

Perth and Kinross Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

Perth and Kinross 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 Perth and Kinross Council during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are 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 risks in the council and the Integrated 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. Perth and Kinross Council's senior management team exhibits strong leadership and a clear commitment to ensuring effective delivery of council priorities through the 'golden thread' from the Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan), through the Corporate Plan to service level actions. There is good engagement with elected members from all parties and a strong focus on members' challenge and scrutiny. The Annual Audit report prepared in September 2017 by the council's external auditors concluded satisfactorily in respect of the significant risk and focus areas. The auditors reported that the council demonstrates good financial management, maintains a strong financial performance, has an effective governance structure, and demonstrates a commitment to achieving value for money.
5. There is also continued candour around the financial pressures which the council faces, which includes strong citizen involvement in the budget setting process. While the council is currently in a strong financial position with £80 million of useable reserves, the Medium Term Financial Plan identifies a mid-range savings requirement of £54.5 million over the next five years. The continued focus on medium term financial planning was further reinforced when the council recently approved revenue budgets for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 to provide services with time to identify budget savings and deliver transformational change.
6. The council has a strong approach to performance management but could do more to demonstrate the impact of all of its wide-ranging continuous improvement activity, including how it reports its performance. It has a transformation programme aimed at creating new models of service delivery and options appraisal, underpinned by an innovative strategy for staff involvement and empowerment. There is good evidence of partnership working at both council and regional level through, for example, the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative for Children's Services, the Tay City Deal and the Tayside Procurement Consortium; steady progress is also being made towards health and social care integration. At the same time, the council faces a number of important challenges, such as:

-
- The ability to fill certain posts, for example teachers (in certain subjects, sectors and localities) and people employed in the social care sector.
 - Higher than council average teacher sickness absence rates, but with a longer term downward trend.
 - Tackling delayed discharges, which is a national challenge for all councils and their partners.
 - The need to improve certain housing outcomes, including rent arrears, repairs response times and the relatively high levels of refusals of temporary accommodation.
7. 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.
 8. It found that the council is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: tenants who feel that their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and decisions, the % of complaints responded to in full within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman timescales, its rent arrears, the time it takes to complete non-emergency repairs and repairs it completes right first time.
 9. The council has undertaken some work on its response repairs service. The four repairs categories were agreed with tenants and reflect the importance of emergency repairs and will lengthen the time it takes to carry out non-emergency repairs. Despite this it is currently reporting improved performance in delivering its non-emergency repairs.
 10. In relation to the council's homelessness service the SHR has identified risks in the council's approach to homelessness and housing options. These are in relation to how people get access to its services, the number of applications that the council takes, the level of Not Homeless decisions it makes, and the level of refusals for its temporary accommodation.
 11. The council has increased the number of housing allocations it makes to homeless people. This has had a positive impact on the number of applications waiting longer than a year for an outcome.
 12. The council has also introduced a new model of service delivery for homeless people that supports them wherever possible to move directly to settled accommodation. The council's analysis of these new arrangements indicates that this approach has significantly improved outcomes for homeless people.

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 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. 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 assessment of scrutiny risk.

Best Value Audit Report

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. The current proposed BVAR programme includes publication of a report for Perth and Kinross 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.
16. The BVAR programme could change if the risk profile of individual councils changes. If this is the case we will update the council. In the meantime, Best Value audit work planned in this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in two areas:
 - Leadership, governance and scrutiny
 - Improvement.
17. The results of this work will be reported in KPMG's Annual Audit Report which will be available by the end of September 2018.

12 April 2018

Appendix 1: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
External auditor (KPMG)	<p>Annual audit of Perth and Kinross Council's financial statements including BV assessment of the council's arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, governance and scrutiny • Continuous improvement. 	Annual audit report to be completed by end September 2018
Audit Scotland	<p>Audit Scotland is currently carrying out a performance audit on <i>Children and young people's mental health</i>. Perth and Kinross Council is not included as one of the sample councils in this audit.</p> <p>Other performance audit work due to start in 2018/19 which will be of relevance to Perth and Kinross Council includes audits examining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community assets • City Deals • Skills investment and planning • Educational outcomes • Housing (precise area still to be finalised) <p>The extent of Perth and Kinross Council's involvement in these audits has still to be determined.</p>	Report publication date is September 2018
Care Inspectorate	<p>Joint inspection of services for children and young people. Five joint inspections to be conducted, including scrutiny partners from Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and HMICS, at areas still to be determined.</p> <p>Joint Inspection of services for adults focusing on the effectiveness of strategic planning in integrated authorities. Three joint inspections to be conducted, including scrutiny partners from Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Audit Scotland, at areas still to be confirmed.</p> <p>Thematic review of self-directed support building on previous Audit Scotland report. Inspection of up</p>	

	to six areas across the country still to be determined.	
Education Scotland	Community Learning and Development Inspection (CLD)	Sept-Dec 2018
Scottish Housing Regulator	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing and homelessness service weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.</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>	

Perth and Kinross 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 

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 