

Stirling Council

Assurance and Improvement Plan

2014–17

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Introduction

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Stirling 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 Stirling 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 for Scotland (HMICS) (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence)
 - the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and associated development plan for the council area
 - the council's own performance data and self-evaluation evidence
 - analysis of data from the SOLACE/COSLA/Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework.²
3. The shared risk assessment process was reviewed in 2013, in the context of a significantly changed scrutiny landscape and the evolving public service reform agenda.³ Based on the findings of the review, this year's shared risk assessment focused on identifying the council's current position in implementing the Scottish Government's reform agenda. It also placed more emphasis on scrutiny risk in relation to the council's improvement and transformation agenda. This change in approach is reflected in the structure of the AIP for 2014-17, which covers four areas:
 - local priorities and public service reform
 - corporate assessment
 - service performance
 - improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting.

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

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

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

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

Summary

6. Stirling Council has a clear vision for the future, with a strong focus on building an equal and inclusive society within a high quality environment. The LAN has judged that, overall it continues to perform well or very well in many areas, including education, health and cultural services. The LAN notes that the council plans and manages its budgets effectively and performs well in relation to the collection of council tax, the administration cost per benefits case and the payment of invoices.
7. The council, as part of the Stirling Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has developed a new SOA. The SOA is a carefully structured document which is informed by a balance of hard data and softer knowledge of local communities of geography and of need. Stirling CPP is working to align its resources to support prevention and early intervention. The LAN notes that the CPP recognises the challenge posed by the need to reduce the polarity of wealth and opportunity which exists within the area.
8. There have been significant changes in the senior management structure of the council, with the deletion of three assistant chief executive posts and the appointment of a deputy chief executive. In addition, it has recently been announced that the council's chief executive will retire in September 2014. These changes, at the most senior level of the council's administration, occur during a time of significant change with a potential impact on the council's capacity to manage this change and corresponding risk. Whilst we plan no specific scrutiny response to this risk, the LAN, through the external auditor, will continue to monitor the effects of these changes on the work of the council.
9. There have been significant changes to the leadership of shared education and social work services and the LAN will continue to monitor the impact of these changes on the work of the council.
10. Two pieces of scrutiny work from last year's AIP took place early in 2014. The Scottish Housing Regulator's verification of the council's progress towards meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards in March 2014 and the Care Inspectorate led Joint Inspection of children's services in January/February 2014.
11. Some progress has been made in relation to the council's housing and homeless services. However, some important performance indicators remain below national figures. Based on its engagement with the council, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is confident that new systems which the council has put in place are allowing it to report accurately on its performance. SHR and the LAN will monitor closely the council's performance during 2014. The results of this monitoring will inform the shared risk assessment process for 2014/15.
12. Based on the findings of the Joint Inspection of children's services, the LAN is not confident that the quality of services to protect children has improved to a satisfactory level. Within one year of the publication of its report, the Care Inspectorate and other bodies taking part in this

inspection will revisit the authority area. They will assess and report on progress made in meeting identified areas for improvement.

13. The council has lost a relatively high percentage of its workforce through early departures and any associated risks which emerge in relation to this will be highlighted by the external auditor.
14. The LAN has considered the council's public service reform arrangements and has concluded that more information is required to assess its readiness for health and social care integration. There are regular high level talks between chief officers of NHS Forth Valley and Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils on this issue and each body is working on plans to deliver better integration. Chief officers are confident that they will have arrangements in place to deliver integrated health and social care within the required timescales. However, at the time of writing, the organisations had yet to agree a model framework for taking forward integration. The LAN will continue to monitor developments closely in this area, particularly with health and social care integration due to be implemented from 1 April 2015.
15. The Stirling area will support a number of key events during 2014, including Bannockburn Live, the National Armed Forces Day and the Spirit of Stirling Whisky Festival. The programme of events is being delivered by a steering group, with progress reported to both the council and Community Planning and Regeneration Committee. The LAN judges that the scale and timing of the 2014 programme of events carries significant risk for the council and its partners. LAN members will therefore continue to monitor the impact of the programme.
16. 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.
17. The LAN considers that further information is required in relation to a number of areas, including the risks associated with changes to the senior management team, joint working and to staff terms and conditions.

