

South Lanarkshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17



March 2016

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in South Lanarkshire Council during 2016/17. The plan is based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN) which comprises representatives of all the scrutiny bodies who engage with the council (Audit Scotland, PwC, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)). 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 2016/17, which is available 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 2016/17. This is a positive position for the council and is consistent with the LAN view last year. Scrutiny activity undertaken in the last 12 months was either at the request of the council or part of national activity. A number of reports have been issued on this work.
4. This does not mean that the council has addressed all risks facing it or that all areas of council performance are improving. However, it does mean that the LAN is satisfied that the council continues to demonstrate sound corporate governance and performance management framework. In service areas we are satisfied that there has been either:
 - information gathered by the LAN to demonstrate performance in areas where, previously, further information was required or
 - the council has demonstrated self awareness of the standards of performance required at a service level or
 - there is evidence to demonstrate the council's awareness of, and monitoring of, the key risks to meeting outcomes and service delivery.
5. The LAN continues to monitor the council's financial position and the challenges that reductions in future spending will create for services and their users. The council has a good approach to financial management, which includes longer-term financial planning.

However, it will need to find significant savings in 2016/17 and this will require decisions to be made about how services are delivered in the future. To support this, the council has an established rolling programme of service reviews in place to look at how services operate now and what changes can be made. Elected Members and senior management are both involved in this process, with the council's CMT monitoring progress on reviews regularly.

6. There are effective links between the Service Reviews and the council's day to day performance management arrangements. These are underpinned by self assessments, comparative analyses using the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and service improvement plans. Services delivered through partnership arrangements are monitored through the Community Planning Partnership.
7. Effective management of the significant reductions in future funding will also require good workforce planning and management. The council is currently finalising a number of key elements in this area. These include a Strategic Workforce Plan for 2016-19, accompanied by a People Strategy and a Learning and Development Strategy covering the same period.
8. The council has a positive approach to health and social care integration. New arrangements for the Integration Joint Board are being put in place, with joint posts being agreed. This is a significant transition for the council, and the LAN will monitor the risks to service delivery and the impact on outcomes.
9. The council has responded positively to the Care Inspectorate's joint inspection of children and young people across the Community Planning Partnership reported in February 2015. It has an integrated approach to the recommendations, developing a comprehensive improvement plan against which improvements are being delivered.
10. To assess the risk to social landlord services, the SHR has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords in order to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that South Lanarkshire Council is in the bottom quartile for all social landlords in relation to non-emergency repairs, some areas of tenant satisfaction and some aspects of its homelessness service. SHR will therefore engage with the council about these areas during 2016/17. Council officials have said that they are aware of these areas of weaker performance and have a number of plans in place to improve future performance.
11. The Joint Thematic Review of MAPPA in Scotland reported in November 2015. The Review involved a range of inspection activities undertaken in all Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) areas. These groups included representation from all local authorities, Police Scotland, Health Services and the Scottish Prison Service as Responsible Authorities for the MAPPA process. The key message is that MAPPA is making an effective contribution to public safety and sex offender management. There are a number of recommendations and areas for development which are intended to improve efficiency in processes. The Care Inspectorate will contact Strategic Oversight Groups

and Responsible Authorities to outline how these will be implemented and progress monitored and evaluated.

12. Education Scotland worked in partnership with the council to carry out a validated self-assessment of Educational Psychology Services. A report from this exercise was published on 11 December 2015 highlighting a number of positive outcomes and indicating a strong capacity for continuous improvement in these services. The report is available [here](#).

Planned scrutiny activity

13. As shown in [Appendix 1](#), the council will be subject to a range of nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17. Where appropriate, scrutiny activity will be carried out jointly by scrutiny bodies. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2016/17, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes and which specific council areas they will cover. Where South Lanarkshire Council is to be involved, the relevant scrutiny body will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead. Where activity is planned this year we have summarised it below.
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. 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.
15. In December 2014, the Accounts Commission concluded its review of Best Value and set out principles for a new approach to auditing Best Value. These principles include the need for more frequent assurance on Best Value across all 32 councils, integrating the audit processes, an increased emphasis on driving improvement, and a strong focus on the quality of service experienced by the public and the outcomes achieved.
16. The new approach will be rolled out from October 2016 but will continue to evolve. It will include assessment each year of aspects of Best Value as part of an integrated annual audit and a public report, (Controller of Audit report to the Accounts Commission) for each council at least once in a five year period that will bring together an overall picture of the council drawn from a range of audit activity. The initial iteration of the rolling programme, which will be reviewed and refreshed annually in response to factors including the SRA, will be presented to the Accounts Commission in April 2016. The results of this current SRA will make a significant contribution to the audit intelligence that will underpin the new approach, and inform the development of the initial programme.
17. 2016 is a transition year. This includes development of the intelligence about each council for the new approach and the handover to new audit appointments. While

preparations progress, Best Value audit work will continue, with appropriate elements of the new approach, such as reporting mechanisms, will also be tested in some councils.

18. 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 here.
19. 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.
20. A joint review by Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland covering Career Information and Guidance Services is scheduled to be carried out at South Lanarkshire in 2017/18.
21. In relation to its housing and homelessness services, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will engage with the council to monitor its progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to non-emergency repairs, some areas of tenant satisfaction 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 and representative tenant groups if considered necessary.
22. 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.
23. 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.

March 2016

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Care Inspectorate	The Care Inspectorate will work with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and their partners across Scotland to support the validation of the Partnerships' self-assessment of performance.	South Lanarkshire involvement TBC
Education Scotland	A joint review by Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland will cover Careers Information and Guidance Services.	2017/18
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits 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.	2016/17
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	<p>The SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to non-emergency repairs, some areas of tenant satisfaction 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 meetings with council officials and representative tenant groups, if considered necessary.</p> <p>The SHR will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work completed during 2015-16. It will carry out further thematic inquiries during 2016-17.</p> <p>SHR will review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during quarter 2.</p> <p>If the council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit, SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.</p>	<p>Half-yearly</p> <p>Timings to be confirmed</p> <p>Quarter 2</p>


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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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