

Shetland Islands Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Shetland Islands Council during 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 published on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The conclusion of this year's shared risk assessment is that no scrutiny risks have been identified which require specific scrutiny by the LAN in the coming year; however there are a number of areas where the LAN will carry out ongoing oversight and monitoring. This is a similar position to that in the previous 2016-17 Local Scrutiny Plan (LSP) issued in April 2016. Scrutiny activity undertaken in the last 12 months was part of planned national activity. A number of reports have been issued on this work.
4. As identified in previous LSPs the council has focused on achieving a sustainable financial position whilst reducing the need to draw on its reserves. The LAN is of the view that the council has made significant improvement in its approach to long term financial planning in the past year. The council now has a medium term financial plan (MTFP) to help the council approve annual budgets that are balanced and affordable in the medium term. The MTFP is aligned with the council's five year Asset Investment Plan and the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy. Policies are aligned with the council's corporate plan, ensuring that the council has a clear strategy and direction. In common with many other councils, Shetland Islands Council is now reporting gaps between income and the cost of providing services over the next few years. With further funding pressures expected and demand for council services increasing, largely due to population increases, the council faces difficult decisions to balance its budget. The 2017/18 budget has been set with a one-off use of reserves to the value of £2.753 million to balance the budget, though the council recognises this is not a sustainable

approach in the medium term. The council's reliance on reserves, its long term financial sustainability, including assessing the council's performance in undertaking transformational change, and achievement of savings targets will be reviewed as part of the annual audit process and any relevant best value audit work through 2017/18.

5. The council is committed to having a strong framework in place for monitoring and reporting performance. The Planning and Performance Management Framework (PPFM) is regularly updated as the council's arrangements for improving performance continue to be developed. The council has sound governance arrangements in place. Training and development of members has significantly improved the amount of scrutiny and debate by elected members at committee meetings. As a result, the strategic direction and focus of the council are now better aligned and subject to effective scrutiny and challenge. Given the potential for changes in elected members arising from local government elections in May, it will be important that the council seeks to effectively induct new members, and maintain this progress.
6. Audit Scotland has commenced performance audit work in the following local government areas:
 - equal pay (publication in August 2017)
 - early learning and childcare (November 2016)
7. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 required local authorities and health boards to integrate their health and social care services and make arrangements for the planning and resourcing the services. In Shetland, these responsibilities have been delegated to the Shetland Islands Integration Joint Board (IJB) which was formally constituted in June 2015. As at January 2017, a draft commissioning strategy was being developed by the Head of Planning and Modernisation, NHS. This is still to be presented to the IJB for approval. The effectiveness of partnership working within the IJB has been mixed. The IJB balance of executive and non-executive members has been affected by the resignation of one Shetland Islands Council (SIC) elected member and one NHS Non-Executive member. However, progress in IJB decision-making has not been slowed. It is anticipated that the position will be resolved following the local elections. The LAN has assessed health and social care integration as an area where ongoing oversight and monitoring is required.
8. Overall, Education Scotland considers the quality of local education services and resulting outcomes for children and young people to be good. Inspection evidence is positive overall. Young people continue to achieve very well and progress to positive destinations. The effectiveness of central support and challenge was identified in the previous LSP an area for improvement. This is a much improved situation. Central support staff within Children's Services have benefited from quality improvement training delivered by Education Scotland. The moratorium on school closures has also enabled central staff to better engage in terms of challenge and support. However the moratorium is time limited. The challenge for the council will be how to keep attainment

levels high with an ever-reducing level of funding. The LAN has assessed this as an area requiring ongoing oversight and monitoring.

9. On the instruction of the Deputy First Minister Education Scotland engaged with Shetland Islands as part of a national workload review. The outcome was that the authority was reported as not yet giving sufficient support and guidance to prevent or reduce undue workload demands on staff, and further improvement was required. There is a clear commitment by the Director of Children's Services and senior management to reduce bureaucracy and improve workload demands. An action plan for improvement has been initiated. Education Scotland will monitor progress.
10. Education Scotland undertook a follow-up review of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG). Progress has been made against all the main points for action.
11. 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 Shetland Islands Council is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to: overall satisfaction; tenants who feel the landlord is good at keeping them informed; tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate; satisfaction with the standard of home when moving in; tenants satisfied with the quality of their home; time to complete non-emergency repairs; repairs completed right first time; anti-social behaviour cases resolved in target timescales; and time to re-let properties.
12. In relation to its homelessness service, access remains an issue. The council reported an increase in the numbers of households using temporary accommodation and in the overall number of days spent in temporary accommodation. Its use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation has increased significantly. Allocations of homes to homeless people fell in 2015/16. The council's case durations are lengthy and double the national average and it has a number of cases waiting for an outcome, some of these date back three years.
13. The LAN has assessed that the areas of performance management and improvement in social care services require no additional scrutiny beyond statutory/ongoing work. The position of the Chief Social Work Officer has been strengthened. As a result professional relationships at the IJB are improving. The Care Inspectorate reports the Shetland Islands Health and Social Care Partnership has made good progress in addressing the areas of improvement identified during the joint inspections of Children's Services and Adult Services undertaken in 2015. As a result of the progress review carried out December 2016 The Care Inspectorate reported that significant progress had been made in the assessment of need and risks faced by children and young people. The quality of response to those needs and risks had improved as had quality improvement and self-evaluation practice. Whilst senior managers believed the areas of concern identified within the Adult Services inspection had been addressed, the action plan has yet to be fully scrutinised by the IJB. Adult Protection findings from inspection work identified a need for improvement in risk assessments and risk management

planning. The Care Inspectorate link inspector will provide ongoing support for this activity.

Planned scrutiny activity

14. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2017/18. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2017/18, scrutiny bodies are still to determine which specific council areas they will cover. Where the council is to be involved, the relevant scrutiny body will confirm this with the council and the LAN lead.
15. 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. 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.
16. 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 Shetland Islands Council is not planned in the period covered by this scrutiny plan. The Best Value audit work planned this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial and service planning, financial governance and resource management, and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.
17. Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2017/18. These include Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs), City Deals, Children's Mental Health and Health and Social Care Integration. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).
18. Education Scotland will undertake a validated self-evaluation of Educational Psychology Services.
19. 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.

20. The 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. 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.

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	<p>Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs), City Deals, Children's Mental Health and Health and Social Care Integration during 2017/18. 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.</p> <p>Best Value audit work this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial and service planning, financial governance and resource management, and will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.</p>	Timing to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	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.	Timing to be confirmed
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will engage in a validated self-evaluation of Educational Psychology Services.	November 2017
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will engage with the council in relation to the housing and homelessness service weaknesses identified in this plan.	Timing to be confirmed
	The 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. 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.	Timing to be confirmed

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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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