

Report

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Report to:	Risk and Audit Scrutiny Forum
Date of Meeting:	5 February 2013
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Shared Risk Assessment Submission 2012/2013
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Forum with details regarding the shared risk assessment (SRA) process and submission for year 2012/2013

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to note the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Council's input to the shared risk assessment (SRA) process as detailed in the report is noted

3. Background

3.1. The shared risk assessment process was developed as the mechanism for ensuring that scrutiny within local government was streamlined and co-ordinated. This was in response to the Crerar Report published in 2007 which set out recommendations for reforming external scrutiny of Scottish public services. The SRA process was also intended to ensure that scrutiny resources were targeted using a risk based approach as an alternative to the then cyclical approach to audit and inspection. The first round of SRAs took place in 2010.

3.2. The Council has received three Assurance and Improvement Plans to date.

3.3. For the last two years, the SRA process has been undertaken largely as a business as usual exercise focusing on those information sources which were routinely accessible to secure data required for assurance purposes.

3.4. Last year, the evidence submission was also supplemented by the use of a web-based portal designed to hold and share data for Inspectorates. This was a project supported through SOLACE and managed via South Lanarkshire Council.

4. 2012/2013 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP)

4.1. Arising from last year's SRA, the key issues identified within the 2012/2013 AIP were:-

Area	2012/13 risk assessment	Comment
Vision and strategic direction - leadership and culture	Area of uncertainty	<p>The area of uncertainty was attributed to the LAN wishing to assess the impact of significant changes to the Corporate Management Team during 2011/2012. It was recognised that the Council did, however, continue to benefit from strong and clear direction.</p> <p>The Council's Chief Executive has been in post since January 2012, and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) took up appointment in May 2012.</p> <p>The current Executive Director (Education Resources) retires in December 2012 and a new appointment was made in September 2012, ensuring a smooth transition of responsibilities.</p> <p>The CMT continues to demonstrate strong leadership and a commitment to corporate working.</p> <p>Following the May 2012 elections, the Council's political reporting and decision making management arrangements are once again in place, providing strong and effective leadership working alongside senior officers. Elected members' induction training was provided, together with arrangements for continued training and development to enable members to effectively fulfil their scrutiny role.</p>
Housing - homelessness services	Area of uncertainty	<p>The basis for the area of uncertainty was that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) needed to better understand what work was being undertaken to improve homelessness services and specifically, how the Council planned to achieve the abolition of priority need.</p> <p>Through the LAN, the SHR identified four areas for further consideration and comment in respect on the Homelessness Service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="703 1693 1465 1989">1. <u>Breaches of unsuitable Temporary Accommodation Order.</u> The number of breaches has been reducing year on year and for the period April – September 2012 there has been only one breach. Work is underway (PQQ complete) to introduce 1st stop accommodation for households with children which, it is anticipated, will eliminate breaches of the order. <li data-bbox="703 2018 1465 2123">2. <u>Increasing length of time to discharge duty.</u> The length of time to discharge duty has increased each year between 2009/2010 to 2011/2012,

Area	2012/13 risk assessment	Comment
		<p>mainly due to the ongoing rise in homelessness applications between 2006-2010 and increased proportion of applicants determined as priority need. However, between April and August 2012, the average time to discharge duty was 229 days for priority need cases and 73 days for non-priority and intentional cases. This currently shows an improvement on previous years. The Council has worked to balance letting targets to meet its duties to homeless households and facilitate lets to other housing groups. In particular, the aim is to prevent homelessness through housing options. A range of interventions has resulted in a reduction in the total number of households on our homeless list, from 1,329 at April 2011 to 927 at April 2012, and a further reduction to 869 at September 2012. The reduction in the number of applications (by 21% during 2011/2012) will also reduce the list of homelessness households waiting for housing and, therefore, the length of time taken to re-house. In May/June 2012, a full analysis of time taken to discharge duty across all housing areas was undertaken, with a view to addressing the issue in a targeted way.</p> <p>3. <u>Increasing level of lost contact as a final outcome</u>. There has been a reduction in lost contact outcomes in both 2011/2012 and 2012/2013. This has been as a result of action taken, including ongoing contact with applicants. Our records show contact was made with 77% of cases during August, which is an increase from 39% in January 2012. Also, careful consideration is given to the appropriate time to record case closures. To further these efforts, the Council has agreed to appoint an additional resource of 8 new support officers. An internal target of 10% for lost contact final outcomes has been set for 2012/2013. Between April and August 2012, 9.7% were lost contacts at case closure (6.9% priority and 11 non priority). This compares with figures of 16.89% for 2011/2012 and 21% for 2010/2011.</p> <p>4. <u>Lack of evidence of preparation to implement 2012 requirement to abolish non-priority distinction</u>. The Council aimed to eliminate non-priority decisions from October 2012. As at May 2012, 95% of homeless households were determined as priority need. The abolition of non-priority distinction was implemented from 1</p>

