

East Renfrewshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

East Renfrewshire 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 East Renfrewshire Council during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are 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 risks in the council and the 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 2018/19 shared risk assessment process has not identified, from its assessment for East Renfrewshire Council, any additional risk areas where specific scrutiny is required, other than that which is nationally directed or part of ongoing work programmes by Scrutiny Bodies. However, the following areas were identified by the LAN as requiring oversight and monitoring.
5. **Financial sustainability:** The council continues to face significant financial challenges. A public consultation on savings proposals of around £28 million was undertaken in October 2017. The council's latest estimate is a funding gap of £28.581 million over the years 2018/19 to 2020/21. The council has approved an increase in council tax reducing the savings required to £23.7 million. Savings of £20.3 million have been approved by the council in March 2018 along with the use of some use of reserves over period 2018/19 to 2020/21. There is a risk that the council is unable to deliver these significant savings over the medium term.
6. External auditors will continue to monitor developments through the 2017/18 annual audit process and Best Value audit work.
7. In all other areas there has been no change to the level of required scrutiny from last year. The LAN are satisfied that the required scrutiny will be provided by ongoing oversight and monitoring as part of routine ongoing inspection work, or part of planned national activity.
8. **Housing and Homelessness:** To assess the risk to social landlord services, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has reviewed and compared the performance of all Scottish social landlords to identify the weakest performing landlords. In relation to the council's homelessness service, it identified risks in relation to percentage of applicants sleeping rough, and the percentage of 'Returned to' households that had been assessed as

unintentionally homeless. The council will continue to develop its actions from its Significant Performance Failure improvement plan.

- 9. Education and Children's Services:** The council has continued to build upon its strengths and has demonstrated further improvements across a wide range of outcomes. Officers have provided clear strategic direction in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence and other national priorities and this has resulted in planned and coherent approaches. There is strong strategic leadership in Education in East Renfrewshire Council. The council has appropriate governance in place to ensure that educational provision is well-organised and well-led. Scrutiny outcomes, including inspections, have been extremely positive in recent years. Outcomes for children and young people are above the national average and generally improving. There are significant strengths in the approach taken to quality improvement within education.
- 10.** East Renfrewshire Council is receiving universal support from the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools in East Renfrewshire have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place and are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate. East Renfrewshire Council is receiving a total PEF allocation across Primary, Secondary and Special Schools of £1,370,400. Twenty-one primary schools have allocations that range between £7,200 (Calderwood Lodge) - £123,600 (Carlibar). One primary school currently has no funding. Seven secondary schools have an allocation of between £40,800 (Mearns Castle High School) - £66,000 (Woodfarm High School). One special school has an allocation of £105,600. The local authority quickly produced their own guidance for schools providing a clear rationale for improvement and linking clearly to national operational guidance. There is an audit toolkit to help schools self-evaluate and establish current needs. Reporting procedures are made clear and in line with best practice. It was decided and agreed that a few schools with the greatest level of funding prepare a separate PEF plan to go alongside the school improvement plan. The guidance also includes a suitable range of evidence to help decision-making, for example EEF.
- 11.** Overall, no significant issues are raised in respect of East Renfrewshire Council's educational provision and therefore there will be no additional scrutiny in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme.
- 12. Social Care Services:** Overall there are no causes for concern in the level of service performance in adults and children's services. Within children's services, there are no red RAG ratings in the most up to date performance report dated. Appointments have been made for both adult and child protection leads within an overarching stable leadership group which prioritises continuous improvement. Strategic plans are clear and outline priorities for sustaining and improving performance.
- 13.** There has been a steady decrease in the number of children and young people on the child protection register and audit activity has been planned to provide assurance about the outcomes for children and young people just below the child protection threshold. A recent audit of IRDs (interagency/initial referral discussions) was positive and 100 per cent of the sample had attendance from police, health and social work. A recent re-structure is being reviewed and there appears to be a willingness to continually see how services can be delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible within budgetary

restrictions. One SCR has been undertaken and East Renfrewshire Council has maintained contact and dialogue with the Care Inspectorate throughout the process. The Care Inspectorate carried out an inspection of Health and Social Care Partnership's Home Care Service in February 2017 and it was evaluated as very good.

14. One issue was raised at the LAN in relation to the council's performance in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework for people aged 65 and over with intensive needs receiving care at home. This emerged from Audit Scotland's Best Value review in 2017. This point is addressed at paragraph 18 below.

