

South Ayrshire Council

Assurance and Improvement Plan 2014–17



Prepared for South Ayrshire Council
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Introduction

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in South 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 South 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
 - findings from the targeted Best Value audit work carried out by Audit Scotland during 2013
 - evidence gathered from Audit Scotland, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Housing Regulator and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence)
 - the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 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 progress in improving and transforming public services. 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. South Ayrshire Council has undergone a period of change since our last AIP. The former executive director resources, governance and organisation was appointed to the chief executive's post in an acting capacity in January 2013 and was subsequently appointed on a permanent basis in May 2013. The head of legal services was later appointed to the role of executive director resources, governance and organisation, although the remit of section 95 officer has been removed from this post and is now being filled by the chief accounting officer.
7. This has been a challenging year for the council with the changes in key personnel, the challenges of the public service reform initiative and addressing the difficult messages that have come out of the best value work undertaken by Audit Scotland. The council has acknowledged the challenges ahead and is striving to address these and improve the way the council operates.

Local priorities and public service reform

8. The LAN has assessed local priorities and public service reform areas as 'no scrutiny required'.
9. Community planning is the process through which a council and its public sector partners, in consultation with the community, can agree a strategic vision for the delivery of public services and local priorities for the area and the action which each of the partners will take in pursuit of that vision. As leader and facilitator of community planning in South Ayrshire, the council is committed to the community planning SOA which sets out seven "visionary outcomes" for the area and how these will be delivered by the partnership. The SOA has been scrutinised and approved through the Scottish Government's quality process.
10. In March 2014, members approved the Council Plan for 2014-2017. The plan set out the six strategic objectives of the council and the improvement themes for 2014-15. Members also agreed the proposals for developing service and improvement plans across all services and for ensuring that formal performance management arrangements support monitoring progress against these plans. This is a significant step forward for the council and it is essential that they maintain the momentum and ensure that these plans are fully embedded across the entire council as it moves forward.
11. The LAN considered the council's response to the public service reform agenda. Overall the council has made good progress in addressing the challenges and requirements of public service reform. Actions taken include:
 - Approving scrutiny arrangements for local police and fire and rescue services.
 - Adopting a body corporate model for health and social care integration and agreeing the services to be delivered by the new health and social care partnership.

- Taking steps to manage rent arrears through personal contact with tenants, ensuring support is given where required, that benefit claims are maximised and that appropriate repayment arrangements are made.

Corporate assessment

12. The 2013-16 AIP identified the corporate Best Value framework as an area requiring further scrutiny. This work was undertaken by Audit Scotland, in two phases of targeted scrutiny. The first phase considered progress and reporting against the council's corporate improvement programme and the second assessed how well members and senior officers are identifying, prioritising and driving improvement across the council.
13. Audit Scotland issued the first stage report in June 2013, the findings of which are summarised below.

- Since November 2011 members have not been provided with comprehensive and regular information to allow effective management and scrutiny of the council's improvement programme.
- A number of improvement areas included in the programme do not have specific, measurable actions against which progress can be monitored.
- Reports have been made to various panels on a range of activity which includes incidental reporting against some of the six improvement areas but it is difficult to trace these back to improvement programme objectives.
- The disparate nature of reporting makes it very difficult for the council to demonstrate progress against its improvement programme and for members to be assured that progress is being made.

14. The second phase of the Best Value work examined leadership and direction and aspects of governance and accountability. This work was undertaken during November 2013 and the findings were published in February 2014. The report made the following recommendations for improvement:

- Fully implement the previously agreed recommendations to set improvement objectives as part of the Council Plan and introduce regular reporting against these.
- Ensure that the Council Plan and service and improvement plans are in place for the start of the 2014/15 financial year, and effectively communicated to all staff.
- Ensure that all staff have Performance and Development Reviews, including clear forward objectives reflecting the new corporate and service plans.
- Ensure corporate approaches agreed at CMT, such as the roll out of "How Good Is Our Council?" are consistently implemented across the council.
- Introduce regular and timely performance reporting that has a greater focus on outcomes and leads to improvement action being taken where required.
- Ensure the review of scrutiny arrangements addresses the weaknesses in the current arrangements and that improvements are made with greater urgency.