Planned scrutiny activity

18. There is one area of planned scrutiny as a result of the Shared Risk Assessment process: The Care Inspectorate, and other scrutiny bodies as appropriate, will return to the Stirling Council area within one year of the publication of its report on the Joint Inspection of children's services. The Care Inspectorate will assess and report on progress made in meeting identified areas for improvement.
19. 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.

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20. 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.
 - 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 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.
21. 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>.
22. 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.
23. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in Stirling Council between April 2014 and March 2017 is at [Appendix 1](#).

Local priorities and public service reform

24. 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

25. The council, as part of Stirling CPP, has developed a new SOA. The SOA embraces an assets based approach and was prepared through an inclusive and comprehensive partnership initiative entitled Outcomes for Stirling. The LAN notes that the process supported Stirling CPP to build on its learning from the previous SOA by adopting a more structured approach to gathering data. It combined a non-geographic approach focusing on transitional life stages from early years to 85+ with a traditional examination of data collected in a geographical context.
26. The SOA identifies four key priorities: early intervention and prevention, more effective partnership working around a reduced number of key outcomes, targeting towards greatest need and community and third sector involvement and capacity building. Stirling CPP has allocated resources appropriately, assigned strategic leads and put in place arrangements for governance and accountability. The LAN notes that Stirling CPP is in the process of finalising its arrangements for the delivery of early intervention and prevention.
27. The Stirling SOA was subject to a national collaborative cross-sector quality assurance (QA) process designed to give ministers and council leaders' confidence that the SOA was as well developed as possible and sets the course for effective partnership working and on-going improvements in the joint delivery of outcomes.
28. The review panel of senior public sector officials that reviewed the Stirling SOA identified a number of important strengths including a clear local evidence base with links to national priorities, commitment to step change and an understanding of the need for robust governance. The QA process also gave each CPP useful feedback and constructive challenge to help it develop and agree its SOA and undertake improvement thereafter. The

improvement areas, which Stirling CPP has now addressed, included the need for benchmarking data, clearer alignment to the allocation of resources, confirmation of governance arrangements, the development of a community engagement framework and the development of support vehicles for the delivery of prevention and early intervention.

Police and fire

29. Police Scotland (Forth Valley Division) and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Stirling and Clackmannanshire Division) are active members of Stirling CPP and report to Stirling Council Public Safety Committee. This is a full committee of Stirling Council which comprises eight elected members and the Chair and acts as the scrutiny body for local plans. The committee has sought to cover a range of public safety related issues including presentations from the Ambulance Service and Mountain Rescue. Although the committee has been in existence for less than a year, its range of activities and level of scrutiny suggest that it will make an active contribution to community safety.
30. HMICS conducted a thematic inspection of the new arrangements for local scrutiny in 2013 and believe that the new arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement (LSE) require more time to bed in and that it is therefore too early to assess the effectiveness of these arrangements.
31. In relation to the wider issue of the delivery of community safety, HMICS has seen no significant changes to partnership arrangements since the creation of a single police service model for Scotland. HMICS is considering community safety as a possible area of focus within its 2014-17 work plan.
32. Fire reform is also still at an early stage and HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) has not as yet undertaken any detailed examination of the way in which community safety and engagement activities are delivered across local authority areas in Scotland. HMFSI published *An Overview of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)* in 2013. In its report, HMFSI highlighted that local senior officers (LSOs), who have responsibility for overseeing partnership working with local authorities in the delivery of community safety and engagement, are clearly sighted on their responsibilities and are keen to make local partnerships work in an effort to optimise community outcomes.
33. The SFRS is consulting on a suite of local fire and rescue plans. HMFSI is not currently proposing any specific scrutiny on local planning and consultation processes, but may consider this in its future inspection plans.

Health and social care integration

34. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill 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.

35. Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council and NHS Forth Valley, are working together to agree a model framework for taking forward integration. There are regular, high level discussions between chief officers through the Joint Executive Group. Also, there is clear evidence of NHS Forth Valley, Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council working at an operational level to integrate services. However, at the time of writing, the councils and the health board had yet to agree on an integration model to take forward health and social care reform although every indication is that the body corporate model will be adopted. Many integration initiatives are still at the development or early planning stage making it difficult to assess whether the requirements of the Bill will be achieved. Moreover, decisions on delegation and governance arrangements will only proceed once an integration model is in place. Additionally, further work is required to establish the budgets for all services within scope and to establish frameworks for financial control and monitoring.
36. Chief officers are confident that suitable arrangements will be in place for the timely implementation of health and social care integration. However, due to the early stage of development of many initiatives, LAN members will review the council's progress in this area as part of their on-going discussions with the council. External audit will update the position in their annual audit report for 2013/14.

