

Perth & Kinross Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18



Perth and Kinross Council

Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2017 to March 2018

Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Perth and Kinross 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 2016/17 LSP did not identify any specific additional scrutiny, although scrutiny activity was undertaken as a consequence of national follow-up work or at the direction of Scottish ministers.
4. The 2016/17 LSP identified three performance audits to be undertaken by Audit Scotland covering local government:
 - An audit of equal pay in councils. This is due to be reported in June 2017.
 - A follow-up audit on self-directed support. This is due to be reported in August 2017.
 - An audit of early learning and childcare. This is due to be reported in November 2017.
5. A medium-term financial plan for the period 2017-22 was presented to council in October 2016. The council agreed provisional budgets for 2017/18 and 2018/19. The financial plan includes the need to make savings of £17 million, reducing to £7 million per annum between 2017/18 and 2021/22 are noted. The council proposes to continue to prepare provisional three-year revenue budgets, with preparation of the 2019/20 budget now underway. The council's transformation program is key to its future financial sustainability. It is extending the transformation programme for three years from

2017/18 onwards. External auditors will continue to monitor developments in this area through the 2017/18 annual audit process.

6. The Care Inspectorate has been leading a project on the validated self-evaluation of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) across Scotland during 2016. Field work activity has concluded and all ADPs received individual summary feedback to support continuous improvement. The Care Inspectorate plans to publish a national report on its findings in May 2017. Perth and Kinross ADP received a very positive report on their performance, although a number of areas were identified for further development.
7. Perth and Kinross Council's Educational Psychology Service (PKCEPS) participated in the national Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) of educational psychology services in 2016. Education Scotland published the national report in June 2016. PKCEPS has developed a comprehensive Action Plan from the VSE findings. Education Scotland considers that PKCEPS has a very comprehensive and rigorous self-evaluation process which is used very effectively to inform practice and ensure continuous improvement. There is a strong culture of effective self-evaluation within the council leading to transformational change. As such, Education Scotland validated the service's self-evaluation. Plans for taking forward the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are under discussion.
8. The Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16 outlined the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) findings that the council was in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: percentage of rent collected: gross rent arrears; non-emergency repairs; and tenant satisfaction. While the council has a number of plans in place to improve future performance, there continues to be performance issues in areas such as complaints handling, levels of rent collection, rent arrears, repairs and homelessness. The SHR will follow-up these issues with the council.
9. The LAN has not identified any other specific additional scrutiny for 2017/18.

Planned scrutiny activity

10. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based based and nationally driven scrutiny activity between April 2017 and March 2018. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2017/18, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes 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 inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively. Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits during 2017/18 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 assessment of scrutiny risk.

12. Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in four areas covering local government in 2017/18. It will undertake performance audits on Children's mental health; City Deals, Arms-Length External Organisations (ALEOs) and a follow-up audit on health and social care integration. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be decided. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).
13. 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 BVAR report for Perth and Kinross Council is not planned in the period covered by this scrutiny plan.
14. There are seven statutory Best Value audit areas to be covered over the five year cycle. For 2016-17, the council's external auditor intends to consider two: Financial and Service Planning; and Financial Governance and Resource Management. Completion of the Best Value audit programme will inform the risk assessment to determine the areas of focus and of most significance to the council. The interim external audit report, to be presented to the Audit Committee in June 2017, will set out more details of the areas to be covered in years one and two of the cycle.
15. The Care Inspectorate will be undertaking a joint inspection of children's services in Perth and Kinross in October and December 2017. This will be a joint inspection with Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland.
16. 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. Perth and Kinross Council may be subject to a thematic inspection in 2017/18.
17. Education Scotland will be undertaking an inspection of the council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) service between April 2017 and March 2018. They will also be undertaking a follow-up inspection of the council's careers information advice and guidance service in November 2017. In addition to these two nationally-driven pieces of inspection work Education Scotland will be monitoring the settling in of the new team of senior officers in the council's education service.
18. To assess the risk to social landlord services the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has reviewed and compared the 2015/16 performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that Perth and Kinross Council is in

the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: complaints handling; time to complete non-emergency repairs; repairs completed right first time; rent collected of rent due; and percentage of gross rent arrears of rent due.

19. The SHR has identified risks in the council's approach to homelessness and housing options. These relate to how people get access to its services and the number of homeless applications that the council makes.
20. The council is aware of these areas of weaker performance and it has plans in place to address this. It has already undertaken a series of staff training and awareness sessions on homelessness. In addition, its recent Internal Audit report into rent arrears states that performance information indicates that results are improving, although it is too early to assess whether the revised processes introduced are adequate to reduce the long-term level of rent arrears.
21. The SHR will continue to engage with the council and monitor its performance in relation to the areas identified in its improvement plan. The SHR will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.
22. Later this year SHR will publish the findings of its national thematic inquiry work into gas safety and repairs that was 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.
23. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (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. The next local policing inspection will take place in Tayside Division in early 2017/18. Tayside Division spans the Dundee, Angus and Perth and Kinross council areas.

May 2017

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland has four planned performance audits covering local government in 2017/18: children's mental health; city deals; ALEOs; and a follow-up audit on health and social care integration. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be decided.	None indicated at present
Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, HIS and HMICS.	Children's services inspections as part of the Care Inspectorate's wider programme of national work and not as a result of the LAN's assessment.	October and December 2017
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Adult services inspections as part of the Care Inspectorate's wider programme of national work and not as a result of the LAN's assessment.	None indicated at present
Education Scotland	Community Learning and Development (CLD) strategic inspection activity.	January – March 2018
	Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) follow-up inspection	November 2017
	Validated self-evaluation (VSE) arranged by negotiation between Education Scotland and the council.	None indicated at present
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	HMICS will undertake a review of policing in Tayside during 2017/18. The inspection will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and Perth and Kinross Council.	June – August 2017
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	Local fire and rescue inspections activity in the council area over the next year.	None indicated at present
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will monitor the Council's performance in relation to complaints handling, rent management, repairs and its housing and options and homelessness service.	Quarterly

Perth & Kinross Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2017/18

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 

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 

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 

www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 