

North Lanarkshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

North Lanarkshire 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 North Lanarkshire Council during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by the 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 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.

Financial management

5. In September 2017 the Policy and Resources Committee approved a five year financial plan to cover the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, but the short to medium term savings plans to support the five year financial plan are still in development.
6. During the 2018/19 budget setting process, the cross-party "Sounding Board" was discontinued. This was designed to develop and implement the service prioritisation process.
7. The council has a relatively low level of usable reserves in comparison to its net revenue stream, but this is consistent with many of the other larger councils. It also has a low level of capital reserve. In setting its 2018/19 budget the council is planning to use a further £2.5 million of reserves to meet its short term funding gap and forecasts a budget gap for 2019/20 of £20 million.
8. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor developments in this area through the 2018/19 annual audit process and will report the outcomes in the annual audit report.

Education

9. Overall, the council has received positive conclusions for most inspection areas in recent years. Outcomes for children and young people are improving but there is still evidence where

the council performs less well than both the national average and the council's Virtual Comparator.

10. North Lanarkshire Council is one of the nine Challenge Authorities receiving substantial funding support from the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools in North Lanarkshire Council have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place which are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with the council and its establishments as appropriate and monitor the impact.

Housing

11. 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 this council.

North Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board

12. In February 2018 the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland published the first joint inspection focusing on the effectiveness of strategic planning and commissioning for the North Lanarkshire Partnership. The inspection highlighted a number of areas of strength and areas where improvement activity should be focused and concluded that they were confident that the partnership will continue to move forward with the integration of health and social care.

Scrutiny activity

13. 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 the 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. 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 assessments of scrutiny risk.
15. 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.
16. The current proposed BVAR programme includes publication of a report for North Lanarkshire Council in 2019. The scope and timing of the work to be carried out, as part of the 2018/19 audit, will be discussed with the council. The BVAR programme could change if there is a change to the risk profile of the councils. If this is the case we will update the council as soon as we are aware of the change. In the meantime, Best Value audit work planned in this year

will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial planning and reporting, organisational restructuring and performance/outcomes, and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.

17. 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.
18. 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	Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on City Deals, Health and Social Care Integration and Children and young people's mental health. Engagement with individual councils is still to be determined and the council will be notified if it is to be included in any of these audits. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website here .	Specific dates to be confirmed
Education Scotland	Education Scotland has implemented a programme of inspections focusing on the progress made by local authorities in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. These inspections will focus on the nine local authorities who are designated as Challenge Authorities within the Scottish Attainment Challenge.	Spring 2018
Scottish Housing Regulator	The 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.	-

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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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