

# Stirling Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan

2017/18



May 2017

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# Stirling Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2017 to March 2018

### Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Stirling Council during the financial year 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 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 part of routine ongoing inspection work, or part of national activity. It included the following non-risk based scrutiny which took place over the year:
  - 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 was published in early May 2017.
  - In November 2016 the Scottish Government launched the national strategy for community justice alongside the Outcome Performance and Improvement Framework. The Scottish Government commissioned the Care Inspectorate to develop a guide to self evaluation for community justice in Scotland and forms the basis of the model for scrutiny and inspection of community justice in the future. A transitional plan is in place for the statutory criminal justice partners and work has been undertaken to ensure that the objectives of presenting and reducing offending are addressed through the new arrangements.
4. **Financial sustainability:** The 2017/18 budget was approved by the council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, along with indicative financial plans for the following four financial years

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2018/19 to 2021/22. The council's five-year Business Plan, outlining the financial position over this period, has been updated to reflect a more detailed understanding of the cost pressures, planning assumptions and Scottish Government settlement figures.

5. A break even position is budgeted for 2017/18. However, the cumulative budget gap over the five year period to 2021/22 is £10.330 million. This incorporates £20.109 million of existing savings requirements approved in the first three years of priority based budgeting (PBB), together with £0.357 million of new savings that were approved through PBB4, the most recent budget setting exercise. There is a risk to future service delivery if the council doesn't address the projected funding gap or if it can't meet the existing savings it has set itself. Audit Scotland will report on the council's progress in managing its five year funding gap as part of the annual audit.
6. **Shared services:** In March 2017 the shared social care and education services between Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils formally ended. Prior to decoupling, Clackmannanshire Council was the lead agency for social work services with Stirling Council leading on education for both council areas. As a result of the decoupling, Stirling Council established a new structure and developed arrangements for the delivery of both education and social work services. This has taken place as part of a wider redesign and reshaping of the council's services.
7. The new structure includes two Director posts below the chief executive. One of these is the director of communities, children and enterprise who the chief education officer & chief social work officer report to. The structure also includes:
  - Adult Social Work which sits within Communities and People, Care and Housing. This post has a key link with the chief officer of the IJB.
  - Children's Services which includes Education & Children and Families. The senior manager within Children and Families was also designated to the post of chief social work officer.
8. The Care Inspectorate will continue to monitor progress following the decoupling.
9. The chief education officer has made good progress in establishing the new management team to support education across the council. Early indications are that the team has a clear shared vision firmly focused on securing further improvement. Education Scotland will continue to monitor progress following the decoupling of services.
10. Some schools have benefitted directly from the additional funding offered through the Scottish Government Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and plans for taking forward any residual PEF funding are under discussion. There is a need to ensure this funding secures a positive impact in relation to closing the poverty related attainment gap. Although no Education related risks have been identified, Education Scotland has highlighted that the authority has spent the majority of its allocated Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

11. There continues to be a joint Adult and Child Protection Committee with Clackmannanshire Council. Whilst there has been a strong commitment to self-evaluation to inform improvement priorities, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these. The two councils undertook a single agency (social work) audit of adult support and protection practice at the end of 2016 which was supported by the Care Inspectorate. Further audit activity has taken place during the last quarter of 2016/17.
12. **Health and Social Care Integration:** On 1 April 2016 the Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership became operational. The Integration Joint Board (IJB) approved the partnership's three year strategic plan in February 2016. The council delegated its Adult Services to the IJB, together with a small element of housing covering housing support needs. The plan acknowledges that service redesign is required to meet future demand. The Clackmannanshire & Stirling partnership area has been divided into three localities designed to support collaborative working across primary and secondary health care, social care and third and independent sectors.
13. The partnership aims to make efficiency savings. While progress is being made, the partnership is forecast to overspend in 2016/17. The Stirling Council element of the IJB forecast overspend is approximately £0.250 million. Regular monitoring reports are prepared and these are reported to the council's Finance & Economy Committee approximately four times a year. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor the governance arrangements around the IJB and will report progress in the annual audit report.

## Planned scrutiny activity

14. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of nationally driven scrutiny activity between April 2017 and March 2018. Where appropriate, scrutiny activity will be carried out jointly by scrutiny bodies. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2017/18, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes and which specific council areas they will cover. Where Stirling 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 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.
16. 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 Stirling 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 and service planning, financial governance and resource management, and will be reported in the local auditor's Annual Audit Report.

17. Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2017/18. These include Arms Length External Funding 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](#).
18. The Care Inspectorate, along with Health Improvement Scotland, plans to carry out a joint strategic inspection of adults' services in the Stirling Council area in the fourth quarter of 2017/18. This inspection will also cover Clackmannanshire Council as both councils are covered by a single Integrated Joint Board (IJB).
19. Education Scotland have developed a new model of inspection for Community Learning and Development (CLD). Inspections will be based on the local authority area and will include local authority CLD provision and partners. It is anticipated that all local authorities will be covered in the next three years.
20. Education Scotland will be working in partnership with the council to carry out a validated self-assessment of Educational Psychology Services. This is scheduled to be completed by June 2017.
21. To assess the risk to social landlord services, Scottish Housing Regulator (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 Stirling beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2017/18.
22. 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 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland has planned performance audits covering local government in 2017/18 focusing on: ALEOs, city deals, children's mental health, and health and social care integration.	Dates to be determined
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Joint inspection (with HIP) of adults' services as part of the Care Inspectorate's wider programme of national work and not as a result of the LAN's assessment.	March 2018
Education Scotland	A new model for Community Learning and Development (CLD) has been developed. The inspection will be based on the local authority area and will include local authority CLD provision and its partners.	2017/18, 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter
	Validated Self-Evaluation of Educational Psychology Services	May 2017
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	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.	Dates to be determined.

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### A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats,  
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[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

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