

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar during 2017/18. 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 2017/18, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The 2016/17 shared risk assessment concluded that most areas of provision, including leadership and governance, resource planning and management and education, did not require any additional scrutiny beyond statutory and ongoing work. However, ongoing oversight and monitoring was required in the area of social work services.
4. **Adult services:** Strategic scrutiny for adult services in the Western Isles was completed by the Care Inspectorate in March 2016. The inspection identified a number of weaknesses in Eilean Siar Community Planning Partnership's performance, policy development and plans to support improvement, and leadership and direction for adult services. Weaknesses in outcomes for older people, in self-evaluation for improvement and in leadership raised concerns about the Partnership's capacity to improve.
5. The Partnership had already developed a strategic action plan which was approved by the IJB in March 2016 with four key deliverables prioritised for transitional funding – Re-ablement, Intermediate Care, Mental Health Re-design and Extra Care Housing. There are some areas of uncertainty in that the partnership continues to experience recruitment difficulties particularly for key professional staff. The IJB is still at an early stage and key resourcing decisions relating to service development and the commitment to development of re-ablement and care at home services is being taken forward to address delayed discharge numbers.

6. Following publication of the inspection report, a further action plan was prepared to address the recommendations of the inspection and work is ongoing to address the areas for improvement identified.
7. The chief social work officer report dated October 2016 noted that self-evaluation and inspection reports have all been converted into Improvement Plans and more use is being made of data to target interventions, evaluate outcomes and measure impact. Detailed reports on delayed discharge performance are also presented to the IJB. The LAN will continue to monitor improvements needed.

Commentary on areas for information

8. **Integration Joint Board:** The Scheme of Integration for Curam Is Slainte nan Eilean Siar (the Western Isles Integration Joint Board (IJB)) was approved by the Scottish Government in June 2015. The Comhairle agreed its delegated IJB budget as part of its own budget in 2016. The IJB became responsible for financial and strategic oversight of the services that fall within its remit on 1 April 2016. For the Comhairle this encompasses all adult social work and community care services, criminal justice social work services and some housing adaptation works.
9. Based on the current budget monitoring report (for the period to 31 October 2016), there is a projected underspend of £0.102 million for the IJB. However, there are currently a number of overspends in high risk areas. A financial efficiency plan is in place and is continuously updated, to address those areas of overspend. Progress will be monitored closely by Audit Scotland.
10. **Community engagement:** The Comhairle has introduced several initiatives such as the E-Sgìre communities connect portal, as well as public consultation on the Scottish Government's Crown Estate proposals and the Comhairle's Budget Choices. A number of members have also attended a seminar covering the broad implications of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for the Comhairle. The chief Executive has also begun engagement with Community Councils.
11. **Financial sustainability:** Total savings of £6.2 million for 2016/17 and £2.2 million for 2017/18 have been agreed by the Comhairle. By June 2016, £6,137k of these had been implemented with £2,209k of work in progress and £76k (relating to prudential borrowing) dependent on capital projects proceeding. The majority of the 2016/17 efficiency savings have either been implemented or departments have identified alternative resources to meet the shortfall. At this stage no Comhairle department is indicating that it will not be able realise the planned savings.
12. The 2017/18 budget was agreed on 7 February 2017 with £3 million expected to be funded from balances. Work will continue on the process of developing three year transformation plans for all services and identifying budget choices for future budgets so that comprehensive information can be provided to the new Comhairle as early as possible following the elections in May 2017.