15. The Accounts Commission considered the findings and published their report on 27 February 2014. The recommendations arising from the report will be the subject of follow-up scrutiny during 2014/15.
16. Our conclusion on all other aspects of corporate assessment is 'no scrutiny required'.

Service performance

17. The LAN has assessed education, social care services, housing and non-regulated services as 'no scrutiny required'. However, a number of concerns have been raised on aspects of the council's housing service, including on tenancy sustainment, void rent loss, speed of priority repairs, homelessness, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and Scottish secure tenancies. While no specific scrutiny is planned, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the position through performance reviews and monitoring meetings throughout the year.
18. 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.

Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

19. The Best Value work undertaken on the improvement programme, leadership and direction and aspects of governance and accountability corporate assessment included an assessment

of progress in this area. Audit Scotland's conclusion was that, in the absence of a "golden thread" linking corporate objectives to resource planning in services further scrutiny was required. This scrutiny will be undertaken as part of the follow-up to the Best Value audit work during 2014/15.

20. Public performance reporting was assessed as no scrutiny required.

Planned scrutiny activity

21. Audit Scotland will follow-up on the findings from the Best Value work undertaken in 2013.
22. Education Scotland will carry out a validated self-evaluation VSE of education services.
23. 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.
24. There is some 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. This may change as we get closer to publication.
 - 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. This may change as we get closer to publication.
 - 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.
 - 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.
25. Audit Scotland will follow-up two national performance audits during 2014. This will involve targeted follow-up of *Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?* (June 2011) and *Major capital investment in councils* (March 2013). 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>.
26. Scheduled audit and inspection work will take place through the annual audit process and the ongoing inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care

Inspectorate respectively will continue as planned. The individual audit and inspection agencies will also continue to monitor developments in key areas of council activity and will provide support and challenge as appropriate. This will also help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.

27. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in South Ayrshire Council between April 2014 and March 2017 is at [Appendix 1](#).

Local priorities and public service reform

28. 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 SOA for South Ayrshire sets out seven "visionary outcomes" for the area and how these will be delivered by the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP). These are:

- South Ayrshire has an enterprising and sustainable economy.
- People in South Ayrshire are skilled, confident and successful in accessing employment.
- Children and young people in South Ayrshire have the best possible life chances.
- People in South Ayrshire enjoy the best possible health.
- Older people in South Ayrshire enjoy full and positive lives within their own communities.
- Communities in South Ayrshire are stronger and safer.
- South Ayrshire is clean, attractive and delivering a sustainable low carbon future.

30. The Community Planning Board consulted with local communities to derive the above outcomes. Consultation took the form of leaflets, a web based questionnaire, a mobile trailer visiting rural areas and drop-in sessions in each multi-member ward. Three key priorities were identified from the consultations. These were developing the local economy and creating more jobs, improving town centres and improving leisure opportunities.

31. The SOA is the Community Planning Partnership's key strategic document, which gives the opportunity to set out the aspirations for the people of South Ayrshire. The SOA includes intermediate outcomes (three -five years) and long term outcomes (five - ten years) as well as progress measures, baseline data and targets. Rather than setting quantitative targets for objectives which are challenging, measurable and encourage accountability, the partnership has set targets only for direction of travel such as increase/decrease on baseline data. The absence of quantitative targets means there is a lack of clarity over the extent of improvement

the partnership is seeking to make against each of its priorities and a lack of accountability for performance.

