

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

Thursday 19 June 2014

Report by Deputy Chief Executive

AUDIT SCOTLAND ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE 2014-17

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report presents the annual update to the Council's Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP). The report is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by all scrutiny bodies which interact with the Council. The 2014-17 update is attached as an annex.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. The Cabinet is asked to:

- (a) commend the Council's positive assessment by external scrutiny bodies and note that the 2014-17 AIP is published on the Accounts Commission website;
- (b) note the Local Area Network's (LAN) conclusion that 'no risk based scrutiny work is required' with only housing services required to provide further information to the Scottish Housing Regulator in two areas; and
- (c) note the external scrutiny plans in Appendix 1 of the report which list the timescales for the joint inspection of the Council's children's services. This inspection is part of a planned programme and is taking place during May and June.

**BACKGROUND**

3. In response to the 2007 Crerar report on the 'Independent Review of Regulation, Audit, Inspection and Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland' the Scottish Government committed to developing a simplified and streamlined approach to local government scrutiny by external bodies. This included the need to better co-ordinate strategic scrutiny activity between main scrutiny bodies including Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate (formerly Care Commission), Education Scotland (formerly HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe)) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4. A Local Area Network (LAN) was established to bring inspectors and auditors together to share all the relevant information held about East Renfrewshire Council and to agree a scrutiny plan for the Council. The first Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP), published in July 2010 set out a programme of scrutiny activity for the Council for the period 2010-2013 based on a shared risk assessment. The AIP has since been updated annually and the last report was considered by Council in May 2013.

## **SHARED RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW**

5. The shared risk assessment process was reviewed in 2013 to determine the focus of future assessments. As a result this year's shared risk assessment looked at the Council's current position in implementing the Scottish Government's reform agenda in areas such as police and fire; health and social care integration and welfare reform. The assessment also scrutinised risk in relation to the Council's improvement and transformation programme.

6. The AIP for 2014-17 covers a risk assessment across four broad themes: local priorities and public sector reform, corporate assessment (i.e. council's management arrangements and best value obligations); service performance and improving and transforming public services and public performance reporting. The 2014-17 update is attached at Annex 1 and comprises a scrutiny assessment and commentary on the Council's approach and current position across these four broad themes.

7. Each Council in Scotland has undergone a similar process to determine the planned level of scrutiny. All 2014-17 AIP reports are published on the Accounts Commission's website and a copy of East Renfrewshire's report will also be made available on the Council website.

## **SUMMARY**

8. This year's AIP report is very positive and the LAN has concluded that no risk based scrutiny work is required within the Council's corporate or service areas with only housing services required to provide further information to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The SHR requires progress updates on how the Council's Housing Service is performing on reducing levels of rent arrears and void rent loss and reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. The service has been working on an ambitious plan to improve performance in these areas, including a review of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and the introduction of a 'Mixed Tenure Scheme to increase the desirability of specific properties and thereby reducing void rent loss.

9. Whilst there is to be no *risk* based scrutiny work, the Council will continue to receive non risk based service inspections and monitoring from each of the scrutiny bodies, This includes, for example routine inspections of schools and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate. The scrutiny bodies also have further non risk based activity planned, such as: HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland on local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils, Scottish Housing Regulator thematic inquiries, and Audit Scotland housing benefit risk based assessment, however the specific council areas are yet to be determined.

10. The LAN will carry out a risk assessment next year to co-ordinate and determine the appropriate level of external scrutiny. At the national level Audit Scotland will follow up on two national performance audits on 'Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?' and 'Major Capital Investments in Councils.'

## **CONCLUSION**

11. This AIP report presents an extremely positive external assessment. Given this is the second year we have achieved the LAN's decision that no external risk based scrutiny is required at a corporate or service level, it demonstrates the Council's and employees' ongoing commitment to be the best we can be, to deliver better outcomes for our customers and residents.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

12. The Cabinet is asked to:
- (a) commend the Council's positive assessment by external scrutiny bodies and note that the 2014-17 AIP is published on the Accounts Commission website;
  - (b) note the Local Area Network's (LAN) conclusion that 'no risk based scrutiny work is required' with only housing services required to provide further information to the Scottish Housing Regulator in two areas; and
  - (c) note the external scrutiny plans in Appendix 1 of the report which list the timescales for the joint inspection of the Council's children's services. This inspection is part of a planned programme and is taking place during May and June.

