

# **Renfrewshire 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 Renfrewshire Council (the 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 Renfrewshire 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 Inspector 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 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. The previous AIP reported that Renfrewshire Council (the council) had demonstrated its commitment to improve in 2012 through its self-evaluation work and that governance arrangements had been reviewed to better meet the changing political and economic climate. In 2013 the council introduced new council governance structures and council service and management structures. The final outcomes of the change programme 'Transforming Renfrewshire' concluded that £12.2 million in net recurring revenue savings had been generated. The council continues its commitment to improve by putting new community and council plans in place and details for a new change programme are due in early 2014.
7. The Community Plan 2013 – 2023, was launched in autumn 2013. The vision, outcomes and targets were developed with partner organisations and agreed through the Community Planning Boards established for each theme. The plan sets out the six key themes which are:
  - Children and Young People.
  - Jobs and the Economy.
  - Community Care, Health and Wellbeing.
  - A Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire.
  - A Greener Renfrewshire.
  - Empowering our Communities.
8. The council plan, *A Better Future, A Better Council*, was approved by the council in December 2013 and outlines the organisation's improvement agenda over the period 2014-2017. The plan sets out the key strategic priorities for the council over the next four years and the actions required to achieve the outcomes.
9. On key aspects of public service reform the council is at various stages of progress:
  - New police and fire oversight arrangements are in place with progress being reported to the council and through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).
  - For health and social care integration, in December 2013 elected members adopted a partnership model for local integrated service delivery for adult services in conjunction with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The LAN considers the council is well placed to progress with integration.
  - The council has been proactive in responding to the impact of welfare reform through a range of programmes to support residents and tenants.
10. In the 2013-16 AIP all areas were assessed as 'no scrutiny required' with the exception of governance and accountability. This was based on a perceived risk of a lack of independent scrutiny arrangements within the Scrutiny and Petitions Board and the limited extent of discussion of financial audit issues. The council acted to reduce membership overlap with the Leadership Board and has renamed the board to the 'Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board' to re-emphasise the importance of financial audit.

11. The 2013-16 AIP did not include any scrutiny work as a result of the shared risk assessment but did include three areas of work for 2013/14, which were planned as part of supported self-evaluation, or national activity or work requested by ministers:
  - Audit Scotland follow-up of Audit Scotland's report, *Scotland's public finances: addressing the challenges* - ongoing.
  - Audit Scotland *Scotland's Public Finances: Workforce Planning* - completed in November 2013.
  - 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 follow-up education and leisure services VSE (validated self-evaluation) work, in partnership with Education Scotland, was postponed from March 2013 to January 2014. This was due to significant levels of absence affecting both the senior management team and the wider headquarters education and leisure team. The VSE process has now concluded and HM Inspectors are confident that the overall quality of Renfrewshire Council's self-evaluation across education is accurate and that senior managers, staff and partners have a clear commitment to improving education through self-evaluation. In recent months the extended senior management team have participated in a series of planned team-building activities to ensure that service priorities continue to be met. Following on from the recent VSE activity, it has been agreed that the area lead officer from Education Scotland will continue to monitor progress in the education service. Planned scrutiny activity**

12. Following the 2014/15 shared risk assessment process, we have concluded that all areas are assessed as 'no scrutiny required'.
13. There is some non-risk based scrutiny activity planned across councils in 2014/15, but scrutiny bodies are yet to determine which specific council areas will be included. This includes the following:
  - The Scottish Housing Regulator (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 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.
  - 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. As part of its scrutiny of children's services across Scotland, the Care Inspectorate will lead a joint inspection of children's services in Renfrewshire during January and February 2015.
  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 Renfrewshire 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. The Renfrewshire Community Plan 2013-2023 was approved by ministers in August 2013. The development of the plan was led at senior management level by partner agencies in Renfrewshire including third sector and private sector representatives. The plan describes the significant challenges for the area: poverty; misuse of alcohol and drugs, youth unemployment, offending and violent behaviour (although recognising the significant achievements in reducing some crime rates).
20. Following a strategic needs assessment carried out with partner agencies during 2012 to determine key priorities for partnership working, partners agreed to organise community planning in Renfrewshire around the six key themes outlined in paragraph seven above.
21. Each section of the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement sets out the following: vision for the theme; key players who will attend each group; key issues, outcomes; actions; impact and key/supporting performance indicators. The intention is to focus on a limited number of key issues, including prevention and early years interventions that have a significant impact on communities in Renfrewshire and can only be improved by a number of partners working together. A Tackling Poverty Commission is to be established to identify the actions that will make the most difference to those living in poverty in Renfrewshire. The draft community plan was issued for consultation to community planning partner organisations and community and voluntary organisations prior to approval.
22. Progress against each individual theme within the community plan is monitored by the six thematic policy boards on a regular basis and overall performance is monitored by the Community Planning Partnership Board (CPPB).



