

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS 2009

Joint scrutiny schedule 2009/10

*Local government scrutiny co-ordination strategic group
April 2009*

INTRODUCTION

This schedule has been jointly prepared with colleagues in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Care Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (NHS QIS). It is an important step forward in changing the way we work together for the future and a key milestone in the transitional arrangements we have set out for 2009. This is the first joint scrutiny plan for local government in Scotland and it covers the period from April 2009 until March 2010.

In preparing this schedule we have:

- improved co-ordination of planned scrutiny activity at individual councils
- agreed that 2009/10 scrutiny activity at shared risk assessment development site councils could change to bring it in line with the outcome of the shared risk assessment activity taking place through the summer
- made changes to the planned timing of scrutiny activity to allow us to better join up our work and minimise the potential for overlap in the areas we review
- identified some opportunities for changing the way we work together with a view to improving efficiency and minimising the potential for duplication.

These arrangements mark a fundamental shift away from scrutiny based on standard inspections undertaken on a cycle except where there is a high risk. For instance, Ministers have requested a second cycle of child protection inspection because of the variability in performance across the first cycle. We are working with colleagues in all scrutiny bodies that engage with local government to establish a shared assessment of the risks in each council and to develop a range of proportionate approaches in response to the risk assessment. We aim to place self evaluation at the heart of this approach. These approaches will be tested and further developed through the summer at the BV2 audit Pathfinder councils and Shared Risk Assessment Development Site councils.

In addition to this joint work, more proportionate and risk-based approaches to scrutiny have already begun to be adopted by many audit, inspection and regulatory bodies in Scotland when exercising their statutory functions. These include:

- The Care Commission's work on the statutory frequency of inspections, their regulatory support assessment process and 'Regulation for Improvement Project'¹

¹ The Care Commission, Corporate Plan 2006-2009 (2006).

- HMIE's revised Inspections of the education functions of local authorities (INEA2)², its new school and pre-school inspection models³, and the ongoing National Performance Framework (NPF) requirement for HMIE to report on inspections of child protection in local areas through a proportionate second cycle of inspections.
- Audit Scotland's modernised annual audit process and its proportionate and risk-based approach to the Best Value and Community Planning audit in local government.⁴
- Equally important are the various joint working arrangements which have been established between scrutiny bodies to reduce duplication of work and scrutiny overlap, such as:
 - HMIE and the Care Commission's integrated inspection activity.
 - SWIA multi-agency inspection activity (for instance, services for adults with learning disabilities).
 - HMIE joint inspection activity (child protection services).
 - Mental Welfare Commission and the Care Commission joint inspection activity undertaking joint inspections in a small number of care homes for older people.
 - Coordination of SWIA local authority performance inspections with Care Commission inspection of local authority fostering and adoption services.

In producing this schedule we have sought to be open and transparent and have included all known strategic scrutiny activity of which we are currently aware. This means that our focus has been on planned scrutiny activity which assesses whole services or corporate functions. We have not focused on scrutiny activity which is carried out at service unit or institution level. The schedule will be updated on a quarterly basis for any changes to planned activity.

Our experience in preparing this schedule for 2009/10 has already helped us to identify some areas for improvement and we plan to build appropriate refinements in to our approach for the future.

² HMI Inspection Guidelines. The Inspection of Education Functions of Local Authorities. HM Inspectorate of Education. October 2006.

