

# **West Dunbartonshire 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 West Dunbartonshire Council (the council) between April 2014 and March 2017. The AIP is based on a shared risk assessment (SRA) 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 SRA 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 the council since the introduction of the shared risk assessment process.<sup>1</sup> It is the result of the SRA 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.<sup>2</sup>
3. The SRA process was reviewed in 2013, in the context of a significantly changed scrutiny landscape and the evolving public service reform agenda.<sup>3</sup> 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.
4. Scrutiny risk is assessed against the following criteria:

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

# Summary

6. Over the past year the council has continued to focus on performance improvement and has been progressing a major transformation programme focused on achieving savings through delivery of efficient and effective services. This is an ambitious programme which will require strong programme and project management if it is to deliver its projected benefits. To support the programme the council has implemented a strategic programme framework and governance arrangements designed to monitor significant strategic projects. The LAN note the introduction of formalised strategic programme management arrangements and will continue to monitor progress against the transformation programme through routine audit procedures. Particular areas of progress in 2013 include:
  - Introduction of a ten year capital plan.
  - Opening the new Dumbarton Academy.
  - Progression of the transformation programme including payroll modernisation.
  - Positive employee survey results.
  - Progressing plans for the provision of two new care homes.
7. The West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has refreshed its SOA 2011/14, reflecting the key actions for 2013/14 and developed the 2014/17 SOA which was submitted to the Scottish Government in March 2014. This three year plan is focused on delivery of the ten year vision which was established in 2012 by a strategic advisory group. It has six interconnected priorities, the delivery of which will be supported by monitoring the delivery of associated local outcomes. A joint approach to health and social care integration has been established between the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGCC), East Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council and West Dunbartonshire Council with transition to the new Shadow Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) arrangements under way.
8. The 2013 AIP identified a need for additional scrutiny in relation to housing maintenance and assets and compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) which require to be met by 2015. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), with support from Audit Scotland, conducted a review in the spring of 2013. The report published in June 2013 concluded that the council had improved its approach to bringing the housing stock up to SHQS by 2015 and that plans were in place to achieve the targets set. An enhanced position on compliance was noted with the percentage of stock, based on existing records, not requiring remedial action increasing from 32 per cent to 62 per cent. The council has recently completed a 100 per cent housing stock condition survey and have advised that they are currently at 80 per cent compliance.
9. 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.

10. In the 2013-2016 AIP, issued in April 2013, the LAN confirmed their opinion that the Best Value review which was scheduled for 2012/13 should be delayed and reassessed as part of the 2013/14 SRA process. The LAN remains of the view that there is no requirement for a Best Value review. This reflects the LAN's overall view that the council is continuing to make good progress and is taking appropriate action to manage the challenges and risks that it faces. This view is supported by the LAN's assessments detailed on pages 11-25 which confirm there are no areas of risk requiring specific scrutiny activity. There are, however, some areas where the LAN feels it is important for a watching brief to be maintained and this will be carried out through routine scrutiny activity.

## Planned scrutiny activity

11. The LAN has not assessed any areas as 'scrutiny required' and therefore no specific scrutiny activity has been identified as a direct consequence of the current SRA process. There are areas assessed as 'further information required' where the LAN will monitor progress through the annual audit process. In particular the LAN will monitor progress against the joint SHR/Audit Scotland June 2013 inquiry report in relation to housing maintenance and assets.
12. 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.
13. There is some non-risk based scrutiny activity planned across councils in 2014/15, but where scrutiny bodies are yet to determine which specific council areas will be included. This includes the following:
  - The SHR 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 was 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.
14. 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>.
  15. 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.
  16. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in the council between April 2014 and March 2017 is detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

# Local priorities and public service reform

17. 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 SRA 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