## A detailed resources plan is being prepared in the first year of the community plan. Police and fire

23. At the council, scrutiny of police and fire takes place through the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board, which has considered the local police and fire and rescue plans.
24. The local police and fire and rescue plans are linked to the council's community plan. The local police and fire and rescue commanders are both members of the CPPB. The performance of the local police and fire services will be reported to the CPP via the Safer and Stronger Board and these will include details of how the police and fire arrangements are contributing to the delivery of the CPP objectives.
25. There have been no significant changes in local arrangements as scrutiny remains through the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board. The main change is the consultation on the local police and fire and rescue plans which is ongoing at present, and which now follows the national framework for each organisation. This has enabled constructive discussion on ensuring local priorities are included and both were presented at the policy board meeting on 21 January 2014. The council has also responded to a number of consultations on the reform of the police service.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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

30. Arrangements for health and social care integration are currently under discussion. In December 2013 members adopted a partnership governance model for local integrated

service delivery for adult services in conjunction with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGG&C). During 2013 senior officers in the council met to consider the practical steps required to agree, and have in place, integrated arrangements for adult services. There has been a series of joint meetings at chief officer level with counterparts in NHSGG&C and these continue.

31. Areas still under discussion include the size of the partnership board and levels of representation; the reporting arrangements to the council and CPP; the establishment of shadow board arrangements and clarity over who will draft the integration plan. Reports on the progress of partnership arrangements will be provided to full council meetings, or relevant policy board, on a regular basis up to the implementation date of 1 April 2015. The LAN is of the opinion the council is well placed to progress with integration.
32. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill refers to the integration of all adult services as a minimum but also provides scope for the integration of other services such as children's services and public health. The council is considering the potential implications and opportunities the changes represent for children's services, which has been a key priority for the council in recent years.

## Welfare reform

33. The council established a corporate welfare reform programme under the stewardship of the Corporate Management Team and reporting to the council's Leadership Board. This dedicated project team has developed measures to identify and manage the changes required primarily from a housing services' perspective, including under-occupation and direct payment of housing costs through universal credit. Regular liaison arrangements are in place with finance and corporate services and with partners in the CPP to ensure the effective co-ordination of activity in response to housing benefit changes.
34. Well developed income management arrangements are in place to monitor rental income levels and arrears levels and recent reports show that only around 30 per cent of tenants affected by the under occupancy rules have been able to maintain a clear rent account. The council increased its irrecoverable rent budget for 2013/14 from 2.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent of net rent, an increase of £450,000 to a total of £1.6m.
35. All tenants impacted by under-occupation have been contacted and offered tailored support and advice. Further welfare changes are assessed in accordance with the Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) timetable and communicated to all customers and stakeholders, for example the update on the revised roll out of the migration of disability living allowance to personal independence payment. The DWP are now planning that the universal credit service will be fully available in each part of Great Britain during 2016, having closed down new claims to the legacy benefits it replaced; with the majority of the remaining legacy caseload moving to universal credit during 2016 and 2017.
36. The council earmarked £5 million from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in 2012-13 for a five-year programme of measures to support tenants managing the impacts of reform. This

includes a new council tenant assistance fund (£600,000 in 2013/14) which allows for tenants in financial hardship to have their rent debt written off. The council has also allocated funds to top up discretionary housing payment resources to the maximum allowable under DWP regulations and contributed additional £150,000 of its resources to top up the Scottish Welfare Fund to sustain the fund to the end of the financial year. The council's decision to increase staffing in 2013 has enabled the service to process a significant increase in claims within target timeframes.

