

The Moray Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2017/18



Moray Council

Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2017 to March 2018

Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Moray Council 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 LAN identified one risk area where specific scrutiny is required during 2017/18:

Children and young people's services

4. The Care Inspectorate, in conjunction with Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, led on a joint inspection of services for children and young people in Moray in autumn 2016. This inspection established that services for children and young people in Moray required significant improvement. There was an urgent need to strengthen collective strategic direction, challenge and scrutiny of services for children in Moray. Community planning partners have accepted the inspection findings and taken steps to direct a collective response towards improving services for vulnerable children and young people.
5. As a result of the above outcome of the joint inspection of services for children and young people in Moray, the Care Inspectorate, in collaboration with their scrutiny partners, is providing additional support to leaders and managers in Moray to prepare, develop and implement a comprehensive improvement plan.
6. Given the significance of the inspection findings, the LAN has assessed this area as a significant risk requiring a scrutiny response in 2017/18. The Care Inspectorate will lead a review, to be concluded within six months of the inspection report's publication, to report on progress against the areas for improvement set out in the inspection report.

7. In addition, the LAN agreed to monitor progress made by the council in the following areas:

Financial sustainability

8. Following the 2017/18 local government settlement, Moray Council approved a budget for 2017/18 that included the requirement for £3.4 million of savings and the use of £8 million of reserves to achieve financial balance. Current projections indicate significant funding gaps of £14.4 million for 2018/19 and £19.7 million for 2019/20.
9. The council agreed to use its reserve funds to maintain services at current levels during 2016/17 and 2017/18. It has acknowledged that the current level of service provision is not financially sustainable and has agreed to work towards achieving a sustainable financial plan for 2018/19 onwards.
10. The LAN will continue to monitor the council's approach to financial planning and service redesign and Audit Scotland will report on this as part of its Best Value work in the 2016/17 annual audit report.

Health & social care integration

11. The Moray Integration Joint Board (the IJB) assumed operational responsibility for health and social care services on 1 April 2016. The board is establishing its governance arrangements through the creation of an Audit and Risk Committee, and a Clinical & Care Governance Committee. Its initial three year strategic commissioning plan was approved in March 2016.
12. The IJB is forecasted to overspend its 2016/17 budget by £0.882 million which will be funded through the use of slippage in expenditure from the Strategic Funds. The board approved a working budget for 2017/18 in March 2017. Additional savings of £4 million have still to be found to close the funding gap. The LAN will continue to monitor progress and Audit Scotland's 2016/17 audit of the IJB will report on any issues relating to governance and financial sustainability.

Community planning and community empowerment

13. The Moray Community Planning Partnership Board received regular updates throughout 2016 as the Scottish Government produced their guidance on the implementation of the Community Empowerment 2015 Act. The Partnership has established a Community Engagement Group to coordinate all partners' approach to community engagement. This new approach was used during 2016 to seek community views on the Partnership's priorities for the next ten years and the council's budget pressures and financial position. The Partnership acknowledges that more needs to be done to provide community groups and individuals with the a greater understanding of the challenges being managed by the public sector and the opportunity to influence how services will be changed in the future to meet those challenges.

Planned scrutiny activity

14. As shown in the Appendix, the council will be subject to a range of risk-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.
15. In addition to specific work shown in the Appendix, 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 assessment of scrutiny risk.

Risk-based activity

16. The Care Inspectorate will lead a review of progress made to address the areas for improvement set out in the report on the joint inspection of services for children and young people in Moray. Education Scotland will also contribute to this review with the results due to be reported during the autumn.

Nationally driven scrutiny activity

Audit Scotland

17. 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 the council 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 planning and service management, financial governance and resource management, and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.
18. Audit Scotland also plans to undertake performance audit work on arms length external organisations (ALEOs), city deals, children's mental health and health and social care integration. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).
19. Audit Scotland will undertake a local Housing Benefit (HB) performance audit during 2017/18 which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment, supporting evidence and updated action plan. The findings of this audit work will be reported separately to the council.

The Care Inspectorate

20. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland are expected to introduce a new approach to the Joint Strategic Inspections of Adult Services in 2017 that will assess the extent to which the planning, organisation and coordination of services complies with the principles of integration and contribute to the national health and wellbeing outcomes. 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.
21. All Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) have received individual feedback to support continuous improvement and a national report will be published in May 2017.

Education Scotland

22. In addition to contributing to the follow-up review of children and young people's services in Moray, Education Scotland's Area Lead will continue to monitor performance and provide support and challenge. There remains a need for Moray Council to improve the information it gathers on how well children and young people are achieving in the broad general education phase. There is a need to improve educational attainment in literacy and numeracy. Education Scotland will also undertake a strategic level inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD) services between January and March 2018. Plans for taking forward the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are also under discussion.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)

23. 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.

Scottish Housing Regulator

24. 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 the council beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2017/18.
25. 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. 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.

May 2017

Appendix: 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 : Arm's-Length External Organisations (ALEOs) Innovative financing - City deals Children's mental health Health and social care integration: Part 2.	Dates to be determined
	Local HB performance audit which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment, supporting evidence and updated action plan.	July - September 2017
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	The Care Inspectorate will lead a review within 6 months to report on progress in relation to the areas for improvement set out in the joint inspection of children's services report.	September 2017
	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.	Dates to be determined
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will undertake a strategic level inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD).	January to March 2018
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	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.	Dates to be determined
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	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.	Councils to be determined
	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.	Quarter 2

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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:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 

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