

# West Dunbartonshire Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

# West Dunbartonshire 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 West Dunbartonshire Council during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a 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 LAN is of the view that the council continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to best value and has strong leadership, a clear vision and a focus on continuous improvement.
5. The LAN did not identify any specific areas from the risk assessment where specific scrutiny was required, other than scrutiny that was nationally directed or part of a planned programme of work. The LAN members followed up on some areas that were identified in the 2017/18 Local Scrutiny Plan (LSP) for ongoing oversight and monitoring which are reflected below.
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 to identify the weakest performing landlords. SHR has assessed that no additional scrutiny is required in West Dunbartonshire Council during 2018/19, beyond statutory and ongoing work.
7. **Staff Absence Levels:** Attendance management continues to be a priority for the council. In 2016/17, the average number of days lost per employee (excluding teachers) due to sickness absence improved by 11 per cent to 11.6 days compared with 13.06 days in 2015/16. Sickness absence results for teachers showed an improvement of 15 per cent from 6.78 days in 2015/16 to 5.77 days in 2016/17. Replacing the Attendance Working Group, the Employee Wellbeing Group in conjunction with Joint Trades Unions aim to support sustained improvement and focus on the health and wellbeing of the workforce. The LAN recognises that there is improved attendance across the council, however the council wide absence rates remain above the council's targets and it continues to be a priority to improve it further. The

absence rates will be reviewed as part of the Best Value audit work outlined within the Scrutiny Activity section below.

8. **Financial Sustainability:** In March 2018, a report to council provided an update on the general services revenue estimates for 2018/19 to 2020/21, identifying a projected budget surplus for 2018/19 of £0.671 million and cumulative budget gaps of £7.091 million and £12.972 million for 2019/20 and 2020/21 respectively. The Council could consider the use of reserves to assist in closing the funding gap. As the council's usable reserves (as a proportion of net revenue stream plus housing rents income) are in the lowest quartile in Scotland, this approach could be challenging. The LAN recognises that the council has managed its finances proactively, however, there is still uncertainty in the wider economic climate for the financial position. The Best Value (BV) audit work outlined within the Scrutiny Activity section below will include an assessment of the council's financial position and how effectively the council has planned to face the challenges of the future. This will also be reflected in the 2017/18 annual audit report.
9. **Shared Services:** Delivering services with partners had been identified by the council as an area where efficiencies and improvements in the delivery of services could be realised in future years. The council has progressed various shared service and joint working opportunities with other public bodies including the delivery of internal audit services for Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, the provision of shared data centre and ICT service desk technologies with East Dunbartonshire Council as well as the provision of communications and PR service for Stirling Council. The council has invested significant resource in driving forward the project for Roads and Transportation shared services with Inverclyde and East Dunbartonshire councils. However shared services has not progressed as initially expected and therefore, the savings targets have not been achieved. Progress in this area will be reviewed as part of the Best Value audit work outlined within the scrutiny activity section below.

## Scrutiny activity

10. 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.
11. 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 inspections 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.

## Audit Scotland

12. 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.

13. As part of this approach, audit work is now underway which will result in a BVAR for West Dunbartonshire Council, to be considered by the Commission in June 2018. The work being undertaken in West Dunbartonshire Council this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value by reviewing the following:
  - The council's vision and strategic direction.
  - The council's self-assessment/evaluation processes and the impact made.
  - How effectively the council plans its use of resources including asset management, financial planning and workforce planning.
  - How the council delivers services with partners, including consideration of the City Deal and shared service developments.
  - Community engagement and how this impacts on the council's activities.
  - How well prepared the council is to meet the challenges of the future in relation to their continuous improvement programmes such as regeneration and office rationalisation.
  - Outcomes/performance and the reporting of these, including Public Performance Reporting – potentially with detailed work in selected areas being identified from our initial review.
14. Audit Scotland plans to undertake national performance audit work covering local government during 2018/19 including a performance audit on City Deals. In addition, Audit Scotland will publish the findings of a performance audit relating to Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs); updates on Scottish Fire and Rescue Service integration and Health and Social Care integration and children and young people's mental health and a housing benefit risk assessment in 2018. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).

## Education Scotland

15. West Dunbartonshire Council is one of nine Scottish local authorities which have been receiving significant additional investment from the Scottish Government through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC). In addition, West Dunbartonshire's schools received £3.380 million of Pupil Equity Funding in 2017/18. This additional funding from the Scottish Government's Attainment Scotland Fund is allocated directly to schools, targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap and is to be spent at the discretion of head teachers working in partnership with each other and their local authority.
16. In September 2017, Education Scotland announced plans to inspect the attainment related aspects of the education functions of the nine SAC local authorities using a bespoke inspection framework. This framework was piloted at West Dunbartonshire Council in December 2017, with an evaluative report due to be published by Education Scotland.

