City of Edinburgh Council
Local Scrutiny Plan

2015/16

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in City of Edinburgh Council during 2015/16. 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 2015/16, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. In May 2013, the Accounts Commission considered a Best Value report on the City of Edinburgh Council. The Commission recognised that the council had made a range of improvements since its last Best Value audit in 2007. The council demonstrated a good understanding of the challenges it faced and the need to restore public confidence, which had been damaged in light of high-profile issues such as the trams project and the statutory repairs service. However the Accounts Commission expressed concerns around the specific challenges the council faced in relation to achieving substantial recurrent budget savings, and requested a follow-up report in 2014. This follow-up work was reflected in last year's 2014-17 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP), where the LAN reported that ongoing scrutiny was required around aspects of governance and accountability, financial management, procurement, people management, efficiency, and improving and transforming public services. In addition, the LAN reported that some further information was required in relation to leadership and direction, and ICT management.

4. The Controller of Audit's follow-up Best Value report was considered by the Accounts Commission at its meeting in November 2014. The report recognised the good progress the council had made in developing its approach to scrutiny and risk management, and that work was continuing on developing ICT arrangements. It highlighted the improved procurement arrangements in place, and closer working between the central procurement unit and service areas.

5. The report also emphasised, however, that the financial challenges the council faces have increased since the original Best Value review was undertaken. The council has developed a transformation agenda, including the Better Outcomes through Leaner Delivery (BOLD) initiative, through which a programme of savings options and improved service outcomes have been identified. This initiative will be used to underpin the council's new service delivery model, *Organise to Deliver*, which aims to empower front-line staff in the localities to ensure devolved decision making and improved outcomes for citizens.

6. Nonetheless, the council is still developing the detailed business cases around the delivery model, and it is too early to assess the BOLD initiative's impact in delivering the required financial savings. The report also highlighted some concern around the council's management capacity to deliver a programme of change and improvement whilst dealing with other issues it faces, along with the council's lack of progress in developing a comprehensive workforce strategy.

7. The Accounts Commission noted the Controller of Audit's view and asked for a further report in 2015 focusing on these areas of concern. Consequently, the local scrutiny plan includes focused Best Value work around the council's initiatives to address its financial challenges, and the reporting of these, along with its development of a comprehensive workforce strategy.

8. The LAN has considered the other key risk areas within their scope and concluded that there are no further scrutiny risks that have been identified which require specific work by the scrutiny bodies this year. This does not mean that in relation to these other areas the council has addressed all risks, or that all areas of performance are improving. However, it does mean that the LAN is satisfied that:

    •   there has been further 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.

Planned scrutiny activity

9. In addition to the Best Value follow-up work, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2015/16. This is set out in appendix 1. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2015/16, scrutiny bodies are still to determine their work programmes 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.

10. Audit Scotland has three planned performance audits covering local government during 2015/16. It will be working jointly with the Care Inspectorate looking at social care and

jointly with both the Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) on a Health and Social care integration position statement. It will also carry out a follow-up audit on roads maintenance. Any engagement with councils is still to be determined.

11. The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will be undertaking a joint thematic review of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland during 2015. This forms part of the Care Inspectorate's wider programme of national inspection, and is not a result of the LAN shared risk assessment. The purpose of the review will be to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the MAPPA in Scotland, in terms of keeping people safe and reducing the potential risk of serious harm by registered sex offenders in our communities. It will cover all 32 local authorities and involve local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Boards and the Scottish Prison Service. The joint review will cover the City of Edinburgh Council area during May 2015.

12. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has a planned programme of thematic inquiries into housing services which will be carried out largely in the first quarter of 2015-16, with publication of inquiry reports in the first and second quarters of the year. The thematic inquiries will cover a range of housing services including: Gypsy/Travellers; factoring services; gas safety; complaints handling; customer service standards; repairs; rent consultation; equalities; and openness and accessibility. Some of the thematic inquiries will not involve any on-site work at all and no local authority will be selected for on-site work in more than one thematic. The SHR will contact individual landlords with details about their potential inclusion.

13. During the first and second quarters of the year, the SHR will review the Charter data submitted by social landlords in May 2015 and identify topics for a further programme of thematic inquiries to be taken forward in the second and third quarters of the year.

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 Scotland will carry out a programme of performance audits during 2015/16 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.

March 2015

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Best Value follow-up work focused on the council's delivery of initiatives to address its financial challenges, and the development of its workforce strategy.	4th quarter 2015
	There are currently three local government related performance audits in Audit Scotland's proposed programme: roads maintenance follow-up; social care; and health and social care integration. Details for these audits are still to be developed together with which councils will be involved.	Publication in second half of 2015
Care Inspectorate and HMICS	HMICS and the Care Inspectorate will undertake a review of the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland.	Fieldwork 1st quarter 2015/16
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out a validated self-evaluation (VSE) of educational psychology services across all councils over a two-year period beginning in 2015/16. Education Scotland will notify councils of its VSE plans each academic term.	Dates to be determined
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	HMICS will be inspecting local policing across Scotland over the next three years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. As part of this national programme, HMIC will be inspecting local policing in Edinburgh between April and June 2015.	April to June 2015
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	HMFSI will be inspecting local fire and rescue services across Scotland over the next five years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and councils. As part of its programme, HMFSI will inspect four local fire and rescue services during 2015/16. Edinburgh is not included in the programme this year.	Dates to be determined
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	SHR will carry out a number of thematic inquires in 2015/16. If City of Edinburgh Council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council and the appropriate LAN lead.	Councils to be determined