Deputy Chief Executive

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Audit Scotland Assurance and Improvement Plan 2013/14, Council 15 May 2014

## **KEYWORDS**

Assurance and Improvement Plan, AIP, Best Value, Scrutiny Plan, Risk Assessment

# **East 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 East Renfrewshire 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 East 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 Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS), including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence
  - the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and associated development plan for the council area
  - the council's own performance data and self-evaluation evidence
  - analysis of data from the SOLACE/COSLA/Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework.<sup>2</sup>
3. The shared risk assessment process was reviewed in 2013, in the context of a significantly changed scrutiny landscape and the evolving public service reform agenda.<sup>3</sup> Based on the findings of the review, this year's shared risk assessment focused on identifying the council's current position in implementing the Scottish Government's reform agenda. It also placed more emphasis on scrutiny risk in relation to the council's improvement and transformation agenda. This change in approach is reflected in the structure of the AIP for 2014-17, which covers four areas:
  - local priorities and public service reform
  - corporate assessment
  - service performance
  - improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> Assurance and Improvement Plans for each council since 2010 are available on the Audit Scotland website: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/scrutiny/aip.php>

<sup>2</sup> The indicators used in the framework can be found on the Improvement Service website: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

<sup>3</sup> The review of the shared risk assessment process was one of four work streams taken forward by the Strategic Group for Local Government Scrutiny Co-ordination during 2013.

4. Scrutiny risk is assessed against the following criteria:
  - No scrutiny required - there are no significant concerns, so no scrutiny work is necessary.
  - Scrutiny required - there are concerns about performance, services or outcomes, resulting in the need for scrutiny work.
  - Further information required - there is insufficient information to reach a judgement about performance.
5. The National Scrutiny Plan for 2014/15 is available on the Audit Scotland website. It provides a summary of planned scrutiny activity across all Councils in Scotland, based on the AIPs for each council.

# Summary

6. East Renfrewshire's SOA 2013-16 was prepared in June and agreed by the Scottish Government on 25 July 2013. The document setting out the five key outcomes, reflects the Scottish Government's national outcomes of:
  - economic recovery and growth
  - employment
  - early years
  - safer and stronger communities including reducing reoffending
  - health inequalities and physical activity
  - outcomes for older people.
7. This is the core strategic document for the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), and encompasses the work of the statutory community planning partners, key public sector agencies and voluntary and business sectors. Each key outcome is being managed as an outcome-focused work stream and the six monthly performance and accountability reviews will monitor the position, although we note that these reviews may change to quarterly reviews.
8. The AIP update issued in April 2013 noted that the LAN concluded that no risk based scrutiny work was required on the council's services or outcome areas and no areas had been identified as requiring additional information. This year the LAN has concluded that no risk based scrutiny work is required with only housing and homelessness requiring 'further information'. As part of a rolling programme the Care Inspectorate will lead and coordinate multi-agency scrutiny of services for children to evaluate the continued effectiveness of integrated working to improve outcomes for children across all local authorities and this work is reflected in planned scrutiny activity.
9. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has identified that rent arrears and void rent loss performance is below the national figures and further information is required on progress against the planned improvement action. The use of B&B accommodation is also high and the council's 2012 improvement plan advised that a review of its available temporary accommodation was being undertaken which aimed to reduce the use of B&B accommodation. Progress updates need to be provided to confirm the action taken by the council to reduce B&B use.
10. Last year's AIP included two areas of planned work during 2012/13. Audit Scotland's follow-up audit of its national report *Scotland's Public Finances - Addressing the Challenges* was completed and published in August 2013. The findings of a further audit, *Scotland's Public Finances - Workforce Planning* is due to be published later this year.
11. The Care Inspectorate, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Risk Management Authority, has been undertaking supported self-evaluation activity to assess



the initial impact of the introduction of the assessment and case planning instrument LS/CMI across Scotland's criminal justice social work services. This activity started in June 2013 and will conclude with the publication of a national report by May 2014. Action plans arising from this activity will be implemented in 2014.

