

East Ayrshire Council

Assurance and Improvement Plan

2014–17



Prepared for East Ayrshire Council
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Introduction

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in East Ayrshire 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 East Ayrshire 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 improvement 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. The conclusion of this years shared risk assessment is that there are currently no scrutiny risks identified which require specific scrutiny by the LAN this year. This is the same position as in the previous year. Scrutiny activity undertaken in the last 12 months was either at the request of the council or part of national activity as no specific areas of risk were identified in the previous AIP. A number of reports have been issued on this work.
7. The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) risk assessment is that no scrutiny is required on the council's housing service. In the last AIP, SHR highlighted that further information was required about: the management of voids; the sustainability of new or homeless tenancies remaining in their permanent accommodation after 12 months; and the reliability of data used to forecast the ability to achieve Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. Last year's AIP stated that SHR intended to issue a self-assessment to the council during 2013 but this has not yet been issued. The current year's AIP has highlighted the downward trend in tenant sustainability (57.2 per cent) which is the lowest sustainability rate in the country and 6.2 per cent lower than the previous year. SHR, therefore, still plans to obtain further information on these areas through the issue of a self-assessment to the council before the end of March 2014. This will form the basis of any potential further work required during 2014-15.
8. Also since the last AIP, Audit Scotland carried out a follow-up to its *Scotland's public finances* national report that was originally published in 2011. The findings were reported to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee in June 2013. The report concluded that the council has taken steps to address the challenging financial climate and the reductions in financing that it faces over the next few years. It also acknowledged the alignment between the budget setting processes and the council's transformation strategy. Audit Scotland will continue to review the financial position of the council as part of the 2013/14 annual audit process.
9. In the last AIP we stated that a follow-up housing benefit performance audit would be completed in January 2014. This work is now expected to be undertaken between February 2014 and April 2014.
10. 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.
11. The council and its partner organisations have clear strategic priorities. These are set out in the Community Plan/SOA, and are linked to four themes:
 - Promoting lifelong learning.
 - Delivering community regeneration.

- Improving community safety.
 - Improving health and well being.
12. The SOA was subject to an independent quality review led by the Scottish Government. This highlighted a number of key strengths in the plan as well as some areas for improvement. These were accepted by the East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and an improvement plan agreed with the Scottish Government. The CPP is planning to undertake a significant review of its strategic priorities, structures and processes during the next 12 months in preparation for the refresh of the SOA in 2015.
 13. The council's Transformation Strategy 2012-17 sets out how they intend to change the way they deliver and operate services to meet the challenges presented by reduced funding available to the council over this period. It also takes cognisance of the challenges of public service reform. The strategy identifies a number of workstreams and key actions towards delivering the council's three strategic priorities of:
 - raising educational attainment and equipping its young people for the world of work
 - promoting town centre living
 - supporting older people to live independently in their own homes.
 14. The council has well established performance management and self-evaluation arrangements. The annual performance report for 2012/13 provides a range of information regarding performance in relation to the Community Plan/SOA, and reflects how the council is performing in relation to the transformation strategy workstreams and strategic priorities. This reported that 80 indicators (76.2 per cent) had achieved improved progress; five indicators (4.8 per cent) had maintained progress similar to the previous year; and 20 indicators (19 per cent) required improvement. Actions to ensure effective progress against the 20 indicators that require improvement have been included in the SOA Improvement Plan, where appropriate.
 15. The LAN has considered the council's response to key areas of public service reform and has concluded that no scrutiny is required, in recognition of the progress and action taken by the council and its partners. There has been satisfactory progress agreeing and developing the preferred model for managing and delivering health and social care integration in East Ayrshire. The LAN will continue to monitor this.
 16. Arrangements for the scrutiny of police and fire are in place and the Governance and Scrutiny Committee are monitoring performance at a local level. These arrangements require time to bed in and to ensure that elected members build up the skills and expertise to provide effective challenge to local police and fire services.
 17. Two opencast coal mining operators with significant interests in East Ayrshire were placed into liquidation in April 2013 and May 2013 respectively. This is having an impact on each of the four Community Plan themes. The implications of this for the council are being worked through. Members are regularly informed of key developments and "steps to recovery" are in place. The complexity and uniqueness of the current legal situation means that it is currently not possible to give a definitive view on the likely financial outcome for the council. The LAN is

of the view that the council is taking appropriate steps to respond to the issues arising from the liquidation of the coal mining operators including the impact on local communities.

