

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Assurance and Improvement Plan

2014–17

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Introduction

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Dumfries and Galloway Council between April 2014 and March 2017. The AIP is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN). There is a LAN for each council, comprising representatives of all the scrutiny bodies who engage with the council. 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 a three year period.
2. This is the fifth AIP for Dumfries and Galloway Council since the introduction of the shared risk assessment process.¹ It is the result of the shared risk assessment which began in October 2013. The process drew on evidence from a number of sources, including:
 - the annual report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2012/13 from the council's appointed external auditors
 - evidence gathered from Audit Scotland, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Housing Regulator and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS), including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence
 - the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and associated development plan for the council area
 - the council's own performance data and self-evaluation evidence
 - analysis of data from the SOLACE/COSLA/Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework.²
3. The shared risk assessment process was reviewed in 2013, in the context of a significantly changed scrutiny landscape and the evolving public service reform agenda.³ Based on the findings of the review, this year's shared risk assessment focused on identifying the council's current position in implementing the Scottish Government's reform agenda. It also placed more emphasis on scrutiny risk in relation to the council's improvement and transformation agenda. This change in approach is reflected in the structure of the AIP for 2014-17, which covers four areas:
 - local priorities and public service reform
 - corporate assessment
 - service performance
 - improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting.

¹ Assurance and Improvement Plans for each council since 2010 are available on the Audit Scotland website: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/scrutiny/aip.php>

² The indicators used in the framework can be found on the Improvement Service website: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

³ The review of the shared risk assessment process was one of four work streams taken forward by the Strategic Group for Local Government Scrutiny Co-ordination during 2013.

4. Scrutiny risk is assessed against the following criteria:
 - No scrutiny required - there are no significant concerns, so no scrutiny work is necessary.
 - Scrutiny required - there are concerns about performance, services or outcomes, resulting in the need for scrutiny work.
 - Further information required - there is insufficient information to reach a judgement about performance.
5. The National Scrutiny Plan for 2014/15 is available on the Audit Scotland website. It provides a summary of planned scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland, based on the AIPs for each council.

Summary

6. Over the past year Dumfries and Galloway Council has continued to take forward its improvement and service modernisation agenda at a time of significant political change. During 2013 a new Labour and SNP coalition was established to lead the council following the resignation of seven Conservative councillors from the former Conservative SNP coalition.
7. There is evidence of members of the new Administration working productively with officers to support implementation of the council's strategic objectives, with a number of important decisions taken recently in areas such as taking forward the Dumfries Learning Town (DLT) and refinancing the council's waste management programme with its public finance initiative (PFI) partners Shanks.
8. The council continues to focus on an agreed set of strategic priorities that are shared with its partners across the public, private and third sector. These are to:
 - provide a good start in life for all children in Dumfries and Galloway
 - prepare young people for adulthood and employment
 - care for older and vulnerable people
 - support and stimulate the local economy
 - maintain safety and security in the region
 - protect and sustain the environment.
9. At officer level, the council carried a number of vacancies at senior management level during 2013, including an interim social work director (chief social work officer) and temporary management arrangements within the community and customer services department. It is currently in the process of implementing structural changes within social work services which it is hoped will support the council in taking forward the health and social care integration agenda and in addressing its continued social work budget overspend issues and the improvement agenda arising from the Care Inspectorate joint inspection of services for children, young people and families that took place across the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in January and February 2014.
10. The inspection found that performance in relation to child protection had declined since 2010 and the effectiveness of the response to ensure children's safety and wellbeing was inconsistent. Performance in relation to assessing and responding to risks and needs was evaluated as unsatisfactory. The inspection report, which was published in April 2014, made recommendations for urgent action to improve the arrangements to protect children and young people. Community planning partners in Dumfries and Galloway have accepted the inspection findings in full and have taken immediate steps to direct a collective response towards improving services vulnerable children and young people. Given the significance of the inspection findings the Care Inspectorate will revisit the Dumfries and Galloway CPP area within six months to report on progress in relation to the areas for improvement set out in the report.

11. Organisational changes are also taking place in relation to housing and homelessness support. These involve relocating housing support to within the council's community and customer services department. It is hoped that this will help the council address areas for improvement identified by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) as part of its 2013 national thematic inspection into housing options and the prevention of homelessness.
12. These developments reflect the council's positive and mature approach to responding to external scrutiny, as does the education authority's recent review and strengthening of its attainment targets following advice from Education Scotland that it should do so to demonstrate greater ambition for improvement.
13. The Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Risk Management Authority, has been undertaking supported self-evaluation activity to assess the initial impact of the introduction of the assessment and case planning instrument LS/CMI across Scotland's criminal justice social work services. This activity started in June 2013 and will conclude with the publication of a national report by May 2014. Action plans arising from this activity will be implemented in 2014.
14. The public sector faces significant challenges as a consequence of reducing public finances, increasing service demand and the wide-ranging public service reform agenda (welfare reform, improving community planning, health and social care integration, police and fire reform, college regionalisation). The council has a good corporate approach to planning for and managing the risks associated with these challenges, many of which it is taking forward in partnership with others. The council has recognised though that further strategic improvement capacity is needed if it is to effectively deliver the ambitious change and improvement agenda to which it is committed.
15. For that reason, as part of its 2014/15 budget setting process the council is giving consideration to the future shape and size that is needed for its various services to allow it to match service delivery arrangements and available resources to future service demands.