## Planned scrutiny activity

12. As part of its scrutiny of children's services across Scotland, the Care Inspectorate will lead a joint inspection of children's services in East Renfrewshire during May and June 2014.
13. 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.
14. There is some non risk based scrutiny activity planned across councils in 2014/15, but where scrutiny bodies are yet to determine which specific council areas will be included. This includes the following:
  - The SHR recently carried out a thematic inquiry into the outcomes that councils are achieving by delivering housing options and prevention of homelessness services. A sample of councils were selected to take part in this as case studies. The findings from this work could potentially lead to further engagement with some councils. The SHR will carry out further thematic inquiries between 2014/15 and 2015/16. If a council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.
  - HMICS will be inspecting local policing across Scotland over the next three years. This will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. The geographic areas to be inspected during 2014-15 have yet to be determined.
  - Education Scotland will continue to engage with councils for the purpose of validated self-evaluation (VSE). The scheduling of VSEs will be arranged by negotiation between Education Scotland and individual councils.
  - Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out self-evaluation of education psychology services over a two year period beginning in 2014/15.
  - Audit Scotland will carry out a housing benefit risk assessment during the third quarter of 2014/15.
15. Audit Scotland will follow-up two national performance audits during 2014. This will involve targeted follow-up of *Arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs): are you getting it right?* (June 2011) and *Major capital investment in councils* (March 2013). Audit Scotland will also carry out a programme of performance audits during the period of this AIP that will involve work with councils. The performance audit programme for 2014/15 is available at <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/forwardwork.php?year=2014>.

16. Scheduled audit and inspection work will take place through the annual audit process and the ongoing inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively will continue as planned. The individual audit and inspection agencies will also continue to monitor developments in key areas of council activity and will provide support and challenge as appropriate. This will also help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
17. A timetable for the planned audit and inspection activity in East 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 CPP prepared by the SOA was approved by the council on 25 June 2013 and then ratified by Scottish Government. The document sets out the five key outcomes for 2013-16 and it reflects the Scottish Government's national outcomes.
20. The five SOA outcomes are:
- All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed.
  - Residents are fit and active and have the skills for learning, life and work.
  - East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses to grow.
  - East Renfrewshire residents are safe and supported in their communities and homes.
  - Older people in East Renfrewshire are valued; their voices are heard and they are supported to enjoy full and positive lives for longer.
21. The SOA contains targets that will allow the partnership to identify the progress being made towards positive changes for local people. Each key outcome is being managed as an outcome-focused work stream and key leads and stakeholders have been identified. The current six monthly performance and accountability reviews will continue to be carried out but these may change to quarterly at a future date.
22. A wide ranging community engagement process was undertaken to develop the SOA, delivery plan and equalities outcomes. The group included participants from equalities backgrounds, young people, members of active community groups and third sector forum members.

23. The Outcome Delivery Plan 2013-16 supports the SOA and corporate statement in the council's corporate planning hierarchy. It links high level plans through to individual performance review and development plans and it expresses the council's priorities on how the SOA and corporate statement will be delivered. It sets out the key activities being planned by services to achieve better outcomes for both customers and residents.

## Police and fire

24. Within the council, the Joint Cabinet (Police and Fire) meet quarterly. The group focuses on the Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service plans and performance and quarterly performance reports are submitted to the Joint Cabinet.
25. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 sought to place local communities at the heart of the provision of police and fire and rescue services. The three key elements of this were:
- the designation of a Local Police Commander (LPC) and, for the fire and rescue service, a Local Senior Officer (LSO) with a statutory requirement on LPCs and LSOs to include information on community planning in their respective local plans
  - production of a local policing plan and a fire and rescue plan for each local authority area approved by the local authority
  - the creation of formal relationships between local authorities and the services.
26. Ward plans are currently being developed by local policing teams to reflect localised concerns and priorities established through community consultation and engagement. Draft local police plans were developed, presented and approved by the Joint Cabinet (Police and Fire) on 27th March 2013.
27. East Renfrewshire Council holds weekly Greater Results in Partnership (GRIP) meetings chaired by the local authority liaison officer from Police Scotland. This is attended by several local authority officials including those focused on housing, community safety, antisocial behaviour, environmental services, etc. The initiative involves partners reviewing recent incidents, sharing information and agreeing actions. This group has been in operation for almost a year and it formalises previous informal relationships and work done by the police and the local authority. Contact takes place at least weekly and it ensures that actions are agreed and followed up. Reform appears to have had no negative impact on this initiative.
28. 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.
29. 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.

