

# **West Lothian 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 Lothian 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 West Lothian Council since the introduction of the shared risk assessment process.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>
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.<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.

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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.

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. West Lothian Council and its community planning partners agreed a new SOA for 2013 to 2023 for the West Lothian area to reflect the six policy priorities contained in the guidance on Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) issued by COSLA and the Scottish Government in 2012. The council, in agreement with partners, has been selected as one of five sites for the second round of CPP audits conducted by Audit Scotland. This audit is ongoing and Audit Scotland will report its findings in September 2014.
7. The 2013-16 AIP assessed a number of areas as 'further information required'. This included homelessness, welfare reform and the financial position. In terms of homelessness, the council completed a homelessness enquiry submission which was provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) with the additional information required. The council has established a Welfare Reform Development Group (WRDG), chaired by the head of finance and estates, which is considering the impact of the various welfare reform changes, in terms of both the financial impact on affected individuals and the council's finances. The WRDG is monitoring the effects of the welfare reform changes on the council's services, including council tax collection and rent arrears. Membership of the WRDG will be expanded for 2014/15 to include relevant community planning partners. No further information is required in relation to these areas.
8. In terms of the council's financial management processes, the LAN noted that:
  - Regular revenue budget monitoring reports are presented to the Council Executive which provide members with details of the forecast outturn financial position for the year and also update members on progress with the achievement of efficiency savings projects.
  - Audit Scotland carried out a targeted follow-up audit of their national report *Scotland's Public Finances: Addressing the challenges* (August 2011). The report highlighted a number of good practices including the work done to establish a clear link between the budget and the council's corporate plan and the council's robust performance management framework. Also, members regularly scrutinise the council's financial position through regular budget monitoring reports and ad-hoc reports which highlight issues which may impact on the council's financial strategy.
9. On this basis, the LAN has now concluded that no specific scrutiny is required in relation to financial management. Audit Scotland will continue to review the financial position of the council as part of the 2013/14 annual audit process.
10. The Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Risk Management Authority, has been undertaking supported self-evaluation activity to assess the initial impact of the introduction of the assessment and case planning instrument LS/CMI across Scotland's criminal justice social work services. This activity started in June 2013 and will conclude with the publication of a national report by May 2014. Action plans arising from this activity will be implemented in 2014.

## Planned scrutiny activity

11. As noted above, West Lothian Council, in agreement with partners, has been selected as one of five sites for the second round of CPP audits conducted by Audit Scotland. This audit is ongoing and Audit Scotland will report its findings in September 2014.
12. Audit Scotland will carry out a housing benefit risk assessment during the third quarter of 2014/15.
13. Education Scotland will be reviewing the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland as part of planned programme of work during the first quarter of 2014/15.
14. 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 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.
15. 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>.
16. 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.

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

# Local priorities and public service reform

18. 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

19. During 2012 West Lothian CPP was one of the first CPPs in Scotland to carry out a community planning wide strategic assessment. This allowed the CPP to undertake evidence based prioritisation and planning in order to assess current trends across community planning themes, emerging issues and priority areas of concern for West Lothian to enable the setting of achievable and demonstrable outcomes for the SOA.
20. As a result of the strategic assessment, in 2013 the West Lothian CPP produced an updated SOA covering the ten year period 2013-2023 and which reflects agreed outcomes, indicators and activities that will be delivered now and that will have impact on the short term, medium and longer term. This was submitted to the Scottish Government SOA Quality Assurance Panel who provided feedback which the West Lothian CPP reflected in the final SOA and associated development plan which were agreed by the Scottish Government and approved by the Leader of West Lothian Council in August 2013. The SOA 2013-2023 has been converged with the West Lothian CPP's Community Plan 'Towards 2020' and is also supported by a range of enabling plans and strategies including, a Community Engagement Plan, a Prevention Plan, an Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Life Stages Outcome Planning Programme.
21. The SOA focuses on ten local priorities (which are linked to the six national priorities areas for CPPs) each of which has associated local outcomes. The ten local priorities are:
- Maternal and Child Early Years.
  - Adult Literacy and Numeracy.
  - Raising Attainment.