Planned scrutiny activity

16. The following scrutiny activity is planned for 2014 to 2017:
 - 2014: Targeted audit work (PWC) on the effectiveness of the council's revised governance and scrutiny arrangements in holding officers to account and driving performance management and improvement.
 - 2014: Audit Scotland will keep under review progress with the internal audit work that is currently taking place to investigate allegations of procedural malpractices within the council's DGFirst commissioning body.
 - 2014: Audit Scotland will carry out a targeted follow-up of two national performance audits - *Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?* (June 2011) and *Major capital investment in councils* (March 2013).
 - 2015/16: The council's last Best Value audit was in 2009, with some targeted audit follow-up work in subsequent years. Since that time the council has undergone a number of

significant political and managerial changes alongside its significant transformation and improvement agenda. In order to assess the impact of the council's recent restructuring and provide independent assurance to the Accounts Commission on progress that is being made by the council in delivering continuous improvement, Audit Scotland will undertake a targeted Best Value follow-up audit in 2015/16. The focus of the audit will be informed by the outcome of the 2014/15 shared risk assessment process.

17. There is also some non-risk based scrutiny activity planned across councils in 2014/15, but where scrutiny bodies are yet to determine which specific council areas will be included. This includes the following:
 - The SHR recently carried out a thematic inquiry into the outcomes that councils are achieving by delivering housing options and prevention of homelessness services. A sample of councils were selected to take part in this as case studies. The findings from this work could potentially lead to further engagement with some councils. The SHR will carry out further thematic inquiries between 2014/15 and 2015/16. If a council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.
 - HMICS will be inspecting local policing across Scotland over the next three years. This will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. The geographic areas to be inspected during 2014/15 have yet to be determined.
 - Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out self-evaluation of education psychology services over a two year period beginning in 2014/15.
 - Education Scotland will be reviewing the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland across all council areas over the next three years.
 - Education Scotland will continue to engage with councils for the purpose of validated self-evaluation (VSE). The scheduling of VSEs will be arranged by negotiation between Education Scotland and individual councils.
18. Audit Scotland will also carry out a programme of performance audits during the period of this AIP that will involve work with councils. The performance audit programme for 2014/15 is available at <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/forwardwork.php?year=2014>.
19. Scheduled audit and inspection work will take place through the annual audit process. The ongoing inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively will continue as planned. Individual audit and inspection agencies will continue to monitor developments in key areas of council activity and will provide support and challenge as appropriate. This will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
20. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in Dumfries and Galloway Council between April 2014 and March 2017 is set out at [Appendix 1](#).

Local priorities and public service reform

21. Local councils are operating within a context of significant change as a result of the challenging financial environment and the public service reform agenda. The Scottish Government's reform agenda emphasises the importance of place, people, partnership, prevention and performance in public services. This year's shared risk assessment identified the council's current position in implementing the Scottish Government's reform agenda, specifically in relation to:
- community planning and new Single Outcome Agreements
 - police and fire oversight arrangements (following the introduction of new national police and fire services)
 - health and social care integration
 - welfare reform.

Community planning and Single Outcome Agreements

22. Dumfries and Galloway's SOA for 2013-16 is the first SOA to be prepared by the council and its partners in the context of the Scottish Government/COSLA Statement of Ambition for Community Planning⁴. It reflects the locally agreed vision of public bodies 'working together to create an ambitious, prosperous and confident Dumfries and Galloway where people achieve their potential'. The commitment is that the council and its partners will, over the next ten years, make a positive and tangible change to the region; working at pace, identifying and making service improvements and achieving a significant shift towards preventing problems arising rather than tackling them after they have happened.
23. The SOA makes clear that the council and its partners want all local people to fulfil their potential and make the most of the rural and urban places right across the region. It sets out six strategic priority areas for action and improvement to which the council and its partners are committed. These areas for action reflect the council's own priorities. The six priority areas are to:
- provide a good start in life for all children in Dumfries and Galloway
 - prepare young people for adulthood and employment
 - care for older and vulnerable people
 - support and stimulate the local economy
 - maintain safety and security in the region
 - protect and sustain the environment.

⁴ Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements. Statement of Ambition. Scottish Government/COSLA, 15 March 2012.