30. 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.
31. 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

32. A joint approach to health and social care integration has been established between the chief executive of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGG&C) and the chief executives of the three councils (East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire) where CHCPs currently exist. A number of meetings have already taken place with the transitional Planning Group of CHCP directors and the NHSGG&C director of corporate planning and policy.
33. It is intended that these arrangements remain stable and transition to the new HSCP results in minimum disruption to the established ways of working. The NHSGG&C Board considers that the CHCP manages a wider range of services than is likely to be prescribed by the government. Although it is acknowledged that the new HSCP will differ from the present arrangements the aim is to ensure that the shared objectives, values and ways of working already developed continue into the new partnership.
34. A transition working group, reporting to all four chief executives, has been established and it developed a plan which detailed the transition of CHCPs to shadow HSCPs by April 2014. This plan was subject to approval by the NHS Board and the councils. To assist in a smooth transition the working group proposes that the CHCP Committee will take on the role of the Shadow Integration Joint Board for 2014/15 operating with the current membership under existing standing orders.
35. The remit of the working group is to develop proposals for draft integration agreements covering the following areas:
  - Services and functions to be included.
  - Arrangements for support services.
  - Financial arrangements and approach to budget setting.
  - Relationship to parent bodies.
  - Transition of current management teams.
  - Accountability, planning and performance arrangements.
  - Approach to acute services.

- Relationship to community planning.
- Health improvement resources and leadership.
- Accountability for hosted services.

36. In preparation for integration the CHCP Committee/Shadow Integration Joint Board will develop its performance scrutiny and governance roles to reflect the emerging obligations of HSCP's as defined in legislation and guidance. Some management arrangements for the shadow HSCP have been considered. The CHCP director will assume the additional role of chief officer designate of the shadow HSCP. Planning arrangements will remain unchanged for 2014/15. The chief officer will lead the development of a full strategic plan for the HSCP's first formal year of operation including joint planning for acute services.

## Welfare reform

37. The Welfare Reform Strategic Planning Group (WRSPG) oversees progress on eight work streams and regularly provides updates on the action plan to CMT and cabinet. Community Planning Partners have attended presentations and some are included on relevant working groups. The WRSPG has included representation from the local Citizens' Advice Bureau, Voluntary Action and Barrhead Housing Association.
38. The East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) cabinet approved a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy and additional funding for DHPs was also agreed to the end of the financial year. The value of rent arrears attributable to the changes is currently £64,000.
39. The council has provided information on the availability of financial support through the Scottish Welfare Fund, and at the end of November 2013, expenditure was in line with the initial projection.
40. Council officers engaged with East Renfrewshire Credit Union to develop an agreement where credit union accounts will be provided to assist tenants. An agreement was signed in December 2013 and work is on-going to identify tenants who may benefit from this assistance. Once accounts are set up they can be credited with DWP benefits and payments can then be made directly to the council and housing associations.
41. The council has identified 411 tenants affected by the under occupancy rules and letters have been issued to them. The DWP has not provided an update on the likely roll out date of any further changes but the group continue to work to the original 2017 deadline.
42. In 2013-14, the Scottish Housing Regulator 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

43. 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	The council approved a new corporate statement, East Renfrewshire: Your Council, Your Future, in 2013. This document sets out the council's vision and statement of intent for East Renfrewshire over the next four years. Another key council planning document, the Proposed Local Development Plan, was available for local comment for a 12 week period up to 1st May 2013. This set out the council's preferred position in terms of its future land use policies and its growth strategy up to 2025 and beyond. As a result of the comments and issues raised during the consultation, the council prepared two pre-examination modifications to the Proposed Local Development Plan along with a minor technical modification to clarify some issues. These modifications were made available for comment for a further six week period until November 2013. The website also contains a quarterly newsletter providing information on the plan.	No specific scrutiny activity.
<p><b>Governance and accountability</b></p>	No Scrutiny Required	The council's governance and accountability arrangements are sound with the council having detailed terms of references for	No specific scrutiny activity

<sup>4</sup> The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Best Value Guidance, Scottish Executive, 2004.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>Whether governance arrangements are working effectively and whether good governance underpins Council decisions and supports performance improvement.</p>		<p>committees and a comprehensive scheme of delegation. Feedback and self-evaluation are part of ongoing improvement activity throughout the council with services using a range of self-evaluative approaches. For example, this is demonstrated in the work of the education department schools and services.</p> <p>In school inspections over the last year, improvement through self-evaluation has, in almost all cases, been evaluated as either very good or excellent. Head teachers present their inspection reports to the Education Committee. Officers monitor progress in implementing areas for improvement identified in these reports. The education department produces an annual Standards and Quality Report which links with the department's Local Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Reports from scrutiny partners will be included on the council website. Currently the updated reports are not available on the website but links to the relevant scrutiny bodies are provided for access to available relevant reports.</p> <p>Attendance at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (ASC) has provided an understanding of how the committee works, including the ability of members to raise questions in the committee format. The ASC call on officers to present reports giving the council's position in relation to relevant external reports.</p>	
<p>Community engagement and empowerment</p>	<p>No Scrutiny Required</p>	<p>The council has a range of mechanisms in place to engage with local people to affect policy and service developments. This includes its citizens' panel. The panel consists of 1,200 residents,</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>



Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<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>broadly representative of the area, who have the opportunity to give their views on key topics and services. (Recent feedback is referred to below)</p> <p>The council continues to deliver high quality services to local residents and has a range of service standards that are reviewed every two years. Elected members continue to review all areas to ensure appropriate service delivery. The performance of the council, including performance on customer orientated issues is available on the website. The council's Annual Performance Report (also available on the website) also records performance on customer issues. The council has a strong culture of grass roots capacity building in sport. There are now sustainable and signposted pathways for children and young people to follow from school to community based sport, and to progress with their talents and interests as performers, officials, coaches or volunteers.</p> <p>The council has a history of community engagement, with the Local Development Plan and the Proposed Budget strategy issued as part of public consultation prior to the final decisions being taken.</p> <p>The most recent feedback via the citizens' panel suggests the majority of residents are satisfied overall with the area and council services. ERC completed a successful panel recruitment exercise in 2013 to refresh a third of the panel membership.</p>	
<b>Financial</b>	No Scrutiny	Our 2012/13 annual audit report noted that the council achieved	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>management</b></p> <p>How effectively the council is planning and managing its budgets.</p>	<p>Required</p>	<p>an accounting surplus of £11 million. After statutory adjustments and the transfer of £9.1 million to reserves, the council achieved a general fund deficit of £0.3 million.</p> <p>The majority of the total general fund balance (£13.5 million) is not ear marked (£8.5 million representing 4 per cent of net relevant expenditure, which is in line with the council's agreed policy) and the council has a relatively high level of usable reserves and low levels of external borrowing which suggests a relatively good financial position to cushion against unexpected future funding shortfalls.</p> <p>The council's Budget Strategy Group meets regularly and reviews budget setting arrangements, including proposed savings plans. The group includes all members of the administration with members of the opposition having access to financial information to allow them to table alternative budget proposals. The cabinet reviewed seven budgetary control reports during the 2012/13 year. Reports in the first half of the year reported "actual spend to date" with the first forecast year end outturn position reported in October 2012.</p> <p>Our follow-up work on <i>Scotland's Public Finances</i> concluded that the council has taken steps to address the challenging financial climate and the reductions in financing it faces over future years. The council has outlined a number of savings within the Revenue Estimates (for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15) and continues to take a longer term outlook to financial planning.</p>	