17. Strategic leadership, governance and quality improvement of education are all strong. The council has performed well in almost all aspects of scrutiny and the outcomes for children and young people are generally improving. The council has worked effectively to begin to close the poverty related attainment gap and there continues to be a great deal of work in this area. Overall, there are no particular concerns about the provision of education in West Dunbartonshire Council.
18. Education Scotland will also carry out a review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) delivered by Skills Development Scotland across West Dunbartonshire Council area. This will be completed by March 2019.

## Care Inspectorate

19. In its February 2017 report on the joint inspection of children's services, the Care Inspectorate concluded that services provided by the council and its community planning partners were having a positive impact on the wellbeing of children, young people and their families and demonstrated a culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement. At the same time, the inspection identified areas for development, which the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) aimed to incorporate within their ongoing activities. These included actions to:
  - Demonstrate the difference investments in early intervention and prevention are making for all children and young people through the measurement of robust data and progress across strategic plans.
  - Strengthen strategic plans in recognition of national policy directives on prevention of domestic abuse and local trends in use of kinship care.
  - Achieve greater consistency in quality of assessments of risk and need and the formulation of plans to meet identified factors by ensuring approaches to day-to-day quality assurance of operational practice are robust, systematic and deliver intended improvements.
20. The Care Inspectorate's Link Inspector will liaise with the CPP on an ongoing basis to monitor the improvement actions in 2018/19.
21. The Care Inspectorate and partners will introduce a revised approach to the joint strategic inspections of services for children and young people for 2018/19 which will focus on those children and young people identified as most vulnerable.
22. A thematic review of self-directed support will be carried out during 2018/19. Inspections will be undertaken in a number of areas with the aim of identifying factors which support effective delivery of self-directed support and any barriers to implementation.
23. The Care Inspectorate have 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.

### **Scottish Housing Regulator**

24. 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 the SHR will confirm this directly with the Council and the LAN lead.

**Appendix: Scrutiny activity**

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	A Best Value Assurance Report is being prepared for West Dunbartonshire Council and the report is due to be considered at the Accounts Commission meeting in June 2018.	June 2018
Audit Scotland	<p>Audit Scotland plans to undertake a performance audit of City Deals in 2018/19.</p> <p>The findings of a performance audit of Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) and an update on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be published in Spring 2018.</p> <p>An update on Health and Social Care integration is due to be published Autumn 2018.</p> <p>Children and young people's mental health is due to be published September 2018.</p> <p>A Housing Benefit Risk Assessment has been completed and will report in June 2018.</p>	Dates to be determined
Care Inspectorate	<p>The Care Inspectorate's Link Inspector will liaise with the Community Planning Partnership on an ongoing basis to monitor improvement actions from its February 2017 report on the joint inspection of children's services.</p> <p>A revised approach to the joint strategic inspections of services for children and young people will be introduced in 2018/19 and will focus on those children and young people identified as most vulnerable.</p>	Ongoing
Care Inspectorate	<p>The Care Inspectorate is currently undertaking preparatory work for a thematic review of self-directed support which will be carried out during 2018/19.</p> <p>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. The local authorities involved in the inspections are still to be identified.</p>	Dates to be determined

<p>Care Inspectorate</p>	<p>The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland introduced a revised approach to the Joint Strategic Inspections of Adult Services in 2017. These 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. These inspections will continue in 2018/19 with three partnership areas selected for inspection.</p>	<p>Dates to be determined</p>
<p>Education Scotland</p>	<p>Education Scotland will publish an evaluative report following the inspection of the attainment-related aspects of the education functions at West Dunbartonshire Council undertaken in December 2017.</p> <p>A review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) delivered by Skills Development Scotland.</p>	<p>Dates to be determined</p> <p>March 2019</p>
<p>Scottish Housing Regulator</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 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.</p>	<p>Dates to be determined</p> <p>Q2 2018/19</p>




# West Dunbartonshire Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19

### 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](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

If you require this publication in an alternative  
format and/or language, please contact us to  
discuss your needs: 0131 625 1500  
or [info@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

For the latest news, reports  
and updates, follow us on:



Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN

T: 0131 625 1500 E: [info@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 