

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET22 June 2017Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18Report by Deputy Chief Executive**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report presents the Local Scrutiny Plan for 2017/18, which sets out the planned external scrutiny activity of East Renfrewshire Council over the next year. The report is based on a Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) undertaken by all scrutiny bodies who engage with the Council. The plan for 2017/18 is attached as an annex and can also be accessed at Audit Scotland's website¹.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to note:
- (a) the Council's continued positive assessment by the Local Area Network (LAN) of external scrutiny bodies; and
 - (b) that the planned external scrutiny activities by bodies in the LAN this year are listed in Appendix 1 of the Local Scrutiny Plan.

BACKGROUND

3. In response to recommendations in the 2007 Crerar report on the 'Independent Review of Regulation, Audit, Inspection and Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland' a streamlined approach to local government scrutiny by external bodies was introduced. This included improving the co-ordination of strategic scrutiny activity amongst the main scrutiny bodies such as Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), by establishing a Local Area Network (LAN) to bring these inspectors and auditors together. The LAN share relevant information held about East Renfrewshire Council and agree a co-ordinated scrutiny plan for the Council.

4. Over the years since 2010, changes have been made to further streamline the process. The Local Scrutiny Plan (previously called Assurance and Improvement Plan) based on a shared risk assessment (SRA) undertaken by the LAN, is now updated annually. The Plan sets out the external scrutiny of the Council for the forthcoming year.

SHARED RISK ASSESSMENT (SRA) 2017/8 SUMMARY

5. The LAN's overall assessment of the Council in 2017/18 is very positive and no areas where *additional* specific scrutiny is required this year have been identified. The report identifies two areas requiring ongoing external audit oversight and monitoring. Firstly, financial sustainability given the extent of savings we, along with other Councils across

¹[Audit Scotland](#)

Scotland, will be required to make over the next five years. In East Renfrewshire this will be £7.2 million in 17/18 plus on average £12 million for the years to 2021/22. The second area highlighted was providing additional future nursery provision to meet the Scottish Government's early education and childcare target by 2020. The Council has identified the additional early education and learning provision required and capital works are underway to increase the current levels of provision.

6. A national review of the approach to auditing Best Value was completed and principles agreed by the Accounts Commission in 2014. Best Value is a statutory duty for all councils and is based on a set of criteria to support councils to continuously improve, measure and manage their performance across all services. We were selected as one of six councils to go through Audit Scotland's new approach to auditing Best Value. Fieldwork was completed during January to May 2017 by a team of the Council's external auditors and some additional auditors from Audit Scotland. A Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) setting out the findings from the audit is scheduled for publication in September 2017.

7. Each council in Scotland has undergone a similar process to determine the planned level of scrutiny. All Local Scrutiny Plans 2017/18 are published on Audit Scotland's website² and a copy of East Renfrewshire's report will also be posted on the Council's website.

PLANNED SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

8. Whilst no specific scrutiny risks have been identified, the Council will be subject to some planned areas of scrutiny and will participate in a number of nationally driven risk based audits and reviews during 2017/18. These are listed in Appendix 1 of the Plan and include Care Inspectorate thematic reviews of Adult Support and Protection and Self-directed Support. As yet, many of the details and timings of these audits and the Council's involvement have to be confirmed.

9. The LAN reported that there are some areas where relevant LAN scrutiny bodies will continue to monitor developments as part of the annual audit process. On the Council's provision of its social landlord function, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the Council's use of temporary accommodation in 2017/18. A Significant Performance Failure was reported to the SHR in 2015 regarding the Council meeting the Scottish Housing Charter statutory consultation requirements. Housing Services developed an action plan which was approved at Cabinet in February 2016. As part of this plan the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) were procured to undertake an independent review into tenant engagement in East Renfrewshire and have provided key recommendations. Housing Services are working with tenants and tenant organisations over the next few months to implement the final recommendations. The SHR will monitor progress against the implementation of the action plan during 2017/18.

10. Education Scotland introduced a new model for inspecting councils' Community Learning and Development (CLD) service. A CLD inspection at East Renfrewshire Council commenced in February 2017 and concluded in March 2017. The inspection was positive and a report is expected to be published imminently.

11. The Council will also continue to be subject to routine scheduled audits, inspections and monitoring from each of the scrutiny bodies. This includes, for example, routine inspections of schools and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.