Area	2012/13 risk assessment	Comment
		October 2012.
Use of resources - procurement	Area of uncertainty	<p>In 2011/2012, whilst recognising progress made within the Council, the LAN considered it too early to assess the effectiveness of the procurement strategy and the revised officer leadership of procurement.</p> <p>The Council's Procurement Strategy was endorsed by the Finance and Information Technology Resources Committee (September 2011) and approved by Executive Committee (October 2011). This included a detailed Action Plan aligned to the Procurement Capability Assessment and progress on this will be reported twice yearly to Finance and Corporate Resources Committee. (First update June 2012)</p> <p>This year's Procurement Capability Assessment was completed in October 2012 and achieved a score of 55% compared with 36% in the previous year.</p> <p>The 2011/2012 follow up by PWC (Audit of Best Value and Community Planning 2009) confirmed that the outstanding procurement action was complete. It noted the Procurement Strategy Action Plan as being well progressed and that the category management approach to delivering procurement is well embedded.</p>

5. Progress update

- 5.1. Since approval of the 2012/2013 AIP, progress has been monitored through the Corporate Improvement Advisory Board (CIAB).
- 5.2. Updates on progress made are contained within the table in paragraph 4.1 above with specific attention being drawn to the following points:
 - Strong and effective leadership continues. This is provided by the Corporate Management Team, with new appointments enabling smooth transition during 2012/2013, together with the Committee reporting and decision making structure enabling elected members to provide scrutiny and challenge as required.
 - Significant improvement in the Council's approach to delivery of procurement services, reflected in the Procurement Capability Assessment score for 2012 of 55% compared with the previous year score of 36%.
 - Progress made on all four areas relating to Homelessness. It is noted that, at May 2012, 95% of homeless households were determined as priority need and that the abolition of the non-priority distinction was implemented from 1 October 2012.

5.3. At the conclusion of the 2011/2012 Shared Risk Assessment process, the Council was invited to feedback comment on the process, to help inform future arrangements. This feedback included reference to the following points:

- It would be of interest to the Council to understand how LAN representatives share knowledge and understanding of the Council, outwith their area of speciality
- In respect of LAN engagement with the Council during the SRA process, it was noted that, whilst these worked well (based on initial and follow up meeting), it would be beneficial for the Council to be provided with feedback from consideration by the National Scrutiny Panel which influenced the final format/content of the AIP.
- It was advised that, whilst the Council was proactive in preparing its response to the SRA, it would be helpful if the planned programme for all LAN activity was available for information and provided as far as possible in advance

6. SRA submission 2012/2013

6.1. The SRA is managed via a local area network comprising all the key local government scrutiny agencies. A new LAN lead officer, Martin Walker of Audit Scotland, was appointed for 2012/2013. Following discussion with the LAN lead in November 2012, it was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the Chief Executive and Head of Audit and Improvement to discuss key areas of significance. This meeting took place on 10 December 2012 and provided an opportunity to identify additional information to be provided to the LAN to assist its work.

6.2. Based on previous years' experience, input to the SRA process focussed on the following:-

- in order to ensure that the annual SRA allows scrutiny agencies to access relevant data routinely, it is intended that any evidence which South Lanarkshire Council considers relevant to LAN will be uploaded within the new scrutiny portal.
- specific attention will be drawn to how the Council has progressed the previous areas of uncertainty (Paragraph 4.1 refers) and to demonstrate progress in the implementation of the corporate self assessment tool Empower
- the benefit of the Council having an initial meeting with the LAN lead to provide a brief update on progress made to date

6.3. Feedback from the LAN will be advised early in the new year. This will provide the basis for preparation of the 2013/2014 Assurance and Improvement Plan which will be presented to the Executive Committee in due course.

7. Employee Implications

7.1. There are no employee implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. There are no financial implications.

9. Other Implications

9.1. As the annual SRA involves a detailed risk assessment there are no other implications.

9.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained in this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 10.2. Consultation will take place between the LAN and the Council over the coming months.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

21 December 2012

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values

- Promote performance management and improvement

Previous References

- Risk and Audit Scrutiny Forum (4 September 2012) Shared Risk Assessment - Assurance and Improvement Plan 2012-15

List of Background Papers

- None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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