

The Moray Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2018/19



April 2018

Moray Council

Local Scrutiny Plan – April 2018 to March 2019

Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out any scrutiny risks identified by the local area network (LAN), proposed scrutiny responses and expected scrutiny activity for Moray Council during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by the 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 risks in the council and the integration joint board (IJB).
3. Expected scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland informs the National Scrutiny Plan for 2018/19, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

4. The LAN identified one risk area where specific scrutiny is required during 2018/19:

Children & young people's services

5. The Care Inspectorate, in conjunction with Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, led on a joint inspection of services for children and young people in Moray in autumn 2016. This inspection established that services for children and young people in Moray required significant improvement. Community planning partners accepted the inspection findings and together took steps to make improvements in services for vulnerable children and young people. The Care Inspectorate led on an initial progress review in September 2017. This review established that chief officers had rightly prioritised strengthening their planning arrangements and developing quality assurance systems. Chief officers now need to prioritise improvements in operational practice to ensure that children, young people and their families experience more effective support and intervention. The Care Inspectorate, in conjunction with scrutiny partners, will lead on a further progress review in September 2018.
 6. In addition, the following scrutiny comments are noted:
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Financial management/sustainability

7. Moray Council approved a budget for 2018/19 that includes £6.5 million identified savings and £4.5 million of reserves to achieve financial balance. Current projections indicate significant funding gaps of £13.3 million for 2019/20 and £5.6 million for 2020/21.
8. The council has a relatively low level of reserves available to it and the [Local government in Scotland Financial overview 2016/17](#) reported that it would run out of General Fund reserves within two to three years. The council has acknowledged that the current level of service provision is not financially sustainable and has agreed to use 2018/19 as a transition year and work towards achieving a sustainable financial plan for 2019/20 onwards. To support the achievement of financial balance throughout this period, the council must ensure that a medium-long term financial plan is agreed and that a transformational service plan is put in place.
9. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor the council's approach to financial planning and service redesign and will report on this as part of its Best Value work in the 2017/18 annual audit report.

Education and children's services

10. Significant concerns exist regarding strategic leadership and governance in Education and Children's Services. Outcomes for children and young people are below the national average and the virtual comparator and in some measures are showing a decline. Scrutiny outcomes, including inspections, have overall shown a weak picture in recent years, particularly in the primary sector. This has been exacerbated by an acute shortage of teachers, an inability to recruit primary Head Teachers and a lack of long term stability in the central Quality Improvement Team. Education Scotland will undertake enhanced monitoring during 2018/19.
11. Moray Council is part of the Universal Scottish Attainment Challenge. Pupil Equity Funding plans are in place in Moray schools and are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate.

Scrutiny activity

12. Expected scrutiny activity for Moray Council between April 2018 and March 2019 is shown in the Appendix. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2018/19, 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.
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13. In addition to specific work shown in the Appendix, 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. The outcomes of this work will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.

Audit Scotland

14. 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 BVAR for Moray Council is not planned in the period covered by this scrutiny plan. The Best Value audit work planned this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial management, financial sustainability, vision and leadership, and will be reported in the 2017/18 annual audit report.
15. Audit Scotland also plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2018/19. These include City Deals, Health and social care Integration: progress update and Children and young people's mental health. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. In addition, Audit Scotland will publish the findings of a performance audit relating to Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs). Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website [here](#).

Care Inspectorate

16. The Care Inspectorate will lead a review of progress on the areas for improvement identified in the joint inspection report of services for children and young people (published in February 2017) in conjunction with colleagues from Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
 17. The Care Inspectorate is currently undertaking preparatory work for a thematic review of self-directed support which will be carried out during 2018/19. Throughout the year, the Care Inspectorate will conduct an inspection in up to six areas across the country, including Moray Council, with the aim of identifying factors which support effective implementation of the legislation and barriers which require to be overcome.
 18. The Care Inspectorate has recently completed a thematic review of Adult Support and Protection, carried out across six partnership areas, in collaboration with colleagues from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The Care Inspectorate intends to publish a report on this work by the end of the current financial year. During 2018/19, the Care Inspectorate will work with the Scottish Government and colleagues to encourage partnerships to use this learning to review their own practice and to take any action necessary to strengthen their response to concerns.
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19. The Care Inspectorate will work with Community Justice Scotland and other partners to support improvement in the implementation of the community justice strategy to identify any particular risks and to carry out targeted scrutiny where this is required.

Education Scotland

20. Education Scotland will undertake enhanced monitoring of the Education and Children's Services during 2018/19. No additional scrutiny is planned other than what is nationally directed or part of ongoing work programmes including general inspection and support activity.

Scottish Housing Regulator

21. No additional scrutiny is planned beyond statutory/ongoing work during 2018/19. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) may carry out thematic inquiries during 2018/19 or may carry out survey or on-site work to follow-up on published thematic reports. SHR will also review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2018/19. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry, any follow up work to a published thematic inquiry, or a data accuracy visit, the SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.

March 2018

Appendix: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland will monitor the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in financial management, financial sustainability, vision and leadership.	April to September 2018
Care Inspectorate	The Care Inspectorate will lead a review to report on progress in relation to the areas for improvement set out in the joint inspection of children's services report.	September 2018
	The Care Inspectorate is currently undertaking preparatory work for a thematic review of self-directed support which will be carried out during 2018/19. Throughout the year, the Care Inspectorate will conduct an inspection in up to six areas across the country, including Moray Council, with the aim of identifying factors which support effective implementation of the legislation and barriers which require to be overcome.	Quarter 3 or 4 of 2018/19
Education Scotland	Enhanced monitoring of Education and Children's Services during 2018/19.	Ongoing throughout year
	Review of Careers Information and Guidance Services provided by Skills Development Scotland.	September 2018


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A summary of local government strategic scrutiny activity

This report is available in PDF and RTF formats, along with a podcast summary at:
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