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>People management</b> The effectiveness of the council's workforce planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>No Scrutiny Required</p>	<p>The council has a well developed approach to staff development as supported by a corporate training calendar, e-learning and 'on-the-job' training. For example the deployment of newly qualified teachers has enabled teaching staff to undertake development work and supported new initiatives such as the 'Learning Centres' and promotion of active learning techniques in primary schools.</p> <p>The Audit and Scrutiny Committee was provided with a statement on the council's position and response to the Audit Scotland Report – <i>Management of Early Departures in the Public Sector</i>. This is summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since October 2009 two voluntary redundancy trawls were implemented. The council has considered a long-term workforce strategy rather than short term budget cuts, with planned restructures and skill requirements being shaped by service needs and local and national policy decisions.</li> <li>• The experience and skills that employees have are considered along with the retraining of employees and redeployment into other roles as a result of restructures.</li> </ul> <p>An annual report is presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee detailing the cost of early retirements and voluntary redundancy to the council. In 2012/13 the council had 35 exit packages at a cost of £1.3 million.</p> <p>As well as using early departures to achieve budget savings the council has also used vacancy management, natural attrition, redeployment, a reduction in the use of agency staff and a</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>reduction in the use of overtime to ensure value for money. To date the workforce has been reduced by 231 FTE.</p> <p>The chief social work officer and the director of finance retired in March and April 2014 respectively. The director of finance's retirement reduces the number of directors from five to four. This significant organisational change sees the responsibilities of the director of finance being shared between the chief executive and the director of corporate and community services, with the head of accountancy assuming the chief financial officer role with section 95 responsibilities.</p> <p>The previous director of education left in August 2013 and was replaced in November 2013 by an internal applicant.</p>	
<p><b>Asset management</b></p> <p>The council's arrangements for managing assets and how this key resource is used to support effective service delivery.</p>	<p>No Scrutiny Required</p>	<p>As part of a drive to ensure effective asset management and the effective use of the resources available, the council has developed agile working pilots looking at rationalisation of office premises through better use of technology, mobile working and hot-desking. A key programme is preparing for a new Eastwood Health and Care Centre opening in 2015, moving towards a model of flexible working and team co-location across the CHCP. Further pilots are progressing within property and technical services, planning and building standards and protective services. The council is also working with the Scottish Futures Trust to look at implementing new ways of working across its office estate.</p> <p>The council is also reviewing its early year's estate and is considering taking forward a number of consultations.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>A paper was presented to cabinet in December 2013 outlining an overall shortfall of £106k in the general fund capital programme. A similar report on the housing capital expenditure and income was presented indicating a shortfall of £77k. Both shortfalls are considered manageable and regular updates are given to Cabinet. Regular review is carried out on capital expenditure to ensure the council achieves value for money.</p>	
<p><b>Procurement</b> How effectively corporate procurement contributes to the council maximising value for money in the goods and services it uses to deliver its services.</p>	<p>No Scrutiny Required</p>	<p>In November 2013 the council's corporate procurement service achieved a national Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) score of 62 per cent, classified as 'improved status'. Its PCA score has improved from 58 per cent in 2012.</p> <p>The chief procurement officer retired in 2013 and the post was filled by his deputy ensuring continuity.</p> <p>Internal audit carried out a review on <i>Tender Evaluation Process and Operation of Contract</i>. The report concluded that the tender document and evaluation processes followed were not transparent or robust. This report will be followed up by internal audit.</p> <p>A review by internal audit as part of SPI work noted an error in the calculation of the period taken to pay invoices. Amendments were required resulting in a reported deterioration of the payment times. Updated guidance has been provided to staff to ensure the information reported is accurate.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>
<p><b>Risk management</b> The effectiveness of the</p>	<p>No Scrutiny Required</p>	<p>Risk management of the council is embedded in its culture and each service director is accountable to the chief executive with a risk register for each service. The Corporate Risk Management</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny activity</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
council's arrangements for identifying, managing and mitigating risks and how its management of risk contributes to the successful delivery of public services.		Group continues to meet quarterly and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee are provided with an updated risk register twice per year. The regular review identifies any changes to the relevant category of risk as well as detail on any new items which have been placed on the register. The register was last reviewed in September 2013. There are 31 risks on the strategic risk register, of which eight are evaluated as high, 20 medium and three low risk.	
<b>Information management</b> The effectiveness of the council's arrangements for managing information as a key resource in delivering services.	No Scrutiny required	The chief executive meets regularly with the head of IT to review information management. Training is provided in this area as part of information security training.  Procedures are in place to protect data and any identified security breaches are investigated by the information security officer. Corrective action is taken and all information is provided to management.  The ICT department's business continuity plan is out of date and should be revised to reflect the recent changes resulting from the Public Services Network (PSN) application process.  The council have attained PSN accreditation.	No specific scrutiny activity
<b>Joint working</b> Progress with any significant shared services initiatives, in particular in relation to	No Scrutiny required	In October 2012 the council was advised that a number of Clyde Valley local authorities, including East Renfrewshire, would work in partnership to progress an initial project to share ICT services based on the recommendations in the McClelland report on national ICT infrastructure. Specific opportunities for ICT	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
governance or pace of implementation.		<p>collaboration have been identified and are being progressed.</p> <p>The council is participating in the shared procurement of residual waste processing with East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire councils. In 2012/13, North Ayrshire joined this consortium. Good progress is being made towards the overall delivery date of 2020 and procurement progress is ongoing with outline solutions from bidders being assessed before the next stage of detailed solutions being submitted.</p> <p>Potential collaboration work in roads and transportation between Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire councils is currently being considered. This is in the early stages and includes discussion with Management and Unison, GMB, and Unite trade unions in all councils. The final decisions will be made by the elected members in each council.</p>	
<b>Efficiency</b> How effectively the council is improving its efficiency in response to the budget challenges being faced.	No Scrutiny required	An Annual Efficiency Statement is prepared and presented to cabinet which indicates the savings made in year. In addition to this the council continues to review opportunities for applying efficiency savings over the whole range of its services. Cash-releasing savings of £6,164,226 were noted in 2012/13. (This includes £1.9m of inflation absorption.) Efficiencies are reviewed to ensure there is no knock on effect on productivity or quality.	No specific scrutiny activity
<b>Equalities</b> Whether the council is providing effective	No Scrutiny required	The corporate equality unit works closely with departmental equality officers and the Corporate Management Team to unite elected members, officers and the community to work towards	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p>leadership of equalities and is meeting its statutory obligations.</p>		<p>equality.</p> <p>The council's first <i>Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes</i> were published on 30 April 2013, for the period 2013-2017. The report was a result of consultation with a range of stakeholders and sets out how equality considerations are embedded in policies and includes outcomes to ensure no individual is disadvantaged. A copy of this report is available on the council website.</p> <p>The education department continues to work with children's services in the CHCP to promote effective working through Integrated children's services. The LIP 2013-2016 is organised around the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) well-being indicators. Prevention and early intervention to reduce inequity are high priorities for 2013-2014.</p> <p>Training programmes are available in areas such as race equality, awareness training on Gender Equality and Disability. All schools are taking the Fair Trade agenda forward which helps individuals increase their understanding of equality.</p>	