Police and fire

32. The Police and Fire and Rescue Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 created a national police force and a national fire and rescue service. It replaced local authorities' role as police authorities and fire and rescue authorities through the creation of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). Local authorities now have the role of commenting on SPA and SFRS strategic plans, contributing to the preparation and subsequent approval of the local plans for police and fire and rescue, to monitor the delivery of police and fire and rescue functions in the area and make recommendations for improvement and finally to provide feedback to the local police commander and the Fire and Rescue Service local senior officer.
33. South Ayrshire Council has agreed the following scrutiny arrangements for local police and fire and rescue services:
 - An annual review by the full council of progress in the preceding year and a forward look to agree a plan for the next year.
 - A mid-year report on progress to the full council.
 - Reports to the council to be supported by presentations from the local police commander and local senior fire officer.
 - Reporting to the council will be supplemented by quarterly meetings between the leader and the chief executive of the council and the local police commander and local senior fire officer.
34. The council has committed to review these arrangements after the first year of operation.
35. 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 (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 (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.

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 Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill was introduced by the Scottish Government in May 2013. The Bill aims to ensure that the health and social care systems work together to improve outcomes for people by providing consistency in the quality of services, ensuring people are not unnecessarily delayed in hospital and maintaining independence by creating services that allow people to stay safely at home for longer. Arrangements for how services will be delivered are determined by councils and health boards based on what they believe is the best way to meet the care needs of their local populations.
40. South Ayrshire Council is adopting a body corporate model of integration and while there is a pan-Ayrshire Strategic Alliance Group to consider issues with integration, the respective councils are developing their own models independently. The new body is an Integration Joint Board, made up of four councillors, four health board directors and representatives from other affected bodies however only councillors and NHS board members will have voting rights. A strategic officers working group has been established within the council to facilitate project planning and key milestone dates have been set to ensure that the new organisation is working effectively by 1 April 2015.
41. On 6 March 2014, the council agreed the services to be delivered by the Health and Social Care Partnership. As well as the mandatory services to be included, the council agreed to deliver children and families social work and criminal justice social work through the new partnership.

Welfare reform

42. To meet the challenges of welfare reform, the council established a cross-directorate Corporate Welfare Reform Working Group in 2012. The group established two work streams, one covering corporate debt and the second covering the impact of welfare reform on both claimants and council services. The working group prepared an action plan and submitted this to the Leadership Panel in November 2012. There was little evidence of routine progress monitoring during 2013, however, an update was provided to members through the Leadership Panel in December 2013.
43. The council is seeking to manage escalating rent arrears through personal contact with tenants to ensure that they are receiving the necessary support, that any housing benefit entitlement is maximised and to establish an affordable and realistic repayment arrangement for any outstanding balance. The council has earmarked £0.4 million of the HRA balance to meet the cost of measures to manage and mitigate the risks of welfare reform.

44. The council has expressed concern that it is seeing increasing rent arrears among tenants not affected by welfare reform and also an increase in council tax debt. The council is taking action to mitigate this risk by invoking its arrears recovery processes and through targeted communication with tenants and residents.
45. 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

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

46.

