthcare Improvement Scotland to develop an approach to inspecting services providing care and health for adults drawing on its experience of implementing joint inspections of child protection and children's services. Development work involving a number of local authorities is underway and will continue into the early part of 2013. Following this, the Care Inspectorate will implement a programme of these inspections. Further details of the schedule will be confirmed in due course.

12. Subject to ministerial approval, the Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and the Risk Management Authority (RMA), will undertake supported self-evaluation across the 32 local authority criminal justice social work services during the latter part of 2013. This will look at the impact of the Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LSCMI), otherwise known as the national assessment and care planning instrument. This particular approach is one of a number of approaches the Care Inspectorate will use in its current and future scrutiny and improvement work in this area.

13. The SHR plans to carry out a thematic inspection into the outcomes that local authorities are achieving by delivering a Housing Options and Prevention of Homelessness approach. SHR will carry out this thematic inspection during the first half of 2013/14. This is likely to involve fieldwork visits to a small sample of local authorities. SHR is currently identifying potential fieldwork sites and will be contacting those councils that it would like to visit in early 2013.

14. The council is continuing to work towards improving outcomes for looked after children through the phased re-design of services for children and families. Educational attainment and outcomes for care leavers are improving. The chief social work officer is reviewing the arrangements for assessing, managing and recording risk to vulnerable people in order to improve the quality of practice. Child and adult protection committees evidence a commitment to learn from practice through reviewing individual cases when necessary.
15. The Care Inspectorate receives very few complaints about care services directly provided by the council and these services generally perform well in terms of service delivery and meeting people's needs. The council responds immediately when the Care Inspectorate raises child and adult protection concerns.

Assuring public money is being used properly: No scrutiny is required

16. The annual audit of councils forms part of the baseline scrutiny of councils. This audit examines the financial management and controls in each council. The council continues to demonstrate sound financial management and scrutiny arrangements.
17. The council's corporate governance framework is effective in challenging the performance of services and driving improvements. The council's Electronic Performance Management System (EPMS) and the periodic East Ayrshire Performs reports provide a range of financial, performance and statistical information on service delivery, and allows systematic review of performance information for members and officers.
18. The council has robust self-evaluation arrangements in place. All services of East Ayrshire Council undertake annual EFQM assessments. There are two exceptions which use more service specific self-evaluation tools. The Education Service uses the Quality Management in Education 2 (QMIE2) framework to self-assess. Similarly, the council has adopted the Care Inspectorate's Self Evaluation Model in Social Services.
19. The council completed its third "council-wide strategic self-assessment of performance" in 2012. The review found that East Ayrshire Council is continuing to move in the right direction and that the improvements detailed within the report represent genuine progress based on best value principles.
20. There is a robust budgetary control process in place. This includes regular reporting to budget holders and committees; and incorporates the setting of efficiency savings targets from base budgets and a challenging mid-year review of departmental spending plans.

How councils are responding to the challenging financial environment: No local scrutiny required other than monitoring of the financial position through the annual audit

21. Recognising the significance of the uncertain financial context within which councils operate, Audit Scotland produced Scotland's Public Finances: Addressing the Challenges in August 2011. Follow-up work around the issues raised in the report will be undertaken in each council during 2013/14 to provide the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland with evidence on the progress that public bodies are making in developing a strategic

response to these long-term financial challenges. In addition, a specific piece of work on Reshaping Scotland's public sector workforce will be undertaken in 2013/14.

