

East Dunbartonshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan (LSP) sets out the planned scrutiny activity in East Dunbartonshire Council during the financial year 2017/18. The plan is 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 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 is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The council is continuing to focus on delivering its ambitious transformation programme which sets out how organisational change, efficiencies and improvements will be achieved. The 2016/17 LSP outlined the Accounts Commission's request for a follow-up Best Value audit to be undertaken during 2016/17 in order to track the progress of the council against the concerns raised in the original best value report in 2013.
4. The Best Value follow-up work focused on:
 - Transforming public services
 - People management
 - Asset management
 - Procurement
 - Financial controls and reconciliations
 - Performance management, governance and scrutiny.
5. The Controller of Audit provided a statutory report to the Accounts Commission, and the report was published in December 2016. The report says that:
 - The council does not demonstrate adequate capability to deliver its ambitious transformation programme and thus its ability to address its significant funding gap. This is evidenced by failure to meet targets and lack of clarity about the savings to be achieved.

- Workforce planning needs to improve further, with a workforce plan that is better integrated to the transformation programme, ensuring that the skills needed to achieve the programme will be available and the targeted savings are monitored and achieved.
 - Member scrutiny must improve further. Members need to set the priorities of scrutiny and determine the quantity and content of information they require to fulfil their responsibilities.
 - The Commission needs the council to demonstrate effective leadership in ensuring the required change.
6. Audit Scotland will follow-up the council's response to the follow-up report and include an update in the annual audit report.
 7. The following areas were identified by the LAN as requiring ongoing oversight and monitoring.
 8. The council faces significant financial challenges, which was emphasised when the council's 2017/18 budget was approved at a meeting of the Council in February 2017. The approved budget highlighted an initial funding shortfall for 2017/18 of £11.307 million with additional expenditure proposals costing approximately £1.225 million leading to a revised shortfall of £12.532 million. In addition, a further £0.3 million of expenditure proposals were agreed at the meeting, however these are being treated as one-off pressures. To support the achievement of financial balance throughout this period, the council must ensure the financial control environment is strong and that financial information is reliable and up to date. The LAN has agreed that the local audit team will report on progress in relation to achievement of savings within the annual audit report.
 9. The LAN has assessed housing and homelessness as an area that requires ongoing oversight and monitoring in relation to those parts of the service identified as a concern by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) in paragraph 18 below.
 10. East Dunbartonshire Council continues to deliver high quality educational outcomes for children and young people. Plans for taking forward the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are under discussion.
 11. The Care Inspectorate does not plan to undertake a joint inspection of adult services however will continue to monitor risks that inform the scrutiny planning process. As a result of this continued and improving position within education and social services the LAN agreed that no scrutiny is required in these areas.

Planned scrutiny activity

12. 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 scrutiny 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.

13. 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 services by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively.
14. 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 council's BVAR is currently planned for later in the five year programme, outwith the period covered by this LSP. Audit Scotland will follow-up the council's response to the December 2016 Best Value follow-up report and include an update in the annual audit report. The Controller of Audit will report progress to the Accounts Commission by the end of 2017.
15. Audit Scotland will undertake a local Housing Benefit (HB) performance audit during 2017/18 which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment, supporting evidence and updated action plan. The findings of this audit work will be reported separately to the council.
16. Audit Scotland also plans to undertake national performance audit work in four areas covering local government during 2017/18. It will undertake a performance audit on ALEOs, city deals, early learning and childcare 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](#).
17. 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. 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.
18. To assess the risk to social landlord services the SHR has reviewed and compared the 2015/16 performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that East Dunbartonshire is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: overall satisfaction; complaints handling; time to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs; repairs completed right first time; satisfaction with the repairs service; antisocial behaviour cases resolved in target timescales; time to re-let properties; and percentage of gross rent arrears of rent due.

19. The SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing service weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.
20. 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.
21. HMICS will continue to inspect local policing across Scotland during 2017/18 as part of its rolling work programme. These inspections will examine, among other things, local scrutiny of and engagement with Police Scotland by councils. HMICS will also consider the local policing division's contribution to partnership working.

May 2017

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Follow-up of the Best Value report published in December 2016 to examine progress by the council in the areas identified as requiring improvement.	Report by the end of 2017
	Audit Scotland has four planned performance audits covering local government in 2017/18 focusing on ALEOs, City Deals, Early Learning and Childcare and Health and Social Care Integration – Part 2.	Dates to be determined
	Local HB performance audit which includes a review of the council's HB performance self-assessment, supporting evidence and updated action plan.	April – June 2017
Education Scotland	It is planned that Community Learning and Development at East Dunbartonshire Council will be inspected in 2017.	May 2017
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will engage with the council to better understand performance in relation to overall satisfaction, complaints handling, time to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs, repairs completed right first time, satisfaction with the repairs service, antisocial behaviour cases resolved in target timescales, time to re-let properties and percentage of gross rent arrears of rent due.	To be confirmed
	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.	Dates and councils to be determined

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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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