# Service performance

44. 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
<b>Education</b> The quality of local education services and the resulting outcomes (including early years).	No scrutiny required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERC continues to build on its strengths and has demonstrated further improvements across a wide range of outcomes.</li> <li>• Officers continue to provide clear strategic direction in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence.</li> <li>• East Renfrewshire is above national and education authority averages in almost all attainment measures in secondary schools.</li> <li>• The department achieved the Gold standard award in 2012 from liP.</li> <li>• The authority is working well to implement the Early Years Collaborative.</li> <li>• All HMI inspections of schools, learning communities and services have been "positive" with a number of schools receiving excellent evaluations resulting in requests to share practice nationally.</li> <li>• Inspections of schools, learning communities and services continue to indicate that the authority supports the needs of learners well. There are effective tracking and monitoring systems,</li> </ul>	No specific scrutiny activity

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>for example, LAC, MCMC, lowest 20%. Youth work programmes effectively target those most in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total number of learners completing Skills for Work qualifications and other qualifications eg DoE (169 in 2012 to 463 in 2013), ASDAN, City &amp; Guilds, National Progression Awards has significantly increased. The range of awards has also been extended to include John Muir, Caritas and Saltire awards.</li> <li>• The authority has a range of effective partnerships including, Riverside Studios and Glasgow Caledonian University as well as projects with Young Enterprise Scotland at the Rouken Glen Training Centre.</li> <li>• The percentage of young people who left school in 2011-12 and went onto further education, employment, training or voluntary work was 95.3 per cent, this increased to 95.8 per cent in 2012-13.</li> <li>• Over the next few years the authority faces further challenges relating to the rising population and increasing school rolls which continue to put pressure on the provision of schools that are full to capacity.</li> <li>• The authority will implement the new national and higher qualifications to meet student requirements in terms of progression in 2014-15.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Social care services</b> The quality of local social work and care services and the resulting</p>	Scrutiny required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social work services are delivered as part of the Community Health and Care Partnership. The link inspector has maintained contact with the social work service.</li> <li>• Regulated care services delivered are generally of a good quality</li> </ul>	Joint Inspection of East Renfrewshire's children's services.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
outcomes (including adult care, older people's services, learning disability services, criminal justice services, mental health services, children and families).		<p>in both adult and children's services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2013/14 the Care Inspectorate, together with the Risk Management Authority and the Association of Directors of Social Work, has been undertaking supported self-evaluation activity with the 32 councils in Scotland to assess the impact of the introduction of LS/CMI: Level of Service/Case Management Inventory. This is the main current tool in Scotland for assessing the likelihood of further offending based on risk/needs and planning intervention for adult offenders. Actions plans arising from this activity will be implemented in 2014.</li> <li>• In community care services performance has continued to improve with performance in most care groups increasing to above the national average.</li> <li>• In the inspection of the Sheltered Housing Warden service in November 2013 the service was awarded 'very good' grades in all three themes (quality of care and support, quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership).</li> <li>• There has been no strategic or joint inspection of adult and children's services in East Renfrewshire since 2011. The Care Inspectorate will lead and coordinate multi-agency scrutiny of services for children to evaluate the continued effectiveness of integrated working to improve outcomes for children.</li> </ul>	
<b>Housing and homelessness</b> The quality of housing	Further information Required	The assessment reflects discussions with senior officers as part of the SRA clearance process and assertions which have not yet been examined in detail/verified by the SHR. There are key areas where	SHR will wish to obtain progress updates from the

