

# Argyll and Bute Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16



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### Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Argyll and Bute Council during 2015/16. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN), comprising representatives of all the scrutiny bodies who engage with the council. The shared risk assessment process draws on a range of evidence with the aim of determining any scrutiny activity required and focusing this in the most proportionate way.
2. This plan does not identify or address all risks in the council. It covers only those risk areas that the LAN has identified as requiring scrutiny, or where scrutiny is planned as part of a national programme. Planned scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland informs the National Scrutiny Plan for 2015/16, which will be available on the Audit Scotland website.

### Scrutiny risks

3. In the 2013-16 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) the LAN reported that leadership and direction was an area where ongoing scrutiny was required. Follow-up audit work was carried out to review progress made by the council since publication of the Controller of Audit's statutory report in October 2013. The follow-up report was considered by the Accounts Commission at its meeting in June 2014. The Commission reported that it was encouraged that the council was making progress. They also noted the Controller of Audit's view that it was too early to assess the effectiveness of plans being implemented and concluded that there was still much work to be done by the council to secure the required improvements. The Commission therefore required the Controller of Audit to report on progress by the end of 2015, with particular focus upon the effectiveness of the following: political management arrangements, scrutiny and roles and relationships, including between members and officers.
4. In this year's scrutiny plan, the LAN has reflected this follow up work which is to be reported to the Commission. The changes needed in the council to ensure effective leadership, and demonstrate delivery of Best Value, are at a time when financial pressures are increasing. There is short term financial stability, and the two year budget approved in February 2014, requiring 1% savings across all service areas, is on track. However, the longer term budgetary outlook is more challenging. In February 2014, the council estimated it will need to reduce expenditure over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 by an average of around three per cent or £8 million per annum, building up

to £28.565 million in 2019/20. This equated to approximately £77 million in total over the four-year period. The council has now set out a revised forecast of its financial position which estimates that by 2020/21 expenditure is estimated to exceed income by between £27.5 million and £37.5 million. Averaged over the 5 years 2016/17 to 2020/21 this equates to an annual gap in the range £5.5- £7.5 million. Achieving these savings is likely to require transformational change in the way the council operates. The LAN will continue to monitor the council's ability to manage its resources, deliver the 2014/15 budget and close the budget gap for future years.

5. In common with many councils, Argyll and Bute Council has a number of surplus assets. The council's corporate property disposal procedures, which have not been updated for 8 years, are currently being reviewed and updated. The LAN feel that an area requiring ongoing monitoring across all services is how the council's asset management plans support service delivery in the context of a challenging future financial environment.
6. The Section 95 Officer left the council on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Interim arrangements have been put in place until a permanent officer is appointed.
7. Within Education Services attainment performance is generally positive. The council has made good progress with improving positive destinations for school leavers, taking into account the geographical challenges it faces. However, the rate of improvement is not now as swift as the national average or virtual comparators. The GIRFEC practice model has been well embedded within Education Services. The careers service inspection report was published in June 2014. The service was evaluated as "very good" for 4 quality indicators and "good" for the other. In common with many councils, it is recognised that there are some ongoing recruitment challenges across the council area.
8. There have also been changes in the management structure of Education Services following on from an external review carried out last year. The new Head of Education took up post in August 2014. The LAN will monitor the delivery of services and outcomes for children and young people.
9. Within Social Care most outcome data for children's social work services is broadly in line with the national average. Overall Argyll and Bute's balance of care data for older people is positive. However there are significant budget and demographic challenges to be met and services will continue to have to reshape and modernise as they strive to meet the expectations of service users at a time of restricted budgets.
10. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland plan to carry out a joint inspection of services for adults during 2015-16. The specific focus of the inspection will be on services for older people. This is part of the wider national programme of scrutiny work being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland and has not arisen through the LAN risk assessment.

11. Progress is being made on health and social care integration, and a shadow Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board has been established. The council submitted an integration scheme to the Scottish Government in early January 2015 and is on track for this to be approved by 1st April 2015. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor progress in implementing the governance arrangements for the new Integration Joint Board and will maintain a national oversight on developments.
12. The LAN has identified no issues in housing and homelessness services that would warrant further work.

## Planned scrutiny activity

13. The council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2015/16. This is shown at Appendix 1. The risk based scrutiny arising from the LAN assessments, relates to the Best Value follow up work. All other scrutiny included in the appendix arises from national scrutiny programmes.
14. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2015/16, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes and which specific council areas they will cover. Where a council is to be involved, the relevant scrutiny body will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.
15. The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will carry out a joint thematic review of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland during 2015. This forms part of a wider programme of national inspection, and is not a result of the LAN shared risk assessment. The purpose of the review will be to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the MAPPA in Scotland, in terms of keeping people safe and reducing the potential risk of serious harm by registered sex offenders in our communities. It will cover all 32 local authorities and involve local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Boards and the Scottish Prison Service. This work will be carried out at Argyll and Bute in the first quarter of 2015/16.
16. In addition to specific work shown in Appendix 1, routine, 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.
17. Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of [performance audits](#) during 2015/16 and individual audit and inspection agencies will continue to monitor developments in key areas of council activity and will provide support and challenge as appropriate. This will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
18. Audit Scotland has three planned performance audits covering local government during 2015/16. It will be working jointly with the Care Inspectorate looking at social care and jointly with both the Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) on a Health and Social care integration position statement. It will also carry out a follow-up

audit on roads maintenance. Any engagement with councils is still to be determined. Publication of these reports is scheduled for between October 2015 and February 2016.

19. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has a planned programme of thematic inquiries into housing services which will be carried out largely in the first quarter of 2015-16, with publication of inquiry reports in the first and second quarters of the year. The thematic inquiries will cover a range of housing services including: Gypsy/Travellers; factoring services; gas safety; complaints handling; customer service standards; repairs; rent consultation; equalities; and openness and accessibility. Some of the thematic inquiries will not involve any on-site work at all and no local authority will be selected for on-site work in more than one thematic. The SHR will contact individual landlords with details about their potential inclusion.
20. During the first and second quarters of the year, the SHR will review the Charter data submitted by social landlords in May 2015 and identify topics for a further programme of thematic inquiries to be taken forward in the second and third quarters of the year.

**March 2015**

## Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Risk-based best value audit work with particular focus on the effectiveness of political management arrangements, scrutiny and roles and relationships, including between members and officers.	Ongoing throughout 2015
	National programme scrutiny:	
Care Inspectorate	The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will be carrying out joint inspections of services for adults during 2015-16. Inspections will initially focus on services for older people then, at the latter part of the year, these will encompass other adults' services, firstly learning disability services then alcohol and drug services. This is part of a wider national planned programme of scrutiny work being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015/16
	The Care Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS) will undertake a review of the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland.	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015/16
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) of educational psychology services across all councils over a two-year period beginning in 2015/16. Education Scotland will notify councils of its VSE plans each academic term.	Dates to be determined
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	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. Two local Policing Divisions are programmed to be inspected in addition to Edinburgh Division in 2015/16. The Divisions will be identified approximately three months prior to inspection, the first being no earlier than October.	Dates to be determined

Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMICS)	HMFSI will be inspecting local fire and rescue services across Scotland over the next five years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and councils. As part of its programme, HMFSI will inspect four local fire and rescue services during 2015/16. Argyll and Bute is not included in the programme this year.	Dates to be determined
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will carry out thematic inquiries during 2015/16. If Argyll and Bute Council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.	Councils to be determined