22. The council has usable reserves totalling £59.652 million as at 31 March 2012. This was an increase of 5.9 per cent on the previous year. This includes a general fund balance of £34.568 million, of which £17.602 million is uncommitted. The uncommitted general fund balance is in excess of the council's reserves and balances strategy. The council addressed this when setting its 2012/13 budget.
23. However, the council's Transformation Strategy for the years 2013 to 2017 predicts a much more challenging future. This takes a forward view until 2016/17 and has identified that the council requires to achieve sustainable savings of £34.1 million over this period. The council's budget proposals for 2013/14 highlighted the scale of the challenge by predicting the impact that a trend of reserve utilisation to fund budget gaps would have on the uncommitted general fund balance.
24. The council have consulted extensively with stakeholders and have held a series of seminars with members to identify and consider the challenges facing the 2013/14 budget. A funding gap of £11.877 million was identified in November 2012 which will be met by management efficiencies and savings of £7.623 million, and by using £4.254 million of the uncommitted general fund balance. This was incorporated in the budget approved by members in December 2012 – the first council in Scotland to approve its 2013/14 budget.
25. At the request of Scottish ministers, Audit Scotland has piloted an approach to auditing CPP and the delivery of local outcomes. The CPP audit model was tested during 2012/13 in three council areas (Aberdeen City, North Ayrshire and Scottish Borders). Following evaluation of the approach in early 2013, a number of CPPs will be audited during the second half of 2013/14. Audit Scotland will be contacting any likely audit sites in spring 2013.
26. The EHRC has commissioned a piece of work to assess the extent to which Scottish public authorities have complied with the specific duties of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 during 2013. Analysis of public authorities compliance with the duty to publish equality outcomes and employment information will be available later in 2013. The results of this activity will be reflected in future Shared Risk Assessment work.
27. The LAN is committed to maintaining its engagement with the council between now and the next SRA cycle 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 that remain 'no scrutiny required'

28. This update focuses predominantly on those areas assessed as 'scrutiny required' and 'further information required'. 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 requiring no scrutiny which continue to be so. The LAN identified no scrutiny is required in the following areas:

Area	Update
SERVICE AREAS	
Finance & Corporate Support:	
Finance	<p>SPIs on key finance department indicators for council tax and payment of invoices show some improvement.</p> <p>The council demonstrates robust budgetary control, prudent management of reserves and effective reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>Our review of the council's Benefits Service in 2011/12 highlighted some areas for improvement which management agreed to address in a completed action plan.</p>
Human Resources	<p>Good performance information relating to workforce and other HR functions (eg Health & Safety) is regularly reported to committees.</p> <p>SPIs indicate that staff absenteeism has improved.</p> <p>The introduction of a new HR/payroll system was reviewed and tested by Audit Scotland in 2012. An action plan was agreed and is being addressed by management.</p>
Corporate Infrastructure	<p>Audit Scotland's review of corporate IT services in 2011/12 did not reveal any significant risk areas.</p> <p>High quality performance management information and satisfactory governance processes help to ensure that of corporate</p>

Area	Update
	<p>decisions are based on relevant up to date information.</p>
<p>Democratic Services</p>	<p>Minutes and associated papers demonstrate that there is appropriate administration and support to the work of council committees.</p>
<p>Legal, Procurement & Regulatory</p>	<p>The council attained a 52% procurement capability score in October 2012, exceeding the Scottish Government target of 50% and continuing a year on year improvement trend.</p> <p>Legal implications of all proposals to committee are considered.</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate receives very few complaints about services provided by East Ayrshire Council.</p> <p>Protective Services indicators show mixed performance with improvements in the percentage of consumer complaints dealt with within 14 days, but declining performance with the other three indicators over the last three years. The decline in performance can be attributed to a small number of incidents where response times increased or were not met.</p>
<p>Planning & Economic Development</p>	<p>The time taken for processing planning applications has declined and is now the 2nd worst in Scotland. Various reasons were provided for this including: the council handling a number of complex and time-consuming applications (eg coal mines); and many cases where the council requested additional information from the applicant rather than rejecting the application.</p> <p>Therefore, we concluded that there is no significant scrutiny required; however, Audit Scotland will continue to monitor performance as part of the audit of SPIs during 2012/13 to assess the effectiveness of steps taken by management to improve performance in the coming year.</p>