18. The West Dunbartonshire CPP refreshed its SOA 2011/14, reflecting the key actions for 2013/14. This was submitted to the Scottish Government assurance panel who commented that the CPP was well placed to deliver a revised SOA. It also recognised the existing strengths the CPP has to build upon in the extent of prior work already carried out amongst the CPP partners. This included agreeing a ten year vision, key priorities and outcomes, a model for community engagement and a newly revised governance structure. The panel was happy to recommend the existing draft SOA to ministers and the council leader for sign off.
19. The CPP is working to develop the 2014/17 SOA by April 2014. This will be focused on delivery of the ten year vision established in 2012 by a strategic advisory group. It particularly focuses on six interconnected priorities each of which have associated local outcomes. The six priorities are:
- Stimulating Regeneration and Economic Growth.
  - Supporting Safe, Strong and Involved Communities.
  - Tackling Health Inequalities.
  - Supporting Older People.
  - Promoting Physical Activity.
  - Supporting Children and Families.

## Police and fire

20. 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.

21. Each of the 14 territorial policing divisions is in the process of consulting with communities on the content and priorities for the policing plan 2014-17. That process will include local authorities who will give final approval of plans.
22. The council has been reviewing its approach to community planning and intends that there be a Community Planning Management Group which will be responsible for scrutiny of local police and fire plans.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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

27. West Dunbartonshire is one of six existing Community Health Care Partnerships (CHCP) in Scotland. The governance and financial management of the CHCP was one of the main focuses of the last inspection by the Care Inspectorate in 2012. The inspection found the CHCP was functioning effectively in these areas. The indications were that given its experience as a CHCP, West Dunbartonshire was relatively well placed in terms of health and social care integration.

28. A joint approach to health and social care integration has been established between the NHSGCC chief executive and the chief executives of three associated councils within the NHSGCC area. These three council areas already have CHCPs in place and it is the intention that these arrangements remain stable and transition to the new Shadow Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) with minimum disruption to the well-established ways of working.
29. The current position based on link inspector contact and the November 2013 report by the Joint Improvement Team on its conversations with partnerships is that, in West Dunbartonshire:
  - A shadow arrangement is in place.
  - A body corporate model has been agreed.
  - The existing CHCP director is acting as the chief officer.
  - As with the existing CHCP, the new partnership will include children's services and criminal justice services in addition to adult's services.
30. A transition working group which will report to all four chief executives has been established which will develop a plan to transition the current CHCPs to shadow HSCPs by April 2014. This plan will be subject to approval by NHSGCC and the councils.

## Welfare reform

31. Audit Scotland's Welfare Reform Update report (published May 2013) considers the impact that the government's reforms will have on councils and the public. The report looked to identify how the council is assessing the risk from welfare reforms; how they are planning for welfare reform; and how they included welfare reform in discussions with community planning partners.
32. The council record welfare reform as a strategic risk of "medium" impact. In addition they maintain a risk register for the Scottish Welfare Fund project. They have an established governance structure to manage all the welfare reform workstreams with each stream is set-up as a project with relevant members across impacted council service areas.
33. The council works closely with local advice agencies through a partnership arrangement and shared strategy and liaised closely with registered social landlords, stakeholders and third sector agencies to manage the impact of welfare reform. Through this approach the council are ensuring that the wider cumulative impact of welfare reform on services and policies is kept under consideration. The council is one of three local authorities in Scotland acting as a pilot. A proactive approach well in advance of significant changes - such as the under occupancy charge and social welfare fund - was undertaken across communities to raise awareness and ensure appropriate advice could be provided.
34. 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

35. 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).<sup>4</sup>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Leadership and direction</b></p> <p>How the council's vision is designed around its knowledge of its local communities and how this is translated throughout all the council's plans and strategies.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Following the election of the new Administration in 2012, the council set out its strategic vision for the five year period to 2017 underpinned by values and challenging targets. Effective leadership has driven the delivery of the key priority to have robust structured corporate planning and performance systems. The council have replaced their Performance Management Framework and Joint Planning and Budget Guidance with a new Strategic Planning and Performance Framework 2013-2017. The framework draws together the work performed by the council to revise its approach to performance and planning over the past year including setting the new strategic priorities, revising departmental plans and refreshing the approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement.</p> <p>The council's Strategic Plan 2012-2017 identifies the council's key priorities and the departmental plans set out how each directorate will contribute to these priorities. Service and team plans detail how the departmental plans will be delivered. This ensures the overall vision is reflected throughout the council's planning hierarchy.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Governance and accountability</b></p>	No scrutiny required	The Audit & Performance Review Committee is a key part of the council's governance framework. Its remit includes performance, risk management and	No specific scrutiny activity