Scrutiny activity

15. Any expected scrutiny activity between April 2018 and March 2019 is shown in Appendix 1. 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.
16. 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. The outcomes of this work will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.
17. Audit Scotland: Follow-up of Best Value assurance report: The Accounts Commission agreed the overall framework for a new approach to auditing Best Value in June 2016. A Best Value audit was carried out at East Renfrewshire Council during 2017 with the BVAR being published in November 2017. Progress against the recommendations of the BVAR will be followed up during 2018, with the findings being reported in the Report to Members on the 2017/18 Audit. This follow up will include further consideration of the council's performance on the indicator relating to people aged 65 and over with intensive needs receiving care at home
18. **Audit Scotland: Housing Benefits Performance Audit:** The Accounts Commission has responsibility for the audit of housing benefit services in Scotland and Audit Scotland carries out a programme of performance audit work every year. A risk assessment of the housing benefits functions across all councils is completed and used to identify those councils to be selected for review. It is currently planned to carry out a performance audit of the housing benefits service within East Renfrewshire Council as part of the 2017/18 audit. The outcome of this will be reported to officers in a separate audit report and a summary of the outcome and any significant findings will be included in our annual audit report.
19. The relative performance of all councils' housing benefits services is kept under review throughout the year. This may result in a need to reschedule a review or substitute one council for another, should it not prove possible to proceed with the original selection or in response to emerging or escalating risks.

- 20. Audit Scotland: National Performance Audits:** Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2018/19. These include City Deals, changing models of health and social care integration and children and young people's mental health services. In addition, Audit Scotland will publish the findings of a performance audit of Arms-Length External Organisations (ALEOs). Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland website.
- 21. Scottish Housing Regulator:** The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) may carry out thematic inquiries during 2018/19 or it may carry out survey or on-site work to follow up on published thematic reports. The 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.
- 22. Care Inspectorate: Joint Inspections of Services for Children and Young People:** From April 2018, Scottish ministers have asked the Care Inspectorate to lead another programme of joint inspections of services for children and young people, with scrutiny partners Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. They have asked partners to provide assurance about how community planning partners are protecting and meeting the needs of children and young people who have experienced, or are at risk of, abuse and neglect, and how they are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people who are subject to corporate parenting requirements. The Care Inspectorate intend to carry out five joint inspections in 2018/19. It was agreed with ministers that, for the duration of this programme of inspections, the Care Inspectorate will incorporate an area of specific enquiry each year, with the aim of identifying key lessons and best practice which all partnerships could use to support their own continuous improvement. An overview report will be published at the end of each year. The Care Inspectorate will inform the council if East Renfrewshire Council is selected as one of the five joint inspections in 2018/19.
- 23. Care Inspectorate: Community Justice:** The Care Inspectorate are planning to 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.
- 24. Care Inspectorate: Adult Support and Protection:** The Inspectorate has also completed a thematic review of adult support and protection, across six partnership areas in collaboration with HMICS and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. A report is scheduled for publication by the end of March 2018. During 2018/19, the Care Inspectorate will encourage partnerships to use this learning to review their own practice and to take any action necessary to strengthen their response to concerns.
- 25. Education Scotland:** Education Scotland will review the quality of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) provided by Skills Development Scotland. This review is scheduled at the council for November 2018.

March 2018

Appendix 1: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	Follow-up audit of the East Renfrewshire Council BVAR November 2017	May to June 2018
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	Housing Benefits Performance Audit	May to June 2018
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on City Deals, changing models of health and social care integration, and children and young people's mental health services. The findings of a performance audit of Arms-Length External Organisations (ALEOs) will be published in Spring 2018.	Dates to be determined
Care Inspectorate	Joint inspections (with scrutiny partners Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland) of services for children and young people.	CI to inform the council if selected for inspection in 2018/19
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will review the quality of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) provided by Skills Development Scotland.	November 2018
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor the council's progress in addressing the housing and homelessness service weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary. The SHR may carry out thematic inquiries during 2018/19 or it may carry out survey or on-site work to follow up on published thematic reports. The 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.	Quarter 2 2018/19

East Renfrewshire Council

Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19

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 

If you require this publication in an alternative
format and/or language, please contact us to
discuss your needs: 0131 625 1500
or info@audit-scotland.gov.uk 

For the latest news, reports
and updates, follow us on:



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 