Area	Update
Education & Social Services:	
Education	<p>Overall pre-appeal attainment data for 2012 indicates a further improvement on the 2011 results at almost all levels. Attainments in S4 SCQF levels 3 and 4 has continued to increase, those at level 5 have remained the same. S5 results at SCQF levels 6 have increased. Attainment at SCQF level 7 has also increased. The council is continuing to make progress in raising attainment but remains behind comparator councils in most key measures.</p>
Social Services (Other than issues raised in "areas with changes assessments").	<p>Overall performance is good with all SPI data showing improvement. The council compares well to others.</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate conducted an ISLA during 2011/12 and concluded that with the exception of a few areas, overall performance is satisfactory. Management in the council have responded well to the report and actions are being taken to address the actions raised.</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate will continue to monitor progress.</p>
Neighbourhood Services:	
Waste Management & Community Safety	<p>The council has improved its kerbside collection and recycling rates. The council is ranked just outside the top quartile in Scotland for recycling rates.</p>
Leisure, Street Cleansing	<p>SPI data demonstrates that cleanliness index is improving and the council is above average. Attendance at swimming pools and other leisure facilities have also shown improvement with the council comparing well to others.</p>
Building and Works	<p>The Housing Asset Service has demonstrated good progress in service performance following a fundamental review of the service during 2010/11. A follow-up report to Committee showed that the service had fully implemented six of the 10 recommendations</p>

Area	Update
	<p>whilst two were substantially complete and the remaining two were partially complete.</p> <p>The proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition has improved and is better than the Scottish average.</p>
Housing (Other than aspects of housing in "areas with changed assessments").	<p>The council remains committed to achieving the SHQS by 2015 and continues to invest in its housing stock through the building of new houses and refurbishment of existing homes within the approved capital programme.</p> <p>The council demonstrates excellent performance in rent collection, a high level of homelessness assessments processed within timescales, and positive levels of satisfaction from the latest tenant's survey.</p>
Roads & Transportation	<p>SPI trend data shows that the road condition within the council has improved slightly, however, it is just outside the bottom quartile for Scotland.</p> <p>Work by Audit Scotland during 2011/12 on <i>Maintaining Scotland's Roads, a follow-up review</i> highlighted that the service has responded positively to the recommendations in the original report and that work is currently ongoing to improve intelligence about the road network in order to target resources at a time when available finance is restricted.</p> <p>The three Ayrshire councils are currently investigating the possibility of a joint roads service for Ayrshire under a joint committee model.</p>
Outcome Areas	
Promoting lifelong learning (Raise educational attainment and equip our young people for the world of work).	<p>The council continues to focus very well on young people who need more choices and more chances. This is reflected in the high level of positive destinations for school leavers which is around the national average.</p> <p>There is some improvement in the numbers of</p>

Area	Update
	<p>care leavers in education, employment and training; however these remain lower than the Scottish average.</p> <p>School attainment has improved, although this is still under the Scottish average.</p>
<p>Improving community regeneration (Promote town centre living).</p>	<p>Overall performance is mixed. A number of indicators demonstrate comparatively poor and deteriorating performance, including unemployment, benefit claimant levels and financial security. However there are also areas of comparatively good performance, including improvements in median earnings, identifying priority need homeless, and the gender pay gap which is the lowest across all councils.</p> <p>279 new businesses were set up in East Ayrshire in 2011/12. This exceeded the target of 250. Business survival rates (three years after start up) are also showing slight improvements.</p> <p>The council incurred significant capital expenditure in 2011/12 (as part of its 10 year capital plan) aimed at stimulating the local economy through investment in schools, local communities and relocation of council offices to town centres to stimulate further investment in town centres.</p>
<p>Improving community safety (Promote town centre living).</p>	<p>There is a mixed picture of performance. Some "safer and stronger" indicators (volunteering, good condition of flat/house, neighbourhood as a good place, and perception of drug use) are worsening in the short term. The Single Outcome Agreement annual performance report indicates a generally stable picture but acknowledges the areas of concern around perceptions of crime, safety, and drug misuse.</p> <p>There were improvements in 2011/12 regarding the number of domestic abuse referrals, alarms fitted and home security</p>