24. The Dumfries and Galloway SOA was subject to a national collaborative cross-sector quality assurance (QA) process. This was designed to give ministers and council leaders confidence that the SOA was as well developed as possible and sets the course for effective partnership working and ongoing improvements in the joint delivery of outcomes.
25. The review panel of senior public sector officials that reviewed the Dumfries and Galloway SOA identified a number of important areas of strength. These included:
- a clear ten year vision set out in six priorities and a shared understanding of the issues, opportunities and challenges facing the region
 - clear governance and accountability arrangements across partnerships and partners and regular scrutiny by the Strategic Partnership
 - commitment to the prevention agenda and good examples of the activity across all priorities
 - equality outcomes that have been developed from community engagement with diversity groups and individuals and that are embedded in individual partners' activity
 - up to date relevant profile information that underpins ambitions and actions.
26. The QA process also gave each CPP useful feedback and constructive challenge to help it develop and agree its SOA and undertake improvement thereafter. The improvement areas and the partnership's proposed improvement actions for community planning in Dumfries and Galloway are set out below:
- **Considering the development of more ambitious longer term targets.** *Proposed actions:* the partnership is keen to move to the development of longer term performance information and work with its partners to encourage and support this. Consideration will also be given to the development of more ambitious long term targets.
 - **Establishing a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement across all partners.** *Proposed actions:* a formal programme of stakeholder engagement across all partners should provide a clear picture of the public and communities' views of the SOA priorities.
 - **Alignment of discretionary spend across local partners.** *Proposed actions:* future development will include the development of activity based budgeting by the council and further mapping work within the Third Sector.
 - **Establishing a clearer focus on local community planning approaches and work to reduce inequalities.** *Proposed actions:* consideration should be given to establishing baselines and targets (including gap targets) to measure the impact of the actions. Work to further develop current area profiles should provide a firm basis for the further development of local community planning approaches.
 - **Ensuring an effective third sector contribution across all six priorities.** *Proposed actions:* support will be provided to enable the sector to contribute at a strategic level and to ensure that its contribution to each of the priorities are maximised.

Police and fire

27. In March 2012, the council established a Fire and Rescue subcommittee. Its membership of 11 elected members focus on providing leadership and maintaining strategic oversight of police and fire and rescue matters, in particular the local impact on the council of the change to a single national Police and Fire and Rescue service. At that time it was agreed that the council's area committees would continue to be the primary focus for local reporting on police and fire and rescue matters. However, given the significance of these matters on broader community outcomes (as reflected in the SOA priority 'we will maintain the safety and security of our region') they are also considered as part of the broader public protection/community safety activity of the council.
28. In developing its arrangements the council considered the non-statutory national guidance on good scrutiny and engagement prepared by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Improvement Service to support those involved in implementing the new local scrutiny and engagement arrangements created by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
29. Discussions have been taking place between the local divisional commander and local authority officials about how best to link scrutiny to community safety, community planning, and single outcome agreements in the most efficient and effective way. The proposed review of committee remits in Dumfries and Galloway provides an opportunity to reflect on the early impact of recent changes and consider any changes that might be made to local scrutiny arrangements.
30. HMICS conducted a thematic inspection of the new arrangements for local scrutiny in 2013 and believe that the new arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement require more time to bed in and that it is therefore too early to assess the effectiveness of these arrangements.
31. In relation to the wider issue of the delivery of community safety, HMICS has seen no significant changes to partnership arrangements since the creation of a single police service model for Scotland. HMICS is considering community safety as a possible area of focus within its 2014-17 work plan.
32. Fire reform is also still at an early stage and HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) has not as yet undertaken any detailed examination of the way in which community safety and engagement activities are delivered across local authority areas in Scotland. HMFSI published *An Overview of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)* in 2013. In its report, HMFSI highlighted that local senior officers (LSOs), who have responsibility for overseeing partnership working with local authorities in the delivery of community safety and engagement, are clearly sighted on their responsibilities and are keen to make local partnerships work in an effort to optimise community outcomes.
33. The SFRS is consulting on a suite of local fire and rescue plans. HMFSI is not currently proposing any specific scrutiny on local planning and consultation processes, but may consider this in its future inspection plans.

Health and social care integration

34. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill provides a framework for supporting improvements in the quality and consistency of health and social care services in Scotland through the establishment of new statutory health and social care partnerships. The legislation provides for four models of integration: delegation to body corporate; delegation between partners (either by local authority to NHS board; by NHS board to local authority; or the “Highland” model). There will be requirement to create local integration plans. New national outcomes are to be prescribed and significant reserve powers are available to Scottish ministers.
35. Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway's new model for health and social care integration will be based on the principles contained in the Strategic Partnership's submissions on earlier consultations on public service reform proposals. These principles, which reflect the Scottish Government's four national pillars of public services reform are:
 - A decisive shift towards prevention.
 - Greater integration of public services at a local level driven by better partnership, collaboration and effective local delivery.
 - Greater investment in the people who deliver services through enhanced workforce development and effective leadership.
 - A sharp focus on improving performance, through greater transparency, innovation and use of digital technology.
36. A shadow Health and Social Care Partnership has been established in preparation for more formal integration between adult health and social care. Supporting this work is the Health and Social Care Integration Board which is co-chaired by the chief executives of NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council. A report setting out the proposed new health and social care integration arrangements will be presented to full Council and the NHS Board in May of this year. This report will set out proposed governance arrangements (including accountable officers), resource transfer and budget delegation proposals and linkages between the new arrangements and existing area committee structures in the council.

Welfare reform

37. The council is working actively with its partners to consider and, where appropriate, to address the impact of welfare reform on local people. Elected members have been briefed on welfare reform and arrangements are in place for regular updates. In addition, members of the Social Work Services Committee have received a specific briefing on the anticipated impact of the changes upon that service. The impact on people as a result of welfare reform has been added to the corporate risk register for 2013/14, with updates to the Audit and Risk Management Committee planned throughout 2013/14.
38. The council's Policy and Resources Committee agreed a policy statement on welfare reform, including the establishment of a subcommittee to make recommendations to the Policy and

Resources Committee on further policy initiatives required. The subcommittee first met in April 2013 with subsequent meetings in June and July 2013, and with a further three meetings scheduled before the end of the calendar year.

39. Budget pressure funding of £1.195 million was identified within the 2013/14 budget to support the development of the welfare reform agenda. In addition Policy Development Funding of £0.477 million has been set aside for enhanced advisory services and discretionary housing payments.
40. Four posts are currently dedicated to welfare reform preparation within the council: a planning officer funded from the Change Fund and three officers funded by a grant from the Department of Work and Pensions. Three additional posts have also been recruited within the DG Direct call centre in order to meet additional customer demand.
41. Joint partnership events were held in April 2013 involving the council, Dumfries and Galloway Health Board and voluntary sector representatives to identify key issues. This forum aims to raise awareness about welfare reform within local communities through talks and media campaigns, collaboration and shared information, the facilitation of the development of Credit Unions within Dumfries and Galloway and the mapping of impacts on specific communities to identify any improvements that can be made.
42. In 2013/14 the SHR surveyed social landlords and published findings on the early impact of welfare reform on rent arrears. It will continue to gather information on rent and arrears through the annual return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter in order to monitor the impact of welfare reform on social landlords and their tenants.

Corporate assessment

43. The following table provides an assessment of scrutiny risk relating to the council's management arrangements (including how it is meeting its Best Value obligations).⁵

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Leadership and direction</p> <p>How the council's vision is designed around its knowledge of its local communities and how this is translated throughout all the council's plans and strategies.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has a well developed set of arrangements for strategic planning and implementing its strategic objectives, including arrangements for working in partnership with others to improve outcomes for the area. The council has six strategic priority areas for action and improvement to which it and its partners are committed.</p> <p>The council has undergone some significant political changes during 2013 with the establishment of a new Labour and SNP coalition to lead the council following the resignation of seven Conservative councillors from the former Conservative SNP coalition. There is evidence of members of the new administration working productively with officers to support implementation of the council's strategic objectives. This has included taking a number of important decisions recently in areas such as the Dumfries Learning Town (DLT) and refinancing the council's waste management programme with its PFI partners Shanks.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