Welfare reform

37. The council has established a Corporate Welfare Reform Working Group with representation across services. The Community Planning Partnership Tackling Poverty Group, which is a subgroup of the Economic Partnership, also coordinates partnership activity to respond to welfare reform. The group has developed an action plan to ensure that partners work together to engage with people affected by welfare reform directly.
38. Training and support has been provided to community organisations, front line services and partners to maximise the impact and information available for individuals affected. The SOA for 2013-2023 recognises the inequalities within the Stirling area and focuses on prevention, in line with the Tackling Poverty Framework.
39. The council has also established a group to monitor the implementation of welfare reform, including communication arrangements and engagement with the 850 tenants affected by under-occupancy. The monitoring group has used a checklist developed by the Improvement Service to carry out a self-assessment of progress to date. The council has also identified specific challenges, including the balance of housing stock and the impact of increased arrears on the Housing Revenue Account and rent setting strategy.
40. The SHR will gather information on rent and arrears through the annual return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Corporate assessment framework

41. 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>	Further information required	<p>Stirling Council has worked very effectively with partners to develop the SOA (2013-2023). The SOA was prepared following an inclusive and comprehensive partnership initiative and is informed by a balance of hard data and softer knowledge of local communities and communities of need.</p> <p>The council continues to demonstrate strong corporate leadership with well-developed plans and priorities to respond to future challenges.</p> <p>There have been a number of changes to key personnel in the senior management structure of the council. These include the joint heads of the two shared services with Clackmannanshire Council, the appointment of a depute chief executive and the deletion of the three previous assistant chief executive posts. In addition, it has recently been announced that the council's chief executive will retire in September 2014. These changes occur at a time of significant change and challenge, including the introduction of priority based budgeting and the development of the Stirling</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

