

South Ayrshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2016/17



March 2016

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity for South Ayrshire Council during 2016/17. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN), comprising representatives of all of the scrutiny bodies which engage with the council. The shared risk assessment process draws on a range of evidence with the aim of determining a proportionate programme of scrutiny activity for the council.
2. This plan does not identify or address all risks relevant to 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 2016/17, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The 2013-16 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) identified the corporate best value framework as an area requiring further scrutiny. In response to this Audit Scotland undertook targeted scrutiny, in two phases. Phase one, reported in June 2013, considered what progress the council had made against its corporate improvement programme. Phase two, reported in February 2014, considered the council's; vision and strategic direction; leadership and culture; performance management; and challenge and improvement.
4. A follow-up position report was submitted to the Accounts Commission in December 2014. The follow-up report noted that the council had made clear progress in implementing the Council Plan and Service and Improvement Plans and had revised its scrutiny arrangements. The report concluded that although the council had made good progress in addressing weaknesses previously reported, it was too early to comment on the effectiveness of the changes. The Accounts Commission requested a further report, within 18 months, on the impact of the actions taken by the council. This work will be undertaken in the early part of 2016 and reported by June 2016.
5. Financial management is strong with a robust budget setting process in place to deliver services in line with the council's priorities. The LAN continues to monitor the council's financial position and the challenges to service delivery in the future from increased demand and reducing resources. The council carries out medium term financial

planning on a rolling three year basis, and in December 2014 they agreed a five year financial strategy for the period 2015 to 2020.

6. The 2016/17 budget, together with indicative budgets for the following two years, are scheduled to be approved on 3 March 2016. Audit Scotland will report on the council's progress in managing its three year funding gap as part of the annual audit.
7. On 1 April 2015, the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership began delivery of services. The Integration Joint Board (IJB) approved the Partnership's three year strategic plan at its inaugural meeting in April 2015, based on an integrated budget of £152.9 million for 2015/16. This budget subsequently rose to £154.5 million as additional funding became available. At 30 September 2015, the Partnership was forecasting an overspend at the year end of around £0.4 million, pre-dominantly relating to health budgets. However, reports to South Ayrshire Council's Leadership Panel of 16 February 2016 and the Integrated Joint Board of 18 February 2016 show a projected year end overspend of £0.812 million on the council element of delegated resources. Audit Scotland will report progress in the annual audit report.
8. To assess the risk to social landlord services, Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords in order to identify the weakest performing landlords. The review found that South Ayrshire Council is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to non-emergency repairs, tenancy sustainment, and some aspects of its homelessness service. SHR will therefore engage with the council about these areas during 2016/17. Council officials are aware of these areas of weaker performance and have a number of plans in place to improve future performance.
9. No other areas have been identified by the LAN as requiring risk based scrutiny.

Planned scrutiny activity

10. The council will be subject to a range of risk based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17 ([Appendix 1](#)). For some 2016/17 scrutiny activity, scrutiny bodies have yet to determine work programmes and which specific councils will be covered. Where South Ayrshire Council is to be subject to scrutiny as part of a national programme, the relevant scrutiny body will communicate this to the council.
11. In addition to specific work ([Appendix 1](#)), 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 assessments of scrutiny risk.
12. A new approach to the audit of Best Value will be introduced from October 2016, it will include an annual assessment of aspects of Best Value as part of an integrated annual audit and a public report for each council at least once in a five year period. The results

of current shared risk assessments will make a significant contribution to the audit intelligence that will underpin the new approach and inform the development of the initial programme. While preparation for the new approach continues, Best Value audit work will continue and the Best Value follow-up work and report to the Accounts Commission programmed for 2016 will be delivered as planned by 30 June 2016.

13. Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in three areas covering local government during 2016/17. It will undertake a performance audit on early learning and childcare and a follow-up on audit on self-directed support. Audit Scotland will also carry out audit work on equal pay, but is still considering the focus and outputs of work in this area. Any engagement with councils is still to be determined. Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland [website](#).
14. The Scottish Government has confirmed in its funding letters to Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships (ADPs) that the Care Inspectorate will undertake Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) activity with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships. The purpose of this activity is to support the validation of ADP and services' self-assessment of local implementation and service compliance with the Quality Principles: Standard Expectations of Care and Support in Drug & Alcohol Services. The findings from this validation work will be reviewed by the Scottish Government to consider and inform the future programme of national support that will further encourage and support delivery of continued improvements at ADP and service level. It is anticipated that all 30 ADPs will participate. On site activity is likely to commence in March 2016 with a national overview report completed by the end of 2016. The Care Inspectorate will also provide brief, customised feedback to each ADP in order to help build their capacity for self-evaluation.
15. In relation to its housing and homelessness services, SHR will engage with South Ayrshire Council to monitor its progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to non-emergency repairs, tenancy sustainment, and some aspects of its homelessness service. The council will submit half yearly progress reports in relation to its proposed improvement actions and outcomes. SHR will meet with council officials in November 2016.
16. The Care Inspectorate will work together with partner regulatory agencies to continue to deliver a coordinated programme of joint scrutiny of Community Planning Partnerships and integration joint boards. Partner agencies are reviewing the methodology for joint inspections of Adults' services. As well as joint strategic scrutiny programmes, the Care Inspectorate will also be reviewing its approach to strategic commissioning, reviewing the validated self-assessment of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and undertaking a variety of thematic programmes of work.
17. HMICS will continue to inspect local policing across Scotland during 2016/17 as part of its rolling work programme. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. HMICS will identify and notify LANs and the local Policing Divisions to be inspected approximately three months prior to inspection.

18. Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate will undertake a local based inspection in South Ayrshire in spring 2016. The locations selected for review were determined based on choosing both urban and rural locations and ensuring coverage across the country, not as a result of specific risks being identified.

March 2016

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan


Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Best Value Follow-up	By June 2016
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Validated self-evaluation to find out the extent to which Alcohol and Drug Partnerships are embedding the Quality Principles and their impact on improving experiences and outcomes for people who use drug and alcohol services, and their families.	2016
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Joint strategic inspection of children's services.	April 2016
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	Local based inspection.	Spring 2016
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to non-emergency repairs, tenancy sustainment, and some aspects of its homelessness service. The council will submit half yearly progress reports in relation to its proposed improvement actions and their outcomes. This will be followed by a meeting with council officials in November 2016.	Half yearly
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work completed during 2015-16. It will carry out further thematic inquiries during 2016-17. If the council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry SHR will confirm this directly with the council and LAN lead.	Timing to be confirmed.
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during quarter 2. If the council is to be involved in a data accuracy visit SHR will confirm this directly with the council and LAN lead.	Quarter 2 2016/17

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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

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