⁵ The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Best Value Guidance, Scottish Executive, 2004.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>The council carried a number of vacancies at senior management level during 2013 but is currently in the process of implementing structural changes (including filling senior posts within social work services) which it is hoped will support the council in taking forward the health and social care integration agenda and in addressing its continued social work budget overspend issues.</p> <p>Organisational changes are also taking place in relation to housing and homelessness support. These involve relocating housing support to within the council's community and customer services department. It is hoped that this will help the council address areas for improvement identified by SHR as part of its 2013 national thematic inspection into housing options and the prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>When considering leadership capacity more generally, the council has recognised that further strategic improvement capacity is needed if it is to deliver the ambitious change and improvement agenda to which it is committed effectively and at an appropriate pace. For that reason, as part of its 2014/15 budget setting process the council is considering what future shape and size is needed for its various services to allow it to match service delivery arrangements and available resources to future service demands.</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Governance and accountability</p> <p>Whether governance arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins council decisions and supports performance improvement.</p>	<p>Scrutiny required</p>	<p>Overall, the council has a well established committee structure that continues to be reviewed on an annual basis by full council in order to ensure that it reflects the activities of the council. The council's standing orders and scheme of delegation set out the formal governance and accountability arrangements for the work of the council. These are available to all members of staff and are reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Business Plans are prepared by each service area to support delivery of the council's corporate priorities as set out in its SOA. Performance management is now becoming more embedded within the organisation, with corporate objectives and performance indicators used to report on the implementation of service department's Business Plans.</p> <p>Service Committees receive six-monthly performance reports detailing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for their service in a traffic light format, with explanations when targets are not being met. In addition, Area Committees receive a performance report every six months based on the performance across all services in their geographic location. These reports are in a similar format to those used for Service Committee reporting.</p> <p>Further development of the council's Performance Management approach and performance information is a focus for the updated three-year Business Plan.</p> <p>Given the significance of the leadership role of elected members in relation to scrutiny and performance improvement, it is proposed</p>	<p>2014: targeted audit work (PWC) on the effectiveness of performance management and scrutiny arrangements in holding officers to account and driving improvement.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		to undertake some targeted scrutiny activity in 2014 on the effectiveness of performance management and scrutiny arrangements in holding officers to account and driving improvement. This work will also allow the local appointed auditor to gain assurance on the impact and effectiveness of organisation and governance changes that took place during 2013 or are planned in 2014.	
<p>Community engagement and empowerment</p> <p>Whether the council is giving local people a greater say in local budget decisions and giving communities a right to challenge local public service delivery.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has a wide range of arrangements in place for consulting local people on both specific service developments or issues of more general concern to communities, through its area committee arrangements.</p> <p>The council's Area Framework Implementation Team provides support to area committees. That team's work was informed by the council's Area Framework Member/Officer Working Group</p> <p>Dumfries and Galloway Council also provides financial assistance to the Third Sector (voluntary and community organisations) with area committee grants available to organisations that work within one of the four areas (Annandale & Eskdale, Nithsdale, Stewartry and Wigtownshire) for a contribution towards running or project costs for up to one year. Support for bodies seeking funding is provided by the council's External Funding Unit or Local Area Framework team.</p> <p>The national quality assurance feedback to the council on its SOA 2013-16 has highlighted the need for the council and its partners</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		to strengthen the linkages between local community planning approaches and SOA priorities. Work to further develop current area profiles is planned to provide a firmer basis for the further development of local community planning approaches.	
<p>Financial management</p> <p>How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Overall, financial management arrangements in the council are good. The council budgeted for a breakeven position in 2012/13 and returned an underspend.</p> <p>The council had a General Fund balance of £63.75 million (including specific amounts set aside for identified expenditure) as at 31 March 2013. This was an increase of £3.8 million from the previous year. The increase in the General Fund was largely a planned approach to allocating financial resources to areas where strategic investment will be needed to meet future service change or demand pressures. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a Social Work Support Fund (£1 million) to support Social Work in implementing the changes that are needed in this service to achieve its planned savings targets. • The creation of a Policy Development Fund (£1.5 million) to help support delivery of the priorities set out in the SOA, such as the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme and the High Street Facelift Scheme. • Corporate Change Fund (£1.2 million) including funds already allocated for early retirement and voluntary severance payments during 2013/14. 	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>From current monitoring reports the council appears to be on track to achieving its £7.2 million savings target. Social Care is currently projected to be £250,000 overspent, but the council anticipates that this will be offset by additional savings in other areas.</p>	
<p>People management The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council continues to develop its approach to workforce management. In implementing its workforce strategy it has been seeking to ensure that staff across the council are adequately equipped to provide high quality professional services to the public, and that it has an engaged and well motivated workforce. This has involved the implementation of a leadership development programme and the roll-out of staff development and appraisal across the whole organisation.</p> <p>The council continues to be going through a process of change and restructuring and as mentioned earlier has recognised that further strategic improvement capacity is needed if it is to deliver the ambitious change and improvement agenda to which it is committed effectively and at an appropriate pace. For that reason, as part of its 2014/15 budget setting process the council is considering what future shape and size is needed for its various services to allow it to match service delivery arrangements and available resources to future service demands. This may lead to further changes in the shape and make-up of the workforce.</p> <p>As at 1 August 2013, the council had received 358 equal pay claims which were classed by the council as "rated as equivalent".</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>The majority (251) relate to classroom assistants, learning assistants and nursery nurses employed during school term-time in Dumfries and Galloway's schools under a national collective agreement known as the "Blue Book". They wish to compare their terms and conditions with a variety of full time manual workers employed by the council under a different collective agreement known as the "Green Book".</p> <p>In 2005 an employment tribunal allowed for the claim to proceed but an appeal overturned that decision. The Court of Session supported the council's claim that the women's case was unjustified. The Local Authority workers union, Unison, took the appeal to the Supreme Court in June 2013 which ruled that the women have a valid case for discrimination and reversed the earlier rulings. The case has been referred back to an employment tribunal which will decide whether to find in favour or otherwise.</p>	
<p>Asset management The council's arrangements for managing assets and how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council had a general fund capital programme budget for 2012/13 of £38.774 million (2011/12: £29.600 million).</p> <p>The 2012/13 actual expenditure was £38.310 million. The total capital expenditure was funded through capital grants, receipts from the sale of assets and other contributions totalling £20.7 million leaving £17.6 million to be funded through borrowing.</p> <p>The Capital Investment Strategy Group is responsible for assessing improvements to project planning and delivery to ensure</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		that approved capital allocations are appropriate and that the level of slippage incurred on individual projects is reduced.	
Procurement How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.	No scrutiny required	The council has a procurement strategy in place which incorporates Best Value principles. Past internal audit work has indicated generally sound approaches to procurement. Dumfries and Galloway has participated in the Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) three times since its introduction in 2010. Its level of compliance in 2013, the last year for which data is currently available for the council, is 50%. This is an improvement on its performance in 2012 (38 %) but still remains below the Scottish average.	No specific scrutiny activity
Risk management The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for identifying, managing and mitigating risks and how its management of risk contributes to the successful delivery of public services.	No scrutiny required	The council has a Risk Management Policy which is supported by guidance for staff on how it should be implemented. These documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The council also has a corporate risk register which is scrutinised by the Corporate Management Team and the Audit Risk Committee every six months. Risk registers are in place for each of the Business Plans that are approved by the council. The corporate risk register is reviewed formally on an annual basis as part of the council's business planning cycle. This process includes the Corporate Management Team dedicating a whole day to reviewing the risk register.	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Information management</p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for managing information as a key resource in delivering services.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>No significant risk issues have been identified in this area as a consequence of recent scrutiny activity or as part of the wider shared risk assessment process. However, previous difficulties with information management in the council's social work department were identified by the council's appointed auditors (PWC) in 2012/13 as part of a broader review of business planning in that department triggered by repeated significant budget overspends.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p>Joint working</p> <p>Progress with any significant shared services initiatives, in particular in relation to governance or pace of implementation.</p>	<p>Scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council continues to focus on a clear set of strategic priorities that are shared with its partners across the public, private and third sector. It has a good track record of working productively with strategic partners to improve services and deliver better outcomes for the area. There are effective working relationships with some key partners. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South of Scotland Alliance • Community Safety Partnership • Biodiversity Partnership/SWestrans <p>However, the recent joint inspection of children's services in Dumfries and Galloway which identified a number of serious weaknesses in the collective leadership shown by the council and its partners to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. Given the significance of the inspection findings the Care Inspectorate will be undertaking a follow up inspection to review</p>	<p>The Care Inspectorate intends to revisit the Dumfries and Galloway CPP area in late 2014 to review progress that is being made to improve the collective leadership shown the council and its partners to protect children and young people.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>progress with implementing the improvement agenda later in 2014.</p> <p>The council also works closely with the third sector through its Third Sector Interface.</p> <p>The council recognises that there is scope to further improve the linkages between its partnership working and its area committees and will be taking steps this year to address this.</p>	
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>How effectively the council is improving its efficiency in response to the budget challenges being faced.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council will need to generate £7.226 million of savings to balance the 2013/14 budget. The council's agreed budget development process outlines the approach to be taken for the identification of savings over the upcoming period.</p> <p>Budget pressure funding of £1.195 million was identified within the 2013/14 budget to support the development of the welfare reform agenda.</p> <p>Efficiency plans are monitored monthly and, new for this year, the council have developed an efficiency tracker to monitor efficiency targets against actuals for individual initiatives.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p>Equalities</p> <p>Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's overall policy in relation to equality and diversity is that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value all people within Dumfries and Galloway • make its services, facilities and resources accessible and responsive to all people 	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
statutory obligations.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a culture within the council so that fair treatment is at the heart of all its activities • be fair, reasonable and just in meeting all of its responsibilities • challenge and seek to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment. <p>It intends to achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring its functions, policies and procedures are inclusive and non-discriminatory • providing equal opportunities in employment and development so that its workforce reflects the breakdown within the community it serves • working in partnership with individuals and organisations to ensure that it remains responsive to the changing needs of its communities. <p>At the time of the council's last Best Value audit in 2009, many equality policies were in place as were 'member champions' for diversity issues. However, improvements were needed in the council's arrangements for leading and managing equalities issues. The council prepared an Equality Action Plan and has made significant progress in relation to equality matters since that time.</p> <p>The Equalities Act 2010 required Dumfries and Galloway Council</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>to publish a Mainstreaming Equalities Report, Equality Outcomes and an Equal Pay Report by 30 April 2013 and to update them in subsequent years. The council worked closely with local diversity groups, Trades Unions, national experts and council departments to develop its reports that were agreed at full council on 28 March 2013.</p> <p>The council plans to embed its equality actions contained within the council's Equality Action Plan 2013 within departmental Business Plans when they are updated for 2014/15.</p> <p>Equalities issues are also considered by the Dumfries and Galloway CPP. It has undertaken an equality impact assessment (EIA) on its approach to partnership working and the priority actions set out in its Single Outcome Agreement. The EIA identified positive impacts in all nine Protected Characteristics, including human rights; health and well-being; economic and social sustainability; climate change and energy management.</p>	