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

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
Whether governance arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins council decisions and supports performance improvement.		<p>consideration of audit plans and reports. It is chaired by the leader of the opposition and three lay members are invited to attend.</p> <p>In 2011/12 Audit Scotland highlighted potential concerns about officer/member relationships and member/member relationships and monitored this during 2012/13. Audit Scotland is content that the council are prepared to take action where it feels behaviour has not met the expected standard. Overall there is good cooperation between elected members with willingness for cross party working where it is deemed necessary and productive. In the majority of occasions political debate is respectful and is conducted in a manner which does not give us concern. However Audit Scotland will continue to monitor officer/member relations as part of its routine audit approach.</p>	
<p><b>Community engagement and empowerment</b></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>A Community Participation Committee (CPC) is in place. It meets five times a year with open forums in place to widen involvement to include members of the public.</p> <p>In October 2013, as part of the renewed CPP arrangements and in line with the requirements to demonstrate "understanding place," a new approach to community engagement called neighbourhood listening events was launched. These are designed to give residents the opportunity to describe what matters most to them on a range of issues including employment; health and wellbeing, elderly care and the environment.</p> <p>The council's budget setting process includes consultation with local residents and the workforce through consultation forums and online questionnaires. The consultation process allows the public to fully consider budget proposals, provide input and perspective, and enable them to shape and influence the decision making process.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>A Citizens' Panel is in place. It has approximately 1,400 representatives and a high level of participation with an average of 1,020 respondents per survey in 2012/13.</p> <p>An independent telephone survey was undertaken throughout 2013. Residents were asked to provide feedback on council services such as roads and waste. This has been a successful mechanism for achieving feedback and will be run again in 2014.</p>	
<p><b>Financial management</b> How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The refreshed long term financial strategy presented to the council in October 2013 reported a cumulative budget gap for the period 2014/15 - 2016/17 of £21.69 million. In December 2013 the council were provided with an updated financial position projection following the completion of draft revenue estimates for 2014/15. This took account of the Scottish Government settlement for 2014/15 and a package of savings options prepared by the Corporate Management Team. This reduced the cumulative budget gap by 2016/17 to £16.54 million.</p> <p>The council does have high debt levels in relation to other Scottish local authorities though there is recognition that a significant portion of this debt is tied in to housing stock and PPP schools which not all councils have. As a consequence it has the third highest interest payable as a proportion of net revenue spend out of all 32 Scottish local authorities.</p> <p>Whilst there are key areas of concern (such as debt levels and funding gaps) the council is fully aware of them and is managing its finances appropriately. The council delivered surpluses against service budgets in both 2011/12 and 2012/13 and is holding reasonable reserves to deal with unforeseen circumstances. The ten year capital plan introduced in January 2013, and refreshed in February 2014, should help ensure that longer term revenue considerations take account of the impact of capital borrowing.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>People management</b></p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>Further information required</p>	<p>Work to develop the council's Workforce Strategy and cyclical framework began early in 2013 shortly after the council appointed the new head of people and transformation. The strategy provides a formal, structured framework to ensure that all departments have a consistent approach to planning which is incorporated into the annual reporting of department plans to committee. The strategy was developed in partnership with the trade unions and was formally approved by Corporate Services Committee in November 2013, allowing the departments to utilise the framework for the 2014/15 planning process.</p> <p>Service workforce plans are targeted to be in place by the end of April 2014 with a council wide workforce plan in place by the end of May 2014. This evidences a structured approach to workforce planning however until such time as revised workforce plans are in place it is difficult to assess whether the council's approach is going to be effective. Audit Scotland raised concerns about the quality and consistency of information in workforce plans in the 2011/12 annual audit report and feels that more progress could have been made to address this issue.</p> <p>While workforce plans are being finalised, the workforce strategy is underpinned by various mechanisms which demonstrate a commitment to positive, proactive workforce management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing a more targeted approach to early release, better use of flexible retirement and refocusing on redeployment</li> <li>• review of the personal development planning framework</li> <li>• refreshed employee recognition framework</li> <li>• launching a Joint Partnership Agreement in conjunction with elected members, the trade unions and the Scottish Trade Unions Congress.</li> </ul>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Attendance at work is a significant corporate priority due to many years of high absenteeism. The council has a major project in place to improve attendance levels and early indications are that the action being taken is having a positive impact, particularly with regard to short term absences. However it is likely to be medium to long term before the effectiveness of the action being taken can be properly measured.</p> <p>Development of workforce plans and progress reducing absence levels will be monitored through routine audit procedures.</p>	
