

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 AUGUST 2010

NATIONAL SCRUTINY PLAN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2010-11 AND EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S SHARED RISK ASSESSMENT: ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2010-13

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Governance and Scrutiny Committee with details of the outcome of the joint scrutiny bodies' Shared Risk Assessment and advise of the receipt of their Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) for East Ayrshire Council for the period 2010 – 13; to place this within the context of the wider National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010-11; and to advise that Peter Tait, Assistant Director, Audit Scotland will present details of the Assurance and Improvement Plan to Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the Crerar Review of public scrutiny, the Accounts Commission was given a 'gatekeeper' role and tasked with reducing the burden of scrutiny on Local Government by avoiding duplication and streamlining scrutiny to ensure that it is risk based and proportionate.
- 2.2 During 2009/10, Audit Scotland, working with several other scrutiny bodies, including HM Inspector of Education, the Social Work Inspection Agency, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, the Care Commission and the Scottish Housing Regulator, developed and signed up to a new joint scrutiny code of practice which sets out arrangements for cooperation between the scrutiny bodies involved.
- 2.3 During the summer of 2009, these new proposals were tested and reviewed at five councils and two police authorities, including East Ayrshire. The outcome of these BV2 pilots has now been reported and evaluated and the new arrangements will be rolled out across the country over the coming year. Under it, scrutiny will change from standard inspections of all bodies undertaken on a cyclical basis, to a tailored approach for each body based on their individual circumstances and risks.
- 2.4 Under the new model, Local Area Networks (LANs) have been established for each of Scotland's 32 councils. Within each LAN, all audit and inspection agencies get together and collate the information they already have on each council concerned. This information, together with data from other sources and information from each council's own self-evaluation is used to come to an agreed view on the performance of the council and the risks associated with it. This is known as a Shared Risk Assessment (SRA), and is used to plan scrutiny activity that is proportionate and tailored to the assessed risks of individual Councils. This is set out in the Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP).

3. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL – ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2010-13

3.1 East Ayrshire Council's AIP concludes that the Council:-

- is very self aware and has a track record of continuous improvement;
- knows where changes are required and has good plans in place to deliver improvements;
- has a good record of delivering service reviews that result in improvements to processes, services and outcomes;
- has governance and scrutiny arrangements that are generally, sound; and
- was an enthusiastic participant in the BV2 pathfinder programme and, in a very positive report, was assessed as 'improving well' in respect of pace and direction of change and 'well placed' to deliver future improvement.

3.2 As a consequence, the LAN has considered that there are no significant areas of concern which would require specific scrutiny input. A copy of East Ayrshire Council's AIP has been placed on the Member's Portal and hard copies will be made available to Members of this Committee. In terms of the forward plan for scrutiny activity, the Scottish Housing Regulator has already made contact in preparation for their planned Review of self-evaluation in November. Peter Tait, Assistant Director, Audit Scotland will provide full details of the process and conclusions of the LAN to Committee in his presentation.

4. NATIONAL SCRUTINY PLAN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2010/11

4.1 Concurrent with the development of Individual Council AIPs, the Local Government Scrutiny Coordination Strategic Group have been developing a National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010/11 which provides a summary of the strategic scrutiny work for April 2010–March 2011 described in each of the 32 council's individual scrutiny plans.

4.2 The National Scrutiny Plan reflects the agreed national risk priorities of:-

- Protection, welfare and access to opportunities for children; adults in need of support and protection; and older people;
- Assuring public money is being used properly; and
- the effect of the recession.

4.3 The National Scrutiny Plan also highlights the key achievements of joint scrutiny arrangements including:-

- a 36% reduction in the time spent undertaking strategic scrutiny work in councils when compared with 2008 levels;
- joint process to identify where scrutiny work is needed;
- a more proportionate and risk-based approach to scrutiny; and
- streamlined our scrutiny methods; and
- a move away from a 'one size fits all' approach to the development of a broader set of scrutiny responses.

4.4 A copy of the National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010/11 is appended to this report. This provides some context to the scrutiny activity planned in East

Ayrshire's within the wider national picture and shows the lighter touch planned in East Ayrshire in response to the positive outcome of the Shared Risk Assessment.

5. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report. There are no new policy implications arising from this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Scrutiny Committee:-

- (i) note the details of the presentation from Peter Tait, Assistant Director, Audit Scotland on East Ayrshire Council's Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010-13;
- (ii) note the positive outcome of the Council's first Shared Risk Assessment;
- (iii) note that no significant areas of concern had been identified by the Local Area Network which would require specific scrutiny activity to be undertaken within the Council's Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010-13;
- (iv) note the more proportionate approach to scrutiny planned for East Ayrshire within the wider national context detailed within the National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010/11;
- (v) remit to the Chief Executive to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to respond, as appropriate, to the planned audit and inspections proposed within the Council's Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010-13; and
- (vi) otherwise note the contents of this report.;