Service performance

44. The following table provides an assessment of scrutiny risk relating to the performance of the council's main inspected public services (education, social care services and housing) and non-inspected services (eg corporate services, culture and leisure services, environmental services).

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
Education The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).	No scrutiny required	<p>Comparator data indicates that Dumfries and Galloway education services perform as well as or better than similar authorities and the national average in a number of measures. For example, by the end of S6 the Education Authority (EA) outperforms both comparators and the national average in all measures (with significant improvements in the percentages of pupils attaining one, three and five awards at level six or better and in the percentage of pupils attaining one or more awards at level six). Dumfries and Galloway is making significant progress in closing the gap between the lowest attaining 20% of pupils compared with the highest attaining 80% at the end of S4. In 2012/13 Dumfries and Galloway was ranked second highest of 32 EAs for the highest 80% and seventh highest of 32 EAs for the lowest 20%. The proportion of school leavers who were in a positive destination at the time of the SDS follow up survey in March 2013 was 89.8% (2% higher than in 2012 and 0.3% higher than the national average).</p> <p>Standardised assessment data for primary schools indicates that the EA is exceeding its targets in several measures. Performance in mathematics and mental arithmetic has been problematic, but there</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>are signs that remedial action is beginning to have a positive impact.</p> <p>Almost all attendance and exclusion figures compare favourably with comparators and national averages.</p> <p>The EA has put resources in place to support secondary schools to end the practice of early presentation and to ensure that pupils' entitlement to a Broad General Education is fully met. No school or department is currently seeking the assistance of Education Scotland with the implementation of the senior phase.</p> <p>Reports of inspections in individual establishments reflect the inconsistencies in performance between schools in all sectors. The EA recognises these inconsistencies and is increasingly making use of data to challenge underperformance. It has reviewed its targets to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging.</p>	
<p>Social care services The quality of local social work and care services and the resulting outcomes (including adult care, older people's services, learning disability services, criminal justice services, mental health services,</p>	Scrutiny required	<p>The social work department in Dumfries and Galloway Council has been going through a difficult period and remains in a state of change and transition. The director of social work resigned in June 2013 and an interim chief social work officer has been managing social work services until a revised council structure is agreed and put in place. This structure was considered by the Social Work Committee in January with final decisions made by full council in February. Appointments will be made to the new structure in Spring 2014.</p> <p>During 2013 the Care Inspectorate link inspector has maintained</p>	The Care Inspectorate intends to revisit the Dumfries and Galloway CPP area within 6 months to report on progress in relation to the areas for improvement set out in the April 2014