² [Audit Scotland - Access all Councils' Local Scrutiny Plans 17/18](#)

CONCLUSION

12. The Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18 report presents a positive external assessment. This serves to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to make people's lives better and deliver better outcomes for our customers and residents across East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Cabinet is asked to note:

- (a) the Council's positive assessment by the Local Area Network (LAN) of external scrutiny bodies; and
- (b) that the planned external scrutiny activities by bodies within the LAN this year are listed in Appendix 1 of the Local Scrutiny Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17, Cabinet, 2 June 2016
Tenant Participation and Engagement, Cabinet, 18 February 2016

KEYWORDS

Local Scrutiny Plan, Best Value, Risk, Assessment, Assurance

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Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2017 to March 2018

Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in East Renfrewshire 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 conclusion of this year's shared risk assessment is that no scrutiny risks have been identified which require specific scrutiny by the LAN in 2017/18. This maintains the positive position reported last year. Scrutiny activity undertaken in the last 12 months was either part of routine ongoing inspection work, or part of national activity. It included the following non-risk based scrutiny :
 - The Care Inspectorate led on a project on the validated self-evaluation of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships(ADPs) across Scotland during 2016. All ADPs received individual summary feedback to support continuous improvement and a national report was published in early May 2017.
4. The LAN has assessed the following areas as requiring ongoing oversight and monitoring :
 - Financial Sustainability: the council is facing significant financial pressures. Following the announcement of the Scottish Government Settlement for 2017/18, the council will be required to make savings of £7.2 million and will be required to achieve additional savings of on average £12 million for the periods to 2021/22.
 - Future Nursery Provision: the council recognises there is limited capacity within the authority area to meet the Scottish Government target of increased nursery hour provision by 2020. The council has identified that an extra 13 new nursery establishments will be required. Work is currently underway on three new establishments.

5. External auditors will continue to monitor developments in these areas through the 2017/18 annual audit process and best value audit work.

Best Value

6. At its meeting in December 2014, the Accounts Commission agreed the principles of the new best value approach. 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 programme includes a Best Value audit of East Renfrewshire Council in 2017 with the publication of a Best Value Assurance Report for East Renfrewshire Council in September 2017.

Planned scrutiny activity

7. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-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 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.
8. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland is to 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.
9. 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.
10. Audit Scotland plans to undertake national performance audit work in a number of areas covering local government during 2017/18. It will undertake performance audits on Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs), city deals, children's mental health and a follow-up on the integration of health and social care. Engagement with councils is still to be determined on some of these studies, and councils will be updated. More information on future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland [website](#)
11. Education Scotland has developed a new model of inspection for Community Learning and Development (CLD). The inspection will be based on the Local Authority area and will include Local Authority CLD provision and partners. A CLD inspection at East Renfrewshire Council commenced in February 2017.
12. Education Scotland will carry out a follow up review of the quality of Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services delivered by Skills Development Scotland across all council areas in 2018/19.

13. Education Scotland has highlighted that the authority has spent the majority of its allocated Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. Plans for taking forward the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are under discussion.
14. To assess the risk to social landlord services the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found the council does not always provide temporary accommodation when required. SHR will engage with the council about this area during 2017/18.
15. During 2015 a Significant Performance Failure (SPF) was reported to SHR in relation to statutory consultation and meeting Standard 3 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter "Participation". During 2016/17 the council and tenants have worked together to develop an action plan to address the SPF issues. The improvement actions are programmed to be delivered during 2017-18.
16. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing service weaknesses identified.
17. 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.

May 2017

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Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Best Value Assurance Report	March to May 2017
	Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs) Health & Social Care Integration Part 2 City Deals Children and Adolescent Mental Health	Fieldwork councils and dates to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Adults' services inspections as part of the Care Inspectorate's wider programme of national work and not as a result of the LAN's assessment.	To be confirmed
	Thematic reviews of adult support and protection and self-directed support, working with a range of scrutiny partners	To be confirmed
Education Scotland	Community Learning & Development strategic inspection	February to May 2017
	Review of the quality of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) provided by Skills Development Scotland	Session 2018/19
	Education Psychology Service Validated Self-Evaluation	Published 24 March 2017
	Details of any validated self-evaluation (VSE) arranged by negotiation between Education Scotland and the council.	To be confirmed
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing service weaknesses identified in this plan. This will include monitoring the council's progress with its improvement action plan and seeking assurance that the actions have been effective. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.	Ongoing
	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. 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	To be confirmed

	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.	
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East Renfrewshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2017/18

A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity



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along with a podcast summary at:

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