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
and homeless services and the resulting outcomes.		<p>further information is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council's performance in meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is above the national average.</li> <li>• A recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate into the council's homeless and supported accommodation services graded the service as being "very good" in two areas inspected and "good" in the third inspected area.</li> <li>• Rent arrears performance is below the national figures and deteriorating. Void rent loss is also below the national average. The council introduced in 2013 the "Mixed Tenure Scheme" in order to increase the desirability of tenement properties and thereby reduce void rent loss. It is too early to comment on the impact that this has made</li> <li>• The use of B&amp;B accommodation remains high. The council's 2012 improvement plan indicated that the service was undertaking a review of the temporary accommodation available with the aim of reducing the use of B&amp;B accommodation.</li> <li>• Other areas showing a reduction in performance and a lower level than the national figure were the percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than one year and the percentage of total repairs completed on target.</li> <li>• Average re-let times are improving, but are still above the national average over the three year reporting period. However the variation in performance in these areas is less than for rent arrears and the council has an improvement plan for 2012 – 2014 that sets</li> </ul>	<p>council in relation to the action it is taking to reduce B&amp;B use and to improve its performance in reducing rent arrears and void rent loss.</p>

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
		<p>out planned activity to improve performance in its housing service provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas in the council homelessness service where performance is either deteriorating or less favourable in comparison to the national averages are repeat application numbers and the proportion of permanent accommodation resulting in a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST). Performance in relation to repeat applications is improving but still remains above the national average. There is not a large variation in performance and the council developed a Homelessness Action Plan in 2012 outlining proposed actions aimed at future improvements so no scrutiny required in these areas.</li> </ul>	
<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>Road Maintenance Services:</p> <p>The percentage of roads that should be considered for maintenance has fallen over the last three years but is higher (43.3 per cent) than the Scottish average (36.2 per cent) and ranks the council 26th nationally.</p> <p>The road cost per km has fallen significantly from £25,563 to £18,018 but this is the highest in the whole of Scotland.</p> <p>The percentage of Class A, B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance has fallen slightly. Of them, only the percentage of Class A roads is below the Scottish average. The council has invested an additional £4.95m in roads (2011-14), of which the majority will be spent on resurfacing.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny</p>

# Improving and transforming public services/public performance reporting

45. The following table provides an assessment of scrutiny risk relating to how the council is improving and/or transforming public services, and the extent to which it is meeting its public performance reporting obligations under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Improving and transforming public services</b></p> <p>The council's arrangements for continuing to deliver services with reducing resources and growing demand, and what impact this is having on service outcomes.</p>	No scrutiny required	<p>The council launched its Public Service Excellence (PSE) Programme with its six guiding principles in 2009. The principles of this were: One Council; Clear strategic intent; Customer First as the main point to handle enquiries; Services online; Improved asset management; Support activities streamlined and duplication removed. The council has refreshed the 6 PSE principles and these are now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better customer experience</li> <li>• delivering through digital services</li> <li>• improving assets and agile working</li> <li>• processes simplified and standardised.</li> </ul> <p>The biggest areas of work within the PSE programme are around agile working and the CHCP. Since inception, the PSE programme has achieved recurring financial savings of £3.4 million and a workforce reduction of 231 FTE.</p> <p>The annual efficiency statement is presented to cabinet and made available on the website.</p>	No specific scrutiny required

Area	Risk assessment	Current position	What we plan to do
<p><b>Public performance reporting (PPR)</b></p> <p>The progress that is being made by councils in meeting their PPR obligations.</p>	<p>No scrutiny required</p>	<p>The council has a well developed approach to performance management and reporting. It provides detailed information of its performance via a range of media, including the website. The Outcome Delivery Plan is linked to the SOA and a year end strategic performance report for 2012/13 was produced. This includes a range of indicators which are linked to the SOA outcomes.</p> <p>The chief executive provides a strategic mid year review against the outcome indicators and this is presented to cabinet.</p> <p>Scottish councils are required to measure performance against a set of indicators that have been co-created by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Improvement Service as part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). The council has been proactive in its approach to using this national indicator set.</p> <p>Performance against these indicators was presented to cabinet in March 2013 and monitoring these indicators is part of the council's performance management arrangements.</p>	<p>No specific scrutiny required</p>

# Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL 2014/15												
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No local scrutiny planned												
<b>National or supported self-evaluation work year 1</b>												
Children's Services Inspection - Care Inspectorate		x	x									

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



EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL 2016/17	
Indicative scrutiny activity for third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved
No local scrutiny work planned	

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