

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar during 2016/17. 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 2016/17, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The 2015/16 Local Scrutiny Plan (LSP) identified one specific area in which scrutiny was required.
4. The Care Inspectorate led a joint inspection of services for children and young people in 2015. This inspection also involved participation by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and HMICS. The inspection report, published in January 2016, identified a strong staff commitment and sound knowledge and understanding of children and young people and that this was leading to a positive impact for the majority of children, young people and families. A lack of capacity within the health visiting service limited the opportunity to identify those children and families who might most benefit from early and effective intervention. Partners have a stated commitment to early and effective intervention but were not yet able to demonstrate that their approach was successfully closing outcome gaps and reducing inequalities. Four of the nine quality indicators graded were evaluated as “good” with a further three evaluated as “adequate”. Two indicators, ‘planning and improving services’ and ‘leadership of improvement and change,’ were evaluated as “weak”. Importantly, inspectors were confident about the robustness of child protection processes and the strengthening of challenge through the appointment of an independent chair for the child protection committee. However, not all children and young people were benefiting from the same positive impact. Services had not yet taken sufficient action to make sure that the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers were as good as for other children.

5. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland also carried out a joint inspection of services for adults during 2015/16. This inspection focused initially on services for older people then, at the latter part of the year, encompassed other adults' services. This was part of a wider national planned programme of scrutiny work being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The report for this joint inspection has not yet been published. The Community Planning Partnership through its Joint Commissioning Strategy (JCS), and as part of the Single Outcome Agreement, has a reasonably strong and clear vision for older people. However, whilst these provided a positive and useful overarching vision and framework for older people, they lacked a detailed implementation plan. This needs to be formulated as a priority in order to translate the JCS into a Joint Commissioning Plan and also as part of the completion of a strategic plan for health and social care integration. Current recruitment issues and the projected demographics, recruitment and retention have been identified as key challenges for the social work service in Eilean Siar.
6. 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. The Care Inspectorate will ask Eilean Siar Community Planning Partnership to publish a joint action plan detailing how it intends to make any improvements identified as a result of the two joint inspections. The Care Inspectorate and other organisations which took part in these inspections will continue to offer support for improvement through their linking arrangements.

Planned scrutiny activity

7. The 2016/17 shared risk assessment concluded that most areas of provision, including leadership and governance, resource planning and management and education, did not require any additional scrutiny beyond statutory and ongoing work. No areas were identified as requiring a scrutiny response, however, ongoing oversight and monitoring will be required in the area of social work services.
8. Prior to the Scottish Budget announcement in December 2015, the Comhairle estimated that savings of between £4.1 million and £5.9 million would be required in 2016/17 and between £2.7 million and £4.7 million in 2017/18. The Scottish Budget announcement included a one-year settlement for Local Government in which revenue funding for local authorities was reduced by 3.4 per cent. As a consequence, in order for the Comhairle to set its budget for 2016/17, savings of £8.5 million are required. (This excludes demand-led cost pressures in health and social care which could add between £0.7 million and £1.2 million). The Comhairle has consulted on budget choices for a two-year period and has agreed which options will be implemented, including which options will be accelerated into 2016/17.

9. As shown in [Appendix 1](#), the council will be subject to a range of nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17 and further detail on this activity is noted below. For some of the scrutiny activity in 2016/17, scrutiny bodies have still to determine their work programmes, which specific council areas they will cover and/or when this scrutiny activity will be undertaken. 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 plans to carry out a 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.
11. 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.
12. The new approach will be rolled out from October 2016 but will continue to evolve. It will include annual assessments 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.
13. 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 preparation for the new approach progresses, Best Value audit work will continue, but appropriate elements of the new approach, such as reporting mechanisms, will also be tested in some councils.
14. 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.

15. 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. For Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, this will take place in the period March – June 2016.
16. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work completed during 2015/16. It will carry out further thematic inquiries during 2016/17. SHR will also review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2016/17. 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.
17. To assess the risk to social landlord services SHR has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. SHR has assessed the performance of this council and concluded that no additional scrutiny is required beyond statutory work.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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. Individual audit and inspection agencies will also 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 2016

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan


Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Targeted follow-up of the national performance audit report <i>Scotland's Public Sector Workforce</i> published in November 2013.	June 2016
Audit Scotland	Performance audits planned in following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early learning and childcare • Self-directed support follow-up • Equal pay 	Dates to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate	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.	March 2016
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out a validated self-evaluation (VSE) of educational psychology services.	March – June 2016
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)	HMICS will be inspecting local policing across Scotland over the next two years. This will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils.	Date over next two 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.	Date over next five years to be determined.
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work completed during 2015-16. It will carry out further thematic inquiries during 2016-17. SHR will review the Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during quarter 2. 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.	Throughout 2016/17.

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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats,
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