

# Shared risk assessment: Assurance and improvement plan 2011–14

**Inverclyde Council**



# Inverclyde Council

## Assurance and Improvement Plan

### Update 2011–14

#### Introduction

1. The Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) for Inverclyde Council was published in July 2010, setting out the planned scrutiny activity for the council for the period April 2010 to March 2013 based on a risk assessment. As part of the process of on-going scrutiny based on current risk assessments, the local area network met in early 2011 to update the AIP, revise its assessment and reconsider the level of scrutiny required for the council. This update includes a short report which summarises any changes to risk assessments and scrutiny responses. This update also provides a revised timetable for proposed reviews at Appendix 1.
2. The updated AIP draws on evidence from a number of sources, including:
  - The annual report to the Controller of Audit and elected members for 2009/10.
  - The council's own website and supporting evidence.
  - Evidence gathered from the Local Area Network (LAN) consisting of HMIE, SWIA, SHR and the Care Commission (including published inspection reports and other supporting evidence).

#### Summary

3. Over the past year the council has continued to transform the delivery of services to the people of Inverclyde. Although we have highlighted on-going areas of risk and uncertainty we are confident in the council's ability to manage these areas and work to achieve further improvements in service delivery. In particular the council's services to protect children and young people received a very positive report in January 2011, and HMIE school inspectorate reports and Care Commission reports have continued to be positive. SWIA's overall appraisal is that social work services deliver good outcomes for vulnerable children and adults in Inverclyde. As a collective group the LAN have commented positively on the council's commitment to continuous improvement and their responsiveness to scrutiny.

#### Areas of on-going risks and uncertainties

4. The following table relate to issues where risks or uncertainties in the council's processes and activities were identified in the 2010/11 AIP and remain unchanged.

Area	R/A/G	2011/12 Update
Depopulation	<b>Significant risks</b>	Multi-agency Outcome Delivery group (ODG) established which focuses on reducing rate of decline. Progress is being made but depopulation is still a major concern. We will continue to monitor progress made by the depopulation outcome delivery group.  Audit Scotland will monitor progress made by the ODG through minute review and will provide an update in the Annual Report to Members.
People Management	<b>Uncertainty</b>	Workforce reductions are likely to have an impact on the council's workforce and skills. Implementation of the Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan approved by members in May 2009 is still on-going and has experienced slippage.
Housing/ Homelessness	<b>Uncertainty</b>	The council are to self assess themselves in early 2011. This will be reviewed by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Until this is completed this is considered to be an area of uncertainty.
CHCP	<b>Uncertainty</b>	It is not possible to identify tangible benefits arising from the establishment of the CHCP as it is still in its infancy. Hence this is an area of uncertainty.
Governance and accountability	<b>Uncertainty</b>	The scheme of delegation is scheduled to be revised by March 2011. Service business continuity plans have been drafted for relevant services and further meetings with the Joint Civil Contingencies Service (Inverclyde Council, East Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Council) continue to take place to revise and finalise these plans to take account of the new Corporate Structure and introduction of the CHCP.
Performance Management & Improvement	<b>Uncertainty</b>	The council are still implementing the new performance management system, Inverclyde Performs, and it is too early to assess its impact.

## Changes to 2010/11 Risk Assessments

5. The following table relates to risk assessments that have been changed from the 2010/11 AIP.

Area	2010/11 Risk Assessment	2011/12 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
Thriving Diverse Economy	<b>Uncertainty</b>	<b>Significant risks</b>	<p>The council have progressed their multi-agency ODG focused on tackling issues of employability and skills development however the gap between Inverclyde and the Scottish average for both employment and being income deprived as a percentage of working age population continues to grow. Furthermore the on-going impact of the population decline will make the provision and maintenance of a thriving economy more challenging.</p> <p>The urban regeneration company Riverside Inverclyde have recently been informed of their funding from Scottish Enterprise and it is significantly less than expected. This will impact on regeneration.</p> <p>Audit Scotland will monitor progress made by the ODG through minute review and will provide an update in the Annual Report to Members.</p>

Area	2010/11 Risk Assessment	2011/12 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
Procurement	Uncertainty	Significant risks	<p>In November 2009 the council scored 4% in the annual procurement capability assessment. A further assessment in November/December 2010 highlighted an increase to 15%. The council have committed to achieving a score of 25% (which is the score required to achieve 'conformance' status) by the end of December 2011.</p> <p>The council are in the process of revising their Contract Standing orders with these being submitted to the February Policy &amp; Resources Committee for approval.</p> <p>Audit Scotland to follow up on national improving Public Sector Purchasing report during 2010/11. Progress will be reported in Annual Report to Members published in October 2011.</p>
Financial Climate	N/A	Uncertainty	<p>The Comprehensive Spending Review covering public sector expenditure for the period 2011/15 was announced in October 2010 and the Scottish Government responded to it by announcing a single year Scottish budget for 2011/12. This creates an uncertainty over medium term financial planning.</p> <p>Audit Scotland will monitor the council's financial position as part of routine audit coverage. Progress will be reported in Annual Report to Members published in October 2011.</p>
Waste Mgt	Significant risks	Uncertainty	<p>The council are increasing level of wastage being recycled (and therefore decreasing the level sent to landfill). The council are part of multi-authority task force which is developing an outline business case to explore the potential for a joint or collaborative approach to the procurement of a new municipal waste treatment service for the eight authorities within the Clyde Valley.</p>
Vision & Strategic Direction – Operating Model	N/A	Uncertainty	<p>The OM is a six phase project focused on developing a customer service centre providing a "one stop shop" for customers whilst combining a number of transactional based processes within the council. Phase two of the OM is progressing. Full six phase implementation of the OM has a revised completion date of 30 April 2013. As slippage has occurred in such a large scale project upon which key savings depend this is assessed as an area of uncertainty. It is further noted that there is an on-going investigation into matters relating to the progress and monitoring of the operating model.</p>
Education - Leadership	Uncertainty	No significant risks	<p>The corporate director of education and communities and the senior management team are considered to be providing strong leadership across the education sector and relevant partnerships.</p>
Carbon Mgt	Uncertainty	No significant risks	<p>Good progress made in addressing actions in the carbon management plan</p>
Roads & Street Lighting	Uncertainty	No significant risks	<p>Flood action plan is being progressed. There is information available to assess the risk assessment making the classification 'area of uncertainty' inappropriate.</p>

