

Stirling Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2018/19



April 2018

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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 Stirling 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 Integration Joint Board (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, from its assessment for Stirling Council, any additional risk areas where specific scrutiny is required, other than that which is nationally directed or part of the ongoing work programmes by Scrutiny Bodies. This is reflected in the Scrutiny Plan at Appendix 1. Paragraphs five to seven highlight areas identified by the LAN as requiring oversight and ongoing monitoring.
5. **Financial Sustainability:** - The council continues to face significant financial challenges, illustrated by the projected budget gap of £20.5 million over the five year period 2018/19 to 2022/23. This incorporates savings of £2.5 million recently approved by the council's fifth phase of Priority Based Budgeting (PBB). Existing savings options from the previous four cycles of PBB (PBB1-4) remain live and will also have a financial impact during this period. These are forecast to save £3.9 million in 2018/19, and a further £7.5 million over the subsequent three years. To support the achievement of financial balance throughout this five year period, the council must ensure that the financial control environment is strong and that financial information is reliable and up to date. The local audit team will report on the council's progress in managing its five year funding gap as part of the annual audit.
6. **Housing and Homelessness:** To assess the risk to social landlord services, The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords.
7. In relation to the council's homelessness service, SHR identified a number of risks, particularly in relation to contact with applicants throughout the assessment process, the use of temporary accommodation and final outcomes for applicants. SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing these areas. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.

8. The following areas, while not identifying any scrutiny risk, summarise the ongoing work with the link inspector at Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively.
9. **Education and Children's Services:** There is strong strategic leadership of Schools, Learning and Education within Stirling Council. The council has sound governance arrangements in place to ensure that educational provision is well organised and well led. Scrutiny outcomes including inspections have, overall, been very positive in recent years with very few establishments subject to continuing engagement. Outcomes for children and young people are often above the national average and the virtual comparator and generally improving. Further raising attainment in literacy and numeracy and raising attainment for those living in areas of most deprivation remain priorities for Stirling Council in line with the national improvement priorities.
10. Overall there are no concerns about Stirling Council's educational provision and capacity for continuous improvement therefore there will be no additional scrutiny in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme.
11. Stirling Council has two schools in receipt of funding from the Schools Programme of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools in Stirling Council have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place and these are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate.
12. **Social Care Services:** - The Care Inspectorate has not undertaken any strategic scrutiny at Stirling Council since 2015. The LAN's findings are therefore based on national performance data and link inspector contact.
13. Overall there are no significant concerns about the delivery and performance of social work services. Some positive progress has been made in modernising some aspects of children and families social work. A strategic approach has been taken to addressing a long standing problem of the high number of children placed out with Stirling in costly residential placements. The council has been able to significantly reduce this number by investing in the development of a range of more appropriate local resources.
14. Most adult services performance data is above the national average and the council achieves a good balance of care for older people with relatively high numbers being supported at home compared to care homes. Less positively, national data suggests that the implementation of self-directed support has stalled in the last 18 months and this will be subject to ongoing discussion with the council and monitoring by the link inspector.
15. The transfer of delegated adult services to the health and social care partnership has been slower than expected and agreement was reached in September 2017 to transfer these over a phased period to December 2018. The impact of this, together with progress, will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the link inspector.

