

Clackmannanshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan (LSP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Clackmannanshire Council (“the council”) during 2017/18. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN), comprising representatives of 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 will be available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. Last year’s LAN reported that Best Value audit work was to be planned on leadership, governance and financial sustainability. The council’s transformation programme has not been progressing as quickly as planned. Due to the lack of progress there are risks that the savings required to balance future budgets will not be approved and implemented. In June 2016 the Accounts Commission agreed the overall framework for a new approach to auditing Best Value. 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 Clackmannanshire Council will be considered by the Accounts Commission early in 2018. The areas described above are included in the scope of BVAR.
4. The LAN members followed up on some areas which were identified in the 2016/17 LSP for ongoing oversight and monitoring.
5. **Shared services:** In March 2017 the shared management arrangements for social care and education services between Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils formally ended.
6. **Education:** Prior to March 2017 education services were delivered by Clackmannanshire on behalf of the two councils. A new chief education officer is now in post and has been developing the management team. Early indications are that the new education management team is taking positive steps to bring about improvement and

this is borne out by improved recent inspection results. In 2016/17 the LAN identified concerns relating to the strategic management of education as a result of the move to end the shared management of education. Education Scotland has worked closely with the chief executive and the authority to monitor developments. There is a need to continue to monitor progress however no additional scrutiny is required beyond ongoing work.

7. It is acknowledged that educational attainment needs to improve and the council is receiving support in all 18 of its primary schools through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. As in other Challenge Authorities, progress has been slower than originally planned, with an expected spend of £520,000 to the end of this financial year (out of an allocation of £718,000), principally as a result of initial difficulties in recruiting staff. Plans to spend pupil equity funding are currently under discussion.
8. **Social care:** The council has put in place arrangements for the continuing delivery of Social Work Services, previously delivered by Stirling on its behalf. A post of head of social services has been filled by the chief social work officer (CSWO). While improvement work in relation to social work services is progressing well, the challenges presented by the decoupling from Stirling and a new management structure present risks to the services.
9. The last strategic scrutiny of children's services was in 2014, and follow-up scrutiny was undertaken in 2015. This concluded that partners had put in place a comprehensive improvement plan and some early positive changes had been achieved. The pace of change has inevitably been affected by the decoupling and changes of personnel. The link inspector will continue to monitor progress of relevant action plans.
10. The LAN did not identify any specific areas from the risk assessment where specific scrutiny is required. However the following risk areas have been identified for ongoing oversight and monitoring
11. The Care Inspectorate led on a project on the validated self evaluation of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) across Scotland during 2016. Fieldwork activity concluded and all ADPs received individual summary feedback to support continuous improvement. A national report will be published on this work in May 2017.
12. **Sickness absence rates:** Local Government Benchmarking Framework information reported by the council for 2015/16 shows that it performed 29th of the 32 local authorities for sickness absence for teachers (7.2 days) and 31st for non teachers (13.4 days). A number of these are long term absences and all managers have now completed absence management training. The LAN will continue to monitor and report on the council's sickness absence levels.

Planned scrutiny activity

13. As shown in [Appendix 1](#), the council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2017/18. For some of their activity in 2017/18

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.

14. Routine, scheduled audit and inspection work will take place through the annual audit process and the ongoing inspection of school, housing and care services by Education Scotland, Scottish Housing Regulator and the Care Inspectorate respectively.
15. **Social care, Adults:** The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will introduce a revised approach to the joint strategic inspections of services for adults for 2017/18 which will assess the extent to which the planning, organisation and coordination of services comply with the principles of integration and contribute to the national health and wellbeing outcomes. Inspections will include a focus on joint strategic commissioning.
16. In 2017/18, the Care Inspectorate will also lead on thematic activity in the areas of adult support and protection and self-directed support, working with a range of scrutiny partners.
17. **Housing:** 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 landlord. SHR has assessed that no additional scrutiny is required in Clackmannanshire Council beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2017/18.
18. 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.
19. **Best Value:** As reported above, the Accounts Commission agreed a new approach to auditing Best Value in June 2016. As part of this approach, a Best Value Assurance Report is planned for Clackmannanshire Council early in 2018.
20. Audit Scotland also plans to undertake national performance audit work in four areas covering local government during 2017/18. It will undertake performance audits on ALEOs, city deals, children's mental health and a follow-up on the integration of health and social care. Engagement with councils is still to be determined on some of these studies, and councils will be updated. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date published
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland has performance audits planned in 2017/18 on ALEOs, City Deals, Children's Mental Health & Health and Social Care Integration – Part 2.	Dates to be determined
	A Best Value Assurance Report is to be published, based on audit work carried out throughout 2017.	Early 2018
Care Inspectorate	The Care Inspectorate will lead on thematic activity in the areas of adult support and protection and self-directed support.	TBC
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. 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.	TBC


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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:

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