18. The council commissioned an independent review, led by the former chief planner of the Scottish Government, to examine the processes and procedures around the management, determination, monitoring and review of the planning processes in relation to open cast mining arrangements in place throughout the relevant period. Following their review, the independent review team issued a report in January 2014. This highlighted a large number of serious issues and recommendations. The council has prepared a response that provides details of the action proposed or being taken to address each of the recommendations in the report. The council's response to the findings of the independent review is being monitored and will be reported on by Audit Scotland.
19. The LAN considered the council's management arrangements for meeting best value, the service performance of its main inspected services, and how the council is improving or transforming how it delivers services. The LAN concluded that no specific scrutiny is required in these areas.

Planned scrutiny activity

20. During 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).
21. Audit Scotland is expected to complete the follow-up housing benefit performance audit in Spring 2014.
22. Further information with regard to aspects of the housing and homelessness service will be obtained and investigated by SHR in 2014. This will involve officers from SHR discussing with the council aspects of: the council's performance in the management of voids; the sustainability of its tenancies (in particular the allocation of properties and the downward trend of homeless households remaining in their permanent accommodation after 12 months); and the data used to forecast SHQS compliance. SHR will issue a self-assessment in Q1 of 2014-15 which will form the basis for any potential further work.
23. 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 March and June 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.
24. There is 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 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.
25. 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.
26. 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>.
27. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in East Ayrshire Council between April 2014 and March 2017 is at [Appendix 1](#).

Local priorities and public service reform

28. 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

29. The CPP agreed a SOA for the period 2013-15 which was approved by the council in March 2013. The SOA, which continues to concentrate on the CPPs four strategic themes, is aligned to national priorities and has been agreed with the Scottish Government.
30. The SOA was subject to an independent quality review led by the Scottish Government that highlighted a number of key strengths in the plan, including a clear understanding of place and communities, partnership working and community engagement. The review process confirmed that partners' strategic and operational plans were aligned with the Community Plan/SOA and noted the good quality of analysis supporting priorities and actions.
31. The quality review also identified a number of improvement areas which included aspects of outcomes relating to tackling employability, supporting existing businesses and growing the business base, alcohol and drug misuse, tackling inequalities and empowering communities. An improvement plan was agreed with the Scottish Government.
32. The CPP plans to undertake a significant review of its strategic priorities, structures and processes during the next 12 months in preparation for the refresh of the SOA in 2015. This review process is intended to be a wide ranging reflective exercise covering all aspects of the work of the CPP. The LAN will continue to monitor progress in developing the SOA, together with progress made in addressing the improvement plan areas identified by the quality review. The LAN has assessed this area as 'no scrutiny required'.

Police and fire

33. The council has delegated scrutiny of the performance of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in respect of their local police and fire plans to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee. The committee has agreed a timetable for scrutinising performance reports from Police Scotland and SFRS. This is already underway.
34. Both Police Scotland and SFRS have prepared local area plans, together with performance updates. The reports and updates, which are presented to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, are comprehensive and provide contextual information on both local and area police and fire performance.
35. HMICS conducted a thematic inspection of the new arrangements for local scrutiny in 2013 and believes that the new arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement (LSE) require more time to bed in and that it is therefore too early to assess the effectiveness of these arrangements.
36. 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.
37. 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* 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.
38. 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

39. The integration of the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is continuing to evolve. The council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran have agreed a delivery model and the services to be transferred to the new body. The council have approved the scope of services to be included within the HSCP in East Ayrshire as the management portfolios of the head of service community care and the head of service children and families and criminal justice (subject to outcome of the Criminal Justice national review). The director of health and social care for the East Ayrshire Partnership was appointed in February 2014. This is an important step in the preparation for the integration of health and social care services.

40. A Transition Integration Board is in place and the governance arrangements for the HSCP are being developed. One of the functions of the Transition Integration Board is to make arrangements for the establishment of the Shadow Integration Board by April 2014. The functions of the Shadow Integration Board have been determined.
41. While still at an early stage, the LAN is satisfied with the progress to date. LAN members will review the council's progress in this area as part of their ongoing discussions with the council. Audit Scotland will report an update in the 2013/14 annual audit report.