<p><b>Asset management</b> The council's arrangements for managing assets and how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Capital slippage has been an ongoing area of concern for the council with it varying between 19% and 45% over the past six years. Traditionally the council has not planned its capital spend over a number of years. In January 2013 the council approved a new ten year general services capital plan covering 2013/14 to 2022/23 which provides for a longer term view on capital investment. This should facilitate more successful and timely delivery of future capital programmes. The capital plan identifies capital projects over the ten year period with a total capital investment of £320.67 million. This will be principally funded by borrowing, government grants and capital receipts. The prudential borrowing requirement over the ten year programme is £179.30 million. The council has recently completed a 100% housing stock condition survey and are currently preparing the final output. The results of this will inform the capital work required to ensure the council meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standards by 2015. Until there is clarity over the capital works required there is uncertainty over the council's ability to deliver its HRA capital plans.</p> <p>2012/13 statutory performance indicators highlight that, whilst 87% of the council's operational accommodation is suitable for its current use, only 51% are in a</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>satisfactory condition. This places them 32nd out of the 32 Scottish local authorities.</p> <p>Although there are concerns about capital slippage, housing stock and the potential impact on revenue budgets of funding the long term capital plan we are of the opinion that the council is aware of these issues and, through implementation of the long term capital plan, and ongoing review of the financial strategy, is taking the necessary steps to manage the risks associated with asset management.</p>	
<p><b>Procurement</b></p> <p>How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>Since scoring 17% and being graded as 'non-conformance' in the 2010 Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA), the council has demonstrated a commitment to improving their approach to procurement. In 2011 the council received a revised PCA of 33%, 2012 a score of 44% and its 2013 assessment scored the council at 58%. This places them in the 'improved performance' category.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Risk management</b></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 made good progress on risk management over the past two years and is continuing to develop it. The strategic risk register covers the period until 31 March 2017. Department and service risks are embedded into service planning arrangements, and have been developed in line with the new department plans remitted to committees in 2013. The revised risk management strategy and framework was approved by the Corporate Services Committee in November 2013. The strategy applies to all risks (ie strategic, service, project or partnership) and separate risk registers are available for each of these risk types.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Information management</b></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 recognises the importance of information management. During the year the council invited the Information Commissioner's Office to conduct a data protection audit. The conclusion of the audit was: "The Information Commissioner's Office audit achieved a level of assurance that to date has only been matched by one other authority in Scotland."</p> <p>The council's business continuity plan was updated in August 2013 and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Work is in progress to refresh departmental and service business continuity plans. This work will be completed in April 2014.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Joint working</b></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 are in the process of managing a transition to shadow HSCP arrangements. This is to move toward enactment of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill 2013. This Bill requires territorial NHS health boards and local authorities to integrate strategic planning and service provision arrangements for adult health and social care services within new HSCPs. This means that the members of the newly formed Integration Joint Board will be responsible for the totality of the HSCPs functions (unlike the current position with the CHCP where the partners retain their separate statutory responsibilities). The chief executives of NMSGCC, East Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council and West Dunbartonshire Council have established a working group to develop a plan to transition the current CHCPs to shadow HSCPs.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p> <p>How effectively the council is improving its efficiency in response to</p>	Further information required	<p>The Corporate Management Team have reduced the council's cumulative budget gap for the period 2014/15 - 2016/17 from £21.69 million to £16.54 million through identification of a package of savings options. The CMT has a work plan to provide elected members with future reports to the relevant committee to consider further</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
the budget challenges being faced.		savings options to further reduce the budget gap. Delivery of efficiency savings will be monitored through routine audit procedures.	
<p><b>Equalities</b></p> <p>Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its statutory obligations.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council's 'Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2013-2017' was presented to the Corporate Services Committee in February 2013. The report sets out the council's approach to mainstreaming equality and provides details of the equality outcomes (2013-2017) identified by the council which incorporate all the protected characteristics.</p> <p>The council's employee survey carried out in October 2013 highlights that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% of staff strongly agree or agree that there is a good level of commitment shown by the council to promoting equality and diversity within the workplace.</li> <li>• 81% agree/strongly agree that the council is a safe and inclusive workplace.</li> <li>• 95% cent of staff have not experienced or reported harassment, discrimination or been disadvantaged because of any protected characteristics in the past year.</li> </ul> <p>The percentage of council employees in top 2% and 5% of earners that are women has increased steadily over the past three years. Both indicators are above the national average and the council is ranked 4th and 2nd out of the 32 Scottish local authorities.</p> <p>The percentage of public service buildings that are suitable for and accessible to disabled people got worse in 2011/12 but has improved slightly in 2012/13. However it remains significantly below the national average and the council is ranked 30th out of the 32 Scottish local authorities.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