³ HMIE Management Board papers, 6 March 2008

⁴ Independent Review of Regulation, Audit Inspection and Complaint Handling. Response from the Auditor General for Scotland, Robert W Black (December 2006)

Joint scrutiny schedule 2009		2009										2010		
Council	Date not identified	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
Aberdeen City		CP												
Aberdeenshire								ISLA	ISLA					
Angus	BV2 Pathfinder			ISLA	ISLA									
Argyll & Bute		HBW												
Clackmannanshire								Follow-up						
Dumfries & Galloway			Follow-up	ISLA	ISLA									
Dundee City	BV2 Pathfinder	DE												
East Ayrshire	BV2 Pathfinder	DE												
East Dunbartonshire							Follow-up							
East Lothian		Follow-up												
East Renfrewshire								ISLA	ISLA					
City of Edinburgh								VASE	Follow-up					
Eilean Siar				Follow-up										
Falkirk											Follow-up			
Fife	SRA			ISLA	ISLA			(*)				CP Follow-up		
Glasgow City		HBW	CG	CG	CG									
Highland	(*) BV2 Pathfinder										VASE			
Inverclyde				ISLA	ISLA		VASE							
Midlothian									Follow-up					
Moray		HBW		CP Follow-up			Follow-up						Follow-up	
North Ayrshire														
North Lanarkshire		DE									VASE		Follow-up	
Orkney Islands	Follow up	DE					VASE	ISLA	ISLA					
Perth & Kinross	Follow up							ISLA	ISLA					
Renfrewshire														
Scottish Borders	BV2 Pathfinder												Follow-up	
Shetland Islands								ISLA	ISLA					
South Ayrshire		HBW												
South Lanarkshire				ISLA	ISLA									
Stirling	Not Jan- Mar 2010													
West Dunbartonshire	SRA								Follow up					
West Lothian		DE												
Audit Services for all 32 councils		Governance & Performance Reports.					Final Accounts			Annual report to members	Risk Assessment		Governance & Performance Reports.	
Key:	ISLA - initial scrutiny level assessment (involves no direct input from councils)						SWIA	HMIE	HMIE VASE as requested by councils	SHR	Audit Scotland	NHS QIS See separate sheet		
CP - Child Protection	VASE - validated assisted self evaluation (as requested by councils)													
FU - follow-up	HBW - housing benefit work													
DE - Delivering Efficiencies (joint Audit Scotland Study)	(*) - Shared Risk Assessment Dependent													
	CG - Commonwealth Games Audit Scotland Study													

Notes to the joint scrutiny schedule 2009

HMIE's second cycle of child protection inspections is currently being finalised. This will be added to the schedule as soon as it becomes available. Work is also ongoing to align the second cycle of child protection inspection with the work of other scrutiny bodies.

VASE as undertaken by HMIE is activity which is carried out at the request of councils. The timing and duration of this activity is also negotiated at the discretion of participating councils. The joint schedule identifies the planned start times for this engagement.

SHR activity presented in the schedule will take place **at some time after** the period identified. Some of SHR's other planned activity is dependent on the outcome of the shared risk assessment which is taking place during the summer. This is clearly marked within the schedule.

The Care Commission will coordinate its 2009/10 planned inspection activity for fostering and adoption, care at home services, and housing support services with the other inspectorates. The schedule will then be updated to reflect this position.

Housing Benefit Work (HBW) is determined per quarter in conjunction with DWP therefore data is only available one quarter at a time. HBW contact time is 2 week self assessment and three days onsite. The new programme data will be added as it becomes available and in line with our planned quarterly update.

Accounts Commission national study topics for local government have been confirmed but fieldwork councils have yet to be identified. The topics are, Physical recreation services in local government, Looked after children in residential care, Managing unit costs, Management of local government pension funds, Best Value and resource management, Statutory Performance Indicators. Fieldwork councils will be identified in the schedule as part of our planned quarterly update. In addition there are some joint studies which impact on councils and these are delivering efficiencies and commonwealth games and these have been included in the schedule.

The schedule excludes:

- SWIA Learning disabilities multi agency inspection: - selected councils to be approached
- Service unit/institutional level inspections(for instance individual school or care home)- these are not classified as strategic scrutiny visits
- Scottish Information Commissioner spot check visits- planned unannounced activity
- Audit Scotland joint studies are planned in respect of mental health services and community health partnerships- fieldwork councils will be added to the schedule once they have been agreed.