- Financial Stability and Security for Our Communities.
  - Diversify West Lothian's Economy.
  - Building Strong Communities.
  - Protecting People at Risk.
  - Older People.
  - Health Life Expectancy and Physical & Mental Wellbeing.
  - Waste Education - Greener.
22. The SOA highlights that the West Lothian CPP recognises that in order to understand place and plan for and deliver outcomes, it must understand the diversity of experience within the communities that it serves and must develop a clear, coordinated approach to tackling the inequalities that exist. Therefore, 'Tackling Inequality' is the core theme of the SOA and Community Plan and the inequalities agenda will be embedded into all activities of the CPP.
23. West Lothian Council has been selected by Audit Scotland as one of a number of councils to receive a CPP audit in 2013/14, which may assist the council in determining whether some of the initiatives being implemented in West Lothian are delivering improved outcomes. The West Lothian CPP audit will take place in early 2014 and emerging findings will be shared with senior officers before formally reporting in September 2014.

## Police and fire

24. 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 to 2017. That process will include local authorities who will give final approval of plans.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.

28. 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.
29. The council's Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel continues to receive and consider all relevant reports in relation to police and fire issues.

## Health and social care integration

30. Arrangements for the integration of Health and Social Care are progressing steadily. West Lothian is one of six existing Community Health Care Partnerships (CHCP) in Scotland and one of the council's depute chief executives has responsibility for the CHCP (and is jointly responsible to the chief executives of both NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council). This ensures that the CHCP's development is aligned to other reform processes such as the integration of adult health and social care. The CHCP director presents a report to the CHCP Board (which meets every two months) that sets out areas of work that the partnership has been involved in that may be of interest to the board, including progress on health and social care integration arrangements.
31. A joint approach to health and social care integration has been established between the NHS Lothian (NHSL) chief executive and the chief executives of the four councils (City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian) within the NHSL area. These four council areas already have CHPs/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 the minimum disruption to the well established ways of working.
32. 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 Lothian:
  - A joint director post, jointly accountable to NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council, is in place.
  - CHCP governance arrangements reflect the equal involvement of both partners with four elected members and four NHS appointees on the Partnership Board which meets a minimum of six times per year.
  - The scope of CHCP services currently includes community care, children and families, health improvement, criminal justice, mental health, primary care, allied health professionals, community nursing and hosted services.
  - Existing CHCP arrangements will continue during 2014/15 and will provide a route for the enhancement, development and delivery of integrated health and social care services.

## Welfare reform

33. Audit Scotland's Welfare Reform Update report (published May 2013) looks at 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.

34. The council records welfare reform as a strategic risk of “medium” impact in its corporate risk register. The council has established a Welfare Reform Development Group (WRDG), chaired by the head of finance and estates, which is considering the impact of the various welfare reform changes, in terms of both the financial impact on individuals affected and the council’s finances. The WRDG is monitoring the effects of the welfare reform changes on the council’s services, including council tax collection and rent arrears.
35. The Council Executive agreed that the WRDG should carry out a welfare reform impact assessment, along with reviews of the council’s corporate debt policy, housing policies and procedures, and financial inclusion. The completed impact assessment report and any recommendations were discussed by the council’s Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (P&R PDSP) in September 2013 and were reported to the Council Executive on 29 October 2013.
36. The head of finance and estates presents quarterly welfare reform update reports to the P&R PDSP which inform members of the continuing implications for West Lothian Council and its customers of the ongoing programme of welfare reforms, and the actions being taken to mitigate or alleviate, where possible, the impact on communities within West Lothian.
37. It is the intention of the council to expand the membership and remit of the WRDG by the end of 2013/14 to include community planning partners.