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

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		2014 agenda. The LAN will seek to monitor this area through the work of the external auditor and will review progress for next year's AIP.	
<p>Governance and accountability</p> <p>Whether governance arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins council decisions and supports performance improvement.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council approved revised committee arrangements in February 2013. In order to support the changes revisions were made to the standing orders, scheme of delegation and financial regulations.</p> <p>The aim of each committee is to tackle policy, performance, projects and strategic objective delivery. Under the scheme of delegation, each committee also has a role to scrutinise service plans for implementation of the council's policies and priorities for service delivery, establishing appropriate targets and performance indicators and approving arrangements for the management of risk.</p> <p>External auditors will continue to review these arrangements as part of their routine engagement with the council and the outcomes of this work will inform the LANs risk assessment for 2014/2015.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p>Community engagement and empowerment</p> <p>Whether the council is giving local people a greater say in local budget decisions and</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The CPP organises its corporate community engagement around Stirling Council's Area Community Planning Forums, NHS Forth Valley's Public Participation Forum, and Police Scotland Forth Valley Division's Police and Communities Together model.</p> <p>The CPP also supports strategic engagement within non-geographic 'community of interest' forums, currently five groups:</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
giving communities a right to challenge local public service delivery.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stirling Older People’s Reference Group • Stirling Multi-Cultural Partnership • Stirling Youth Partnership • Stirling Business Panel • Stirling Access Panel <p>The council has also recently undertaken a significant programme of public and stakeholder engagement in relation to the options for delivering future savings through the priority based budgeting (PBB) programme.</p>	
Financial management How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.	No scrutiny required	The council manages its financial resources effectively. The council has a medium term financial plan, which reflects macroeconomic forecasts for the UK and Scotland. The Budget Implementation Strategy has signalled a move to (PBB) to deliver future savings. This approach takes future service requirements into account, including demographics, service cost and location. Services will be prioritised based on consultation on service need and the flexibility of delivery options. The PBB strategy notes that savings of £29 million are required over the next five years. A series of public and partnership engagement exercises have been held to identify options to deliver the scale of savings required.	No specific scrutiny activity
People management The effectiveness of the council’s workforce planning and	Further information required	Significant changes to staff terms and conditions, including the length of the working week, have now been agreed. Risks remain about the anticipated increase in productivity associated with longer hours, and therefore the ability to deliver the same level of	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
management arrangements.		<p>service with reduced staffing.</p> <p>Senior managers have also been asked to reduce the council's workforce by around 100 full time equivalent members of staff.</p> <p>The LAN will request feedback from the council on the impact of these changes and monitor their impact through external audit.</p>	
<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>An audit of the council's asset management arrangements in 2011-12 found that the council had set a target to deliver £1 million of savings through more efficient utilisation of assets under the Medium Term Financial Planning and Management Framework. Around half of these savings will be delivered by the recent 'Big Move' project to rationalise city centre office accommodation.</p> <p>The proportion of council buildings in a satisfactory condition has decreased slightly but is above the national average and Stirling is the fourth best performing council.</p> <p>The number of buildings suitable for current use has steadily increased and is greater than the national average and Stirling is the fourth best performing council.</p> <p>The impact of the 'Big Move' will be monitored through external audit.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p>Procurement</p> <p>How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has in place an appropriate procurement strategy. Procurement Capability Assessment scores continue to show a steady increase, and at 56% (2012:50%), performance falls within the 'improved' category. Key areas of improvement include</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.		<p>developments in the council's performance measurement arrangements for procurement, and in the procurement strategy and objectives.</p> <p>Audit Scotland is carrying out a national audit on procurement in local government and is due to publish a report in April 2014. The council should consider the lessons learned and recommendations in that report.</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>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has appropriate risk management arrangements in place at service and corporate level. Risks are reviewed regularly by the Council Management Team, and the corporate risk register is presented to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. Within shared services, risk registers are in place for each service, allowing risks to be escalated to the strategic corporate risk register as required. The social services team has developed a single risk register across both councils.</p> <p>The LAN considers that operational changes associated with shared educational and social services may present additional risk to Stirling Council as organisational changes are implemented. This will be monitored through external audit.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p>Information management</p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for managing information as a key</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The 'Big Move' office rationalisation project has reduced the level of office accommodation used by council staff. Revised workplace arrangements have been developed by the Big Move Working Group, which included representation from the IT department. The arrangements make use of home and mobile working, and cloud technology. The LAN considers that it will be necessary to</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
resource in delivering services.		continue to monitor data protection and information security arrangements, including progress towards Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation. This will be monitored through external audit.	
<p>Joint working</p> <p>Progress with any significant shared services initiatives, in particular in relation to governance or pace of implementation.</p>	Further Information required	<p>Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils evaluated the ongoing implementation of the shared service arrangements across education and social services in a 'taking stock' exercise. As a consequence of the most recent review each council reaffirmed its commitment to shared service arrangements. Both councils agreed to establish a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and commissioned a review of managerial, partnership and political governance arrangements. The review established the principle that business cases for further and deeper integration across the operation of shared services should be prepared and committed both education and social services to the preparation of service delivery strategies. The risks associated with shared educational and social work services will be monitored through Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate links and external audit.</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate led Joint Inspection of services for children early in 2014 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant changes have taken place over the last few years in the key services that support children, young people and their families. • There has not been sufficient improvement in some areas set 	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate with other bodies will revisit to assess and report on progress in 2015/16.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>out in previous inspection reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are still important weaknesses in processes to assess risks and needs. As a result, some children and young people may be left in situations which place them at risk or without sufficient support to improve their wellbeing. • Leaders now need to articulate a shared, coherent vision and accelerate strategic planning for the integration of services for children and young people. Stronger, collaborative leadership is needed to increase the capacity for improvement and to deliver planned changes at the pace needed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. 	
<p>Efficiency How effectively the council is improving its efficiency in response to the budget challenges being faced.</p>	No scrutiny required	The council has recently adopted priority based budgeting which takes account of demographics, service cost and location in identifying enable it to deliver future savings. Services will be prioritised based on consultation, service need and the flexibility of delivery options. The LAN judges that the council's record on honest self-evaluation, partnership working and achieving efficiency savings, position it well to identify services with the highest value to Stirling. However, the LAN will continue to monitor progress.	No specific scrutiny activity
<p>Equalities Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its</p>	No Scrutiny required	In April 2011, the Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector 'General Duty' which encourages equality to be mainstreamed into public bodies' core work so that it is not a marginal activity but part and parcel of how public bodies operate. One of the key	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
obligations under equalities legislation.		<p>requirements of the legislation is for public bodies to publish a set of equality outcomes and reporting requirements no later than 30th April 2013. Stirling Council's Equality Strategy, Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report was developed in consultation with community planning partners. It sets out the council's approach to mainstreaming equality and was approved by Stirling Council in May 2013. The council has agreed seven equality outcomes which were developed through extensive consultation with local equality groups. These are published on the council's website.</p> <p>An equalities action plan and indicators have been developed and will be considered by the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in April 2014. This recommends internal and public monitoring and reporting processes, and Stirling Council has arrangements in place to follow Scottish Government reporting requirements.</p> <p>Processes for Equality Impact Assessment are in place and information and guidance is available on the public website. Stirling Council has recently undertaken approximately 200 Equality Impact Assessment to support the Priority Based Budgeting Process, and is in the process of reviewing that exercise to revise the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and forms as required.</p> <p>Stirling Council and the Stirling CPP approved a Tackling Poverty Framework in 2011, to ensure that a broad and holistic approach is taken to address factors that increase the likelihood of poverty,</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>and therefore the impact of poverty for individuals and families within Stirling.</p> <p>Training and support has been provided to community organisations, front line services and partners to maximise the impact and information available for individuals and families affected. The SOA for 2013-2023 recognises the inequalities within the Stirling area and its emphasis on prevention is in line with the Tackling Poverty Framework.</p>	