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. **Audit Scotland: Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR).** 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 appointment, as part of the annual audit work. In addition a BVAR for each council will be considered by the Accounts Commission at least once in this five year period. The current proposed BVAR programme includes publication of a report for Stirling Council in 2019. The scope and timing of this work to be carried out, as part of the 2018/19 audit, will be discussed with the council later in 2018. The BVAR programme could change if the risk profile of councils change. If this is the case we will notify the council.
19. In the meantime, Best Value audit work planned in 2018, as part of the annual 2017/18 audit, will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial management and financial sustainability. We will also gain an understanding of how effective the council's self-evaluation processes are in driving improvement across the council. The results of this work will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.
20. **Audit Scotland: National Performance Audits.** Audit Scotland also plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2018/19. These include City Deals, Health and social care integration, and Children and young people's mental health services. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. In addition, Audit Scotland will publish the findings of a performance audit relating to Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs). Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).
21. **Care Inspectorate: Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People:** From April 2018, Scottish ministers have asked the Care Inspectorate to lead another programme of joint inspections of service for children and young people, with scrutiny partners Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. They have asked partners to provide assurance about how community planning partners are protecting and meet the needs of children and young people who have experienced, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, and how they are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people who are subject to corporate parenting requirements. The Care Inspectorate intend to carry out five joint inspections in 2018/19. It was agreed with ministers that, for the duration of this programme of inspections, the inspectorate will incorporate an area of specific enquiry each year, with the aim of identifying key lessons and best practice which all partnerships could use to support their own continuous improvement. An overview report will be published at the end of each year which will be of interest to the council. Stirling Council has not been selected as one of the five joint inspections in 2018/19,

but it is anticipated it will be selected in year two or year three of the programme. The Care Inspectorate will inform the council in due course.

- 22. Care Inspectorate: Self-Directed Support:** The Care Inspectorate will carry out a thematic review of self-directed support during 2018/19. The aim is to build on the key findings of Audit Scotland's progress report, published in 2017, particularly to explore the ability and confidence of front line staff to implement self-direction support legislation by offering choice and control and making decisions with people about their support. Inspections will be conducted 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.
- 23.** The Care Inspectorate will provide feedback on each area and publish an overview report which will be disseminated more widely, with the expectation that all areas will then use these findings to evaluate their own practice and make improvements where necessary. Stirling Council has not been selected as one of the six council areas for inspection in 2018/19. Following the completion of the six inspections it will be decided whether to extend this to other council areas, however, the council will have an interest in the findings from the overview report.
- 24. Care Inspectorate: Adult Support and Protection:** As noted in the 2017/18 Local Scrutiny Plan, The Care Inspectorate, along with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, commenced a joint strategic inspection of adults' services (JSIAS) in the Stirling Council area in the fourth quarter of 2017/18. This inspection also covered Clackmannanshire Council as both councils are covered by a single Integration Joint Board (IJB). A key focus of the inspection included reviewing progress made by the partnership in its approach to strategic planning and commissioning. The JIAS scrutiny commenced in March 2018 and will be completed in April with the report published in the second quarter of 2018/19.
- 25. Education Scotland:** As noted in the 2017/18 Local Scrutiny Plan, Education Scotland commenced an inspection of the council's Community Learning and Development service. This was completed in early 2018 and will be reported to the council soon. Education Scotland will also carry out a review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) delivered by Skills Development Scotland across the Stirling Council area. This will be completed by June 2018.
- 26. 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. 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.

March 2018

Appendix 1: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	<p>Best Value (BV) related audit work planned this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating BV in financial management and financial sustainability. The local audit team will also gain an understanding of how effective the council's self evaluation processes are in driving improvement across the council.</p> <p>The BVAR scope and start date will be agreed with the council in the 3rd quarter of 2018/19 with the projected date of the BVAR report around mid 2019.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2018 as part of annual audit.</p> <p>From 3rd quarter of 2018/19.</p>
Audit Scotland: National Performance Audits	<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>	Dates to be determined.
Care Inspectorate (CI)	No specific scrutiny work, however the council will have an interest in the findings from the five joint inspections of service for children and young people; and the six thematic reviews of self-directed support being carried out across Scotland in 2018/19.	N/A
Education Scotland	A review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) delivered by Skills Development Scotland across the Stirling council area.	By June 2018
Scottish Housing Regulator	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 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.	2018/19.
	SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing and homelessness service weaknesses identified in this plan.	Ongoing

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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

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Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN
T: 0131 625 1500 E: info@audit-scotland.gov.uk 
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 