# Corporate assessment

38. 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>The Corporate Plan sets the strategic priorities for West Lothian Council from 2013 to 2017 and was directly influenced by an extensive public consultation exercise (Delivering Better Outcomes) in order to reflect the views and needs of the West Lothian community. The plan identifies the outcomes the council aims to achieve, how it will deliver these outcomes and in doing so, the main challenges facing the council over the four year period.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan is supported by management plans developed by each council service annually and by a number of corporate strategies which are developed by the council to achieve a particular outcome within the corporate planning period (2013 to 2017).</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Governance and accountability</b></p> <p>Whether governance</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council's chief legal officer's annual report for 2012/13 notes that the standards of the Code of Corporate Governance (the Code) were substantially met in 2012/13, that corporate governance arrangements within the council will continue to be a</p>	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
<p>arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins council decisions and supports performance improvement.</p>		<p>key priority for the running of the council in the year ahead and that the focus in 2013/14 should be on identifying actions to further improve the levels of compliance with the Code's standards across the council.</p> <p>In order to increase awareness of the need for good governance arrangements across the council, governance "champions" have been identified by each head of service and have been trained to monitor compliance with the Code within their service areas. A scoring system and Covalent (performance management system) are used to monitor progress against each of the requirements of the Code.</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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>During 2012 the council undertook an extensive public consultation exercise (Delivering Better Outcomes) which outlined eight priorities designed to align the council's resources to services that have the most significant and positive impact on local communities. The consultation also set out nine workstreams that could contribute to delivering these priorities over the period 2013 to 2017. The comments received during the public consultation were used to inform both the Corporate Plan for 2013 to 2017 and the council's medium term financial strategy for 2013 to 2018.</p> <p>In 2012 the council's Citizen Led Inspection (CLI) programme won the Convention of Scottish Local Authority (CoSLA) "One to Watch" award and the council has a dedicated CLI page on its website where individuals can register their interest in becoming involved in future inspections.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Financial management</b></p> <p>How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>During 2012 the council had identified a potential budget shortfall of around £34 million for the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 which was set out in the Delivering Better Outcomes public consultation. The comments received during the consultation informed the council's medium term financial strategy for 2013/14 to 2017/18. As a result, the council agreed the revenue budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 in January 2013 and also agreed that officers should further develop the nine workstreams, as set out in the Delivering Better Outcomes consultation, as part of the development of a robust financial strategy for the three years 2015/16 to 2017/18.</p> <p>The revenue budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 identified funding gaps of £7.699 million and £7.155 million respectively. Savings proposals were produced for 2013/14 and 2014/15 across the nine workstreams referred to above and were agreed by the council in January 2013. The council has established a robust officer level structure to manage the delivery of efficiency savings.</p> <p>The 2013/14 revenue budget monitoring report to 31 December 2013 forecast a net underspend of £0.110 million for the full year, in relation to the finalised distribution of former police force reserves. The report also provided an update on progress with the achievement of efficiency savings projects for 2013/14 and 2014/15. For 2013/14, £7.382 million (96%) of budget reductions have been achieved or are achievable, with the remaining £0.287 million the subject of management action to achieve the savings.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>For 2014/15, £5.035 million (72%) of budget reductions have been achieved or are achievable, with the remaining £1.955 million of savings also being subject to further action to secure delivery. Audit Scotland carried out a targeted follow-up audit of their national report <i>Scotland's Public Finances: Addressing the challenges</i>. The report highlighted a number of good practices including the work done to establish a clear link between the budget and the council's corporate plan and the council's robust performance management framework. Also, members regularly scrutinise the council's financial position through regular budget monitoring reports and ad-hoc reports which highlight issues which may impact on the council's financial strategy.</p> <p>The risk assessment has changed from 'further information required' last year to 'no scrutiny required'.</p>	
<p><b>People management</b> The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The revised People Strategy 2013 to 2017 was approved by the Council Executive in December 2013 and is aimed at improving workforce effectiveness across the council and progress towards the outcomes specified will be monitored using a range of performance indicators. The implementation of the People Strategy actions will provide a means of ensuring that effective leadership and people management processes are directed towards delivery of the priorities identified in the council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Annual workforce management plans are produced at individual service level and there is active review and redesign of working</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		practices through techniques such as Rapid Improvement Events. Staff reductions to date have been well managed.	
<p><b>Asset management</b></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>The council has in place a strategic approach to capital planning, which is integrated with asset management planning. Progress against the corporate Asset Management Strategy is reported annually by asset lead officers to elected members through the relevant policy development and scrutiny panels. The corporate Asset Management Strategy and General Services Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 was approved by the council in January 2013. The strategy sets out capital projects over the five year period with a total capital investment of around £200 million which will be principally funded by government grants, borrowing and capital.</p> <p>The Housing Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 was approved by the council in January 2013 and sets out a total capital investment of almost £197 million over this period. The most significant investment relates to the council's major council house new build programme and the need to ensure all housing stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. The level of housing stock meeting the SHQS in 2012/13 was 85.3 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 76.6 per cent and the council is making good progress to ensure all housing stock meets the SHQS by 2015.</p> <p>The council's Property Asset Management Plan for 2013/14 to 2017/18 (approved by the Council Executive in June 2013) builds</p>	No specific scrutiny activity