Area	Update
	<p>installations.</p> <p>Whilst there is a mixed picture of current performance, the LAN concluded that the council is adequately monitoring and reporting this.</p>
Corporate Assessment Areas	
<p>Vision and strategic direction</p>	<p>The Community Plan (adopted by the council as its Corporate Plan) clearly articulates the council's/partners' key priority areas for 2011-15. The SOA underpins the Community Plan and provides a robust performance management framework, including baseline data and targets, ensuring effective links to the national outcomes. The SOA annual performance report demonstrates outcomes in relation to the Community Plan priorities.</p> <p>A number of reviews have been commissioned by the Transformation Strategy Strategic Board. Project briefs have been agreed and work is underway. This builds upon the council's corporate plan.</p>
<p>Leadership and culture</p>	<p>Following the local government election in May 2012, the council chose to retain the cabinet/ scrutiny structure.</p> <p>The meetings of the council, Cabinet, and Governance & Scrutiny Committees are well attended by members, executive directors and heads of service. Officers and officials continue to work well together.</p>
<p>Planning and resource alignment</p>	<p>The council has approved a Transformation Strategy which sets the strategic direction for the next 5 years. This will produce a number of work streams which will drive forward proposals for future service redesign and BV reviews.</p> <p>Service plans are linked to the community plan priorities. Audit Scotland continue to be satisfied with the good budget consultation process and with the work between the</p>

Area	Update
	<p>corporate finance section and all council services to ensure that financial resources are directed towards service priorities and are in accordance with overall financing requirements.</p>
<p>Partnership working and community leadership</p>	<p>The Ayrshire Shared Services Executive was established in 2006 to drive forward and deliver shared services. The group includes the leaders and chief executives of the three Ayrshire councils and the chief executive and Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran.</p> <p>There are joint arrangements for tourism and social work out of hours. Work is also at an advanced stage in respect of a detailed business case for an Ayrshire roads shared services.</p> <p>Recent joint work to establish the viability for a pan Ayrshire regulatory service was rejected by constituent authorities on the basis that insufficient savings would be derived to counter set up costs.</p>
<p>Community engagement</p>	<p>The council has a history of working with and listening to its residents. The single outcome agreement annual performance report 2011/12 showed an increase in the number of community/voluntary groups managing their own facilities. Committee reports and papers show the extent of consultation that has been undertaken and provides a summary of the views expressed by recipients.</p>
<p>Governance and accountability (Including public performance reporting).</p>	<p>Audit Scotland concluded that the council has good governance arrangements in place, including an effective internal audit section and governance and scrutiny committee.</p> <p>The single outcome agreement annual performance report provides comprehensive details of trends and current performance in relation to most aspects of the council's outcome targets. All performance indicators are reported regularly to members and</p>

Area	Update
	<p>annually to the public. These are published on the council's website.</p>
<p>Performance management</p>	<p>The third council-wide strategic self-assessment of performance provided a corporate overview of the council's performance. This was carried out by the Corporate Management Team in March 2012; with external challenge provided by an externally appointed "critical friend".</p> <p>The ensuing report concluded that the council has made further progress based on best value principles.</p> <p>The council has a robust performance reporting framework which considers a range of both national and local indicators. These are regularly reported to council and committee meetings.</p>
<p>Challenge and improvement</p>	<p>Departments are subject to annual self-assessment reviews of performance against a range of key indicators. Other self-evaluation exercises are based on EFQM assessment criteria.</p>
<p>Customer focus and responsiveness</p>	<p>There are four local community planning forums and a community planning resident's panel of over 1,000 residents who are consulted on a range of issues.</p> <p>The East Ayrshire Community Planning Residents' Survey 2011 was presented to Cabinet in February 2012. Overall, the results are positive and generally reflect an upward trend over the three residents' surveys carried out in recent years. It also demonstrated an improvement in resident's views about how well they are informed by the council.</p>
<p>Risk management</p>	<p>The approach to risk management is embedded within a corporate risk register supported by departmental risk registers and reports provided to the CMT and Members.</p>
<p>Use of resources – efficiency</p>	<p>The council has achieved underspends in</p>