Alex McPhee

Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

10 August 2010

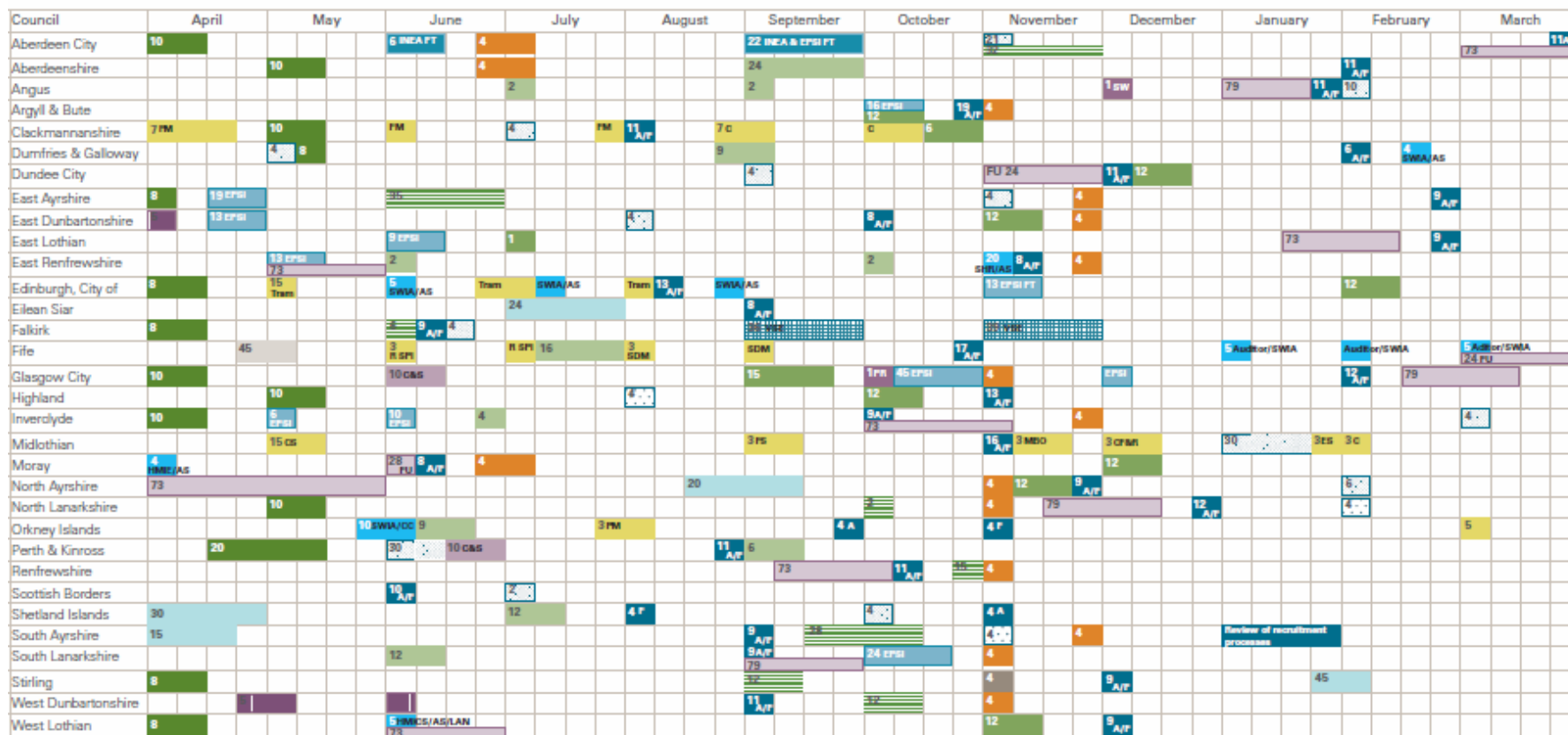
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. East Ayrshire Shared Risk Assessment: Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010–13.
2. National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010/11 - prepared by the Local Government Scrutiny Coordination Strategic Group – July 2010

Any person wishing to inspect the above background paper or seeking further information should contact Jim Farrell, tel.: (01563) 576223, or James Lally, Tel.: (01563) 576148.

Implementation Officer: Jim Farrell, Performance, Development and Projects Manager

National Scrutiny Plan for Local Government 2010/11



KEY 73 – Number of inspector days

Local Area Network (LAN)	HMIE: Inspection of Education Authority (INEA) FT
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)	HMIE: Educational Psychology Services Inspection (EPSI) FT
HMIE: Education Support work (SW) Progress report (PR)	Audit Scotland (AS)
HMIE: Council requested Culture & Sport (C&S)	Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)
HMIE: Child Protection Follow up (FU)	SHR: Homelessness
HMIE: Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) requested by council	SHR: Baseline
	SHR: Other
	SHR: Review of self-evaluation
	Collaborative working

Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA)	SWIA: Prison
SWIA: Initial Scrutiny Level Assessment (ISLA)	SWIA: ISLA FU
SWIA: Performance Inspection FU	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS)
HMICS/AS	Care Commission: Adoption and Fostering Inspection (A/F)

Auditor:	Financial Management (FM)
	Competitiveness (C)
	Review SPI (R SPI)
	Service delivery model (SDM)
	Commercial Services (CS)
	Financial Sustainability (FS)
	Maximising business opportunities (MBO)
	Customer focus and responsiveness (CF&R)
	Effective services (ES)
	People management (PM)

1. For operational reasons the exact timing of some activity may be subject to change.
2. Child protection inspections include a range of organisations and the number of days allocated is split approximately one-third to be based in councils, and two-thirds in the Community Planning Partnership.

Dates to be confirmed

Argyll & Bute: CC, Grant Thornton, HMIE and SWIA to consider improvements in relation to managing people, 5 days

East Lothian: VSE requested by council, 2 days

Scottish Borders: SWIA Management of offenders, 3 days