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>upon the corporate Asset Management Strategy and its overall aim is to ensure that the council's property assets are managed efficiently and effectively whilst continuing to improve performance. The progress of this plan will be reported to elected members annually.</p> <p>A new asset register system has been implemented for 2013/14, which will improve control over council assets and should improve efficiency and effectiveness of asset usage.</p>	
<p><b>Procurement</b> 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>The Corporate Procurement Strategy 2013 to 2018 is aligned to the council's Financial Strategy to secure cashable savings and other efficiencies.</p> <p>In 2012 the council performed a full evaluation of its procurement activity and subsequently prepared a comprehensive set of recommendations to enable future procurement activities to be more efficient and effective.</p> <p>As a result, the council's 2013 Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) score was 62 per cent, which demonstrates a marked improvement on the 2012 PCA score of 44 per cent. This places the council in the 'improved performance' category.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Risk management</b> The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for identifying, managing and</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>A revised Risk Management Policy and Strategy, incorporating business continuity management strategy, was approved by the council in February 2012. The council has approximately 220 risks identified in its Covalent performance management system, which are reported alongside performance.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>mitigating risks and how its management of risk contributes to the successful delivery of public services.</p>		<p>Service business continuity plans were revised to include additional incident types, and individual services returned completed plans in 2012/13.</p> <p>The Risk Management Plan for 2013/14 (presented to the Audit &amp; Governance Committee in March 2013) highlights planned work in relation risks identified as 'high' within Covalent.</p> <p>A review of the council's Corporate Risk Management Arrangements by Falkirk Council's Internal Audit Service (June 2013) concluded that substantial assurance could be provided on the adequacy of the council's corporate risk management arrangements (ie largely satisfactory risk, control and governance systems are in place).</p>	
<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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Officers within the council fully understand the importance of the information management and uses the following methods to improve awareness of information management activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information security incidents are included in the reported KPI's. This information is stored within Covalent.</li> <li>• The ICT department has well-defined procedure for handling breaches.</li> <li>• A clear desk policy is in place and is well policed.</li> <li>• Guidance and instructions for information handling are available to staff. In addition, it is well established that staff store confidential material in locked cabinets.</li> </ul> <p>A project is underway to test the business continuity plans for</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		various services and 18 life and limb applications in the next 18 months.	
<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 and West Lothian College have agreed that human resources, information technology and marketing offer the best opportunity for shared service provision. Proposals have been developed by officers whereby the college will continue to operate these three services independent of the council but will be supported by a range of core services and systems provided by the council, eg payroll services. The college is seeking to implement these proposals during the coming financial year, and officers are presently developing a Partnership Agreement which will set out the proposed governance structure and arrangements for the shared services proposals.</p> <p>In addition, the council has a joint working arrangement in place with Falkirk Council in relation to internal audit work.</p> <p>The council continues to focus on partnership working in terms of sharing locations and developing more “partnership centres” based on community need and partner aspiration. The council believes that bringing services together under one roof can lead to a better customer journey and ensure that customers are able to maximise their entitlements. For example, Bathgate Partnership Centre has created “savings” in building costs and staff numbers, whilst increasing the number of customers receiving a service.</p>	Audit Scotland is carrying out an audit of West Lothian’s CPP in early 2014, due for publication in September 2014, which considers how well the council works with its partners.
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p> <p>How effectively the</p>	No scrutiny required	The council’s submission to the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government & Regeneration Committee on the Scottish	No specific scrutiny activity. However, the delivery of

