

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny
DATE	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
DIRECTOR	Ewan Sutherland
TITLE OF REPORT	Audit Scotland National Reports
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/15/22

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of Audit Scotland national studies published in the last cycle together with any actions taken or agreed to be taken by the Council in response to these.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

that the Committee:–

- (a) note the detail of the Audit Scotland's national "value for money" studies published in 2014; and
- (b) note the detail of the report "An overview of local government in Scotland" and to give consideration to officers comments made in respect of each of the priorities identified within the report.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Every national Audit Scotland review is likely to have implications for this Council. The nature of the implications will vary depending on the subject matter. Officers are required to assess these and report to committees.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Audit Scotland has an annual programme of national reviews it undertakes. Some of these are specific to individual councils and Community Planning Partnerships, others are intended for local government and other public sector bodies more broadly.

Officers review these national reports and, during 2014 this committee specifically considered summaries, together with this Council's reaction, on the following national reports:-

- Reshaping Care
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Local government Overview
- Procurement
- Self-directed Support
- School Education
- National Fraud Initiative

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the majority of national reports have had only indirect significance for Aberdeen City Council. These are:-

- South Ayrshire Council: Best Value Audit
- Argyll and Bute Council: the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning - Follow-up audit
- The City of Edinburgh Council: the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning - Follow-up report December 2014
- Orkney Community Planning Partnership
- West Lothian Community Planning Partnership
- Moray Community Planning Partnership
- 2013/14 audit of the Scottish Police Authority
- NHS in Scotland 2013/14
- Preparations for the implementation of the Scotland Act 2012

The one national report which is of more direct significance is **“Community Planning: Turning Ambition into Action”**. This report was written following initial pilot audits of 3 Community Planning Partnerships, including Aberdeen. The individual report on Community Planning Aberdeen has previously been considered by the Council and the Partnership.

The key findings of this report are:-

*“Since the publication of the Statement of Ambition, there is a strong sense of renewed energy nationally and locally to improving community planning. Community planning continues to become more of a shared enterprise, with more active participation by partners and evidence of more shared ownership of the priorities in Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs). Although aspects of community planning are*

*improving, leadership, scrutiny and challenge are still inconsistent. There is little evidence that CPP boards are yet demonstrating the levels of leadership and challenge set out in the Statement of Ambition.*

*The Scottish Government and the National Community Planning Group (NCPG) have taken steps to promote the importance of community planning across government and in partner organisations. The National Community Planning Group is now starting to focus its activity on the areas where national leadership is most needed. It recently issued a set of key principles that are intended to set out an ambitious but realistic improvement agenda for community planning that draws on the practical experience of implementing the Statement of Ambition by CPPs. It now needs to set out what this refocused approach to community planning means for the Statement of Ambition, its expectation of CPPs and how success in implementing these principles will be assessed. Alongside that, the Scottish Government needs to demonstrate a more systematic approach to implementing its outcomes approach by clarifying the links between longer-term outcomes, its priorities and performance measures across all policy areas.*

*Many CPPs are still not clear about what they are expected to achieve and the added value that can be brought through working in partnership. Although SOAs have improved, many still do not set out the specific improvements CPPs are aiming to achieve. They also lack a focus on how community planning will improve outcomes for specific communities and reduce the gap in outcomes between the most and least deprived groups in Scotland. This reflects a wider ambiguity both nationally and locally about the extent to which the focus of community planning should be on local needs or about delivering national priorities. CPPs need to use local data to help set relevant, targeted priorities for improvement that will address inequalities within specific communities.*

*CPPs are starting to better understand what resources they have available to deliver their SOA. They have begun to identify how partners use their resources, such as money and staff, in particular priority areas or specific communities. But discussions about targeting these resources at their priorities and shifting them towards preventative activity are still in the early stages. CPPs do not yet know what a strategic approach to prevention will look like, and in many areas the evidence base for this is underdeveloped. The current pace and scale of activity is contributing to an improved focus on prevention but is unlikely to deliver the radical change in the design and delivery of public services called for by the Christie Commission.*

*At present, there is no coherent national framework for assessing the performance and pace of improvement of CPPs. This means that there is no overall picture of how individual CPPs are performing and what progress is being made towards the effective implementation of the Statement of Ambition. The Scottish Government is now starting to use existing performance management and accountability arrangements to monitor the contribution of public bodies to community planning. But it is not yet consistently holding central government bodies or the NHS to account for their performance within CPPs.*

*The Statement of Ambition places community planning at the core of public service reform, but many CPPs are not clear about what their specific role in these programmes should be. While some CPPs have a good overview of public service*

*reform in their area, CPP oversight of and engagement with some important aspects of reform, such as the integration of health and social care services and national reform programmes such as the Early Years Collaborative, remains underdeveloped. Scottish Government guidance is not clear enough about the specific role that CPPs should play in the implementation of public service reforms.*

*Community Planning Partnerships should:*

- strengthen the effectiveness of the leadership, challenge and scrutiny role at CPP board level
- streamline local partnership working arrangements and ensure they are aligned with local improvement priorities
- ensure that local community planning arrangements are clear about who is responsible for:
  - agreeing the priorities of the CPP and SOA
  - allocating resources and coordinating activity
  - implementing activity
  - scrutinising performance and holding partners and others to account for their performance
- work with the new health and social care integration joint boards to develop services that meet the needs of local people and support SOA priorities
- set clearer improvement priorities focused on how they will add most value as a partnership, when updating their SOA
- use local data on the differing needs of their communities to set relevant, targeted priorities for improvement
- start to align and shift partners' resources toward agreed prevention and improvement priorities.”

Community Planning Aberdeen is currently taking forward related and specific actions resulting from the audit of the City's Partnership. Regular reports on this are submitted to Council. The national report summarized above has been considered by Council officers and partners and is due to be submitted to the next Community Planning Aberdeen Board.

## 6. IMPACT

The Audit Scotland report states that the impact of governance in local authorities is a key determinant of its effectiveness. Members and officers have a responsibility to ensure good governance positively impacts on the performance of Aberdeen City Council.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There are no identified material risks which would result from the approval of the recommendations in this report. The actions and recommendations contained in the report are a response to identified risks and are designed to mitigate these.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit Scotland reports

1. *Community Planning: Turning Ambition into Action*

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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