Welfare reform

42. The council have responded well to the impact of welfare reform. This includes: the set up of a fund to cover hardship cases; identifying the number of tenants impacted by the under occupancy charge; actions taken to offer support and advice to those in arrears; and working with other agencies to provide information, advice and support. The council have also quantified the financial impact, in terms of the reduced housing benefit and the consequent impact on rent arrears.
43. Regular reports on welfare reform updates are prepared for Cabinet to keep members apprised of the risks arising from welfare reform to the delivery of housing services and homelessness functions. These reports also recognise the impact that this could have to the council in achieving its corporate priorities.
44. Action taken to date to help mitigate this includes:
 - The establishment of a multi-disciplinary Welfare Reform Project Board to oversee the council's response to welfare reform. This group also works with key partners, including the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).
 - The development of a financial inclusion strategy that is led by the multi agency partnership Financial Inclusion Group. This group focuses on improving partnership working to ensure citizens can access information, advice and support.
 - Assisting with debt management, access to other services including DWP and the CAB.
 - Additional staffing within the neighbourhood housing teams.
 - The establishment of a £0.5 million welfare reform fund to mitigate against the impact of welfare reform.
45. The LAN has assessed this area as 'no scrutiny required'.

Corporate assessment

46. 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).⁴

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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The Community Plan (adopted by the council as its Corporate Plan) clearly articulates the council's/partners' key priority areas. 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>The council's Transformation Strategy 2012-2017 outlines the key issues and work streams necessary to enable the council to meet its key priorities. All papers presented to committees are aligned to the council's strategic objectives.</p> <p>The council has been proactive in its response to the impact of the collapse of the two coal mining operators.</p> <p>The executive team has embraced public sector reform initiatives and has established strong partnership networks with other agencies, the third sector and communities.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

⁴ The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Best Value Guidance, Scottish Executive, 2004.