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>council is improving its efficiency in response to the budget challenges being faced.</p>		<p>Government's draft budget for 2014/15 highlights that, although the requirement to make significant savings has had an impact on the council's staffing levels, the focus has been on significantly modernising service delivery to help minimise the impact on the direct delivery of services to customers. The council's general approach to identifying reprioritisation measures has incorporated the need to continue to deliver agreed outcomes. The key efficiency areas being pursued by the council include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New models of service delivery and provision.</li> <li>• Modernising support functions, including new approaches to administrative tasks.</li> <li>• Mobile and flexible working.</li> <li>• Review of management structures and integration with other bodies.</li> <li>• Integration of community and operational facilities and services.</li> <li>• General service restructures and workforce management.</li> <li>• Energy efficiency proposals.</li> <li>• Reviewing income and concessions.</li> <li>• Improvements to how customers interact with the council.</li> <li>• Continued implementation of sound asset management principles.</li> </ul> <p>The council's approach to the delivery of services has changed significantly across the period. However if the real terms reduction</p>	<p>efficiency savings will be monitored through routine audit procedures as part of the annual audit process.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		in resources continues for the next four years, there will be an inevitable impact on service provision.	
<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 Corporate Equality Outcomes report sets out the council's approach to mainstreaming equality and provides details of quality outcomes (2013 to 2017) and employee information.</p> <p>Following the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in May 2012, West Lothian Council took the following measures in order to project manage the development of their outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A briefing on the Public Sector Equality Duty and the specific requirements related to development of equality outcomes was provided to council senior management during Summer 2012.</li> <li>• A subgroup of the council's Corporate Working Group on Equality was devised in order to steer and influence the development of equality outcomes. The group also reviewed progress and evaluated impact of evidence and involvement activity.</li> <li>• Starting in November 2012, the key themes and priorities for development of outcomes were taken to a number of specific groups, individuals and organisations for involvement in the creation of outcomes. A range of facilitation methods were used dependent on the circumstances in order to ensure that the feedback received from involvement was as effective as possible.</li> <li>• The council's equality outcomes have been built into the</li> </ul>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		council's performance management information system so that progress can be tracked and managed over the four year period. The council's Corporate Working Group on Equality will monitor overall progress against the equality outcomes on a regular basis.	

# Service performance

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

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>West Lothian Council invited a team from Education Scotland, including HM Inspectors and Associate Assessors to work with them on a validated self-evaluation (VSE) between February and April 2013. The VSE was focused on the theme of transition in learning. The VSE was conducted as part of the Education Service's planned approach to self-evaluation. HM Inspectors are confident that the overall quality of the council's self-evaluation activity is accurate and robust.</p> <p>A number of strengths and areas for improvement were identified. It was noted that council officers and their partners took the VSE very seriously and were strongly committed to ensuring that their evaluative approaches were rigorous and used widely to bring about improvement for learners. As a result, Education Scotland is work in partnership with West Lothian Council to help build capacity and support their drive for change.</p> <p><b>Early Years</b></p> <p>Between 2010 and June 2013 quality indicator (QI) evaluations of pre-school provision were judged to be satisfactory or better in almost all establishments with most good or better. Inspection evidence</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>presents a strong overall picture with some examples of excellent practice</p> <p>Plans to improve arrangements for reporting on children's progress in early years have recently been developed in line with the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Almost all early years centres are now managed by primary head teachers. The education authority has recently involved all parents across the authority in a consultation on the increase to 600 hours. This will commence in August 2014. Overall, early years provision is well supported in West Lothian.</p> <p><b>Primary</b></p> <p>Inspection reports show a generally positive picture in the primary sector but with aspects of mixed performance and some important exceptions where continued inspection activity is required. In the 25 primary schools inspections published since September 2009 almost all were evaluated as satisfactory or better in all QIs with most at good or above.</p> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <p>Since 2009, five secondary schools have been inspected, with the most recent inspection taking place at The James Young High School (report published November 2013). Curriculum and improvement through self-evaluation were both found to be satisfactory with the other QIs evaluated as good.</p> <p>Analysis of SQA performance shows steady improvement in attainment by the end of S4, S5 and S6 over the last few years on</p>	