- 37.** In the longer term, the council has invested in the Renfrewshire Employability Partnership programme, in order to support the creation of new jobs and sustainable business development. Its anti-poverty strategy includes enhanced debt advisory services and advice on the maximisation of tenants' income. Neighbourhood teams continue to develop "customer profiling" knowledge which will enable the targeting of intervention and support when migration to universal credit commences. The council's detailed 30-year business plan is updated to model the impact of pressures or changes on the longer term viability of the HRA, particularly the impact of direct payment on rental income and associated collection costs. The move to direct payment will increase the rent debt that must be collected from tenants from £14 million to £42 million per annum and the council is preparing effectively for this challenge.
- 38.** 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

39. 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 Renfrewshire Community Plan 2013-2023 was approved in 2013 and can be found on the council's website. A series of community launch events took place, one for each theme of the plan that brought together all relevant partners within the community of Renfrewshire to agree priorities and actions for delivery. The Scottish Government provided positive feedback on the community plan and said that the strategic needs assessment followed by the partners established a clear, evidence-based and shared vision among the partners over the issues and challenges facing Renfrewshire and that there is a strong sense of understanding of place reflected in the plan.</p> <p>A new council plan 2014-2017 <i>A Better Future, A Better Council</i> was approved in December 2013. The plan reflects the priorities outlined in the refreshed community plan and illustrates the role the council will play in delivering the agreed outcomes. Officers aim to integrate the council plan with their medium term financial</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
		strategy and the corporate transformation programme. New guidance was issued in January 2014 by the Corporate Performance Unit to help directors prepare their service improvement plans. The guidance was amended to fit with the direction of the new community and council plans.	
<p><b>Governance and accountability</b></p> <p>Whether governance arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins council decisions and supports performance improvement.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>In December 2012 the council approved changes to its policy boards, service departments and management structures to be better aligned to the wider public sector reform agenda and to the events occurring within the social, economic and constitutional environment in Scotland. The changes aim to improve support to members and officers to focus on key issues e.g. one of the new policy boards is Economy and Jobs, to support improvement in creating jobs in Renfrewshire.</p> <p>Our 2012 concerns on aspects of governance have been addressed by the council. Members who previously sat on both the Leadership Board and Scrutiny and Petitions Board no longer sit on both boards. We have observed in the meetings of the newly named Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board that the audit work of the board is given more prominence than before, though scrutiny work still takes up most of the committee's time, which is partly down to witnesses providing evidence to the committee as part of the inquiries. The chair of the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board is a member of the political administration.</p> <p>The council reviewed and updated the scheme of delegations and contract standing orders to help reflect legislation changes and</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>restructuring across the council.</p> <p>From spring 2013 there have been five operational service areas and the chief executive's service.</p> <p>There has been little change in the local arrangements for the police and fire services after their reform in April 2013 as scrutiny remains through the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board. The Community and Safety Policy Board is responsible for the oversight and scrutiny function of these services. Performance reports for both services will be taken to the CPP.</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>Engage Renfrewshire represents the third sector in Renfrewshire and is a key partner in delivering specified outcomes, standards, levels of service and targets as agreed by the Community Planning Partnership Board and thematic boards. The council is working with Engage Renfrewshire on a review of local area committee arrangements to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and reflect the wider community empowerment agenda.</p> <p>A report, 'Increasing Community Participation/Capacity', was presented to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board in April 2013. The purpose of the review was to consider proposals for improving community participation and building community capacity in Renfrewshire, in light of the significant financial and demographic challenges facing the council and its partners.</p> <p>The council website explains how residents can raise petitions on the functions of the council or issues which are of concern to some or all Renfrewshire residents. Petitions are considered by the</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board. The council website includes separate details on how to make a complaint.	
<p><b>Financial management</b></p> <p>How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>In 2012/13, the general fund increased by £5.5 million, an under-spend of £4.8 million in comparison to the planned £0.7 million surplus. Of the under-spend, £1.1 million was planned as part of the council's annual contribution to the PPP reserve, leaving a net under-spend across services of £3.7 million which represents 1 per cent of the base budget.</p> <p>The council continues to implement the principles agreed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (approved September 2012). A further financial outlook report was discussed at Council in December 2013, which informs the 2014/15 budget setting and the medium term financial plan. Members were advised by the director of finance and corporate services that significant savings of £20-£30 million are required over the medium term through to 2017/18. In February 2014 members approved the 2014/15 budget. A surplus of £3.8 million is anticipated but considered temporary in nature. Officers forecasted a small surplus for 2013/14, which has been used to top up the Scottish Welfare Fund.</p> <p>The council applies its usable reserves for medium and longer term planning purposes. The general fund balance has risen 37% in the last two financial years, but the £50 million balance at 31 March 2013 includes earmarked commitments of £41 million. It has one of the lowest levels of net external debt as a proportion of net revenue spend, reflecting the impact of the medium term debt</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		smoothing strategy objective to reduce long term debt. The increasing general fund balance and low external borrowing position demonstrates that financially the council is preparing for the significant future financial challenges. The council anticipates, given certain assumptions on pay awards and grant reductions, an estimated budget deficit of £20 million to £30 million for 2016-18.	
<p><b>People management</b></p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>For the two years to March 2012 the council had the highest percentage of staff early departures of all councils in Scotland. A further 133 departures were agreed in 2012/13, 2% of the total workforce (full-time equivalent). The council expects workforce reductions will continue through voluntary early retirement/voluntary redundancy over the next two years but the council is also recruiting in specific risk areas as can be seen in the increased number of benefit staff in post to support welfare reform changes.</p> <p>A Strategic Change and Organisational Development Partner was recently appointed, who will support the council in delivering the council plan. A key element of the plan is the development and implementation of a new organisational change programme which includes people management. It is intended that the partner will provide a flexible, expert resource to supplement the council's in-house capacity where this is required.</p> <p>A staff survey was undertaken in 2013 and the results will inform the new people strategy under development to support the change programme. For example, in March 2014, following feedback from</p>	No specific scrutiny activity



