

Stirling 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 Stirling Council during 2016/17. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment (SRA) undertaken by a local area network (LAN), comprising representatives of all the scrutiny bodies which engage with the council ([Appendix 1](#)). The SRA 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 2015/16 local scrutiny plan (LSP) did not identify any specific scrutiny risks where additional scrutiny was required. It included some non-risk based scrutiny activity which took place over the year:
 - In May 2015 the Care Inspectorate conducted a progress review of children's services in Stirling and Clackmannanshire. It published the report in September 2015 and this noted that there had been improvement in all areas.
 - During 2014, Audit Scotland carried out a national performance audit on health and social care integration to review the progress made to establish the new integration authorities across Scotland. Stirling and Clackmannanshire was one of the six authorities selected for fieldwork interview. The audit identified a risk around the size of the Stirling/Clackmannanshire Integrated Joint Board. Audit Scotland is planning to do further work on health and social care integration in 2017/18.
 - The Care Inspectorate and HMICS carried out a joint thematic review of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in all councils in Scotland during 2015. The key message within the national review report, published in November 2015, was that MAPPA was making an effective contribution to public safety and sex offender management.
 - During 2015, the Scottish Housing Regulator carried out a thematic inquiry looking at gypsy travellers. This was a national inquiry, and not a result of the LAN shared risk assessment.

4. The LAN agreed to continue to monitor the pace of progressing shared education and social services with Clackmannanshire Council during 2015/16, and the outcome of the options appraisal by Ernst and Young. That options appraisal was published in June 2015. In October 2015, the council took the decision to move away from the shared services agreement with Clackmannanshire Council for education and social work services. This agreement is due to come to an end in April 2017, but may end earlier.
5. The LAN's conclusion from this year's shared risk assessment is that no new scrutiny risks have been identified that require additional scrutiny work. It has identified a number of areas which require ongoing oversight and monitoring work by scrutiny partners.
6. The council introduced new management arrangements during 2014, and these bedded in well in 2015/16. The council has set out a clear strategy and change programme focused around six key priorities, supported by priority-based budgeting. Elected members are comfortable with the vision. The council delivered within its agreed budgets and met its savings targets. The council has done a lot of work on community and staff engagement, and it has a track record of delivering planned improvements in services.
7. The council is facing a funding gap of £30.184 million over the five years to 2020/21. It has already identified plans to make £23.4 million of these savings. It now needs to move onto delivering more challenging change projects, and elected members will need to make difficult decisions to address the funding gap. The council has been increasing its reserves and has created a risk fund to allow it to invest to support its longer-term change programmes. In February 2016, the council agreed its 2016/17 budget which includes plans to deliver revenue savings of £6.2 million. The external auditor will continue to review the council's financial management, planning and progress as part of the annual audit.
8. The LAN concluded that the decision to move away from the shared services agreement for education and social work services presents a number of risks to the council both during and after the transition period. In particular the continuity of education and social work services, the potential impact on the quality of services and outcomes for service users, the potential loss of senior management experience and the uncertainty relating to the introduction and effectiveness of new management structures as yet to be developed. There are also risks of potential increased costs. The council has established a number of workstreams and developed a plan to manage the transition. It intends to present the proposed new structures to the council for approval in May 2016.
9. The Care Inspectorate will closely monitor developments and will support any planned supported evaluation exercises. The Education Scotland Area Lead Officer will closely monitor developments. The external auditor will continue to monitor overall planning and progress with the new arrangements, including the financial implications. The

external auditor will also look at governance around the decision to withdraw from the shared services agreement.

10. Progress has continued on health and social care integration, and the full Stirling and Clackmannanshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) was established from 3 October 2015. The necessary integration scheme was finalised by June 2015 and the councils are on track to implement full integration by 1 April 2016. The move away from shared services may have an impact on the joint IJB. The external auditor will continue to monitor progress in implementing the governance and accounting arrangements for the new IJB.
11. Stirling Council has taken a range of actions to prepare for the implications of the Community Empowerment Act, which comes into force from summer 2016. It has linked this to the council's overall strategy and change programme, and its approach to community engagement. The external audit will monitor progress and planning as part of the annual external audit.
12. To assess the risk to social landlord services, SHR has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. SHR has assessed that no additional scrutiny is required in this council beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2016/17.

Planned scrutiny activity

13. The council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17 ([Appendix 1](#)). For some of their scrutiny activity in 2016/17, scrutiny bodies are still to determine in their work programmes which specific council areas they will cover. Where a council is to be involved, the relevant scrutiny body will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.
14. 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. Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits during 2016/17 and 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 assessment of scrutiny risk.
15. Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in three areas covering local government during 2016/17, in addition to follow-up work on Scotland's public sector workforce. It will undertake a performance audit on early learning and childcare and a follow-up on 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](#).

16. 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. 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.
17. The initial iteration of the rolling programme, which will be reviewed and refreshed annually in response to factors including the 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. 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. Appropriate elements of the new approach, such as reporting mechanisms, will also be tested in some councils.
18. The Care Inspectorate will undertake Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) activity with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs). This 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 Scottish Government will use the findings from this validation work 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 start 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. 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.
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. 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.
22. HMFSI do not have any plans for specific work in Stirling Council at this stage.

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan


Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Scotland's public sector workforce – Follow-up audit	June 2016
	Possible performance audit work	TBC
Care Inspectorate	Care Inspectorate working in partnership with Stirling Council will support any planned supported self-evaluation on areas to be agreed	Late 2016
Care Inspectorate	Validated self-evaluation with alcohol and drug partnerships	Spring 2016
Education Scotland	No local scrutiny activity planned	
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	No local scrutiny activity planned	
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	No local scrutiny activity planned	
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	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 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.	TBC

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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

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