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>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>In its latest annual audit report, 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 SOA 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 routinely to members and annually to the public.</p> <p>The meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and Governance and Scrutiny Committee are well attended by members, executive directors and heads of service. The Governance and Scrutiny Committee operates in accordance with CIPFA's guidance, <i>Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland</i>.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council has progressed its "Transforming our relationship with the communities we serve" strategy, which underpins the refreshed approach that the council adopted as part of its Transformation Strategy. The Vibrant Communities Service is responsible for implementing this policy which provides a council wide response to a number of national policies and strategies. In addition it addresses many local challenges facing the council arising from uncertainties on future levels of funding, changing demographics, high levels of health inequalities, poverty and deprivation.</p> <p>The aim of the strategy is that it "will ensure that there is focus on delivering services with rather than for communities and recognising and identifying the knowledge, skills and experience which local people have and which can be channelled into positive, collective community</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>action".</p> <p>One element of this strategy is the Community Asset Transfer Policy. The essence of this policy is to facilitate the transfer of the responsibility for an asset from the council to a voluntary or community organisation through either a transfer of management responsibility, short or long term lease, or through the transfer of outright ownership.</p> <p>Traditional and well established methods of engagement continue to be used by the council. This includes the council's annual budget consultation, which is well developed.</p>	
<p>Financial management</p> <p>How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's Transformation Strategy forms the basis for all key strategic decisions and how they impact the council's financial position. The strategy is designed to achieve sustainable savings of £34.004 million over the four year period to 2016/17. All funding gaps are highlighted to members. The gap was £9.030 million when approving the 2013/14 budget. Further savings workstreams were identified when approving the 2014/15 budget and the gap now stands at £1.017 million for the period to 2016/17.</p> <p>A ten year capital programme is in place to enable a strategic approach to capital investment.</p> <p>Audit Scotland's local performance follow-up report in 2012/13 to <i>Scotland's public finances: Addressing the challenges</i> highlighted a number of good practices in the council including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive package of budget papers are produced which are aligned to the Transformation Strategy 2012-2017. • A thorough process of consultation and engagement with members 	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>of the public, employees and key stakeholders is carried out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of extensive service reviews has been undertaken and the council participates in benchmarking in order to identify areas for improvement and determine where costs savings could be made. • The council has identified alternative means of delivery for key services. • The council has a track record of meeting its efficiency saving targets. 	
<p>People management The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's workforce is well managed through the development of workforce plans which support the objectives of the council's transformation strategy. For example, as part of the social work sustainability change programme, the workforce planning arrangements for the children and families service have been reviewed and streamlined.</p> <p>Historically staff reductions have been based on the findings of service reviews rather than ad-hoc voluntary redundancy/retirement schemes. The reduction in employee numbers and the potential impact on council services is monitored by management via existing performance management and quality systems. The council has not identified any noticeable effect on the quality or availability of services from this reduction in workforce numbers</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p>Asset management The council's arrangements for managing assets and</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's asset management strategy formalises a framework of responsibility for the management of both operational and non-operational property assets.</p> <p>As part of the transformation strategy, the council has recognised that</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.</p>		<p>property assets must be employed to maximum effect and surplus and underperforming assets disposed of. The community asset transfer policy is the main mechanism which facilitates the utilisation of surplus properties by transferring them into community ownership and handing over responsibility for maintaining these buildings to local community groups.</p> <p>A school occupancy target of 85% (average) across the school estate has been set and incorporated into the schools estate management plan.</p> <p>The Scottish Futures Trust target reduction of 25% of the national estate has been adopted for the council for other properties. Good progress has been made in respect of office accommodation with large numbers of staff being consolidated into a smaller number of town centre offices.</p>	
<p>Procurement How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's procurement capability assessment (PCA) scores have shown steady increase over the last few years as illustrated below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2010 - 34% • 2011 - 44% • 2012 - 52% • 2013 - 59% <p>The council's PCA score for 2013, assessed in October 2013, is classified as "improved performance".</p> <p>The council has a Procurement Transformation Programme. This combines actions identified within the PCA and Corporate Procurement</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Strategy 2011-2013, aimed at improving the standards and quality of procurement processes within the council to ensure they are more efficient, better planned, better managed and better delivered.</p> <p>Progress has been reported to members regarding many of the identified workstreams. This includes enhanced technology to improved speed of processing, the training of 104 contract administrators in contract and supplier management, and the establishment of eight Category Managers to oversee the strategic procurement activities. The current strategies cover around 82% of the annual council procurement spend (ie approximately £116 million).</p>	
<p>Risk management</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council conducted an independent risk management assessment during 2012/13. This was performed by Zurich Insurance, who found that "the risk management approach and process used within the Council is mature, well established and effective".</p> <p>Areas of good practice were identified as well as some areas for improvement. The council has agreed an action plan to address these areas for improvement.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p>Information management</p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council exchanges data with many other public bodies and in so doing makes use of Cabinet Office sponsored arrangements to share electronic data with other public sector bodies. From November 2012, all applicants were required to apply to connect to the public services</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
arrangements for managing information as a key resource in delivering services.		network (PSN) which means complying with the stricter PSN Code of Connection. In common with most other councils, the council's initial PSN application was not successful however ongoing work with the Cabinet Office resulted in the application being approved. Audit Scotland's will continue to monitor the council's compliance as this will be a recurring issue that requires to be complied with in future years.	
<p>Joint working</p> <p>Progress with any significant shared services initiatives, in particular in relation to governance or pace of implementation.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The three Ayrshire Councils established a Shared Services Joint Committee (known as The Ayrshire Councils' Joint Committee).</p> <p>A shared services Minute of Agreement was approved in March 2013 by the three councils. Joint arrangements include the out of hours social work service and tourism.</p> <p>East Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council agreed to establish a shared roads service from 1 April 2014. This is forecast to save £8.634 million over the first ten years and will involve the transfer of approximately 90 roads staff from South Ayrshire Council to East Ayrshire Council.</p> <p>Other recent proposals include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working relationships with Dumfries and Galloway Council regarding a Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership. • An Ayrshire-wide joint equipment service with North and South Ayrshire Councils and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to have a single service delivering the minor aids and adaptations to assist people to stay in their own home. • A joint social work sensory impairment service in partnership with North and South Ayrshire councils and NHS Ayrshire and Arran as 	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>well as national and local voluntary services including RNIB and action for Hearing Loss.</p> <p>Social Work services have a strong track record of working well with partners. Improvement actions reported to the care Inspectorate throughout 2013 indicate this remains a strength.</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's Transformation Strategy initially identified a funding gap of £34.004 million over the period 2013/14 to 2016/17.</p> <p>When setting the 2013/14 budget the council identified savings workstreams of £24.974 million, leaving a funding gap of £9.030 million that required to be identified over this period. This is reviewed regularly and, when setting the 2014/15 budget, the gap increased by a further £1.988 as a result of revised inflationary pressures. The council approved further savings workstreams savings of £10.001 million to reduce the unfunded gap over the period to 2016/17 to £1.017 million.</p> <p>The council has workstreams, identified in the Transformation Strategy, for each of the proposed savings. Periodic progress is provided to members.</p> <p>The council has a good track record of achieving savings.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p>Equalities</p> <p>Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its statutory</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's Equality Mainstreaming Report 2013 - 2017 was developed in consultation with community planning and other public sector partners. This sets out the council's approach to mainstreaming equality and provides details of equality outcomes and employee information.</p> <p>The council has a number of corporate mechanisms and initiatives to</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
obligations.		<p>embed the equality agenda in its work. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Corporate Equality Strategy Group has been established since 2006. This group has strategic responsibility for equality issues and for ensuring consistency is applied across the council with particular emphasis on the continuation of mainstreaming equalities. • Departmental equalities groups were formed to ensure that equalities are considered at the service level. For example the education service has demonstrated a positive inclusion agenda within mainstream schooling and in much of its community based work. • East Ayrshire Community Planning Residents' Survey includes information on equality monitoring. • A wide range of methods are utilised to develop and maintain awareness within the council, including briefings to Members and officers. Articles are available to all staff via the council intranet. 	