Area	Update
	<p>each of the last five financial years. A mid – year line by line efficiency review is now an established part of this process.</p> <p>There are various pan Ayrshire initiatives aimed at achieving efficiency savings.</p> <p>The council are developing business cases for alternative service delivery of aspects of leisure services and for the transport arrangements for Education and Social Services.</p>
Use of resources - competitiveness	<p>The council reported to committees throughout the year on the results of management service reviews designed to transform services and align resources and service delivery structures to the future demands for services.</p>
Use of resources - financial management	<p>The council continues to demonstrate good financial management of its financial resources. There have been targeted efficiency savings in each of the recent financial years.</p> <p>A ten year capital programme is in place to enable a strategic approach to capital investment.</p> <p>Future funding gaps have been identified and the transformation strategy aligns available resources for the provision of services with available finance. This takes a forward view until 2016/17 and has identified that the council requires to achieve sustainable savings of £34.1 million over this period. The approved 2013/14 budget identified the first £7 million of these required savings.</p>
Use of resources – asset management	<p>The council has a strategic approach to capital planning, which is integrated with asset management planning.</p>
Use of resources – managing people	<p>The council minimises the impact of workforce reduction on council services through the planned implementation of re-organised</p>

Area	Update
	<p>services and structures identified in best value service reviews and through monitoring of overtime and absence levels.</p> <p>The council has carried out several employee attitude surveys in recent years.</p>
Use of resources - procurement	<p>In October 2012 the council achieved 52% in its Procurement Capability Assessment. This exceeded the minimum 50% target performance set by the Scottish Government and demonstrated year on year improvement in the last 4 years.</p>
Equalities	<p>The council has established procedures for equality impact assessments to be carried out as part of each change in service proposal.</p> <p>The EHRC have commissioned a piece of work to assess the extent to which Scottish public authorities have complied with the specific duties of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 during 2013. The results of this activity will be reflected in future shared risk assessment work.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The council continues to embed sustainability into its services.</p> <p>The council's property strategy aims to generate longer term benefits for economic regeneration of its town centres.</p> <p>Environment sustainability has seen an increase in recycling rates and a strategy in place for the longer term treatment of waste.</p>

Areas with changed assessments

29. The following table relates to assessments of scrutiny risk that have been changed from the 2012/13 update.

Area	2012/13 Risk assessment	2013/14 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
Services			
<p>Social Work Service (Aspects of the social work service regarding outcomes for looked after children and care leavers, aspects of the assessment and management of risk of vulnerable people and aspects of strategic commissioning and planning).</p>	<p>Further information required</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Following the publication of the Care Inspectorate scrutiny report in May 2012, the council developed an action plan to address the recommendations for improvement, which Cabinet approved in June 2012.</p> <p>Educational outcomes for looked after children are improving and the council has provided additional and dedicated management resources to promote further improvements. Care leavers are being offered support, and numbers of care leavers in education, employment and training has shown an increase from the previous year although this remains lower than the Scottish average, reflecting the challenging economic context of the council area.</p> <p>In June 2012, the Cabinet approved the appointment of a lead officer to develop a strategic approach to implementing personalised social work services, including self-directed support.</p> <p>Work is underway to address the remaining areas by April 2013 and no further scrutiny is planned. The Care Inspectorate will assess the evidence and monitor progress as part of the ongoing link inspector role. In addition, at the request of the council, the Care</p>

Area	2012/13 Risk assessment	2013/14 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
			Inspectorate will be providing a support and challenge role to the department's self-evaluation processes.
Housing (Management of voids, information in support of SHQS compliance, and sustainability of new tenancies).	No scrutiny required	Further information required	The SHR plans to seek further assurance on aspects of the council's housing service performance. While the council performs well in several areas of its housing management, its empty house performance has been in decline for three years and now ranks poorly in comparison to other local authorities. The SHR is also uncertain about the quality of the council's reported SHQS compliance data and plans to seek assurance on its accuracy. The council's low level of sustainability of its new tenancies also appear to be a risk. The SHR plans to meet with the council in Q2/3 (2013/14) to agree the scope of a self assessment inquiry which will address each of these areas.
Outcome Areas			
Improving health and wellbeing	Further information required	No scrutiny required	<p>The SOA Annual Performance Report shows progress against a number of identified actions including increase in uptake of carers support plans, increases in attendance at a wide range of facilities and increases in life expectancy.</p> <p>Overall, performance remains comparatively below the national average but with a general trend of improvement. However, breastfeeding rates, alcohol discharges and smoking prevalence are areas which have been identified for improvement.</p> <p>The LAN identified evidence of a strong relationship between the council and the NHS. Several partnership initiatives</p>

