

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar 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 comhairle. 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 comhairle. 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 the 2014-17 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) the LAN assessed all local priorities and public service reform areas as “no scrutiny required” reflecting progress and action taken by the comhairle. The structure and arrangements for health and social care integration had still to be finalised and this area was monitored by the LAN. The LAN also assessed all service performance areas and all corporate assessment framework areas as “no scrutiny required”.
4. An Audit Scotland *Best Value* report, published in May 2014, found there was now a positive momentum for improvement within the comhairle. The report concluded that the comhairle had consolidated earlier progress in developing performance management, reporting and self-evaluation; it had improved in key areas such as asset and workforce management; and it was now better at capturing the views of communities to influence decisions and service design. The Accounts Commission welcomed the progress which the comhairle has made.
5. The LAN has identified that no additional scrutiny activity is required beyond statutory or ongoing work in the areas of: leadership and governance; performance management and improvement; education; and housing and homeless services.
6. In April 2014, the comhairle agreed its overall budget strategy for the period 2015-18. In managing the use of its resources, the comhairle identified the need to make savings of £3.6 million in 2015/16, with £1.5 million of this being met from uncommitted general

fund balances. Savings of £1 million are also achievable due to reducing costs on servicing debt. The net amount of £1.1 million represents a saving of 1% which the comhairle considers to be achievable for department without the need for further budget choices. Beyond 2015/16, uncertainties associated with forthcoming elections mean that projecting grant settlements for the following three years is more challenging. The comhairle has identified the possible requirement to reduce its budget by £11.4 million over the next three years. The LAN has concluded that no additional scrutiny is required in regards to how the comhairle manages and uses its resources.

7. In social care services, there are currently 50 regulated care services all of which are performing well. A shared service to support vulnerable young people aged 16-25 years is under development and this innovative approach is helping to promote successful transitions from children's to adult services.
8. In October 2014, the Chief Officers Group considered the Care Inspectorate's Report dated 28 April 2014 in relation to the effectiveness of child and adult protection arrangements in the Western Isles. They subsequently appointed an independent chairperson for the child protection committee. Both the adult and child protection committees now benefit from more robust leadership provided by independent chairs. Accountability of the chairs to the Chief Officers Group is being strengthened and the Chief Officers Group has agreed to conduct a self-evaluation exercise. Benchmarking has taken place with comparator authorities in relation to independent oversight of child protection case conferences and an appropriate degree of objectivity to auditing of child protection cases.
9. Concerned and committed elected members take their responsibilities seriously and are actively engaged in fulfilling their scrutiny role. Corporate parenting responsibilities are being fulfilled increasingly well. However, collaborative leadership across services is not yet sufficiently well developed. This impedes the efforts of strategic leaders to build capacity for improvement and drive forward plans to successfully improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities through better integrated services. Joint inspections of both services for children and services for older people will take place during 2015/16.

Planned scrutiny activity

10. As shown in Appendix 1, the comhairle will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2015/16. 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.
11. 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	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. Publication of these reports is scheduled for between October 2015 and February 2016.	2015/16 (to be confirmed)
Care Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)	The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will be undertaking a joint thematic review of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland during 2015. 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.	June 2015
Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), Education Scotland and HMICS	The Care Inspectorate will lead joint inspection of services for children and young people, and will also involve participation by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and HMICS.	May – June 2015
Care Inspectorate and HIS	The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will be carrying out joint inspections of services for adults during 2015/16. Inspections will initially focus on services for older people then, at the latter part of the year, these will encompass other adults' services. This is part of a wider national planned programme of scrutiny work being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.	May – June 2015
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out 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.	Date over next two years 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. Two local Policing Divisions are programmed to be inspected in addition to Edinburgh Division in 2015/16. The Divisions will be identified approximately three months prior to inspection, the first being no earlier than October.	Date over next three years to be determined
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. It has yet to confirm all the local areas in its 2015/16 programme. For Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, HMFSI has confirmed that it will carry out a local fire inspection during July 2015.	July 2015
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	To be confirmed