

East Ayrshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2016/17



March 2016

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in East Ayrshire Council during 2016/17. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN), comprising representatives of all the scrutiny bodies who engage with the council. The shared risk assessment process draws on a range of evidence with the aim of determining any scrutiny activity required and focusing this in the most proportionate way.
2. This plan does not identify or address all risks in the council. It covers only those risk areas that the LAN has identified as requiring scrutiny, or where scrutiny is planned as part of a national programme. Planned scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland informs the National Scrutiny Plan for 2016/17, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The conclusion of this year's shared risk assessment is that no scrutiny risks have been identified which require specific scrutiny by the LAN in 2016/17. This is a positive position for the council and is consistent with the LAN view last year. Scrutiny activity undertaken in the last 12 months was either at the request of the council or part of national activity. A number of reports have been issued on this work.
4. This does not mean that the council have addressed all risks facing it or that all areas of council performance are improving. However, it does mean that the LAN is satisfied that the council continues to demonstrate a sound corporate governance and performance management framework. In service areas we are satisfied that there has been either:
 - information gathered by the LAN to demonstrate performance in areas where, previously, further information was required; or
 - the council has demonstrated self-awareness of the standards of performance required at a service level; or
 - there is evidence to demonstrate the council's awareness of, and monitoring of, the key risks to meeting outcomes and service delivery.
5. Last year's Local Scrutiny Plan (LSP), which was issued in March 2015, noted that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) would continue to focus and monitor aspects of the social landlords performance which was weak. The SHR carried out further work during 2015/16. To assess the risk to social landlord services the SHR has reviewed and

compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords in order to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that the council continues to be in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: tenant participation levels; tenancy refusal levels; percentage of lets to homeless people; dealing with complaints within Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman timescales; average working days to complete non-emergency repairs; percentage of rent lost through voids; average time to re-let properties; and tenancy sustainment (both for homeless and non-homeless people). With regard to homelessness, the percentage of applicant resolved cases has increased. SHR will engage with the council in 2016/17 to monitor its progress in addressing the weaknesses identified.

6. Financial management is strong with a robust budget setting process in place to deliver services in line with council priorities. The 2016/17 financial year budget represents the final budget within the current five year Transformation Strategy. Previous year budgets have identified cumulative funding gaps to 2016/17 and the proposed steps to address them. The 2016/17 budget was approved on 10 March 2016.
7. During 2016 the council will be developing its Transformation Strategy 2 (TS2) covering the five year period from April 2017, and further progressing its ten year financial strategy. Audit Scotland will report on the council's progress in managing its funding gap, together with updates on the development of TS2, as part of the annual audit.
8. The council introduced a revised senior management structure and changes to its departmental and service structures from April 2015. The council's proposed programme of best value service reviews for 2015/2018 takes account of the implementation of the new council management structure. The council also plans to carry out its fourth council wide strategic self assessment of performance in 2016. The LAN will continue to monitor progress and any resultant improvement plans from each of these.
9. On 1 April 2015, the East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership began delivery of services. The Integration Joint Board (IJB) approved the Partnership's three year strategic plan in April 2015. This plan acknowledges that service redesign is required to meet future demand and proposes a high level model of change and the stepping stones to enable this. A pan-Ayrshire Change Programme schedule is in place. This is being managed through the Strategic Planning and Operational Group (SPOG), which is supported by a change team to oversee the review and re-design of services. The Partnership aims to make efficiency savings. The Partnership is forecasting a small underspend in 2015/16. Audit Scotland will report progress in the annual audit report.
10. The Care Inspectorate and HMICS reported on their joint thematic review of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland in November 2015. The Review involved a range of inspection activities undertaken in all Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) areas. These groups included representation from all local authorities, Police Scotland, Health Services and the Scottish Prison Service as responsible Authorities for the MAPPA process. The key message is that MAPPA is making an

effective contribution to public safety and sex offender management. There are a number of recommendations and areas for development which are intended to improve efficiency in processes. The Care Inspectorate will be asking SOGs and Responsible Authorities to outline how these will be implemented and progress monitored and evaluated.