Area	2012/13 Risk assessment	2013/14 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
			<p>promoting services with older people have had good results. The provision of respite care for older people and adults is above the Scottish average.</p> <p>Children and Families Services are being redesigned and restructured with a well planned coherent approach in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. The impact of this is not yet fully evident.</p> <p>Overall, the LAN concluded that there is no specific scrutiny required within this outcome area.</p>

Scrutiny plans

30. The scrutiny plan at appendix 1 reflects the scrutiny to be carried out at the council. With the exception of the supported self-assessment of certain elements of the housing service, all of the scrutiny is due to national work that is planned.
31. The SHR plans to seek further assurance on aspects of the council's housing service performance. While the council performs well in several areas of its housing management, its empty house performance has been in decline for three years and now ranks poorly in comparison to other local authorities. The SHR is also uncertain about the quality of the council's reported SHQS compliance data and plans to seek assurance on its accuracy. The low levels of sustainability of the council's new tenancies also appears to be a risk and is another area where the SHR requires further information. The SHR plans to meet with the council in the latter half of 2013 to agree the scope of a self assessment inquiry.
32. Audit Scotland will undertake a follow up to the national report "Scotland's public finances" originally published in 2011. This will provide the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland with evidence on the progress that public bodies are making in developing a strategic response to these long term financial challenges. Audit Scotland will also be carrying out follow up work resulting from the workforce planning element of the Scotland's public finances report.
33. Education Scotland has been invited by East Ayrshire Council to carry out a validated self-evaluation (VSE) working with education services. This is planned to commence between January and March 2014. This is not a scrutiny response to any identified risks. VSE is a voluntary process which aims to support and challenge the work of education authorities to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. In line with the principles of VSE, the focus will be agreed between East Ayrshire Council and Education Scotland in due course.
34. A follow up of the Housing Benefit performance audit, which was completed in May 2012, will also be completed in January 2014.
35. Subject to ministerial approval, the Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and the Risk Management Authority (RMA), will undertake supported self-evaluation across the 32 local authority criminal justice social work services during the latter part of 2013. This will look at the impact of the Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LSCMI), otherwise known as the national assessment and care planning instrument. This particular approach is one of a number of approaches the Care Inspectorate will use in its current and future scrutiny and improvement work in this area.

Appendix 1

National scrutiny activity does not result from the shared risk assessment but is either at the request of the council eg supported self-evaluation work or national activity eg national follow-up work or work requested by ministers.

East Ayrshire Council												
												2013-14
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Scottish Housing Regulator - Self-assessment process on management of voids, sustainability of tenancies, and verification of SHQS figures							X	X	X			
National or supported self-evaluation work year 1												
Education Scotland - VSE										X	X	X
Housing Benefits Performance Audit follow-up										X		
Audit Scotland: Follow-up report of Audit Scotland national report "Scotland's Public Finances- addressing the challenges"		X										
Audit Scotland: Reshaping Scotland's public sector workforce	X											
Supported self-evaluation of the impact on quality of the newly introduced national assessment and care planning instrument (LSCMI) in local criminal justice social work services. (TBC- latter part of 2013)												

East Ayrshire Council												
												2014-15
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No local scrutiny work planned												
National or supported self evaluation work year 2												
No national work planned												

East Ayrshire Council	
2015-16	
Indicative scrutiny activity for rolling third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved
No scrutiny 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 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. Education Scotland, through the Area Lead Officer, will continue to support and challenge Education Services regularly and as appropriate. The Care Inspectorate will continue to regulate care services and inspect social work services in accordance with their responsibilities under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

