

Inverclyde Council

Local Scrutiny Plan

2017/18



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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Inverclyde Council during 2017/18. 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 2017/18, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. The 2016/17 shared risk assessment did not identify any risks which required specific scrutiny by the LAN. The conclusion of this year's shared risk assessment maintains this position, with the assessment that no risks have been identified that require specific scrutiny by the LAN in 2017/18.
4. This maintains the positive position reported last year. Scrutiny activity undertaken during 2016/17 was either at the request of the council or part of normal activity. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor developments through the 2017/18 annual audit process and Best Value audit work.
5. To assess the risk to social landlord services the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has reviewed and compared the 2015/16 performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. It found that Inverclyde performs poorly compared to other social landlords in relation to: repeat applications and assessments; some assessment decisions and lost contacts before discharge of duty.
6. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the homelessness service's weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's half yearly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.
7. In October 2016 SHR established that the council has let a small number of residential properties that it owns, under Scottish Secure Tenancies. As such it is a social landlord,

and the provisions of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) and Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) apply to the tenants and properties concerned. The council must put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure its tenants enjoy the standard and outcomes promoted in the SSHC.

8. SHR will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work into gas safety and repairs completed during 2016/17. It may carry out further thematic inquiries during 2017/18. SHR will also review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2017/18. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit, the SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.

Commentary on areas for information

9. **Integration Joint Board:** Inverclyde Integration Joint Board (IJB) was established on 1st April 2016 to deliver social care services on behalf of the council. The council has worked in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde through a health and social care partnership since 2010, which has enabled a seamless transition to the new arrangements.
10. A Strategic Plan 2016-19 - 'saving lives' was approved in March 2016 and sets out the intentions and priorities of the IJB over the three-year period. A service level agreement has also been agreed between Inverclyde Council and the IJB which formally sets out the support requirements, including internal audit, which have been identified.
11. Based on the most recent financial monitoring report (for the period to 31 December 2016) the IJB is projecting an underspend of £0.125 million against a revised expenditure budget of £127.495 million.
12. **Financial Sustainability:** The council is facing a funding gap of £22.5 million over the next three years. The council has approved the use of earmarked reserves to help address the funding gap for the 2017/18 financial year, however the use of reserves for this purpose is not sustainable in the longer term. Following the local government elections in May 2017, the new council will face difficult decisions on how to address the funding gap for future years. The Chief Financial Officer has a number of options for consideration on how the funding gap may be addressed.
13. **Shared Services:** In June 2016 Inverclyde Council approved the establishment of the East Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire councils' Shared Service Joint Committee. The committee became effective from 1 November 2016, and established a governance framework for the potential sharing of services. It will consider any business cases developed to pursue this objective in due course.

Planned scrutiny activity

14. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2017/18. For some of their scrutiny activity in

2017/18, 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.

15. 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.
16. 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 Inverclyde Council is scheduled for publication in June 2017.
17. Audit Scotland will also carry out a programme of performance audits during 2017/18 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.
18. The Care Inspectorate is planning to carry out a joint strategic inspection with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) of children's services within Inverclyde. The fieldwork activity is planned for May and June 2017.
19. The Care Inspectorate has been leading a project on the validated self-evaluation of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) across Scotland during 2016. Field work activity has concluded and all ADPs received individual summary feedback to support continuous improvement. A national report will be published in May 2017.
20. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will introduce a revised approach to the joint strategic inspections of services for adults for 2017/18 which will assess the extent to which the planning, organisation and coordination of services comply with the principles of integration and contribute to the national health and wellbeing outcomes. Inspections will include a focus on joint strategic commissioning.
21. In 2017/18, the Care Inspectorate will also lead on thematic activity in the areas of adult support and protection and self-directed support, working with a range of scrutiny partners. The Care Inspectorate will inform the LAN lead when these are agreed.
22. In relation to its homelessness services, SHR will engage with Inverclyde Council to monitor its progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to repeat applications and assessments; some assessment decisions and lost contacts before discharge of duty. The council will submit half yearly progress reports in relation to its proposed improvement actions and outcomes. SHR will meet with council officials as necessary.

23. It would be SHR's intention to continue to monitor the council to ensure appropriate arrangements are put in place to allow it to discharge its landlord duties to its tenants under the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
24. As with all social landlords, the council should submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Regulator in 2017 covering its performance in relation to both its homelessness and landlord services.
25. HMICS will continue to inspect local policing across Scotland during 2017/18 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.

May 2017

Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	A BVAR will be published for Inverclyde Council in 2017. Audit work started in late in 2016 and discussions with the council will continue prior to publication.	June 2017
	Audit Scotland has four planned performance audits covering local government in 2017/18 focusing on ALEOs, City Deals, Children's Mental Health and Health and Social Care Integration – Part 2.	Dates to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate	The Care Inspectorate is planning to carry out a joint strategic inspection with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) of children's services within Inverclyde. The fieldwork activity is planned for May and June 2017.	May - June 2017
Education Scotland	Contribution to the Joint Inspection of Children's Services in Inverclyde.	May 2017
	A joint review by Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland will cover Careers Information and Guidance Services.	February 2018
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS)	No specific inspections planned	
Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	No specific inspections planned	
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	In relation to its homelessness services, SHR will engage with Inverclyde Council to monitor its progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in relation to repeat applications and assessments; some assessment decisions and lost contacts before discharge of duty. The council will submit half yearly progress reports in relation to its proposed improvement actions and outcomes. SHR will meet with council officials as necessary.	Half Yearly
	SHR will monitor the council to ensure it complies with the provisions of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Quality Standards.	Ongoing

	<p>SHR will publish the findings of its thematic inquiry work into gas safety and repairs completed during 2016/17. It may carry out further thematic inquiries during 2017/18. SHR will also review the Scottish Social Housing Charter data submitted by landlords and carry out data accuracy visits during the second quarter of 2017/18. Where councils are to be involved in a thematic inquiry or a data accuracy visit, the SHR will confirm this directly with the council and the LAN lead.</p>	<p>Timing to be confirmed</p>
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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:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 

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Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN
T: 0131 625 1500 E: info@audit-scotland.gov.uk 
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk 