

Shared risk assessment: Assurance and improvement plan 2010–13

North Ayrshire Council



social work
inspection agency



THE SCOTTISH
HOUSING
REGULATOR



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1. Introduction

The Assurance and Improvement Plan

1. This Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) is the product of a collaborative approach adopted by the following scrutiny bodies operating in North Ayrshire Council:
 - Audit Scotland
 - Care Commission
 - HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)
 - Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)
 - Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA).
2. The AIP sets out the planned scrutiny activity for North Ayrshire Council for the period April 2010 to March 2013 based on our scrutiny risk assessment of the council. The scrutiny activity is proportionate to the assessed scrutiny risks.

Why have we prepared this AIP?

3. The overall objectives of this collaborative approach are to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of scrutiny work and minimise the impact of scrutiny activity on the council. This will be achieved by:
 - jointly identifying and monitoring key scrutiny risks through the sharing of intelligence and information
 - coordinating the timing and approach of our audit, inspection, regulation and improvement support activity
 - drawing on, and taking account of each other's work to avoid duplication of effort
 - building on each other's work to maximise its value.
4. The AIP draws on a number of sources of information, including:
 - the 2009 Strategic Audit Risk Assessment (SARA) for North Ayrshire, produced by Audit Scotland
 - the annual audit report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2008/09
 - the council's own website, self-evaluation and supporting evidence

- reports and data from HMLe, SWIA, SHR and the Care Commission (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence).

What do we mean by a scrutiny risk?

5. All local government scrutiny bodies have agreed the definition of shared risk assessment as:

‘A joint approach using key information about local government to plan scrutiny activity that is proportionate and based on risk’

6. When we determine ‘risk’ we mean risk that may trigger scrutiny work and not inherent risk, for example, as in the risk of harm to an individual. We define three categories of risk as:

- where there are significant concerns which would indicate that we would need to undertake some scrutiny activity in order to provide public assurance
- where there are areas of uncertainty or gaps in the information available to us to determine whether or not we need to undertake some scrutiny activity
- where we have no significant concerns.

7. We recognise that risk levels will change as significant events occur and as councils take action to address identified risks. Scrutiny bodies, through local area network (LAN) contacts, will maintain awareness of activity, including unit level inspection. As new information comes to light the LAN lead, in consultation with other LAN members will update the AIP as appropriate. LAN members will draw any significant matters to the attention of the LAN lead as they arise. The LAN lead will determine what action should be taken in terms of initiating contact with other LAN members.

8. The council is expected to initiate contact with the LAN lead where significant events occur that are likely to influence scrutiny activity. Councils are encouraged to maintain contact with LAN leads to discuss any concerns arising from the AIP or any joint scrutiny activity.

What does proportionate scrutiny mean?

9. When considering the appropriate level of scrutiny activity for each council we consider the following points to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken.
- Is scrutiny activity the best driver for improvement?
 - If so, how can we tailor that activity to the areas where it will have the most impact?
 - How can we tailor that activity in terms of its frequency, intensity and scope?

- What is the minimum level of scrutiny required to provide assurance to the public?
 - How can we work together to minimise the impact of scrutiny activity on the council?
10. The overall objectives of this collaborative approach are to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of scrutiny work and minimise the impact of scrutiny activity on the council. This will be achieved by:
- coordinating the timing and approach of our risk assessment work
 - helping to identify and monitor key risks through the sharing of intelligence and information
 - building on each other's work to maximise its value
 - drawing on, and taking account of each other's work
 - avoiding duplication of effort.

Baseline scrutiny activity

11. The focus of the AIP is strategic scrutiny activity, that is scrutiny activity which is focused at corporate or whole service level, but there will also be baseline scrutiny activity at unit level ongoing throughout the period of the AIP. This will include, 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. In addition, other work may be undertaken as a result of a specific Ministerial request.

2. Summary

Overall scrutiny risk assessment

There have been significant changes to the officer leadership of North Ayrshire Council with a new chief executive recently appointed and changes to the corporate management team. A challenging change programme has been instigated and given the difficult economic climate facing local government there are risks that the council and its partners might not be able to realise outcomes and enhance service performance.

While there are no significant risks with service performance, there are areas of uncertainty within social services and property services. There remain uncertainties around key aspects of the corporate assessment framework, including vision and strategic direction, partnership working and use of resources.

Given the significant changes underway at the council and the number of uncertainties a Best Value 2 (BV2) audit is proposed. This will complement and support the council's own change programme and the results will inform continuous improvement. It will also provide a robust analysis and clarity to areas where remaining uncertainty exists. This will enable more focused work on these areas through subsequent AIPs.

Outcomes

12. The council and its partners have seven main strategic priorities which are based around their key contextual challenges, and focus on delivering outcomes for their communities. One area of significant concern has been identified in achieving the healthy and active outcome and there are uncertainties around the working and training, and caring and supporting outcomes. Audit Scotland will review whether the council and its partners are delivering outcomes for their communities as part of the BV2 audit.

Services

13. Education and Social Work services generally perform well. Where issues have been identified the council either has, or is in the process of implementing, changes. Housing asset management is an ongoing challenge for the council. Infrastructure and Design will be subject to monitoring by SHR with regard to the asset management improvement plan.

Corporate assessment

14. There have been significant changes to the officer leadership of the council with the recent appointment of a new chief executive and changes to the corporate management team. A revised management structure has been implemented to modernise and strengthen the structure of the Senior Management Team. A challenging change programme has also been instigated, which includes two key workstreams reviewing the future workforce and assets.

15. There are no significant concerns with regard to equalities, sustainability and governance and accountability. The council has been implementing changes in a number of areas of the corporate assessment, and Audit Scotland will assess the council's performance during the BV2 audit.

Self-evaluation

16. The council's approach to self-evaluation is being developed further following the adoption of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) in 2008. PSIF has been adopted by all services within the council with the exception of Education, who have opted to continue using well established processes. The education service was recognised in a recent HMIE inspection report as having rigorous and robust self-evaluation which was leading to improvements for learners. All services are scheduled to have completed the PSIF self-evaluation process by March 2011.
17. Prior to the adoption of PSIF, ad-hoc arrangements for self-assessment across services were in place. The level of maturity with these procedures varied across departments, and while they took into account relevant guidance from scrutiny bodies, there was no overall control framework to monitor the robustness of these processes or their impact overall.
18. As the use of PSIF is at an early stage of development in North Ayrshire Council, it is not possible to assess how well it is being used to support ongoing self-evaluation.

National risk priorities

19. A number of core national risk priorities will be applied to all 32 councils. These are:

- Protection, welfare and access to opportunities for vulnerable people:
 - children
 - adults in need of support and protection
 - older people.

The Child Protection Inspection will focus on this priority as will ongoing monitoring by SWIA.

- Assuring public money is being used properly.
 - Assuring public money is being used properly forms a key strand of the council's approach to excellence. Audit Scotland will assess this as part of their annual audit activity.
- The impact of the greater financial pressure faced by councils associated with the current economic climate.

- The economic recession has proved challenging for North Ayrshire Council, in particular with regards to reductions in capital receipts as developers withdrew interest from sites available for house building, and with £15m deposited in Icelandic banks prior to the collapse of the country's banking system in October 2008.
- It was initially anticipated that a substantial element of the deposits in Icelandic banks would be returned as UK local authorities were classified as preferential creditors. However, Glitnir, with whom the council has £10 million deposited, has since removed the preferential status, a move which has prompted legal action by UK local authorities, while the preferential status of the other monies deposited in Landsbanki is also being challenged in the Icelandic courts.
- In the case of capital receipts, the council took early action to prioritise projects and to defer much of the capital programme into future years, with the provision that should the market for development sites improve, projects can quickly be brought forward within the overall programme.
- The council's net general fund balance reduced by £0.8 million in 2008/09. This resulted in an overall unallocated balance of £9.5 million and balances on earmarked funds of £6.6 million, producing an overall general fund balance of £16.1 million at 31 March 2009. The projected outturn for 2009/10 based on figures reported to the Executive to January 2010 forecasts an unallocated balance as at 31 March 2010 of £10.4 million. This figure is likely to fluctuate as a result of year-end accounting adjustments.
- While the council has an accumulated surplus, financial pressures have required it to make efficiencies and savings which will continue into future years. In 2009/10 the council's budget reflected the need for £8.7 million in efficiencies and savings. It is forecast that efficiency savings in excess of ten per cent, approximately £40 million, will be required over the next three years from 2010/11, largely as a result of the economic climate, constrained government support and increased service demand.
- The council has reacted to likely risks and is aware of the steps required to actively monitor and inform members of developments. Audit Scotland will assess through routine activity.

Summary of planned scrutiny activity

20. The planned activity for North Ayrshire Council as described throughout the text is detailed in Appendix 3. In summary this includes:
- as part of the national programme of joint inspections of services to protect children, the council will be inspected during 2010

- to help the council achieve its outcomes at a time of significant change, Audit Scotland will coordinate a BV2 audit in 2010/11 working in partnership with other scrutiny bodies as required
- SHR will also undertake an Asset Management Improvement Plan Review in year one.

3. The council's context

21. North Ayrshire contains a diverse range of socio-economic contexts and covers 885 square kilometres. It has a population of around 135,000 which is predicted to decline with those of pensionable age expected to increase by around the national average at 31 per cent. This will place increasing demands on council services. The manufacturing and distribution, hotels and restaurants sectors employ around 40 per cent of the available jobs. This is above the national average of approximately 31 per cent. The number of unemployed individuals is higher than the national average of 7.6 per cent. The median gross weekly earnings are lower than the national average. Educational attainment levels are improving but remain below the national average.
22. While the islands of Arran, the Cumbraes and the northern coastal area are relatively advantaged, across the area there is a high incidence of multiple deprivation with high levels of unemployment, particularly among the young. North Ayrshire Council is the fifth most deprived local authority area in Scotland (SIMD 2009). The number of hospital admissions for both alcohol and drug misuse is significantly above the Scottish average.
23. Within this context the council has a number of key challenges including:
 - tackling deprivation and reducing poverty indicators
 - lifestyle issues around drug and alcohol misuse as well as teenage pregnancies
 - attracting inward migration and diversifying the housing base to other council tax bands
 - attracting inward investment opportunities
 - improving educational attainment
 - reducing anti-social and offending behaviour
 - the significant growth in the population of older people.
24. North Ayrshire Council has 30 councillors. There are eight wards in North Ayrshire, six with four councillors and two with three councillors. The Labour Party, as the largest party with 12 councillors, forms a minority administration. There are eight SNP councillors, three Conservatives, two Liberal Democrats and five Independent councillors.

4. Delivering outcomes for communities

North Ayrshire Council and its partners have a clear understanding of the context within which they are operating and have focused outcomes to address the challenges they face. There is a significant concern around one area – healthy and active – and lack of information on two key areas – working and training, and caring and supportive. In all other outcomes there are no significant risks. There are no significant concerns with service performance. However, there is still uncertainty over the council's ability to meet the SHQS (2015) until the stock condition survey is complete later this year. Scrutiny bodies have limited information about non regulated services.

25. Full details of each outcome are available at Appendix 1.

Working and training

26. There is limited information to consider the extent of progress the council and its partners are making with this outcome. High levels of unemployment and deprivation are significant challenges for North Ayrshire Council. There has been some success with young people through the More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) sub group, however, sustaining this will be a challenge to the council. There are gaps in available information around this outcome and it is difficult for the council to assess how well it is overall achieving outcomes in this area.

Healthy and active

27. There are significant risks that the council and its partners will fail to adequately address and deal with this outcome. North Ayrshire is below the national average for many of the indicators identified in the community health and well-being profiles. Life expectancy is significantly below the national average. On the key 'health' indicators identified in the single outcome agreement (SOA), targets are not being met including hospital admissions for alcohol misuse, obesity in young children, mortality rates and rate of teenage pregnancies. While North Ayrshire Council is making some improvements in people's levels of activity, they and their partners are failing to meet other health/lifestyle targets.

Caring and supportive

28. The council is addressing the key priorities in this area. A positive inspection of Child Protection was published in May 2008 with most evaluations being "good" or better. However, while there are a number of improvements further work is needed around ensuring every child and young person lives within a supportive family setting. Improvements have been made, for example, in residential care and also in recording and reporting on decisions taken with regard to homelessness. The report arising from the very recent inspection of Child Protection is due to be published in September 2010.

Safe and Secure

29. The council and its partners have established systems and processes that will help deliver on this outcome. There are no significant risks to the council achieving this outcome. The council and its partners have established a Safer North Ayrshire Partnership and are reviewing their Antisocial Behaviour/Community Safety Strategy. The partnership also runs a number of high profile campaigns during the year including a safer streets campaign and alcohol awareness week. Housing services has a strong approach to managing antisocial behaviour that affects its tenants. The SOA progress report highlights that there is a slight decrease from the previous year in the number of residents feeling unsafe walking in their neighbourhood at night. Crimes of violence, disorder and possession have decreased while vandalism and anti-social behaviour have increased.

Learning and taking part

30. There are no significant risks in this area and as a result we do not plan to undertake any scrutiny activity. Overall, Educational Services performs well. Early years provision is particularly strong and supports the most vulnerable children very well. Attainment and achievement is good and improving in primary. North Ayrshire has identified the need to continue to improve attainment in secondary schools. The number of exclusions is declining. Community Learning and Development (CLD) is very strong and considerable work has been done in some of the most deprived communities to engage learners of all ages and to support families.

Clean and green

31. There are no significant risks in this area and we do not plan to undertake any scrutiny activity. The council is making progress on this outcome and has improved on its cleanliness index, increased the percentage of municipal waste recycled and reduced the tonnage of waste sent to landfill. It has also reduced its overall carbon emissions. In education, schools are making good progress towards becoming more eco-friendly. All schools are registered as Eco schools.

For you and for everyone

32. There are no significant risks in this area and we do not plan to undertake any scrutiny activity. North Ayrshire Council and its partners ensure that services are welcoming and accessible for everyone. They promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination and inequality. Positive work has been done in addressing equalities in Educational Services schools and centres and in Housing, Infrastructure and Design and Building Services.

Services

33. Education and Social Work services generally perform well. Where issues have been identified the council either has or is in the progress of implementing changes. Housing asset management is an ongoing challenge for the council. Infrastructure and Design Services will be subject to monitoring

through the SHR improvement plan. The main source of information obtained by the LAN was previous Inspection reports. Other than statutory performance indicators scrutiny bodies have little information about other non regulated services.

34. Full details of each service area are available at Appendix 1.

Education services

35. Overall, education services perform well and there are no significant risks identified. The recent INEA inspection noted that, the authority had made significant improvement in performance in many areas but had yet to succeed in achieving sustained improvement in the levels of attainment of secondary aged learners from S3 to S6. The authority has a good understanding of the relevant risks and has taken appropriate action to deal with this. In the last three years, almost all inspections have been positive and again this is an improving picture. We do not intend to undertake any specific scrutiny in this area.

Social services

36. While no significant concerns have been identified, there are some areas of uncertainty and there will be ongoing scrutiny monitoring in this area. There is stronger performance in children services and criminal justice with good results on keeping more looked after and accommodated children (LAAC) within the authority and achieving good educational attainment. SWIA identified support and outcomes for older people as an area for improvement in the 2007 inspection; the recent follow-through inspection showed good progress, but identified strategic planning and commissioning issues, and that proactive performance management was not as well developed in community care as in child care.

Housing/infrastructure and design

37. The council's performance in housing management is excellent. Tenant satisfaction, tenancy and neighbourhood management, tenant participation and income maximization are all strong and improving. Services for homeless people are good and improving overall with strengths in access, temporary accommodation, prevention and it achieved its 2009 target early. Areas for improvement include aspects of assessment and recording of some of its outcomes. The council has a number of significant weaknesses in its approach to meeting SHQS by 2015 and it does not have a strategic approach to housing asset management, which is the responsibility of infrastructure and design. Also, the information held by the council on its stock condition is unreliable. The SHR will monitor the council's progress in managing these risks.

Regulatory Services

38. Building control, trading standards and environmental health are expected to be delivered on an Ayrshire-wide basis in the medium-term. There remains little information available about how well

these services are performing or their contribution to the wider outcomes. BV2 will focus work on these areas for service performance.

5. Corporate assessment

A combination of the nature of change being undertaken and areas where it is unclear how well the council is performing has resulted in a number of areas of uncertainty in terms of the risk assessment. The council is implementing a change programme and to support this development a BV2 audit will be undertaken. This will focus on all aspects of the council's business but with an emphasis on the corporate assessment areas.

Corporate assessment

39. The corporate risk framework for the council is outlined below with a very brief summary of the risk assessment. Full details of each area are available in Appendix 2.

Vision and Strategic Direction

40. The council and its partners have set out their shared vision in the single outcome agreement. In response to changing pressures, there are a number of recent initiatives which have not had time to establish themselves. These include a new 'change sounding board' which includes political representation and a strategic management team including other public agency chief officials. The council is revising its key strategies and while initial signs are positive it is too early to assess their impact.

Partnership working and community leadership

41. Partnership working is developing. Relationships with the NHS Ayrshire & Arran have previously not been strong but the council is working to change this, particularly through the Community Health Partnership and newly established strategic management team. There are several initiatives involving partnership working with South and East Ayrshire. Emergency Planning and Hearing Impairment services are already delivered on a pan-Ayrshire basis. Plans are in place for a similar approach with regulatory services.

Community engagement

42. Community engagement is strong and the council use a range of different means to consult and involve communities. The council is working to report its performance using the North Ayrshire Performs website. Work to build the capacity of communities to engage in decision making and consultations is particularly strong.

Governance and accountability

43. There are no risks or concerns around governance and accountability. A 'Scheme of Administration for North Ayrshire Council' is in place detailing the respective Committees and Subcommittees to be appointed by the council, and the constitution, quorum, terms of reference and delegated powers of

each committee. 'Standing Orders Relating to Meetings and Proceedings of the council and committees' are also in place and help to ensure proper processes are followed.

44. Cross-party working is improving as evidenced by the joint working during the 2010/11 budget setting process, while 27 out of 30 Elected Members have undergone a Personal Development Plan (PDP). Overall, the committee structure appears to be effective, and no concerns have been identified.

Performance management and improvement

45. Performance management is under developed in some areas. The council has recently adopted the PSIF. This is being rolled out across all service areas. Prior to the introduction of PSIF the council did not have a consistent approach to self evaluation.

Use of resources

46. The council plans to make significant savings over the next three years (£40 million). Elected members have discussed potential options and the council has prepared a three year budget and is developing a change programme to secure the required efficiencies.

Equalities

47. Equalities work is a strength of the council and it includes Equalities as one of its corporate objectives. SWIA identified an example of good practice in equalities where the community development team supported local Chinese citizens to start up a local newsletter. Another example of good practice was a project focusing on independent living support for young people who are looked after.

Sustainability

48. Sustainability is a core value within the councils decision making processes ensuring that economic, social and environmental impact activities do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6. Conclusion

Next Steps

49. Further discussions are planned with the council relating to the proposed BV2 audit. Where there is the opportunity to work with colleagues from other scrutiny bodies this will be reviewed.

Summary of planned scrutiny activity

50. The main area of scrutiny will focus on a BV2 Audit. The council is also scheduled to receive an inspection of services to protect children as part of the national cycle of inspections. It is intended that synergies between these two processes will be identified to reduce the impact of scrutiny on the council. In addition to this, both SWIA and the SHR will monitor progress against improvement plans prepared by the council and determine whether any further scrutiny activity might be required at a later date.

Appendix 1

Performance Assessment North Ayrshire Council

Strategic priorities	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Working and training</p>	<p>Areas of uncertainty</p>	<p>The local labour market is characterised by higher than average unemployment, low wages and low economic activity.</p> <p>The council, along with its Community Planning Partnership partners identified three sub-outcomes – more people in work and training; fewer people dependent on benefits and fewer people living on low incomes. This has been superseded by the SOA which the CPP has adopted as their community plan.</p> <p>The CPP has an Economic and Learning Partnership. The partnership has considered various funding routes to address the working and training agenda, including future jobs fund and FNA funding. There is also a sub group – MCMC focusing on young people. Considerable work has been undertaken by this group to ensure young people move in to positive destinations in either employment, education or training. Numbers of young people who are now engaged and have secured positive destinations has increased. North Ayrshire recognises that sustaining this is a continued challenge.</p> <p>Staff in CLD work in schools to support groups of young people in their transitions to work and training.</p> <p>While the council has an established structure to focus on this agenda, other than where the SOA identifies an increase in the number of new businesses formed over the last year, there is very little up to date information to consider whether the council is achieving its outcomes in this area.</p> <p>In the 2007 social work inspection SWIA reported that North Ayrshire had a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy which had made a positive difference to their vacancy rate. There was evidence of innovative and inclusive thinking about recruitment – there was a job rotation scheme within care at home services to provide short-term employment for unemployed adults within regeneration areas.</p>	<p>Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit.</p>

Strategic priorities	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Healthy and active</p>	<p>Areas of significant risk</p>	<p>North Ayrshire is below the national average for many of the indicators identified in the community health and well-being profiles. Life expectancy is significantly below the national average. On the key 'health' indicators identified in the SOA, targets are not being met including hospital admissions for alcohol misuse, obesity in young children, mortality rates and rate of teenage pregnancies. While North Ayrshire Council is making some improvements in people's levels of activity, they and their partners are failing to meet other health/lifestyle targets. Given the context within which the council is operating there are significant risks that it will fail to adequately address and deal with the outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statutory Performance Indicators show that the number of people attending pools and indoor sporting facilities is increasing and a greater number of young people are receiving a minimum of two hours of PE per week. • The Community Health Partnership (CHP)'s remit is to address the healthy and active agenda supported by subgroups. The partnership meets six weekly and reports to the CPP. However, there is limited information to assess how it is doing in relation to the outcomes. 	<p>Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit.</p>

Strategic priorities	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Caring and supportive</p>	<p>Areas of uncertainty</p>	<p>The council and its partners are generally addressing the key priorities in this area leading to better outcomes. A positive inspection of Child Protection was carried out in 2007/8 and most evaluations were good or better. However, while there are a number of improvements further work is needed around ensuring every child and young person lives within a supportive family setting. Improvements have been made, for example, in residential care and also in recording and reporting on decisions taken with regard to homelessness. However, it is too soon to determine the impact of these measures and the outcomes are unclear.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the number of staff who have appropriate qualifications in children's residential accommodation, to just over half of staff. The Statutory Performance Indicators show that care overnight for children with disabilities is reducing.</p> <p>The 2007 SWIA performance inspection identified that capacity for improvement was good. Outcomes across care groups was evaluated as adequate and social work had not met a number of community care performance targets, particularly those concerned with the support of older people. The 2008 follow up found mixed progress. Progress was delayed due to restructuring of the CHP but actions that could be taken forward by the council were progressed. The council's performance improved in relation to community care targets. In addition the CHP Committee was established in October 2008 and its sub-structure of Officer Locality Groups and CHP Forum created by the end of that year.</p> <p>The council exceeded its target for the supply of affordable housing sites during 2008/09. The SHR report highlighted weaknesses in the way that the council manages its homeless assessments, its recording of some of its outcomes and in its review of its decisions. However, the council responded quickly to address these issues.</p>	<p>Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit</p>

Strategic priorities	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Safe and secure</p>	<p>No significant risk</p>	<p>In addressing the safe and secure outcome the community plan identifies the need to reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime, as well as incidents of fire and malicious false alarms and fatalities and casualties.</p> <p>The SOA progress report highlights that nearly half of residents feel unsafe walking in their neighbourhood at night. This is a slight decrease from the previous year. Incidents of vandalism and anti social behaviour have increased but crimes of violence, disorder and possession have decreased. The number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents has increased considerably from the previous year.</p> <p>The council and its partners have established a Safer North Ayrshire Partnership. The partnership is currently reviewing its Anti Social Behaviour/Community Safety Strategy. There are a number of sub groups including a tasking and problem solving group which plans to use crime statistics to discuss with partners how to jointly deal with priorities and issues across the area. The partnership also run a number of high profile campaigns during the year including a safer streets campaign and alcohol awareness week. There is quarterly monitoring of the SOA targets.</p> <p>The council has established processes to monitor and implement actions in relation to the safe and secure outcome.</p>	

Strategic priorities	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
Learning and taking part	No significant risk	<p>Overall, Education Services performs well. Early years provision is very strong and supports the most vulnerable children very well. Attainment and achievement is good and improving in primary. North Ayrshire has identified the need to continue to improve attainment in secondary schools. The number of exclusions is declining. CLD is very strong and considerable work has been done in some of the most deprived communities to engage learners of all ages and to support families.</p> <p>Learning and Taking Part encourages communities to be 'active' in the widest sense, and makes sure that people are able to access the many opportunities to participate in learning and get involved in what's going on in their own communities. This includes identifying and removing any barriers which may exist, and providing support and incentives to people to encourage involvement.</p>	No scrutiny activity is required at this time
Clean and green	No significant risk	<p>The council is making progress on this outcome and has improved on its cleanliness index, increased the percentage of municipal waste recycled and reduced the tonnage of waste sent to landfill. It has also reduced its overall carbon emissions. In education, schools are making good progress towards becoming more eco-friendly. Almost all schools are working towards the Eco schools awards. The council has a corporate travel plan which encourages staff to walk and cycle to work or car share. The plan sets out short term objectives to encourage a modal change in staff travel.</p>	No scrutiny activity is required at this time
For you and everyone	No significant risk	<p>North Ayrshire Council and its partners ensure that services are welcoming and accessible for everyone. They promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination and inequality. Positive work has been done in looking at equalities in education services and schools and centres. There are no significant risks in this area.</p> <p>The SPIs show an increase in public accessibility for disabled people as well as an increase in the number of female council employees who are in the highest paid two per cent.</p> <p>(Information in relation to this priority is also contained within the Equalities section.)</p>	No scrutiny activity is required at this time

Council Services	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
Education and skills services	No significant risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent education authority inspection noted very clear vision and very good strategic direction. The outcomes of this inspection were very positive. Over the last three years, most pre-school centres have received positive inspection reports. • Very strong overall profile of inspections in primary with almost all evaluations being good or very good. HMIE have been able to disengage from most primaries because of very strong self-evaluation. • Raising attainment in secondary was an area for development in the recent INEA and is a major focus in the council. Overall this area is showing signs of improvement and is a major area of focus in the council. • Inspection reports show that children with additional support needs (ASN) are making good progress and are well supported. Recent inspections of two special schools have been very positive. • The work of the MCMC group has contributed significantly to improved leaver destinations. Significantly more pupils with ASN take more appropriate courses certified through such bodies as ASDAN, and courses at Access levels. • CLD was identified as having significant areas of good practice. There is significant provision for adult learners which is having a positive impact on communities. • Educational Psychology Services (EPS) was also inspected recently and a report was published in April 2009. The overall quality of EPS was very good with excellent practice in operational planning. • The LAN did not have sufficient information on non-inspected services outwith statutory performance information. This included libraries. The LAN will attempt to gather further information for the next iteration of the AIP, including self-evaluation information available from the council. 	

Council Services	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Social services and health</p>	<p>No significant risks however there are some areas of uncertainty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluations in the 2007 performance inspection were 1 very good, 5 good and 4 adequate. Capacity for improvement was good. Follow-up December 2008. Of the 15 recommendations SWIA were satisfied with progress on eight of them. SWIA also highlighted that further work was required in areas which involved partnership work with the NHS, particularly in relation to the development of the CHP, and also on aligning service planning and oversight with financial planning and oversight. Criminal Justice: in CJ partnership with other Ayrshire authorities. The partnership was inspected in 2007. Mixed report but positive progress on delivering the action plan since then with only five recommendations partially outstanding in 2009. There has been a significant demand for residential child care places which has challenged the capacity available resulting in several homes often being over the numbers for which they are registered. The council is addressing this by developing their fostering service and reviewing the registrations of the current provision with the Care Commission. Overall, the services registered with the Care Commission which are owned and managed by the council are not out of step with national comparisons and would not be deemed to require regulatory activity beyond normal planned programmes. Good congruence between social work and corporate strategic plans. Strong professional leadership in Social Work. Executive Director highly respected and influential within the council. Shared commitment to the vision evident at all levels of management. Number of planning and operational deficits identified in community care during the performance inspection – some outstanding concerns at follow-up. SWIA had identified need for clear guidance in the use of chronologies to aid on-going need and risk assessment, and this had been swiftly addressed. Quality of assessments more thoroughly audited. Good results on keeping more LAAC children within the authority and good educational attainment. Good links between child care and addiction services. <p>Areas of uncertainties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SWIA performance inspection found that partnership arrangements with health were not operating effectively. Strategic commissioning was not well developed and strategic planning in community care was found to have a number of deficits. Proactive performance management was not as well-developed in community care as child care. Problematic partnership with health a significant factor in lack of progress on particular recommendations at the time of the follow-up. While there have been structural changes regarding the CHP that now appear to be facilitating improved joint planning, it is early days for clear evidence of demonstrable improvement in services and outcomes. 	<p>Monitoring of progress and support for self-improvement will continue through SWIA link inspector role.</p>

Council Services	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
<p>Finance and infrastructure / Housing services</p> <p>- Housing</p> <p>- Infrastructure and Design Services</p>	<p>Areas of uncertainty</p>	<p>The council's performance in housing management is excellent. Tenant satisfaction, tenancy and neighbourhood management, and income maximization are all strong.</p> <p>Tenant participation and housing revenue account HRA and cost are also strong. The council has a number of significant weaknesses in its approach to meeting SHQS by 2015 and it does not have a strategic approach to housing asset management. Also, the information held by the council on its stock condition is unreliable. As a result, there are a number of risks that the council needs to address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHR due to receive an Improvement Plan update in November 2010 focused on asset management and SHQS services following its 2008 inspection. As a result it is unclear at present what progress has been made in these areas of weakness since the inspection. • Services for homeless people are good overall with strengths in access, temporary accommodation, prevention and it achieved its 2009 target early. Areas for improvement were aspects of homeless assessments, its recording of some of its outcomes and in its review of some of its decisions (which it acted quickly to address). • The council is improving the condition of its stock through investment, but it is not delivering all of its scheduled programme and significantly under spent its capital budget during 2007/08 and 2008/09. Capital allocation per house increased 2008/09. • The council performs poorly in ensuring that gas appliances are given an annual safety check. <p>Building control, trading standards and environmental health are expected to be delivered on an Ayrshire-wide basis by 1 April 2011. There is uncertainty over how this will be structured, and given the timescales it represents a potential risk.</p> <p>The LAN did not have sufficient information on non-inspected services outwith statutory performance information. This included building control, planning and environmental protection. The LAN will attempt to gather further information for the next iteration of the AIP, including self-evaluation information available from the council.</p>	<p>SHR monitoring inspection improvement plan in early 2011</p>

Appendix 2

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council			
Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
Vision and strategic direction	Areas of uncertainty	<p>The SOA between North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government sets out a shared vision for North Ayrshire which is about 'championing and developing the positive aspects of life in North Ayrshire, whilst also tackling poverty and disadvantage in all of its forms'. The Chief Executive started post in August 2009. There are changes to remits of all senior staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'change sounding board' has been set up which includes the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director – Finance and Infrastructure. The board has political representation from all parties. The change programme is expected to last 2-3 years, and all staff have received letters detailing the process being undertaken. Unions have also been contacted. Change workstreams are cross-sectoral and are led by a range of managers. • Regular Senior official meetings and meetings with elected members to monitor progress. • A Strategic Management Team has been initiated which includes the Director of Public Health, local regeneration company and Police Superintendent. • Organisational re-structure of senior management took place in December 2009 with a view to clearly distinguishing between professional roles • A Local Development Plan is being progressed and is currently out for public consultation • While plans setting out the council's revised strategic direction are under development, and it is too early to assess the impact they will have in the medium to long term, initial signs are positive and arrangements appear to be in place to effectively facilitate the change programme. • The SOA contains 34 outcomes and 109 indicators, measuring progress against these outcomes. The SOA Annual Report for 2008/09 identified that targets had been met for 47% of the indicators, had not been met for 34%, were not available for 19%, and had improved 	Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit.

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council

Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>from the baseline whilst not meeting the target for 6%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the number of indicators not achieving target is relatively high, this was the first year in which information has been published. Progress against indicators will be monitored on an ongoing basis with trends investigated as required. 	
<p>Partnership working and community leadership</p>	<p>Areas of uncertainty</p>	<p>The impact and quality of partnership working is developing. Positive partnership working across the three Ayrshires in Education. Directors meet regularly and there are already some very positive mechanisms for sharing resources, training and ideas for better joint working. Partnership working with Ayrshire and Arran Health Board has not been strong in the past, and the council is working towards developing a stronger relationship.</p> <p>Emergency planning services are already delivered on a pan-Ayrshire basis, and proposals for an all Ayrshire Regulatory Service are at an advanced stage, with the host council due to be decided and the service implemented towards the end of 2010.</p> <p>Child protection committees work together pan-Ayrshire.</p> <p>Initiated a Strategic Management Team to involve health, regeneration and Police in strategic direction.</p> <p>Conducted a review of community planning partnership in 2008. However, some issues identified remain to be tackled.</p>	<p>Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit.</p>
<p>Community engagement</p>	<p>No significant risks</p>	<p>Community engagement is strong, with the council using a range of means to consult and involve communities. The council is working to report its performance using the North Ayrshire Performs website. Work to build the capacity of communities to engage in decision making and consultations is particularly strong. Very good use of local radio and other media to engage local groups in the budget process. Council has just appointed a corporate communications manager to improve engagement further. There are no significant risks in this area.</p>	<p>No scrutiny activity is required at this time</p>

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council

Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>The council and its partners engage with the community through the CPP's people's panel. Lowland Market Research manage the panel on the council's behalf and are contracted to deliver two surveys and four focus groups per annum. The council also carries out its own household survey every four years. The next 4- survey is due to be undertaken in summer 2011.</p> <p>A survey examining the impact of the economic recession is also planned. Further community engagement is planned through the establishment of 'North Ayrshire Performs'.</p> <p>The community development team in social work has been integrated into a new CLD Team within Education and Skills. Community engagement is positive with strong work on building community capacity. The INEA inspection reported that an innovative part of community provision was the council's approach to training and then employing community leaders. Housing services has a strong approach to tenant participation and has an excellent range of consultative forums for it tenants, for example, its Housing Forum, major repairs working groups and its newsletter editorial group. It was the first council in Scotland to achieve accreditation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service for its approach to tenant participation.</p>	
<p>Governance and accountability</p>	<p>No significant risks</p>	<p>Governance arrangements are generally good. The scrutiny committee is chaired by an experienced independent councillor, with a member of the opposition as deputy. The committee is well attended and cross-party working is improving. The scrutiny committee sits fortnightly, and provides effective scrutiny of issues put before it. It undertakes detailed scrutiny on key aspects of performance. There are no significant risks.</p> <p>Cross party service review groups also provide helpful direction and support during the budget setting process.</p> <p>The Executive of North Ayrshire Council currently comprises six members of the minority Labour administration. During the budget setting process for 2010/11, a series of member seminars were held to facilitate challenge and consultation on proposals. All council members were also invited to sit on the Executive and challenge proposals prior to the budget being sent to the full council</p>	<p>No scrutiny activity is required at this time</p>

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council

Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>meeting.</p> <p>While members not on the Executive were unable to vote on changes, this improved the governance process and provided effective scrutiny and challenge to budget proposals. This is a sign of improved cross party working at the council.</p>	
<p>Performance management and improvement</p>	<p>Areas of uncertainty</p>	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>The council has adopted the PSIF self-assessment tool as its core approach to self assessment. Social services were one of three local authorities to pilot the combined application of PSIF and the SWIA self-evaluated guide. The council has used consultancy from SOLACE to ensure that planning mechanisms demonstrate clear connections between work on the ground and strategic priorities. With the implementation of revised performance indicators across all Scottish councils from 2009/10, North Ayrshire Council needs to ensure that it has a robust system in place to provide relevant and reliable performance information to the local population. Internal audit have been asked to assess the systems being implemented.</p> <p>Efficiencies</p> <p>The council produces an annual efficiency statement which reports and assesses any efficiency gains during the year and identifies key targets for 2009/10. During 2008/09, the efficiency programme delivered cash and non cash savings of £4.2 million and £0.3 million respectively.</p> <p>Risk management</p> <p>The council has an adequate approach to managing risk. However, at present there is inconsistent performance management across the council and it is too early to determine the impact of recent initiatives.</p>	<p>Will be examined as part of a Best Value 2 audit.</p>

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council			
Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>PPR</p> <p>The council is working to develop the 'North Ayrshire Performs' section of the website which is scheduled to go live by June 2010. The aim is to provide the public with comprehensive and up to date information on council performance.</p>	
Use of resources	Areas of uncertainty	<p>Financial Management</p> <p>In 2009/10 the council's budget reflected the need for £8.7 million in efficiencies and savings. It is forecast that efficiency savings in excess of 10%, approximately £40 million, will be required over the next three years from 2010/11. Four seminars on the budget proposals were held with elected members which ensured that options for change were well discussed. The council has re-prioritised the capital budget and significantly reduced the list of projects. The council is actively considering how to "do things differently" in light of expected continuing financial constraint. Revenue budgetary control is generally well managed, although concerns have been identified in aligning service and financial planning. The council has published three year budgeting from 2010/11 (<i>with indicative figures for years two and three</i>), and this should enable improved medium term financial planning by providing members with improved information on which to base decisions.</p> <p>Workforce Planning</p> <p>The corporate workforce strategy for 2009-12 and associated plans are currently being taken forward by a cross service Corporate Workforce Planning Group. An update on the implementation on the strategy was provided to the scrutiny committee in December 2009 and this provided details of a number of proposals being taken forward. Significant levels of retirements but Corporate Management Team monitoring impact of this on performance. We would, however, consider that the process for implementing the corporate workforce strategy for 2009-12 is behind schedule.</p> <p>Asset Management</p> <p>Asset management remains in a state of development. There is an ongoing issue with regards</p>	Will be examined as part of a BV2 audit.

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council			
Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>common good assets, and the council are reviewing title deeds for all of its assets. A key challenge for the council is deciding what to do with surplus and low occupancy buildings.</p> <p>Procurement The council set up a corporate procurement unit (CPU) in 2005 to deliver best value in its procurement activities The CPU prepares the council's procurement strategy and reports progress to the management team every two months. An annual procurement report is presented to the Executive. The council monitors private care home services and takes action to encourage them to make improvements where necessary.</p>	
Equalities	No significant risks	<p>Equalities work is a strength of the council. A single equality scheme was submitted to the Executive of North Ayrshire Council in September 2008, consolidating the council's race, disability and gender equality schemes. The single equality scheme action plan contains a commitment to strengthen the links between service planning and action plans in service planning guidance.</p> <p>One of the key functions of the corporate equality officers group is to allow the sharing of good practice in management and service delivery processes across the council's services. Participation in the Ayrshire Equality Partnership (AEP) has allowed this sharing of good practice to be extended with the other Ayrshire local authorities.</p> <p>A SWIA inspection found good practice regarding equalities. Examples included the community development team supporting Chinese citizens to start up a local newsletter and mentoring and independent living support for young people who were looked after. An SHR inspection found an excellent focus on equalities in its Housing, Technical and Building services. Examples included a disabled persons housing service, providing repairs service priority to vulnerable tenants and a home security project for women experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	No scrutiny activity is required at this time
Sustainability	No significant risks	<p>The council identifies sustainable development as a core value within its decision-making processes, ensuring that economic, social and environmental impact of all its activities does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is developing a Local Development Plan and as part of the process has undertaken an economic and social assessment</p>	No specific scrutiny activity is required at this time.

Corporate Assessment North Ayrshire Council

Corporate assessment area	Initial risk assessment	Evidence/rationale	What we plan to do
		<p>across the area. This provides the council with a clear understanding of the economic and social sustainability issues which will inform the Local Development Plan. There are no significant risks for the council in terms of sustainability.</p> <p>North Ayrshire Council has put in place a carbon management plan to address its commitments under the 'Scottish climate change declaration'. Through associated projects the council has reduced CO2 emissions, far exceeding target figures.</p>	

Appendix 3

North Ayrshire Council Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010-13: Summary of Scrutiny and Improvement

The AIP is a three year rolling programme. (Express scrutiny footprint in terms of 'scrutiny days'. 1 person for one day = 1 scrutiny day). Include **all days** devoted to scrutiny including off site evidence review. On- site days should be highlighted **in red** as this will be the perceived scrutiny footprint.

2010-11 (Year 1)												
Scrutiny activity	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Services to protect children: Mandatory ministerially-directed inspection of child protection services (73 on site days) 113 total inspector days												
Corporate: Best Value 2 Audit Apx 100 days (20 on site days)												
Infrastructure and Design: SHR appraisal of the council's self assessment of its progress against its housing service improvement plan												
Vulnerable people and families are supported: ISLA Autumn 2010 qtr 3. SWIA monitoring of improvement plan. SWIA carrying out an initial scrutiny level assessment.												
Vulnerable people and families are supported: National adoption and fostering survey by Care Commission												
Police services HMICS / Audit Scotland Best Value Review of Police Services												

2011-12 (Year 2)	
Issues for scrutiny /improvement	Scrutiny bodies /council potential involvement
BV2 Improvement plan review	Audit Scotland

2012-13 (Year 3)	
Issues for scrutiny /improvement	Scrutiny bodies /council potential involvement
BV2 Improvement Plan review	Audit Scotland