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		the employee survey and focus group sessions about employee communication, the first edition of the finance and corporate services newsletter was issued. The newsletter will be issued on a quarterly basis with information about the main priorities and projects, colleagues in other sections, and to recognise the achievements and success of services and employees across finance and corporate services.	
<b>Asset management</b> The council's arrangements for managing assets and how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.	No scrutiny required	The Corporate Asset Strategy provides the overarching framework and action plan for managing all council assets. It is due to be refreshed for October 2014. Service property asset management plans (SPAMPs) have been developed and linked to service improvement plans (SIPs). Further work is required to align financial plans with SIPs and asset management planning. The development of a Corporate Landlord model has enabled a planned rather than reactive approach to repairs and maintenance. Housing services also have a comprehensive housing stock management system. The council completed some significant capital projects in 2012-13 both on time and within budget and previous performance audit work in 2012 gave positive assurance on the capital programme arrangements.	No specific scrutiny activity
<b>Procurement</b> How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the council maximising	No scrutiny required	The council is the only Scottish local authority to achieve 'Superior Status' in the latest PCA and remains the highest performing Scottish council. The council's Corporate Procurement Unit were 'highly commended' in the Team of the Year category at the Government Opportunities (GO) Awards Scotland and shortlisted	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.		<p>in award categories for excellence in collaboration and corporate social responsibility.</p> <p>The governance review from 2012 created a new procurement subcommittee of the Finance and Resources Committee due to the increasing significance of procurement in creating efficiencies and bringing community benefits. The council has appointed a community benefits manager whose role is to ensure the council optimises community benefits across a range of spend categories, record and monitor their delivery; reporting to members will commence in first quarter of 2014/15.</p>	
<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>Risk management of the council is embedded in its culture. Each department director is accountable to the chief executive, the Corporate Management Team and the relevant policy boards for the management of risk. The corporate risk register is reported to the Finance and Resources Policy Board and highlights changes and areas of most significant risk. Each directorate maintains and reports their risk register to their respective policy board. Of the 69 actions (relating to the 23 corporate risks) which are due for completion by early 2014/15, 93% are on track to complete within the original timescale anticipated and of the remaining, none relate to any of the council's 'top 5' corporate risks.</p>	No specific scrutiny activity
<p><b>Information management</b></p> <p>The effectiveness of the council's arrangements</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>An Information Commissioner desk-based follow-up in July 2013 confirmed that the original audit's (October 2012) recommendations had been addressed and data protection arrangements were reassessed as providing a high level of</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
for managing information as a key resource in delivering services.		<p>assurance. The council also achieved Public Services Network Accreditation by the end of September 2013 although there is a follow up action plan of issues to be addressed.</p> <p>Information and technology is a key strand of the new council plan. The draft information and technology strategy, 'Connect Renfrewshire', has been distributed for consultation with stakeholders. The strategy will be taken to the Leadership Board in June for approval along with the change programme. The council plan to develop a new information management strategy and review their ICT assets and infrastructure, as much of the ICT asset base represents a legacy estate.</p> <p>In 2013 internal audit reported that improvements were needed on disaster recovery arrangements and that testing against the arrangements was required.</p>	
<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 continues with some long-standing partnership arrangements including the work of Scotland Excel and providing the billing and collection service for East Renfrewshire Council's non domestic rates. Scotland Excel has now relocated into the council's headquarters achieving savings for both the council and Scotland Excel.</p> <p>The council is progressing procurement of a shared residual waste treatment solution with North Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire (ERC) and North Ayrshire councils in order to be prepared and able to address the landfill ban implications in</p>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>2020. A competitive dialogue process has commenced and is underway.</p> <p>The council is working with ERC on a collaborative ICT programme and progressing with projects which could lead to better sharing of resources, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Renfrewshire social work services received very positive feedback from the Care Inspectorate on the contact centre, which is the first point of contact for all referrals (from the public and other agencies) for services for adults. Contact centre managers were working with their health colleagues to develop the contact centre as a referral point for some health services.</p>	
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p> <p>How effectively the council is improving its efficiency in response to the budget challenges being faced.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council improved its 'in-year' council tax collection rate during 2012-13 and this now sits at 95.9% (higher than Scottish average of 95.2%). There have also been improvements in lifecycle maintenance programming and procurement achieved through better property condition information and prioritisation.</p> <p>Ongoing service and corporate reviews aimed at driving efficiencies are managed by the Corporate and Service Reform Board. Team Talk briefing sessions regularly outline the financial challenges facing the council and many team meetings have efficiency items on the agenda. A staff suggestions scheme also runs regularly to encourage thoughts and ideas for efficiencies in processes and practices.</p> <p>The council is more proactively examining benchmark costs of</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>many corporate type services through review of SPI and CIPFA directors of finance indicators.</p> <p>The new council plan 2014-2017 <i>A Better Future, A Better Council</i> commits to a new programme of change which extends the work from previous change programme, 'Transforming Renfrewshire'. An overview of the new 'Better Council Change Programme' will be published by summer 2014.</p>	
<p><b>Equalities</b></p> <p>Whether the council is providing effective leadership of equalities and is meeting its statutory obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>Equality actions to achieve better outcomes have been agreed with community, voluntary and statutory partners and are now integrated in the community plan, council plan and service improvement plans.</p> <p>An examination and assessment undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland (EHRC Scotland) during May and September 2013 confirms that the council's performance complied with the requirements to publish information as set out in the specific equality duties. The council has also been selected as a pilot partner to work with the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to develop and embed the principles of integrated approaches to equality and human rights impact assessments in decision making, design and delivery of services.</p> <p>The council has revised its reporting template to ensure that integrated equality and human rights assessments are made prior to issuing reports. The council is currently working with the EHRC</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		and the SHRC to develop their practice. The council's Corporate Equality Improvement Plan 2013-2017 actions have been agreed with all services and performance is being monitored with a report due for June 2014	

