

Inverclyde Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2018/19



April 2018

Inverclyde 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 Inverclyde 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 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 2018/19 shared risk assessment process has not identified any additional risk areas from its assessment, where specific scrutiny is required, other than that which is nationally directed or part of ongoing work programmes.
5. Inverclyde Council was the first to receive an audit under the revised arrangements for auditing best value in local government in June 2017. This was a positive report overall. There were a number of recommendations made in the report to support further improvement at the council, but nothing identified that would constitute a specific scrutiny risk.
6. Audit Scotland will focus on the Council's response to issues identified in the BVAR and will report on progress made against the recommendations in its Annual Audit Report for 2017/18.

Financial management and financial planning

7. Inverclyde Council's financial management is effective, and it has a good medium to long-term financial strategy and in each of the last three years, the council has achieved in-year surpluses which exceeded its plan.
8. The council also has significant reserves relative to its size. However a proportion of the reserves are being used to meet short and medium-term budget pressures. The council agreed a balanced 2018/19 Revenue Budget without the use of reserves. The council will need to make challenging decisions to deliver the 2019/23 budget plan over the next four years.

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9. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor the council's approach to financial management and financial planning and will report on these in its Annual Audit Report for 2017/18, in line with the strategic best value audit plan

Social work

10. As part of the Care Inspectorate's wider planned programme of national scrutiny work, a joint inspection of services for children and young people was carried out, led by the Care Inspectorate with participation by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and HMICS. The joint inspection report was published in October 2017. This was a very positive inspection with a strong profile of evaluations. There were notable improvements in the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people, with a commendable focus on those who were most vulnerable. The inspection also noted some areas for improvement and requested that Inverclyde Community Planning Partnership develop a joint action plan to address these. The Care Inspectorate will monitor progress of the joint action plan.

Education

11. Education Scotland has no particular concerns with Inverclyde Council's educational provision and therefore there no additional scrutiny is planned in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme. As an attainment challenge authority Inverclyde will be inspected as part of the Education Authority inspection programme focusing on the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Housing

12. 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.
13. It identified in relation to the council's homelessness service a high level of repeat applications and assessments; and a high level of lost contacts before assessment and discharge of duty.
14. The Scottish Housing Regulator (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 officials as necessary.
15. 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. 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.

Scrutiny activity

16. 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.
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. The outcomes of this work will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
18. The Care Inspectorate is currently undertaking preparatory work for a thematic review of self-directed support which will be carried out during 2018/19. Throughout the year, the Care Inspectorate will conduct an inspection in up to six areas across the country with the aim of identifying factors which support effective implementation of the legislation and barriers which require to be overcome.
19. The Care Inspectorate has recently completed a thematic review of Adult Support and Protection, carried out across six partnership areas in collaboration with colleagues from HMICS and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The Care Inspectorate intend to publish a report on this work by the end of the current financial year. During 2018/19, the Care Inspectorate will work with Scottish Government and colleagues to encourage partnerships to use this learning to review their own practice and to take any action necessary to strengthen their response to concerns.
20. From April 2017, the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland have a joint duty under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 to assess and report on the effectiveness of integration authorities strategic plans. In these early stages of integration of health and social care, the Care Inspectorate will report on the progress which integration authorities are making towards a more collaborative culture and integrated approaches to planning and delivering services. During 2018/19, the Care Inspectorate intend to visit three partnerships to report on their progress.
21. 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. Inverclyde Council's BVAR was published in June 2017.
22. Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits during 2018/19 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 assessments of scrutiny risk.

23. There will be no additional Education Scotland scrutiny in 2018/19 other than that which is nationally directed or part of ongoing work programmes, including general inspection and support activity that Education Scotland provides to the council.

March 2018

Appendix: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	No specific scrutiny work planned	
Audit Scotland	<p>Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on City Deals, Health and social care integration, and Children and young people's mental health services.</p> <p>The findings of a performance audit of Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) will be published in Spring 2018.</p> <p>Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website here.</p>	Specific dates to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate	No specific scrutiny work planned.	
Education Scotland	Community Learning and Development strategic level inspection.	Jan – Mar 2019
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	No specific inspections planned.	
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	No specific inspections planned.	
Scottish Housing Regulator	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator (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 officials as necessary.</p> <p>The 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</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Q2 2018/19</p>

	review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2018/19.	
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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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