# Service performance

36. 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
<b>Education</b> The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).	No scrutiny required	The assessed quality of education overall in West Dunbartonshire is positive across all age groups. The progress and achievement of children in pre-school centres continues to be very strong with the quality of provision in many pre-school centres reflecting best practice. For primary-aged learners levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics while increasing has levelled off in some schools. This increase is most notable in schools which serve areas of deprivation. The improvement in performance of some schools in less deprived areas is less marked. In recent years inspection activity in primary schools has produced a positive report in almost all schools inspected. The council has taken important steps to make secondary school pupils' learning more relevant through increasing the range of vocational courses delivered in partnership with West College and other partners. Attainment levels by the end of S2 in secondary schools have continued to improve steadily, particularly in mathematics. Overall, there were improvements in attainment by the end of S4, S5 and S6 over the last few years on almost all measures. However, at SCQF Levels five and six, West Dunbartonshire still performs less well than similar authorities or Scotland as a whole. There were no secondary school	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>inspections in 2013.</p> <p>In August 2013, the new Dumbarton Academy was opened. However in January 2014 the Education Committee rejected the option to build the new Our Lady and St Patrick's High School in Postie's Park. This decision was taken after a public consultation process highlighted significant public opposition. Council officers have been asked to identify alternative sites. This will result in a delay progressing the school estate. The LAN will monitor the progression of the school estate through routine audit procedures.</p>	
<p><b>Social care services</b> 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>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council's social work service's last inspection in 2012 was largely positive and concluded that the social work services were generally performing well and that there was a solid focus on improvement.</p> <p>Good progress has been made on plans to build two replacement care homes. The council sought early engagement with the Care Inspectorate as any new care homes will require to be registered with the Care Inspectorate. The council has shared information with the Care Inspectorate about the site identified for one of the new homes in Dumbarton and the steps being taken to secure a second site in Clydebank. Initial plans of the Dumbarton site have also been shared with the Care Inspectorate and initial discussion about these has taken place. The process of engagement is ongoing.</p> <p>Regarding adult services, West Dunbartonshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has met the four week target for delayed discharges from hospital</li> <li>• is above the national average for providing balances levels of homecare and intensive homecare</li> <li>• is below the national average for multiple emergency admissions of older</li> </ul>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>people and the proportion of adults with learning disabilities with a personal life plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is broadly in line with the national average for the number of older people supported by the council in care homes.</li> </ul> <p>Regarding children services West Dunbartonshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has above average number of looked after children though not significantly given West Dunbartonshire's levels of deprivation</li> <li>has a very high proportion of children who have left care and are still in touch with social services with the proportion of these in employment, education or training well above the national average.</li> </ul> <p>The majority of the evaluations arising from the inspections of the council's regulated care service are good or better. However, there are a minority (including the fostering service and one of the six existing care homes for older people) which have received an evaluation of adequate or weak. This will be addressed through the Care Inspectorate's system for determining the frequency and intensity of these inspections.</p>	