# Service performance

40. 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>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council is performing well overall for its children and young people. Overall, school inspection reports continue to be positive. There has been progress made in improving learners' performance in SQA national examinations. The level of performance in national examinations by the end of S4 and S5 in key measures (using pre-appeal data this session) is generally better than that of comparator authorities and national averages. There has been a continued reduction in the levels of pupil exclusion across primary and secondary sectors and absence levels in primary and secondary have remained fairly stable but remain below those of comparator and national levels. The council has recently become one of the first councils to become involved in the Scottish Government's Improvement Partnerships projects. It has formed a partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council to improve attainment across a range of selected primary schools. The council has recently launched a new early years strategy called 'Families First' which has the potential to be sector leading. It involves impressive partnership work across services.</p> <p>There have been communication and staffing capacity issues in the</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p> <p>The area lead officer from Education Scotland will continue to monitor progress.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>education service over the past year. This has been apparent mainly at senior management level, but has been exacerbated by staffing absences across the education team. There has been a reduction in staffing numbers in the education team over recent years. During times when there have been significant staff absences, this has led to difficulties in communication and carrying out aspects of work. This has had some impact which the council is addressing. For example, one consequence of this is that last year the council missed out on potential funding for projects, as a result of not completing bids. However, this issue has since been resolved and the council has been successful recently in bidding for a range of funding and has taken forward a number of projects. Elements of team work from March 2012 onward have not been as strong as before. However, the education service has plans to address this, including a series of planned team-building activities.</p> <p>Validated self-evaluation (VSE) work took place in January 2012. The next phase due to take place in March 2013 was postponed and recently took place in January 2014 with an additional theme of leadership and capacity for improvement. This was a positive experience and progress was evident in all agreed themes from the initial VSE activity of January 2012. The area lead officer will continue to work with the council to monitor progress.</p>	
<b>Social care services</b> The quality of local social	No scrutiny required	During the year Renfrewshire social work services embarked on the 'Raising the Bar' improvement programme which aims to improve	No specific scrutiny activity



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
work and care services and the resulting outcomes (including adult care, older people's services, learning disability services, criminal justice services, mental health services, children and families).		<p>practice in relation to risk assessment and risk management, particularly in respect of preparation of written risk assessments and risk management plans. Renfrewshire's direct payment provision has been rising at a reasonably steady rate. Social work services have a dedicated self-directed support team and they are working hard in preparation for commencement of the relevant provisions of the Scottish Government's self-directed support legislation in April 2014. Social work is working with partners to develop an extensive database of information on school children. One of the aims of this initiative is to improve the targeting of children's services to the children and families who need support and to improve early intervention and preventive services for children and families.</p> <p>In relation to delayed discharges for patients, who are 75 and over, Renfrewshire social work services and its health partner are performing better than the Scotland average and better than some comparator authorities and their partners.</p>	