Area	2010/11 Risk Assessment	2011/12 Risk Assessment	Reason for Change
Asset Management	Uncertainty	No significant risks	Progress made implementing various asset mgt plans (ICT, Open Spaces, Roads and Vehicle, Plant & Efficiency Review)
Equalities	Uncertainty	No significant risks	Good progress within services was identified however the Corporate Group is currently being re-established.

## National risk priorities

6. Inverclyde Council's position on topics identified as being of national importance is as follows:
7. **The protection and welfare of vulnerable people (children and adults) including access to opportunities – No significant risks.** All the council's registered services with the Care Commission are achieving grades of 'Good' or above. This is across the board covering quality of care and support, environment, staffing and management. Of these a high percentage are achieving 'Very Good' and some are graded as 'Excellent.' This compares favourably with the rest of Scotland. Exclusion rates, particularly for looked after and accommodated young people, have risen recently. The council is aware of this and has put a working group in place to look in detail at practice and processes relating to behaviour management. HMIE will continue to monitor this as part of their on-going dialogue with the authority. A recent inspection of services to protect children identified major strengths in relation to the effectiveness of the work of the Child Protection Committee.
8. **Assuring public money is being used properly – No significant risks.** The regularity of expenditure is examined as part of the annual financial audit process. Within the council there are several mechanisms which assist in providing assurance that public funds are not misused. Proper scrutiny of activities is undertaken by both members and officers. The council has an effective Audit Committee which operates in line with best practice and the committee is supported by an effective internal audit section. Audit Scotland will continue to review action taken by the council as part of the annual audit process.
9. **How councils are responding to the challenging financial environment – Area of uncertainty.** The Comprehensive Spending Review covering public sector expenditure for the period 2011/15 was announced in October 2010 and the Scottish Government responded to it by announcing a single year Scottish budget for 2011/12. This creates an uncertainty over medium term financial planning. The financial climate will impact on the council's ability to deliver its outcome targets and maintain service performance into the future. The extent of this is currently uncertain and will be kept under review by LAN members. In April 2008, the council approved its first Financial Strategy designed to provide clear direction on how to manage and structure its financial resources to ensure they are utilised effectively and are clearly directed at achieving the council's corporate objectives in the medium to long term. Since its inception the council have reviewed and updated the strategy on a six monthly basis to identify required amendments to take account of any significant policy or financial developments both at a local and national level. This proactive approach to financial management in difficult times has helped the council progress operational and strategic outcomes within the resources available and, in

particular, reduce the impact of the settlement announced by the Scottish Government in December 2010.

## Scrutiny plan changes

10. The statutory minimum frequency of inspection has been removed under the new legislation. Currently all of the Council's registered services are likely to be inspected less frequently due to the high quality of grades they have been achieving.

## Review of 2010/11 planned activity

11. Appendix 3 of the AIP issued in July 2010 highlighted the scrutiny activity scheduled to take place in 2010/11. The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) review of the council's self-assessment of its progress in delivering improvements to the Homeless service has been rescheduled at the council's request. The self-assessment is now scheduled to take place in August 2011 and SHR's level of scrutiny will be dependant on its output. The conclusions of these reviews, and any matters identified, have been raised with the council through specific review outputs.

## Appendix 1 Summary of scrutiny activity

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL SCRUTINY PLAN	2011-12											
Scrutiny activity year 1	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Audit Scotland audit of Housing Benefits												
Audit Scotland Fire and Rescue												
	2012-13											
Scrutiny activity year 2	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2013-14											
Indicative scrutiny activity for rolling third year	Potential scrutiny bodies involved											

### Footnotes

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 on-going 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. HMIE, through the District Inspector, will continue to support and challenge Education Services regularly and as appropriate.

The new body, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), will be in place from April 1st 2011 and will regulate care services and inspect social work services based on the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

SCSWIS will undertake supported self evaluation work with councils during 2011. Planning is currently taking place and SCSWIS will contact LAN leads when the detail of the fieldwork is established.

HMIE and Learning and Teaching Scotland are to form a new quality and improvement agency on 1 July 2011.

The Accounts Commission has decided to undertake Best Value audits of Fire & Rescue Services and Authorities during 2011. Planning is currently taking place and Audit Scotland will contact LAN leads when the detail of the fieldwork is established.

Audit Scotland also undertakes a series of national performance audit studies. Field visits to individual local authorities often form part of this work. When a visit is planned to a council this will be communicated to the council through the LAN lead.

In April 2008, the Accounts Commission agreed to a request from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to take over the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate's responsibility for inspecting housing and council tax benefit (benefits) services in Scotland. As Audit Scotland has no inspection function, this 'benefits performance audit' work has been incorporated into the annual audit of local government. The housing benefit audit of the council is planned for 2011/12.