13. **Performance management and improvement:** LAN members also noted progress against the Comhairle's 181 key performance indicators over the last five years. Whilst performance has been relatively consistent, 25 per cent of indicators were reported by the Comhairle as 'off-track' in 2015/16, the majority of these are in Education and Children's Services. Joint discussions have been held between the chief officer and the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) to identify improvements to performance reporting. A joint visit between the partnership, HIS and the CI is planned in 2017 to explore the possibilities of improved reporting systems. The partners have some concerns that these developments should be mindful of the need to target finite resources on areas of greatest need or development. The partnership anticipates undertaking further supported self-evaluation through file reading in early 2017 with the involvement of the link inspector.
14. The Care Inspectorate led on a project on the validated self-evaluation of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) across Scotland during 2016. All ADPs received individual summary feedback to support continuous improvement and a national report will be published in May 2017.
15. The LAN will continue to monitor developments in performance management and improvement through the annual audit process.

Planned scrutiny activity

16. As shown in Appendix 1, the Comhairle will be subject to a range of risk-based based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2017/18. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2017/18, scrutiny bodies are still to determine 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.
17. 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.
18. Plans to monitor are in place through contact with the Care Inspectorate link inspector and HIS colleagues. It is anticipated that a progress review will be held as identified in the recent inspection reports, however the timing of this progress review will be determined between the partnership, HIS and the Care Inspectorate as a number of improvement activities are underway currently.
19. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will introduce a revised approach to the joint strategic inspections of services for adults for 2017/18 which will assess the extent to which the planning, organisation and coordination of services comply with the principles of integration and contribute to the national health and wellbeing outcomes. Inspections will include a focus on joint strategic commissioning. In 2017/18, the Care Inspectorate will also lead on thematic activity in the areas of adult

support and protection and self-directed support, working with a range of scrutiny partners.

20. Education Scotland will be working in partnership with the council to carry out a follow-up to their validated self-assessment of Educational Psychology Services. This is scheduled to take place in November 2017.
21. Schools have benefited from the additional funding offered through the Scottish Government Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and plans for taking this forward are under discussion.
22. In 2017/18 Audit Scotland will work together with the Care Inspectorate to assess the position and progress being made by partners to manage delayed discharges.
23. The Accounts Commission agreed the overall framework for a new approach to auditing Best Value in June 2016. Best Value will be assessed over the five year audit appointment, as part of the annual audit work. In addition a Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for each council will be considered by the Accounts Commission at least once in this five year period. The BVAR report for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is not planned in the period covered by this scrutiny plan. The Best Value audit work planned this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial and service planning, financial governance and resource management, and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.
24. In addition, Audit Scotland will undertake a Housing Benefit (HB) performance audit during 2017/18 which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment and updated action plan. The findings of this audit work will be reported separately to the council.
25. To assess the risk to social landlord services, Scottish Housing Regulator 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 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2017/18.
26. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work into gas safety and repairs completed during 2016/17. It may carry out further thematic inquiries during 2017/18. The SHR will also review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2017/18. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit, the SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.
27. HMICS will continue to inspect local policing across Scotland during 2017/18 as part of its rolling work programme. These inspections will examine, among other things, local scrutiny of and engagement with Police Scotland by councils. HMICS will also consider the local policing division's contribution to partnership working.

May 2017

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas during 2017/18. These include: Self-directed support: a follow-up audit (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is a selected study site) Equal pay Early learning and childcare Arm's-Length External Organisations (ALEOs) Children's mental health Innovative financing - city deals Health and social care integration: Part 2 Unless identified above, any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website here	Dates to be determined
	HB performance audit which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment and updated action plan.	Quarter 1 - 2017/18
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Following the joint inspection of older people's services in 2016, review of progress will be carried out on an ongoing basis over next 12 months initially by the link inspector with more formal review of progress of some key areas during quarter 4	Quarter 4 - 2017/18
	Following the joint inspection of children's services in January 2016, progress review scheduled	May 2017
Education Scotland	Validated Self-Evaluation of Educational Psychology Services – follow-up	November 2017
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	No risk based scrutiny identified	N/A
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	No risk based scrutiny identified	N/A

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	Scottish Housing Regulator will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work into gas and safety repairs completed during 2016/17. It may carry out further thematic inquiries during 2017/18. SHR will also review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2017/18. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit, the 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

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

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