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		almost all measures with results being above both comparator authorities and the national average in most cases.	
<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>	No scrutiny required	<p><b>Children's services</b> Care Inspectorate reports for services for children in West Lothian are generally positive. There are very small numbers of upheld complaints. These relate to three day care of children (over 3s) and West Lothian Council's fostering service, which was the only service to have a complaint upheld or partially upheld in both 2012/13 and 2013/14 (up to 30 November 2013). Recent results indicate that across the range of services for children in West Lothian there is both inclusion and respect which is demonstrated by the meaningful participation of children, young people and their carers in services. For services for looked after and accommodated children, participation is highlighted as strength. Children in foster care have been involved in delivering training for prospective foster carers, focusing on qualities that they themselves value and appreciate in foster carers. There is also an active group for the children of foster carers to ensure their thoughts and experiences are taken into account.</p> <p><b>Adult services</b> Care Inspectorate reports for services for adults/older people in West Lothian are generally positive. There are very small numbers of upheld complaints. These related to two care home services for older people. Seven adult care services (eg care homes, housing support service or adult placement service) had requirements made at inspection in</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>2012/13 whilst four services had requirements made so far in 2013/14. A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with relevant legislation.</p> <p>With the agreement of the West Lothian CHCP a pilot Joint Inspection of Adult (Older People) Services was carried out in 2013 to test the inspection model for the joint inspection. It was agreed with the CHCP there would be no publication of the report by the Care Inspectorate or Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Of the ten quality indicators covering Adult (Older People) Services, West Lothian was assessed as 'Very Good' and 'Good'.</p>	
<p><b>Housing and homelessness</b></p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p><b>Access to housing and lettings outcomes</b></p> <p>The percentage of tenancies sustained has steadily increased and average re-let times for not low demand housing has been consistently well below the national average for the last three years. In addition, low demand housing average re-let times fell significantly in 2012/13 and is considerably lower than the national average. Although lets allocated to homeless has reduced to 60 per cent in 2012/13, this is still well above the national average of 41 per cent.</p> <p><b>Income maximisation</b></p> <p>Both void losses and gross rent arrears in 2012/13 are well below the national average. Although current tenant arrears as a percentage of net rent due increased to 5 per cent in 2012/13, this is lower than the national average of 6.8 per cent.</p> <p><b>Responsive repairs outcomes</b></p> <p>Repairs performance is very good in comparison to the national</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>average and improving year on year. Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service is good.</p> <p><b>Homelessness</b></p> <p>The majority of the homelessness indicators compare well against the relevant national averages.</p> <p><b>Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)</b></p> <p>The level of housing stock meeting the standard increased to 85.3 per cent in 2012/13 which is higher than the national average of 76.6 per cent. The council is continuing to make good progress to ensure all council houses meet the SHQS by the required date of 2015. The percentage of dwellings that are energy efficient increased to 91.5 per cent in 2012/13 (national average of 88.8 per cent). The percentage of dwellings that have modern facilities and services increased to 98.8 per cent in 2012/13 (national average of 92.4 per cent).</p> <p>The risk assessment has changed from 'further information required' last year to 'no scrutiny required'.</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>In reviewing service performance, SPI data covering the period 2010/11 to 2012/13 was used. In addition, the latest available SOLACE data covering the period 2010/11 to 2011/12 was also considered.</p> <p>West Lothian shows strength across a number of performance indicators within non-regulated services. Also, some specific areas for improvement have been identified but are not significant to detract from overall service performance. Overall the LAN does not consider this an area of scrutiny risk.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

# Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

40. 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 a robust performance management framework (the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM)) that provides an in-depth view of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the service delivery and the impact on the community.</p> <p>A performance scorecard has been created for the Corporate Plan 2013 to 2017 with measures of success for each priority in the plan. The performance indicators provide information on the level of achievement in the key activities that are critical to the delivery of outcomes in priorities.</p> <p>This information will be used across the next four years to challenge and scrutinise performance in the priority and to provide transparent reporting of performance to the public. The plan looks at the challenges and opportunities for each outcome and the key actions which they will focus on for delivery.</p> <p>The WLAM is an evidence based self-assessment model which allows the council to assess service performance using a range of performance indicators that are collected, monitored and reported on the council's performance management system, Covalent. The council's services</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>perform regular self-assessment reviews which are subject to initial scrutiny by the WLAM Performance Review Panel (chaired by the Chief Executive) and then presented to the council's Performance Committee. The process involves evaluating the policies, practices &amp; processes of each service and the most recent service performance reports considered by the Performance Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Services (December 2013).</li> <li>• Central Education Services (November 2013).</li> <li>• Housing Need Service – Homeless (September 2013).</li> <li>• Corporate Procurement Unit (August 2013).</li> </ul>	
<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 produces an annual Public Performance Report (PPR) which is made available on its website and issued in summarised form in the council's quarterly newspaper distributed to West Lothian residents. The 2012/13 PPR, entitled "Factfile 2013" provides a summary of the council's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2013 to 2017 with reference to the performance of services provided by the council and describes aspects of performance, achievements and areas for future improvement across each of the Corporate Plan priorities. The report also provides, for each Corporate Plan priority, an update on the progress of the performance indicators which support the Corporate Plan objectives (ie the number of performance indicators on target or completed/not yet started/below target or behind schedule). The report provides a balanced assessment of performance throughout the year.</p> <p>In June 2013, the Accounts Commission considered a report which</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>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 (December 2012). 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><b>SPI1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully meeting 3 areas (responsiveness to its communities, sustainable development and equalities &amp; diversity).</li> <li>• Partially meeting 4 areas (revenues &amp; service costs, employees, assets &amp; procurement).</li> <li>• Not meeting 0 areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>SPI2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully meeting 8 areas (planning, education of children, child protection &amp; children's social work, housing &amp; homelessness, roads &amp; lighting &amp; waste management services).</li> <li>• Partially meeting 3 areas, (benefits administration, community care and cultural &amp; community services).</li> <li>• Not meeting 0 areas.</li> </ul>	

# Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL		2014/15											
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Audit Scotland - audit of West Lothian CPP	x	x											
Audit Scotland - housing benefit risk assessment (to be carried out in quarter three 2014/15, dates TBC)													
Education Scotland review of Careers Information Advice and Guidance		x											
<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 LoTHIAN COUNCIL		2015/16											
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
National or supported self-evaluation work year 2													

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

**Note:** The focus of the AIP is strategic scrutiny activity - that is, scrutiny activity which is focused at a corporate or whole-service level. However, there will also be baseline scrutiny activity ongoing at a unit level throughout the period of the AIP, for example, school and residential home inspections. Scrutiny bodies also reserve the right to make unannounced scrutiny visits. These will generally be made in relation to care services for vulnerable client groups. The annual audit of local government also comprises part of the baseline activity for all councils and this includes work necessary to complete the audit of housing benefit and council tax benefit arrangements. Education Scotland, through the Area Lead Officer, will continue to support and challenge education services regularly and as appropriate. The Care Inspectorate will continue to regulate care services and inspect social work services in accordance their responsibilities under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.