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>Scrutiny required</p>	<p>In the 2013-2016 AIP, the LAN identified the need for best value work to be undertaken to consider the leadership and direction of the council following a series of delays in setting clear corporate objectives through a corporate plan. While the council committed to finalising the Council Plan and its service and improvement plans by March 2014, the overall process has taken longer than expected and between September 2012 and May 2013, a number of internal deadlines were missed. The Council Plan was taken to members in March 2014 and the service and improvement plans will be considered on 29 April 2014.</p> <p>The council has a poor track record in implementing other corporate strategies, such as its communications strategy, which has been delayed on a number of occasions and is still to be completed. This points to weaknesses in recent years in leadership and culture. In response to these issues, the council has recently introduced a tracking mechanism to record and</p>	<p>Follow-up of findings from 2013 Best Value work.</p> <p>Review of council plan and service plans.</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>monitor officers' progress in implementing actions agreed by elected members.</p> <p>A new chief executive was appointed in May 2013. The impact of the appointment will become clearer through the progress made by the council in setting and meeting its corporate objectives in the future.</p>	
<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>In response to previous audit reports, the council advised that it was using the self-evaluation tool "How good is our council?" at a corporate level and that there were plans to roll this out across all services. However, the Best Value work undertaken in November 2013 found no coherent corporate approach around self-evaluation with services using their own self-evaluation models. The chief executive, in discussion with the Corporate Management Team, has agreed that a uniform approach should be taken on self-evaluation.</p> <p>The lack of a council plan and supporting service plans set out in "leadership and direction" above, means that it is not clear how members are able to make informed decisions on the resourcing and design of services to ensure that they are in line with the council's priorities.</p> <p>The 2012/13 annual report to the Controller of Audit and members (published October 2013) expressed concern over the efficacy of the political decision-making and scrutiny structure of the council and the allocation of workloads across panels. The</p>	<p>Review progress rolling out "How good is our council?" across all services as part of follow-up of Best Value work in 2014/15.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		current structure results in lengthy agendas for the Leadership Panel with some of the other scrutiny panels having limited workloads. There is a risk that some key issues for the council may not receive the attention they deserve.	
<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 is currently developing a Community Engagement Strategy following the issue of community empowerment guidance by the Scottish Government in November 2013.</p> <p>The council operates the South Ayrshire 1000 Panel which surveys 1000 volunteers on attitudes and views on public services and policy issues.</p> <p>Care Inspectorate found evidence of good communication within social work services.</p> <p>Children's services are conducting a survey of the views of the public on the delivery of the additional hours of nursery education, to inform decisions on implementation.</p> <p>The council's website contains details of current and past consultations.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity.
<p>Financial management</p> <p>How effectively the council is planning</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council prepares three year revenue and capital budgets. The budget for 2014-2017 was set 19 December 2013 based on the <i>Finance Circular 6/2013</i>. Savings options were sought from executive directors prior to the budget setting process to allow</p>	No specific scrutiny activity although LAN members will monitor the impact of budget

