

The Moray Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2015/16



March 2015

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Moray 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. The Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) covering the period 2014-17 identified one scrutiny activity to be carried out during the financial year to March 2015. This was Audit Scotland Best Value follow-up activity. Further to discussion by Audit Scotland with the council, this will now be undertaken during 2015-16. The focus of the activity is detailed in the next section on planned scrutiny activity.
4. In August 2014, the report was published of the pilot joint inspection of services for older people undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Of the ten areas for evaluation, one was evaluated as very good, five as good and four as adequate. The report contained four recommendations for improvement. The Moray partnership produced an action plan to address these and their implementation is being monitored via the Care Inspectorate's link inspector arrangements.
5. The Moray Local Area Network (LAN) has shared information and intelligence and has met in order to undertake a scrutiny risk assessment for 2015-16. It has been assisted in this by the provision of information by the council. LAN representatives also met with the council's corporate management team in December 2014 for a discussion on the council's improvement agenda and on some significant developments surrounding its sustainable education review.

6. As a result of the LAN's s considerations, the following scrutiny risk assessments have been made:
- **Leadership and governance.** The re-scheduled Best Value follow-up activity will include consideration of leadership and governance. In addition, a significant development facing the council during the last year was the failure to secure support for the sustainable education review, commissioned by the Area Based Review Working Party, and the introduction of a five year moratorium on school closures. Consequences of this included the resignation of the council leader and the effective ending of the administration resulting in a minority independent administration. It also brought to an end the Area Based Review which in the previous few years had provided a cross party forum where the longer term strategic priorities for the council and its community planning partners were discussed. A previous strategic forum, the Service Development Group has been re-established. The planned scrutiny will allow the consequences of these developments and how they are being managed by the council to be assessed. Given the above, leadership and governance is an area where scrutiny is required in 2015/16.
 - **Use of resources.** Previous Shared Risk Assessments have not identified significant concerns or the need for additional scrutiny in relation to the council's use of its resources, including its financial management. This largely remains the view of the LAN which noted that the audit opinion of the 2013-14 accounts was unqualified. However, the LAN also noted that in common with other councils, The Moray Council will face a significant challenge in generating £11 million in savings in order to balance the 2016-17 and 2017-18 budgets. There is also some uncertainty as to whether there will be any impact in terms of finance and best value as a consequence of the moratorium on rural school closures and the ending of the Area Based Review approach. Whilst no additional scrutiny is required in this area, the LAN will keep the council's use of resources subject to on-going oversight and monitoring.
 - **Performance management and improvement.** The 2012-13 targeted Audit Scotland Best Value activity identified the need for some improvement in relation to the council's approach to performance management. It found that the lengthy review of community planning arrangements had resulted in some performance reports no longer being considered by the CPP. The report of the BV activity stated that the council and the Community Planning Partnership needed to improve reporting against outcomes so the partnership can better demonstrate its impact in delivering all its local outcomes. The CPP audit published in July 2014 said that generally the CPP's revised proposals for performance management looked "sound". However, it recommended that the council needed to implement a robust performance management framework, with regular updates on progress against the ten-year plan. The re-scheduling of the Best Value follow-up activity into 2015-16 means that scrutiny in this area is required.

- **Education and children's services.** Moray Council has improved its performance across almost all measures over the past five years. The council has continued to take positive steps to accredit young people's achievements beyond national examinations. It has also continued to make positive progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence and the multi-agency GIRFEC strategy group has been re-established and has an action plan to take forward agreed priorities. Some risk areas have been identified, for example, difficulties in recruiting teaching, supply and specialist staff and the impact of the removal of the principal teacher post from primary schools. Also, and as noted earlier in this Local Scrutiny Plan, the current absence of a clear school estate plan could have an impact on school rolls and children's learning experience over time. The council has agreed as part of its improvement agenda for young people to progress issues concerning town centre school locations. Overall, the regular and on-going engagement with the council by Education Scotland's Area Lead Officer is sufficient to mitigate any risks. As such no additional scrutiny required beyond statutory/on-going work
- **Social work and social care.** The findings of the pilot joint inspection of services for older people were positive in the main. Some good outcomes were being achieved for older people. It found that the building blocks were in place to achieve better integration between social care and health. The Partnership is adopting the body corporate model, has appointed a Chief Accountable Officer and is working on its strategic plan for health and social care integration. For children outcome data is largely positive. For example, a higher proportion of young people who have been looked after are in employment, education or training than the national average. Gradings from the inspections of registered children's service are also consistently good. Where performance issues have been identified, such as hospital discharge arrangements of older people lacking capacity, these can be addressed via the on-going engagement and monitoring of the Care Inspectorate's Link Inspector. Two areas of scrutiny involving the social work service are scheduled for 2015-16, but these are part of national scrutiny activities commissioned by Scottish Ministers, rather than local scrutiny risks identified by the LAN. The two activities which are detailed at Paragraphs 9 & 10 are a joint thematic review of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and activity to validate the Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships' self-assessment of their performance.
- **Housing and homelessness.** Most data about the performance of Moray's housing and homelessness services is either positive and above the national average or where it is below the mean it is not significantly so. The majority of Moray's satisfaction rates are above the national average. The council's housing service was reviewed as part of the Scottish Housing Regulator's 2013-14 examination of Housing Options. The council has provided an action to identify areas of improvement identified from the review and the SHR is monitoring the council's progress in implementing the action plan. It will do likewise where risks have been identified in the council's performance, for example in the completion of gas safety

checks within the required timescales. As such no additional scrutiny is required beyond statutory/on-going work.

Planned scrutiny activity

7. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a mixture 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. Audit Scotland will undertake targeted Best Value follow-up activity which has been re-scheduled from 2014/15. This will include a focus on:
 - leadership and culture
 - strategic planning arrangements
 - customer focus
 - the leadership on equalities
 - performance management and reporting.
8. Audit Scotland will continue to carry out a programme of housing benefit risk assessments across councils in 2015/16. For Moray Council this will be carried out in July 2015.
9. Moray is one of eight areas where an audit of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has been carried out. Audit Scotland will carry out follow-up work across all eight areas during 2015/16 to assess what progress the CPP has made in addressing outstanding improvement areas. This work will be carried out as part of the annual external audit process.
10. 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 process 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 authority areas and will involve the local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Boards and the Scottish Prison Service. The joint review will cover the Moray council area during June 2015.
11. 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.

12. 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. 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 on-going 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 Activity	Q1 – Q2 2015
	Follow-up work to assess what progress the CPP has made in addressing outstanding improvement areas.	September 2015 as part of the annual external audit process.
	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.	TBC
	Housing benefit risk assessment	July 2015
Care Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.	The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will undertake a review of the Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) across Scotland.	First quarter 2015/16
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 2014/15. Education Scotland will notify councils of its VSE plans each academic term.	w/b 8 th June 2015
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.	TBC
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate	HMFSI will be inspecting local fire and rescue services across Scotland over the next five years. These	TBC

(HMFSI)	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. Moray Council area is not included in the programme this year.	
Scottish Housing Regulator	The SHR will carry out a number of thematic inquiries in 2015/16. If a council is to be involved in a thematic inquiry the SHR will confirm this with the council.	TBC