Service performance

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

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
Education The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).	No scrutiny required	Three year average data for National Performance Framework attainment targets at levels three to six continue to show sustained improvement in young people's attainment in national examinations. The council is in line with national averages for English and maths at level three and for the percentage of young people achieving five or more awards at level three. In all other measures the council figures are above the national figures. Almost all young people leave school with awards in English and maths at level three or above. Most young people achieve five or more awards at level four. The percentage of young people achieving three or more Highers is well above the national figure. Post school positive destinations continue to show improvements. Exclusions in primary schools have declined but there has been a slight increase in exclusions in secondary schools. Education Scotland will continue to support and challenge the Education Authority and will identify areas requiring support for inclusion in a Local Partnership Agreement. A Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) will be arranged in due course.	No specific scrutiny activity.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Social work The quality of local social work and care services and the resulting outcomes (including adult care, older peoples services, learning disability services, criminal justice services, mental health services, children and families).</p>	<p>Scrutiny required</p>	<p>The shared social work service's senior management team has experienced a number of significant changes and the team's capacity to deliver has been under considerable pressure.</p> <p>A review of nationally published outcomes and proxy outcomes data shows that:</p> <p>In adult services most key indicators are around the national average and indicate that performance is improving. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of intensive homecare (10 hours +) has increased steadily and has doubled since 2008/09. • A continuing slow, but steady increase in home care out of hours. • The proportion of older people supported by the council in care homes has continued to decline and is now five percentage points below the national average. <p>In children's services performance is more mixed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff across services are highly committed to improving the lives of children, young people and families, many families are receiving helpful support from a range of services and an encouraging start has been made to implementing a Getting it right for every child approach. • Action has recently been taken to strengthen the throughcare and aftercare team. • There has been a recent improvement in the service's performance in the provision of reports to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. 	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) is supporting improvement in relation to permanence and child care planning processes. The most recent inspections of the council's adoption and fostering services and of its care at home services have all resulted in gradings of good or above. <p>The Care Inspectorate led a joint inspection of services for children in Stirling CPP early 2014. These inspections take account of the full range of work within a community planning partnership areas including services provided by health visitors, school nurses, teachers, doctors, social workers, police officers and the voluntary sector. Therefore the findings from this inspection are covered within the joint working section of this AIP.</p>	<p>The Care Inspectorate with other bodies will revisit to assess and report on progress in 2015/16.</p>
<p>Housing and homelessness</p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's performance in relation to the collection of current tenants' rent arrears remains poor, although there was some improvement during 2012/2013.</p> <p>In conjunction with Shelter Scotland, the council has recently carried out a further comprehensive self-assessment examining the rent arrears process. This has resulted in the development of a range of improvement actions which the council is currently introducing in an attempt to improve its performance in this area.</p> <p>SHR has recently carried out an on-site review of a sample of rent arrears cases. The LAN is confident that the council will incorporate</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>SHR recommendations for improvement in its action plan.</p> <p>Some improvement has been noted in relation to the council's services for the homeless, however some performance indicators remain below the national figures.</p> <p>The council has made some progress in relation to average re-let times for not low demand houses.</p> <p>A number of risks remain in relation to the council's ability to bring all of its properties up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by the ministerial target of 2015. SHR engaged with the council in March 2014 to evaluate the extent to which it is making progress in this area.</p> <p>Based on its engagement with the council, during 2013/14, SHR is confident that the new systems which the council has put in place are allowing it to report accurately on its performance. SHR and the LAN will monitor closely the council's performance during 2014/15. The results of this monitoring will inform the shared risk assessment process for 2014/15.</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>The council has partnerships in place with a number of arms-length organisations, including Active Stirling and the Stirling Development Agency. Steps have been taken recently to rationalise the number of associated bodies, by winding up a number of companies. The Audit Committee receives reports on the performance and strategic direction of each associated body, to allow monitoring of the accountability arrangements in place.</p> <p>Non-regulated service performance is reported through the Stirling Performs website, and in Statutory Performance Indicators. This data</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>confirms that Stirling continues to perform well against national averages, particularly in responding to domestic noise and consumer complaints.</p> <p>The Stirling area will support a number of key events during 2014, including Bannockburn Live, the National Armed Forces Day and the Spirit of Stirling Whisky Festival. The programme of events is being delivered by a steering group, with progress reported to both the council and Community Planning and Regeneration Committee.</p> <p>The LAN judges that the scale and timing of the 2014 programme of events carries significant risk for the council and its partners. LAN members will therefore continue to monitor the impact of the programme.</p>	

Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

43. 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>Further information required</p>	<p>Since 2010 Stirling Council has embedded its use of the Public Sector Improvement Framework as its main method of self-evaluation. A report on the findings of the self-assessment process was presented to the council in February 2013. Areas of potential concern have been incorporated into the council improvement plan for action.</p> <p>Stirling's SOA demonstrates a clear understanding of the challenging context in which it will be implemented. In particular it recognises the impact on individuals and communities of financial hardship, welfare reform, economic uncertainty public service reform, and changing demographics. It emphasises the need to enable individuals and communities to take control of managing positive changes to their circumstances by working together to plan and deliver appropriate interventions.</p> <p>Following a recent review of shared education and social services arrangements, Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils have reaffirmed their commitment, agreed to establish a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and commissioned a review of managerial, partnership and</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>political governance arrangements.</p> <p>The council is in the process of introducing priority based budgeting in response to the challenges it faces in planning its spending for the next five years. It has in place a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement and has disseminated widely the options being considered for transformation, efficiency or stop/reduce</p> <p>The LAN has judged that further information is required in relation to the impact of this approach.</p>	
<p>Public performance reporting (PPR)</p> <p>The progress that is being made by councils in meeting their PPR obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council has a number of approaches in place to report on performance. An Annual Report provides clear links to performance against the SOA, and how the council works with its community planning partners to deliver improved services.</p> <p>Each service also reports on performance monthly using the covalent reporting system, which is available publicly on the 'Stirling Performs' website. The website commentary provides details of planned improvement actions for areas where there is weaker performance. There is also a compendium of background information which includes details on where the data comes from, what it measures and how and when targets were established.</p> <p>The LAN has identified no significant issues in relation to PPR.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny</p>

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

STIRLING COUNCIL		2013-14											
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)													
National or supported self-evaluation work year 1													
Audit Scotland - follow-up of Audit Scotland report, <i>Arm's-length External Organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?</i>		X	X										
Audit Scotland - follow-up of Audit Scotland report, <i>Major capital investment in councils</i>			X	X									
Care Inspectorate led Joint inspection of children's services										X	X		

STIRLING COUNCIL		2014-15											
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Local policing inspections (TBC)													
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)													

STIRLING COUNCIL		2014-15											
Adult services inspection (TBC)													
National or supported self-evaluation work year 2													
Education Scotland educational psychology VSE (TBC)													
Validated Self-evaluation of shared services in education across Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils (dates TBC)													

STIRLING COUNCIL		2015-16	
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved		
Local policing inspections (TBC)	HMICS		
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (TBC)			
Adult services inspection (TBC)	Care Inspectorate		
Care Inspectorate led Joint children's services follow through inspection	Care Inspectorate and others as appropriate		

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.