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
and managing its budgets.		<p>members to select saving measures from a suite of options.</p> <p>Total cash backed reserves amounted to £45.546m at 31 March 2013, of which £22.502m had been committed, an increase of 14.9% from March 2012.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports are presented quarterly and provide comprehensive information to members. Audit Scotland has however reported a trend of underspends at the year end which were not forecast in budget monitoring reports during the year. In 2012/13 all budget heads, with the exception of chief executive's office and corporate services, out-turned with significant underspends, which were not being predicted in the quarter three budget monitoring reports.</p>	<p>reductions on services.</p> <p>Scrutiny of budget outturns will be done as part of normal financial audit activity and reported as necessary by the local audit team.</p>
<p>People management</p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Managing Workforce Change Policy approved by Leadership Panel in April 2013. The policy applies to structural change, changes in working practices, relocation services, reduction or cessation of service delivery and TUPE transfers.</p> <p>The council has plans in place to improve alignment and integration of service planning and workforce strategy and to develop transferable roles and skill sets to allow more flexible use of staff. This work will have great value when aligned to the council and service plans under preparation.</p> <p>Teacher absence has increased over the last three years and is higher than the Scottish average. Management report that there have been difficulties recruiting staff into some subject areas in</p>	No specific scrutiny activity.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		some secondary schools. This is not peculiar to South Ayrshire and the council is actively seeking to recruit.	
<p>Asset management</p> <p>The council's arrangements for managing assets and how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Rationalisation of the council's asset base is a key priority of the council. A new staffing structure introduced in 2013 to improve delivery of the council's capital programme.</p> <p>The council approved a corporate asset management plan in November 2012. A further report submitted to the Leadership Panel in January 2013 set out a timetable for the completion of a number of tasks to implement the plan. These actions are due to be completed by 31 December 2014. The panel expressed reservations on the long timescales for some actions but was satisfied that ongoing reporting on progress against actions would provide some reassurance that these were being progressed. However, by March 2014, no further report had been provided to the Leadership Panel on progress against the plan.</p> <p>In 2012/13 actual spend on the housing capital programme amounted to 72% of the original programmed expenditure and on the general services capital programme amounted to 62% of the original programmed expenditure.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity although the local audit team will monitor progress in delivering the capital plan and will include comment in the annual report to members and the controller of audit.
<p>Procurement</p> <p>How effectively corporate procurement</p>	No scrutiny required	The council's score in the Procurement Capability Assessment undertaken by Scotland Excel has increased steadily between 2009 and 2013 (19% -2009, 29% -2010, 39% -2011, 53% -2012, 65% -2013). The most recent score of 65% (December 2013)	No specific scrutiny activity.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>contributes to the council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.</p>		<p>puts the council comfortably into the "improved" performance banding. This is considerable achievement in improving procurement practices over recent years.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the improved PCA score, in 2013 the council's internal audit service issued a critical report highlighting significant weaknesses in the council's arrangements for letting and managing a contract for the "Provision of a Managed Service of Multi Function Devices" in August 2010. The review concluded that there were a number of serious shortcomings in the specification, financial evaluation and management of the process which ultimately resulted in the council contracting for a service delivered on fundamentally different terms to those intended. In addition the council was unable to demonstrate that Best Value was obtained as a result of this procurement process. The council has agreed an action plan which is intended to ensure these problems are not repeated in awarding contracts in the future.</p>	
<p>Risk management The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for identifying, managing and mitigating risks and how its</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Corporate risk management strategy in place which sets out roles and responsibilities and a reporting framework for officers and members.</p> <p>The council has a corporate risk register as well as directorate risk registers, the content of which are reported to members regularly.</p> <p>The Covalent performance management system is used to</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
management of risk contributes to the successful delivery of public services.		monitor risks in the council and to provide updates to members.	
<p>Information management</p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for managing information as a key resource in delivering services.</p>	No scrutiny required.	<p>The council has a sound information management environment, achieved through the implementation of policies, guidance, standards and the provision of training, needed to maintain and improve information governance.</p> <p>The council is implementing "meta compliance" software to ensure compliance and understanding of business policies including data protection and freedom of information.</p> <p>The council has arrangements in place for disaster recovery/business continuity.</p> <p>The council has now achieved Government Secure eXtranet/Public Service Network (GSX/PSN) compliance, which ensures continuous access to government IT networks.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity.
<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 council has a track record of participation in shared service initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pan-Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Team providing emergency planning services. • The Ayrshire environmental health out of hours noise team operating to tackle noise nuisance throughout Ayrshire. • Social work out of hours response service. 	No specific scrutiny activity.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayrshire shared tourism service. • Ayrshire archives service. <p>The council has collaborated with East Ayrshire Council to deliver a shared roads service from April 2014. This is a flagship shared service which is expected to realise savings in excess of £10m over the next ten years. The council has shown particular resilience on this initiative as the initial plan was a shared service between the three Ayrshire councils but North Ayrshire Council withdrew support immediately prior to the final decision being taken.</p> <p>Planning for health and social care integration is well advanced in South Ayrshire Council.</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>As part of the budget setting process for 2014/15, all directors were required to identify saving options for their share of the expected funding shortfall of £36m in the coming years. The options were then put to members and prioritised and adopted where appropriate. All savings measures are also now subject to an impact assessment.</p> <p>Officers must now demonstrate that any changes in service provision are in line with strategic and financial plans and are not purely a result of budget reductions.</p> <p>This area is assessed as no scrutiny required because the council has measures in place but the impact of these measures will be considered for the 2015-2018 AIP.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity. Scrutiny of budget outturns will be done as part of normal financial audit activity and reported as necessary by the local audit team.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Equalities</p> <p>Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its statutory obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required.</p>	<p>The council produced the South Ayrshire Council Equality and Diversity Strategy Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2013 which sets out its arrangements for meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Specifically it sets out how the council has developed outcomes and how it is mainstreaming equalities as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations. It encompasses the council as a provider of services and an employer, as an Education Authority and as a Licensing Board. The council has also produced a simple guide for use by managers in preparing material for council decisions.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p>