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
children and families).		<p>contact with the social work service with a continued focus on strategic planning and development, given the weaknesses that were identified in business planning and management, budget setting and monitoring and information management, by the council's appointed auditors (PWC) in 2012/13.</p> <p>There has been no strategic inspection of adult services but the Care Inspectorate led a joint inspection of services for children, young people and families across the CPP in January and February 2014. A report of the findings was published in April 2014.</p> <p>Inspectors referred to recommendations for improvement arising from an inspection of services to protect children in 2010. They found that performance in relation to child protection had declined and the effectiveness of the response to ensure children's safety and wellbeing was inconsistent. Performance in relation to assessing and responding to risks and needs was evaluated as unsatisfactory.</p> <p>A further eight indicators of quality were evaluated. Five were evaluated as adequate where performance was characterised by strengths which just outweighed weaknesses, and three were evaluated as weak where important weaknesses were found.</p> <p>The report has made recommendations for urgent action to improve the arrangements to protect children and young people. Community planning partners have accepted the inspection findings in full and have taken immediate steps to direct a collective response towards improving services for vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Inspections of most regulated adult and children's care services in</p>	<p>joint inspection report of services for children, young people and families.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Dumfries and Galloway have not highlighted any significant concerns about standards. Quality and Commissioning staff within the council liaise closely with the Care Inspectorate on the commissioning of services where concerns have been noted and their approach to commissioning takes account of care inspectorate quality assessments of services.</p> <p>In community care services performance has continued to improve with care at home services increasing to around the national average and the level of intensive home care showing a continued increase and into the top quartile. Like other local authorities there are emerging concerns about changes in the approach to commissioning care at home services, and a reduction in the level of packages of care or length of time spent on visits by care staff (how 15 minute visits are applied). This will be monitored by the Care Inspectorate through its link inspector liaison role.</p>	
<p>Housing and homelessness</p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The SHR recently carried out a thematic inquiry into the outcomes that councils are achieving by delivering housing options and prevention of homelessness services. A sample of councils were selected to take part in this as case studies. The findings from this work could potentially lead to further engagement with some councils. The SHR will carry out further thematic inquiries between 2014/15 and 2015/16. If a council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.</p> <p>Organisational changes are planned in relation to the council's approach to managing and dealing with housing and homelessness</p>	SHR follow-up engagement with the council to identify how it intends to address any specific improvement issues identified as part of the national thematic inspection process.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		support. These involve relocating housing support to within the council's community and customer services department. It is hoped that this will help the council address any areas for improvement identified by SHR as part of its 2013 national thematic inspection into housing options and the prevention of homelessness.	
<p>Non-regulated services</p> <p>Particular strengths and challenges in the range of non-regulated services provided by the council, and any significant changes to performance.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Culture and Leisure Services</p> <p>Dumfries and Galloway Council has retained the in-house delivery of sports and leisure services. It has completed a facilities planning model exercise in partnership with sportscotland and is now embarking on a review of leisure and sports facilities provision across the region. Currently the cost per attendance at sports facilities in Dumfries and Galloway (£8.00) is significantly above the Scottish average (£4.15), with levels of customers at the Scottish average.</p> <p>The council's cost per library visit is competitive with an increase in library visits of 33,552 experienced over the last two years. The increased number of visits reflects the inclusion of cyber visits and increased use of computers within libraries. The use of the SOLACE benchmarking data on this service will allow the council to understand the impact of these service delivery pattern changes as it plans its future library services.</p> <p>The council is due to begin a service review of the Museums Service during 2013/14 and is already in discussion with National Museum Scotland and Museums Gallery Scotland. Performance in this area is</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>currently good, with below average costs and above average levels of satisfaction with museums and galleries. The SOLACE benchmarking data will though enable the council to ensure consistency of reporting and performance analysis through discussions with other local authorities.</p> <p>Expenditure on parks and open spaces in Dumfries and Galloway is largely a result of historic decisions on the provision and standards of parks, gardens and other open spaces. Geographically, the council is the third largest in Scotland and this is reflected in the cost of service delivery.</p> <p>Environmental Services</p> <p>One of the council's priorities is 'We will protect and sustain our environment'. The council's environment services take the lead in supporting this strategic priority.</p> <p>Dumfries and Galloway's gross cost of waste collection is lower than the average for rural authorities. Waste disposal costs, although well below the national average, have increased by 5.3% from £76.92 to £81.03, perhaps reflecting increasing costs for disposal across Scotland. Street cleanliness is above average when compared to other Scottish authorities. Levels of public satisfaction with the council's refuse collection and street cleaning services are both slightly above the Scottish average.</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Household waste recycling levels by the council (21.5%) are currently almost half of Scottish average levels (41%).</p> <p>Roads Maintenance</p> <p>The latest carriageway condition survey data indicates that 48.2% of our council's local public road network should be considered for maintenance treatment compared with an average of 36.4% for all local roads in Scotland.</p> <p>A current enhanced capital funding programme provides an additional investment of approx. £2 million per annum on the council's Strategic Road Network.</p> <p>Benefit administration</p> <p>Audit Scotland's May 2013 audit of housing and council tax benefit risk assessment report highlighted the ongoing delivery of continuous improvement across all areas of the benefits service since the previous risk assessment in 2008. While current performance has dipped slightly (taking into account welfare reform changes, this is not entirely unexpected) the service still compares well to others in Scotland. To help the service deal with the challenges of welfare reform, in September 2013 the council appointed a service manager for revenues and benefits in recognition of the important part that the service plays in the welfare reform agenda and to allow the service to be directly represented at cross departmental meetings.</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Support Services</p> <p>Support Services are the activities that the council does to support its frontline services. The average cost of support services nationally is 4.8%. The SOLACE benchmarking exercise shows that the council is below average its support costs at 4.4%.</p>	

Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

45. The following table provides an assessment of scrutiny risk relating to how the council is improving and/or transforming public services, and the extent to which it is meeting its public performance reporting obligations under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Improving and transforming public services</p> <p>The council's arrangements for continuing to deliver services with reducing resources and growing demand, and what impact this is having on service outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has significantly improved its arrangements for managing performance and securing continuous improvement since its very critical Best Value audit report in 2009. Subsequent Best Value audit follow-up activity highlighted the strong progress that had been made in this area and the council now has a coherent corporate approach in this area.</p> <p>The council's Business Improvement Team provides a focus for corporate improvement activity, working in partnership with service departments.</p> <p>The council's approach to service planning and performance management (including member scrutiny) now provides a clear framework for translating corporate objectives into service delivery outcomes and the use of the Service Review Toolkit provides a good model for considering whether services or policies are meeting Best Value requirements. The use of the Service Review Toolkits has led to some important changes and improvements in service delivery.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>The council has engaged strongly with the SOLACE benchmarking project to use the benchmarking information that this project offers to help develop and inform service reviews and service improvement activity.</p> <p>The council is also participating in a UK-wide SOLACE project focused on promoting innovation by middle managers. That research has identified strong foundations for achieving major innovations in Dumfries and Galloway, with many managers seeing the current financial pressures facing the council as an opportunity for implementing radical change and improvement.</p> <p>There is also evidence of elected member interest in, and support, for service improvement through the council's scrutiny and performance committee.</p>	
<p>Public performance reporting (PPR)</p> <p>The progress that is being made by councils in meeting their PPR obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council has well developed arrangements for public performance reporting on both its own services and partnership working linked to the SOA. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual public reports on SOA outcomes • a publication called "Broadcast" that is delivered to every household once a year to tell local people about progress in achieving performance targets • local media, e-newsletters and the council and community planning webpages are employed to ensure information is available to the public • six-monthly local area committee consideration of council (and 	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>partner) service performance at meetings that are open to the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service committee consideration in public of six-monthly performance reports detailing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for their service in a traffic light format, with explanations when targets are not being met. <p>The council recognises that more can be done to increase the depth and sophistication of its public reporting of performance, in particular by consolidating trend and baseline information.</p>	

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL 2014/15												
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
The Care Inspectorate will revisit the Dumfries and Galloway CPP area within six months to report on progress in relation to the areas for improvement set out in the April 2014 joint inspection of services for children, young people and families inspection report.							X					
Targeted audit work by the council's appointed auditors (PWC) on the effectiveness of the council's revised governance and scrutiny arrangements in holding officers to account and driving performance management and improvement.						X						
Audit Scotland will keep under review progress with the internal audit work that is currently taking place to investigate allegations of procedural malpractices within the council's DGFirst commissioning body.												
National or supported self-evaluation work year 1												
Audit Scotland : Targeted follow-up of <i>Arms length external organisations (ALEOs)</i>	X											
Audit Scotland : Targeted follow-up of <i>Major capital</i>			X									

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

2014/15

*investment in councils***DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL**

2015/16

Scrutiny activity year 2

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
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In order to assess the impact of the council's recent restructuring and provide independent assurance to the Accounts Commission on progress that is being made by the council in delivering continuous improvement since the council's last Best Value audit in 2009, Audit Scotland will undertake a targeted Best Value follow-up audit in 2015/16. The focus of the audit will be informed by the outcome of the 2014/15 shared risk assessment process.

				X	X						
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National or supported self-evaluation work year 2**DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL**

2016/17

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL
2016/17

Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved

Note: The focus of the AIP is strategic scrutiny activity - that is, scrutiny activity which is focused at a corporate or whole-service level. However, there will also be baseline scrutiny activity ongoing at a unit level throughout the period of the AIP, 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 their responsibilities under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.