Service performance

47. 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
<p>Education The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The education management team works to an agreed improvement plan each session. A key priority for the council is to raise educational attainment and equip young people for the world of work.</p> <p>Overall, the council has improved the attainment of young people across key Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) measures over the period 2011-2013. However, despite this improvement, the proportion of young people achieving SCQF levels three to six by the time they leave school is below national and comparator average.</p> <p>Post appeal attainment in SQA examinations this year shows improvements in the attainment of young people from 2012 at SCQF levels three to five by the end of S4 and in all measures by the end of S6. There has been a dip in young people's attainment at the end of S5 at SCQF level six.</p> <p>As part of inspections almost all the evaluations of early years establishments, primary schools and secondary schools were positive. In one primary school, the curriculum was found to be weak. The re-lead officer along with East Ayrshire Council will discuss the most</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity, although Education Scotland will validate a thematic self-evaluation exercise on aspects of the education service.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. East Ayrshire Council will produce a progress report about the extent to which the school has improved. At that point Education Scotland will decide whether a further inspection is required.</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, children and families).</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Overall, social work services made good progress against the improvement actions identified by the last scrutiny by the Care Inspectorate in 2011-12.</p> <p>Children and families services</p> <p>There continues to be effective leadership following the re-structuring and modernisation of children and families social work services towards a delivery model that focuses on prevention and early intervention. This programme has, over the last three years, achieved significant changes to the culture, systems and processes and is supported by successful workforce development and planning.</p> <p>The service has developed partnership arrangements to improve the impact and outcomes for children and families. For example: Ayrshire, the electronic information sharing system between agencies supporting children; the pan-Ayrshire out of hours services; and the early intervention and prevention service with Action for Children.</p> <p>Local and national performance information indicates overall that these changes are leading to improvements in the effectiveness of services and therefore the life chances and outcomes for vulnerable children.</p> <p>The service is making progress against its targets to improve</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>educational attainment, secure sustained positive destinations and work opportunities for young people. There has been an improvement in educational attainment and attendance since 2009/10, but this is still variable and not meeting its target. The council has acknowledged this and is monitoring this closely through the SOA improvement planning process.</p> <p>Community care services</p> <p>The reshaping care for older people programme has four workstreams which, together with partners, deliver the council's strategic objective of supporting older people to live more independently in the community. The programme is meeting and exceeding its targets for most of the progress indicators.</p> <p>Criminal justice services</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Risk Management Authority, is 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.</p> <p>East Ayrshire's criminal justice service has been submitting notifications of serious incident reviews. Initial experience has highlighted learning points in respect of reporting process, which the service has responded to. The link inspector will discuss and monitor</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>this during 2014.</p> <p>Regulated care services</p> <p>The majority of services were graded good or above and very few were graded weak or unsatisfactory.</p>	
<p>Housing and homelessness</p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	<p>Further information required</p>	<p>The council's tenant's satisfaction survey demonstrated an improvement in tenants' views of value for money. Sixty three per cent of tenants believe that their house and the services they receive are value for money. This is an improvement from the 49 per cent reported previously. The council reported the volume of stock now meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is 86 per cent. This is an increase from 78% last year.</p> <p>In the last AIP, SHR expressed concerns about the council's management of voids, the sustainability of new tenancies, and the reliability of data used to forecast the ability to achieve the SHQS by 2015. While there was discussion between SHR and officers during the last AIP regarding these areas, SHR planned to issue a self-assessment to the council in 2013. SHR will issue a self-assessment in Q1 of 2014-15 which will form the basis of any potential further work.</p> <p>The SHR have concerns regarding the downward trend in tenant sustainability (57.2%) which is the lowest sustainability rate in Scotland. This is 6.2% lower than the previous year, 15.8% lower than the second lowest local authority and 28% lower than the national average.</p> <p>SHR note that the council's relative position in the national picture on</p>	<p>SHR to obtain further information from officers on the management of tenancy sustainability, aspects of voids management, and volume of stock meeting SHQS standard.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>rents lost through voids is a concern against a background of welfare reform. SHR also wish to seek assurance around the council's allocations process specifically regarding the decrease in the percentage of lets to homeless people. This reduced to 14% in 2012/13; almost one third of the Scottish figure and 4% lower than the percentage reported in 2011/12.</p> <p>Rent arrears have increased from 2.8% in 2011/12 to 4.7% in 2012/13. This is in common with most other councils and is better than the national average.</p>	
<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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>In reviewing service performance, SPI data covering the period 2010/11 to 2012/13 was used. In addition, the latest available SOLACE data covering the period 2010/11 to 2011/12 was also considered.</p> <p>The council shows strength across a number of performance indicators within non-regulated services. Also, some specific areas for improvement have been identified but are not significant to detract from overall service performance. Overall the LAN does not consider this an area of scrutiny risk.</p> <p>The council commissioned an independent review, led by the former chief planner of the Scottish Government, to review the processes and procedures around the management, determination, monitoring and review of the planning processes in relation to open cast mining arrangements in place throughout the relevant period. Following their review, the independent review team issued a report in January 2014. This highlighted a large number of serious issues and</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p> <p>Audit Scotland is monitoring and will report on the council's response to the independent review.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		recommendations with particular emphasis on failings by the planning service over a number of years. The council has prepared a response that provides details of the action being taken to address each of the recommendations in the report.	

Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

48. 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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's Transformation Strategy 2012-17 underpins its approach to transforming services. This arose from a review of the council's strategic and corporate direction, designed to address the financial challenges both economical and service demand led. The strategy, agreed by the council in June 2012, defines the council's three priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise educational attainment and equip our young people for the world of work. • Support older people live independently in the community. • Promote town centre living. <p>Ten strategic imperatives have been identified to ensure that the transformation strategy is in line with the council's vision of how it will look by 2017. The annual budget, together with all proposed savings, is linked to the transformation strategy.</p> <p>The council has demonstrated how it is delivering services in innovative ways in an environment of reducing resources. These include:</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vibrant Communities Service. This follows the refreshed approach that the council adopted as part of its community empowerment workstream. It is designed to revitalise communities by joining up council services in a way that enables local communities to set their own priorities and find their own solutions to their local problems with the council in a supporting role. This is an innovative approach to the redesign of service delivery. • The Ayrshire Roads Alliance is the first shared roads service in Scotland. The agreement between East Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council will involve the transfer of approximately 90 roads staff from South Ayrshire Council to East Ayrshire Council and is forecast to save £8.634 million over the first ten years. <p>The continued delivery of services within an environment of reducing resources is being addressed by working in partnership with other community planning partners, other government agencies and the voluntary sector. A focus on identifying solutions in partnership and building capacity, particularly within the voluntary sector, are important elements of the overall strategy adopted. The council recognises that core service models will have to change and resources will need to be deployed to support new ways of working as part of their transformation strategy and financial planning model.</p>	
<p>Public performance reporting (PPR)</p> <p>The progress that is being made by councils in meeting</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</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 and can be viewed by the public on the council's website.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
their PPR obligations.		<p>The assessment of councils' public performance reporting arrangements in 2011/12 (for meeting reporting requirements) highlighted that East Ayrshire Council is fully meeting one area and partially meeting six areas of SPI 1 (corporate management) and are fully meeting nine areas and partially meeting two areas of SPI two (service performance). There are no areas where the council is not meeting the reporting requirements of SPI 1 or 2.</p>	

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2014/15												
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
SHR will issue a self-assessment in Q1 of 2014-15 regarding aspects of housing and homelessness which will form the basis of any potential further work.												
National or supported self-evaluation work year 1												
Voluntary self-evaluation - thematic review of aspects of the education service validated by Education Scotland.	X	X	X									
Audit Scotland: completion of the follow-up housing benefit performance audit.	X											
Audit Scotland: follow-up of Audit Scotland national report <i>Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?</i>		X										
Audit Scotland: follow-up of Audit Scotland national report <i>Major capital investment in councils</i>			X					X				

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
National or supported self-evaluation work year 2												
Planned national scrutiny work is described at paragraph 24. Whether and/or when this includes East Ayrshire Council has yet to be determined.												

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2016/17	
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved
Planned national scrutiny work is described at paragraph 24. Whether and/or when this includes East Ayrshire Council has yet to be determined.	

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.