Planned scrutiny activity

11. As shown in [Appendix 1](#), the council will be subject to nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2016/17, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes and the specific council areas they will cover. Where East Ayrshire Council is to be subject to scrutiny as part of a national programme, the relevant scrutiny body will communicate this with the council.
12. In addition to specific work shown in [Appendix 1](#), routine, scheduled audit and inspection work will take place through the annual audit process and the ongoing inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively. Individual audit and inspection agencies will continue to monitor developments in key areas of council activity and will provide support and challenge as appropriate. This will help to inform future assessments of scrutiny risk.
13. In the first quarter of 2016/17 Audit Scotland will be undertaking a follow-up of their 2015 housing benefits performance audit of the council's benefits service. An assessment of progress made by the service since the improvement plan was agreed in 2014/2015 will be undertaken.
14. Audit Scotland plans to undertake national performance audit work in three areas covering local government during 2016/17. It will undertake a performance audit on early learning and childcare and a follow-up audit on self-directed support. Audit Scotland will also carry out audit work on equal pay, but is still considering the focus and outputs of work in this area. Any engagement with councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).
15. In December 2014, the Accounts Commission concluded its review of Best Value and set out principles for a new approach to auditing Best Value. These principles include the need for more frequent assurance on Best Value across all 32 councils, integrating the audit processes, an increased emphasis on driving improvement, and a strong focus on the quality of service experienced by the public and the outcomes achieved.
16. The new approach will be rolled out from October 2016 but will continue to evolve. It will include assessment each year of aspects of Best Value as part of an integrated annual audit and a public report, (Controller of Audit report to the Accounts Commission) for each council at least once in a five year period that will bring together an overall picture of the council drawn from a range of audit activity. The initial iteration of the rolling programme, which will be reviewed and refreshed annually in response to factors including the Shared Risk Assessment (SRA), will be presented to the Accounts

Commission in April 2016. The results of this current SRA will make a significant contribution to the audit intelligence that will underpin the new approach, and inform the development of the initial programme.

17. 2016 is a transition year. This includes development of the intelligence about each council for the new approach and the handover to new audit appointments. While preparation for the new approach progresses, Best Value audit work will continue. But, appropriate elements of the new approach, such as reporting mechanisms, will also be tested in some councils.
18. The Scottish Government has confirmed in its funding letters to Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships (ADPs) that the Care Inspectorate will undertake Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) activity with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships. The purpose of this activity is to support the validation of ADP and services' self-assessment of local implementation and service compliance with the Quality Principles: Standard Expectations of Care and Support in Drug & Alcohol Services. The findings from this validation work will be reviewed by the Scottish Government to consider and inform the future programme of national support that will further encourage and support delivery of continued improvements at ADP and service level. It is anticipated that all 30 ADPs will participate. On site activity is likely to commence in March 2016 with a national overview report completed by the end of 2016. The Care Inspectorate will also provide brief, customised feedback to each ADP in order to help build their capacity for self-evaluation.
19. Education Scotland will be working in partnership with the council to carry out a validated self-assessment of Educational Psychology Services. East Ayrshire Council involvement is scheduled for between August and December 2016.
20. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work completed during 2015-16. It will carry out further thematic inquiries during 2016-17. SHR will also review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2016/17. If the council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.
21. The Care Inspectorate will work together with partner regulatory agencies to continue to deliver a coordinated programme of joint scrutiny of Community Planning Partnerships and integration joint boards. Partner agencies are reviewing the methodology for joint inspections of Adults' Services. As well as joint strategic scrutiny programmes, the Care Inspectorate will also be reviewing its approach to strategic commissioning and undertaking a variety of thematic programmes of work.

22. HMICS will continue to inspect local policing across Scotland during 2016/17 as part of its rolling work programme. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. HMICS will identify and notify LANs and the local Policing Divisions to be inspected approximately three months prior to inspection.

March 2016

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

| Scrutiny body | Scrutiny activity | Date |
|---|---|--|
| Audit Scotland | Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits during 2016/17. It will undertake a performance audit on early learning and childcare and a follow-up audit on self-directed support. Audit Scotland will also carry out audit work on equal pay. | 2016/17 Specific engagement with councils to be determined. |
| | There will be a follow-up of the 2015 Housing Benefits Performance Improvement Plan. | Quarter 1, 2016/17 |
| | | |
| Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland | The Care Inspectorate will work with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and their partners across Scotland to support the validation of the Partnerships' self-assessment of performance. | East Ayrshire involvement to be determined. |
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| Education Scotland | Education Scotland will be working in partnership with the council to carry out a validated self-assessment of Educational Psychology Services. | August – December 2016 |
| | | |
| Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) | SHR will carry out a number of thematic inquiries in 2016/17. If the council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry SHR will confirm this directly with the council and LAN lead. | Timing to be confirmed. |
| | SHR will review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy checks during quarter 2 | Quarter 2, 2016/17 |
| | SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in its 2015/16 work. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials and tenant representatives as necessary. | Quarterly |

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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats, along with a podcast summary at:

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