

Falkirk Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2018/19



April 2018

Falkirk Council

Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2018 to March 2019

Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out any scrutiny risks identified by the local area network (LAN), proposed scrutiny responses and expected scrutiny activity for Falkirk Council (the Council) during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are 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 risks in the council and Falkirk Integrated Joint Board (the IJB).
3. Expected scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland informs the National Scrutiny Plan for 2018/19, which is available on the Audit Scotland [website](#).

Scrutiny risks

4. The SRA for the council concluded that there were no significant scrutiny risks in the coming 12 months that would warrant any specific scrutiny activity. This is a positive position for the council.
5. However, the LAN recognises the ambitious council for the Future programme which the council needs to deliver in order to meet the significant challenges facing the council during this period. Progress on this will be considered in the course of LAN members' ongoing engagement with the Corporate Management Team, or through planned and routine inspection/audit activity.
6. The Accounts Commission has reported in its Best Value follow-up report, published on 1 February 2018, that the council has responded encouragingly to previous concerns but needs effective leadership to deliver its five-year improvement programme. The external auditor will follow-up on progress through the annual audit.
7. To assess the risk to social landlord services, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that the council is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to percentage of anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved within locally agreed targets and gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due. For the council's homelessness service, it identified risks in relation to percentage of not homeless and

intentionally homeless decisions, percentage of assessments completed within 28 days and satisfaction with temporary accommodation.

8. SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing and homelessness service weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officers, as necessary.

Scrutiny activity

9. Any expected scrutiny activity between April 2018 and March 2019 is shown in Appendix 1. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2018/19, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes and 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.
10. 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. The outcomes of this work will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
11. 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 Falkirk 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 relation to performance and outcomes and continuous improvement and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.

March 2018

Appendix: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland / external auditor	No additional scrutiny planned. Progress in respect of Best Value will be monitored through the annual audit.	
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2018/19. These include audits on: Children and young people's mental health; Health and social care integration: update on progress; primary and social care workforce planning; VFM of non-profit distributing models. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined and will be confirmed with the council as soon as possible. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website (www.audit-scotland.gov.uk).	
Care Inspectorate	No additional scrutiny is planned.	
Education Scotland	No additional scrutiny is planned in Falkirk in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme.	
Scottish Housing Regulator	SHR may carry out thematic inquiries during 2018/19 or it may carry out survey or on-site work to follow up on published thematic reports. 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 2018/19. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry, any follow-up work to a published thematic inquiry, or a data accuracy visit, the SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.	

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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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