<p><b>Housing and homelessness</b></p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	<p>Further information required</p>	<p>The SHR carried out on-site scrutiny in 2013 and will continue to engage with the council to get assurance on the risk areas identified in the Inquiry Report. Following the on-site scrutiny by the SHR, the council is working through an agreed Inquiry Improvement Plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the Regulator's report.</p> <p>Good progress has been made in addressing a number of the improvement actions. This includes an increase in the SHQS compliance rates and the completion of the stock condition survey. The conclusions of this survey may impact upon delivery of</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p> <p>However the SHR will request information from the</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>capital plans, levels of debt and future revenue budgets.</p> <p>The council's performance in access and lettings outcomes has not improved from the previous reporting year. The percentage of tenancies sustained decreased and is below the national average. Re-let times increased in 2012/13 to 35 days from 29 days for not low demand properties and to 109 days from 63 days for low demand properties. The figures for void rent loss were a little over 1 per cent above the national average of 2.2% at the end of the reporting year.</p> <p>Current tenant arrears are 2.4% higher than the national average but have remained static at this higher level over the previous three reporting years. The council plans a 7% rent increase this year with similar increases in subsequent years.</p> <p>Most of the indicators for the homelessness service are at, or have improved against, the national average. The exception is the percentage of intentionally homeless decisions which has increased and is above the national average.</p>	<p>council to assess improvements in performance and progress against issues highlighted in inquiry report.</p>
<p><b>Non-regulated services</b></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><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>The council have a strong focus on economic development to increase employment and new businesses and make West Dunbartonshire a place people want to live, work and invest in. Multiple services contribute toward achieving this ambition. The council are investing significantly in major regeneration sites, job creation initiatives and supporting local businesses. The council are of the view that that this is having a positive impact with job opportunities and modern apprenticeships being created and businesses accessing advice and assistance through channels such as Business Gateway.</p> <p>Performance in other non-regulated service areas, as with all local authorities, varies across service areas. There are some areas of high performance and some where</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>performance could be improved. A summary of these, evidenced by performance indicator data, are provided below however there are no areas where we feel performance levels are of sufficient concern to require specific scrutiny activity.</p> <p><b>Cultural and (Community) Leisure Services</b></p> <p>Attendance at swimming pools is falling although the council is still above the national average. Attendance at other indoor sports and leisure facilities, although showing a slight increase in 2012/13, are still well below the national average with the council ranked 28 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities. Visits to libraries are declining although the council still exceed the national average.</p> <p><b>Development, Environmental and Protective Services</b></p> <p>The council is performing well in terms of the time taken to deal with major applications, domestic complaints and business advice requests and the costs associated with trading standards and environmental health. However there is room for improvement when dealing with consumer complaints.</p> <p><b>Roads &amp; Lighting</b></p> <p>The percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment improved slightly in 2012/13 and remains below the national average with the council ranked 14 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities.</p> <p><b>Waste Management</b></p> <p>The net cost of refuse collection and disposal per premise have both increased over the past three years. Note though that the council is still well below the national average for collection costs but above the national average for disposal costs. The council's overall cleanliness index has remained stable at 72 in 2012/13; this is below the national average of 75 and places the council 26th out of the 32 Scottish local</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		authorities. The council monitor performance through the relevant service committee and the Audit & Performance Review Committee. We are satisfied that the appropriate measures are in place to identify performance issues and prioritise corrective action.	



# Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

37. 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><b>Improving and transforming public services</b></p> <p>The council's arrangements for continuing to deliver services with reducing resources and growing demand, and what impact this is having on service outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council has approved new strategic priorities and an associated strategic plan to 2017. Department plans have been reviewed and aligned to delivering the strategic priorities. A major transformation programme focused on delivering savings through delivery of efficient and effective services is being progressed. A strategic programme framework has been implemented which is designed to monitor significant strategic projects and ensure they are financially and operationally viable. A Strategic Programme Board consisting of the CMT met in September 2013 and meets every two months to monitor progress and ensure the programme continues to be aligned to the council's strategic direction and priorities. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor progress against the transformation programme as part of their routine audit work.</p> <p>The council has recently refreshed its corporate continuous improvement and self-evaluation model which is based on the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF). It is a three stage approach which culminates with an agreed improvement plan with the agreed actions built into service planning and performance management arrangements. The updated framework, which aims to identify service</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>strengths and areas for improvement, has been rolled out as a pilot in four support service areas. A full evaluation of the process and methodology was completed in January 2014. This highlighted a more streamlined and participative approach in reviewing performance. A report will be submitted to the Corporate Management Team in April 2014 on proposed refinements to continue to improve the process.</p>	
<p><b>Public performance reporting (PPR)</b></p> <p>The progress that is being made by councils in meeting their PPR obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council issues an annual Public Performance Report and makes it available on its website. The 2012/13 PPR, entitled "<i>Measuring Up?</i>" provided a summary of the performance of services provided by the council and describes aspects of performance, achievements and areas for future improvement across each of the Strategic Plan 2012/17 objectives. The report provides a balanced assessment of performance throughout the year. The council have identified a subset of performance indicators which they use to measure their progress against their 2012/17 Strategic Plan. During 2012/13, 56% met or exceeded their target, 27% missed their target marginally and 17% missed their target significantly. Comparable results of 56%, 29% and 13% apply to the council's performance against their targets for the suite of statutory performance indicators.</p> <p>In June 2013, the Accounts Commission considered a report which presented the findings of the Audit Scotland assessment of all 32 councils' PPR arrangements for the 2011/12 financial year in accordance with the Accounts Commission SPI Direction for 2013/14. The review assessed whether each council fully, partially or does not meet the corporate assessment themes and service areas set out in the Direction. The report identified that the council's arrangements for meeting the reporting requirements for SPI1 (Corporate Management) &amp; SPI2 (Service Performance) were as follows:</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>SPI1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully meeting 5 areas (responsiveness to its communities, revenues &amp; service costs, employees, procurement and sustainable development).</li> <li>• Partially meeting 2 areas (assets and equalities &amp; diversity).</li> <li>• Not meeting 0 areas.</li> </ul> <p>SPI2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully meeting 3 areas community care, criminal justice social work &amp; child protection &amp; children's social work).</li> <li>• Partially meeting 8 areas, (benefits administration, cultural &amp; community services, planning, education of children, housing &amp; homelessness, protective services, roads &amp; lighting &amp; waste management services).</li> <li>• Not meeting 0 areas.</li> </ul> <p>The council's Corporate Communications Team was named Scotland's Public Sector Team of the Year at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations PRide Scotland Awards 2013 in Glasgow and was also recognised by the UK-wide CIPR Excellence Public Sector Campaign of the Year award.</p>	

# Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL 2014/15												
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)												
<b>National or supported self-evaluation work year 1</b>												
Audit Scotland - follow-up of Audit Scotland national report, <i>Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?</i>		X										
Audit Scotland - follow-up of Audit Scotland national report, <i>Major capital investment in councils</i>			X									

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Local policing inspections (TBC)												
<b>National or supported self-evaluation work year 2</b>												

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL 2016/17	
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved

**Note:** The focus of the AIP is strategic scrutiny activity - that is, scrutiny activity which is focused at a corporate or whole-service level. However, there will also be baseline scrutiny activity ongoing at a unit level throughout the period of the AIP, for example, school and residential home inspections. Scrutiny bodies also reserve the right to make unannounced scrutiny visits. These will generally be made in relation to care services for vulnerable client groups. The annual audit of local government also comprises part of the baseline activity for all councils and this includes work necessary to complete the audit of housing benefit and council tax benefit arrangements. Education Scotland, through the Lead Area 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.