

# South Ayrshire Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16



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### Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in South Ayrshire 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 is available on the Audit Scotland website.

### Scrutiny risks

3. The 2013-16 AIP identified the corporate Best Value framework as an area requiring further scrutiny. This work was undertaken by Audit Scotland, in two phases of targeted scrutiny. Phase one was reported in June 2013 and looked at what progress the council had made against its corporate improvement programme. Phase two was reported in February 2014 and examined vision and strategic direction, leadership and culture, performance management and challenge and improvement within the council. A follow up review was undertaken in October 2014 to consider the progress made by the council, the findings of which were reported to the Accounts Commission in December 2014.
4. The follow up review found that the council had responded positively to addressing the weaknesses identified through the best value work. It had made clear progress in driving forward the Council Plan and Service and Improvement Plans and had revised its scrutiny structures to improve scrutiny arrangements across the council. The report concluded that while it was clear that the council had made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified, it was too early to comment on the effectiveness of the changes. The Accounts Commission has requested a further report within 18 months from December 2014 to review the impact of the actions taken by the council.

5. To reflect the Accounts Commission's request for a further follow-up, we have assessed leadership and governance and performance management and improvement as areas where ongoing oversight and monitoring are required. Audit Scotland will undertake a Best Value follow up review in early 2016 to assess the effectiveness of the progress made by the council in addressing the weaknesses identified in the recent Best Value review.
6. The LAN concluded that there were no other areas where scrutiny was required. This does not mean that there are no other risks to the council's business or that services are performing well and continuously improving in all areas but that there were no specific risks which merited scrutiny in 2015/16.
7. During 2014 the council reconfigured its internal management structure in response to wider changes in service delivery such as Health and Social Care Integration and the Ayrshire Roads Alliance and to ensure it was well placed to be able to address the issues raised in the recent Best Value reviews. While no specific scrutiny is planned the LAN will, as part of the normal audit and inspection process, monitor the impact of the changes on service performance.

## Planned scrutiny activity

8. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2015/16. For some scrutiny activity in 2015/16, scrutiny bodies have still to determine work programmes and which specific council areas will be covered. Where a council is to be inspected, the relevant scrutiny body will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.
9. In addition to specific work shown in appendix 1, normal 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. 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.
10. 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. 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.

11. 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  | Performance audits  | TBC  |
|   | Best Value Follow-up  | 2016   |
|   | Audit Scotland Housing benefit performance audit  | February 2016                                      |
| Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland | The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will carry out a joint thematic review of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland. 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. | April 2015   |
| 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 over a two-year period beginning in 2015/16. |
|   | Education Scotland will review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland across all council areas over the next three years.  | January 2016.                                      |
| Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)    | Inspection of 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.  | TBC  |
| Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)       | HMFSI will be inspecting local fire and rescue services across Scotland over the next five years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local   | TBC  |

|                                  |  |                        |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------|
|                                  | 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. South Ayrshire is not included in the programme this year. |                        |
| Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) | SHR will carry out a number of thematic inquiries in 2015/16. If the council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.   | Timing to be confirmed |