<p><b>Housing and homelessness</b></p> <p>The quality of housing and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	The council has made significant progress in reducing current tenants' rent arrears, particularly in a context of falling national performance in this area. While performance in re-letting 'not low demand' stock is stabilising, performance for 'low demand' houses shows a significant deterioration and is now well below the national figure. The council is aware of this weakness and has recently completed a comprehensive review of its re-letting process. This has resulted in an improvement plan being developed. The council's performance in completing all emergency repairs within target timescales has remained relatively	<p>No specific scrutiny activity.</p> <p>SHR will monitor the council's progress in relation to SHQS.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>stable over the last three years at around 88%, against correspondingly stable national figures around 93%. However, this has risen to 93.5% over the first two quarters of 2013-14 which presents a significant improvement upon the previous year's reported performance.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council remains the poorest performing of Scottish local authorities in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard 2015 ministerial target. While the reasons for this have been well documented, risk is considered limited at this time as financial resources have been identified and contractual arrangements made to deliver the necessary stock improvements. Renfrewshire has strong project management, quality assurance and monitoring arrangements in place and residents' satisfaction rates are rising. In light of rising refusal rates among tenants, the council has put in place a strategy to deliver improvements in access.</p>	
<p><b>Non-regulated services</b> 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>Leisure:</b> sports facility attendance has increased over the last 3 years and the cost of attendance at these facilities remains lower than the Scottish average. Library and museum visits are less than the Scottish average (per 1,000 population). Library visits have fallen over the three-year period whilst museum visits have increased slightly, however the cost of museum visits remain the highest in Scotland.</p> <p>Paisley Town Hall was refurbished in time for Paisley successfully hosting the 2013 Gaelic Mod.</p> <p><b>Protective services:</b> For protective services the time taken to deal</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>with major applications is below the Scottish average as is the average time to attend a complaint under the ASB Act 2004.</p> <p>Audit Scotland's 2013 report on protecting consumers evaluated a risk profile on each council for trading standards and food safety. As well as evaluating a risk profile the report looked at how many FTE staff are available per 1000 risk-rated businesses for both trading standards and food safety. This allows comparisons between councils to understand how many staff they have available to not only enforce but also investigates areas of concern.</p> <p>Trading Standards: risk profile - 1.89, Scottish average. - 1.78; staff - 2.91, Scottish average - 3.52.</p> <p>Food Hygiene: risk profile - 2.06, Scottish average - 2.02; staff - 6.33, Scottish average - 5.75</p> <p>Officers updated the Environment Policy Board in March 2013 and acknowledged that like other authorities, Renfrewshire had reduced its workforce and had prioritised its workload accordingly. Members were advised that: food safety service was still delivered in line with Food Standards Agency requirements; consumer complaints were dealt with in line with agreed timescales; and trading standards carries out risk based inspection programme.</p> <p><b>Roads:</b> Audit Scotland follow-up work on roads in 2012 reported there had been significant improvement in the council's delivery through revised management arrangements, greater supervision of front line service delivery and revised maintenance practice and culture.</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>Consequently practice and quality had been improved and the budget has achieved significantly more than in previous years. There was increased funding for 2012/13 and 2013/14.</p> <p><b>Waste Management:</b> For waste management services the percentage of household waste recycled is static at around 40%. Initiatives to improve the rate include increasing the number of households able to participate in glass recycling by 17,000 through the introduction of co-mingled glass recycling collections and launch of a new on demand textile recycling scheme whereby residents can arrange for bags of textiles to be collected from their homes, or from an agreed place.</p> <p>The cost of refuse collection and disposal has increased over the three- year period. Street cleanliness has dropped 3 index points however the cost of this has decreased and is now below the Scottish average.</p>	

# Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

41. 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>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>In September 2013 the Leadership Board was updated on the final outcomes of the Transforming Renfrewshire programme which concluded that £12.2 million in net recurring revenue savings had been generated.</p> <p>The next phase of the council's strategic change agenda has been prepared in conjunction with the development of the new Council Plan (2013-17). An overview of the new 'Better Council Change Programme' will be published by summer 2014.</p> <p>The council has an established process of annually updating its rolling three-year service improvement plans. Progress against the improvement plans is reported regularly to policy board meetings.</p> <p>The council has a dedicated Corporate Performance Unit (CPU) which monitors and controls the performance management arrangements and reporting within the council. This includes reporting against SPIs and SOLACE indicators.</p> <p>In 2013, the council revisited the 18 best value (BV2) self-assessment</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>reviews originally carried out in 2011. These had been allocated to lead officers to establish what, if any, improvements has been made for each area and a report will be taken to the CMT in 2014.</p> <p>The council has fully implemented the Public Service Improvement Framework. Cycle 1 of these assessments was completed in 2011 and cycle 2 assessments began in November 2012 and are currently on-going. The LAN members agreed that the council has good awareness of its issues and proactively attempts to deal with these with the use of reporting and action plans.</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>In June 2013 Audit Scotland reported to the Accounts Commission on how individual councils were fulfilling their duties on public performance reporting for 2011/12. Renfrewshire Council fully met the PPR requirements for 55% of the criteria, partially met the requirement for 41% of the criteria and did not meet the requirements for three per cent of the criteria.</p> <p>In August 2013 the council produced a Public Performance Reporting Framework for 2013/14. It shows the planned public performance reporting activity at a corporate, service wide or service specific level. The framework highlights the communication channel (eg website) and the Audit Scotland PPR requirements/criteria. The council is reviewing its webpages to improve direction to performance reporting and is also using social media (Facebook and Twitter) to publish key facts and statistics. The council issued the “people's news” to all household which detailed the welfare reform changes and how these would affect their residents.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

# Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL 2014/15												
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<i>No scrutiny proposed</i>												
<b>National or supported self-evaluation work year 1</b>												
Audit Scotland: Follow-up of Audit Scotland national report of <i>Major capital investments in councils</i>		✓										
Audit Scotland: Follow-up on How councils work report, <i>Arm's length external organisations: are you getting it right?</i>	✓											
Care Inspectorate: children's services inspection										✓	✓	

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/16												
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<i>No scrutiny proposed</i>												
<b>National or supported self-evaluation work year 2</b>												
<i>No scrutiny proposed</i>												

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL		2016/17
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved	
<i>No scrutiny proposed</i>		

**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 pre-five centre, 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.