Service performance

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>	No scrutiny required	No significant concerns have been identified within the education service. Over the past five years, almost all school inspections and all early years centre/nursery class inspections have been positive. The authority's evaluations of its schools have been generally in line with inspection evaluations. Attainment in national examinations is very positive, with results in 2013 above those of comparator authorities and above the national average, in almost all key measures. Overall, children's needs are well met. There is a strong culture of challenge and support across the service.	Education Scotland, at the request of the authority, will undertake a VSE of the education services, working with the authority, in April/May 2014.
<p>Social care services The quality of local social work and care services and the resulting outcomes (including adult care, older peoples services, learning disability services, criminal</p>	No scrutiny required	South Ayrshire has made steady progress in the delivery of social care services in the last year. Any outstanding issues from the previous 2011 inspection of services to protect children have been addressed strengthening the support services/systems that frame this agenda. Key agendas are being appropriately considered and developed ie Health and Social Care Integration and Self Directed Support (subject to audit). There is evidence of good leadership being shown in respect of the operational management team and innovative ways of communicating and consulting with staff, service	No specific scrutiny activity.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
justice services, mental health services, children and families).		users and the wider public around key initiatives in order to determine and help shape the strategic direction of the organisation. Governance and accountability has been strengthened throughout the organisation with a number of key initiatives having been implemented this year across all care groups. For example vision statements are set out in a number of revised care group strategies and quality assurance as well as performance management frameworks have been implemented and will be further scoped out in the year ahead. Social care services are committed to improvement and are striving to develop numerous key posts dedicated to taking such work forward. There are pockets of really good integrated work occurring but a key indicator of success going forward will be how they build on this through the health and social care integration agenda.	
Housing and homelessness The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.	No scrutiny required	Housing Services Overall, there are risks associated with parts of housing services. Performance in tenancy sustainment, re-let times, current tenant arrears and repairs completed against target have deteriorated during 2012/13 and are below the national figures. To address these areas the council implemented a housing operations service review during 2013. This resulted in a new model for service delivery being introduced which is a mix of specialist and area based housing teams. In total 7 posts have been created, these are accommodation officer (hostels and supported accommodation);	No specific scrutiny activity. The SHR will engage with the council through regular performance review and monitoring meetings. The speed of progress

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>housing officer (capital programme/tenant liaison); housing officer (tenancy management) x 2; housing service support officer; housing management assistant; and housing support officer (sheltered housing). In addition to these posts the council has transferred staff from housing to property services and customer services for housing repairs and established a housing revenue, arrears recovery and support team. It is also establishing quarterly performance review and accountability meetings, has awarded a new housing support contract, has reviewed void procedures and practices, has created a dedicated arrears recovery team and transferred the management of reactive repairs to the economy, neighbourhood and environment directorate.</p> <p>These changes will take time to translate into improved performance. SHR will therefore engage with the council through regular performance review and monitoring meetings. The speed of progress will also be monitored.</p> <p>Homelessness Services</p> <p>Overall, there are risks associated with the homelessness service. Performance in the level of repeat applications, not homeless decisions, use of B&Bs as temporary accommodation, percentage of Scottish Secured Tenancies (SSTs) secured for homeless households and the percentage of lets made by registered social landlords (RSLs) have deteriorated during 2012/13 and are below the national figures.</p>	<p>will also be monitored.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>In order to understand the reasons for repeat applications the council is undertaking a short term study which will be undertaken by the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. It has reviewed its decision making procedures and any 'negative' must be discussed with a team leader. The council is expanding its use of the Private Sector Leasing Scheme to reduce its use of bed and breakfast accommodation and is taking action to increase the percentage of lets made by RSLs to homeless households.</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>Leisure Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool attendances, sports facility attendances and museum visits are all below the Scottish average. • Cost of attendance at sports facilities has increased from £9.56 to £10.23 and is the highest in Scotland. • The cost of museum visits has fallen but is well above the Scottish average. • The council has an award winning e-library service. <p>Protective services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed picture across protective services indicators. The council generally performs well in dealing with consumer complaints but is ranked 25th for the percentage of business advice requests dealt with within 14 days. • The cost of trading standards and environmental health has fallen slightly but remains higher than the Scottish average. <p>Roads Maintenance services</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of roads that should be considered for maintenance is in the worst performing quartile ranked 25th nationally. • The National Benchmarking Overview Report 2014 found that the council's cost of road maintenance per kilometre of road has fallen from above the Scottish average in 2011-12 to below the Scottish average in 2012-13. <p>Waste management services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council performs well across all waste management indicators although the cost of street cleaning has increased to just under the Scottish average. 	

Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

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>Scrutiny required</p>	<p>The 2013-16 AIP recommended best value work around the progress against the best value improvement programme of July 2009, the leadership and direction of the council, its performance management arrangements and aspects of corporate governance and accountability. A number of recommendations have been made following completion of this work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement the previously agreed recommendations to set improvement objectives as part of the Council Plan and introduce regular reporting against these. • Ensure that the Council Plan and service and improvement plans are in place for the start of the 2014/15 financial year, and effectively communicated to all staff. • Ensure that all staff have Performance and Development Reviews, including clear forward objectives reflecting the new corporate and service plans. • Ensure corporate approaches agreed at CMT, such as the roll out of "How Good Is Our Council?" are consistently implemented across 	<p>Best Value follow-up</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce regular and timely performance reporting that has a greater focus on outcomes and leads to improvement action being taken where required. • Ensure the review of scrutiny arrangements addresses the weaknesses in the current arrangements and that improvements are made with greater urgency. <p>In addition, it was found that reporting against the improvement programme of 2009 had been sparse, irregular and not sufficient to allow members to hold officers to account.</p> <p>The council has plans in place to implement a refreshed council plan for April 2014.</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 produces an annual Public Performance Report and an annual Performance Report, both of which are available on the council website.</p> <p>Public Performance Reporting pages are on the council website for all services in the council. These give high level information on aspects of service performance.</p> <p>Audit Scotland's review of Public Performance Reporting (June 2013) assessed all 32 councils' PPR arrangements for the 2011/12 financial year in accordance with the Accounts Commission SPI Direction for 2013/14. The report found the following for South Ayrshire Council's arrangements for meeting the reporting requirements for SPI1 & 2 :</p> <p>SPI1: Fully meeting all seven areas (responsiveness to its</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>communities, revenues & service costs, employees, assets, procurement, sustainable devpt. & equalities & diversity.</p> <p>SPI2: Fully meeting eight areas (benefits administration, community care, criminal justice social work, cultural & community services, protective services), partially meeting the remaining three areas (cultural & community services, protective services & roads & lighting).</p>	

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2014/15												
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Audit Scotland - Best Value follow-up work								tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)												
National or supported self-evaluation work year 1												
Audit Scotland - follow-up of <i>Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?</i>	X											
Audit Scotland - follow-up of <i>Major capital investment in councils</i>		X										
Education Scotland - VSE of education services	X											
Education Scotland education psychology VSE (TBC)												

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Children's services inspection (TBC)												
Adults services inspection (TBC)												

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Local policing inspections (TBC)												
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)												
National or supported self-evaluation work year 2												
Education Scotland education psychology VSE (TBC)												

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL 2016/17	
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved
Children's services inspection (TBC)	
Adults services inspection (TBC)	
Local policing inspections (TBC)	
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)	

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.

