

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

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 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar 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 Comhairle. The shared risk assessment process draws on a range of evidence with the aim of determining any scrutiny risks in the Comhairle 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

Financial management/planning

4. Local authorities continue to face a challenging financial environment. In setting its 2017/18 budget the Comhairle identified agreed savings of £3 million together with a reduction in health and social care funding of £0.5 million and a residual gap of £3 million which, is to be funded from reserves.
5. The agreed 2018/19 budget had a funding gap of £5.5 million which was funded through £1.2 million of Loan Charge savings, £0.7 million of departmental efficiencies and £2 million of redesign savings, with the remaining £1.6 million being met from reserves.
6. This will leave a projected £2.4 million in reserves to support the forward budget strategy.
7. The £2 million of redesign savings are part of a four year programme of £9.8 million of savings that form a key part of the Comhairle's long term financial plan.
8. Though appropriate in the short term, using reserves in this way isn't sustainable. The Comhairle will require to implement the agreed process of service redesign to address its financial position in the short term and plan for the medium and long term.

Workforce planning

9. The Comhairle has problems with recruitment, particularly in social work posts, which is affecting performance in this service area. The number of people of working age living in the Western Isles over the next 20 years is expected to fall significantly, at a rate which is higher than the rest of Scotland.
10. The latest Local Government Benchmarking Framework data highlights that the current gender pay gap for staff at the Comhairle is 13.7 per cent. This is the highest in Scotland.
11. A Service Transformation Strategic Plan was approved by the Comhairle on 3 October 2017 to facilitate greater cross Departmental and service planning, working and delivery. This includes an Apprenticeship Strategy.
12. Audit Scotland will continue to monitor the Comhairle's approach to financial management, financial planning and workforce planning and will report on these in its Annual Audit Report for 2017/18, as part of the annual work on Best Value.

Education

13. There is strong strategic leadership in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The Comhairle has appropriate governance in place to ensure that educational provision is well organised and well led. Scrutiny outcomes, including inspections, have been positive in recent years. Outcomes for young people are improving and are more positive than outcomes for young people with similar needs and backgrounds from across the country. Approaches being taken to ensure quality improvement within education are strong and have the capacity to lead to further improvements in provision.
14. There will be no additional scrutiny in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme.
15. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is receiving universal support from the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place and are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate.

Social Work

16. Since the strategic scrutiny was completed for adults' services in March 2016 the Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to address the 12 recommendations. The Care Inspectorate's progress review was delayed in recognition of the time needed to make some of the more significant changes to service delivery. The progress review is now likely to take place week beginning 30 April. As with the children's progress review, this will focus on key areas rather than all recommendations.
17. A progress of services for children and young people in the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership area was carried out in May 2017. This followed the inspection carried

out during 2015, where concerns were identified. The progress review looked at five areas for improvement where the Care Inspectorate found there had been significant progress in four areas and the identified shortage of health visitors had been fully addressed. As well as concluding that there had been considerable progress in all areas, the Care Inspectorate also found corporate parenting had been thoroughly embraced and the voices of care experienced children and young people were increasingly influencing policy and practice. There was evidence of improved collaborative working at all levels across partnership.

Housing

18. The Scottish Housing Regulator has assessed that no additional scrutiny is required in the Comhairle during 2018/19.

Scrutiny activity

19. 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.
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. The outcomes of this work will help to inform future assessment of scrutiny risk.

March 2018

Appendix: Scrutiny activity

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	Reviews of financial sustainability and workforce planning, as detailed in 2017/18 Annual Audit Plan, to be reported within 2017/18 Annual Audit Report	Q1/Q2 2018/19
Audit Scotland	<p>Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on City Deals, Health and social care integration, and Children and young people's mental health services.</p> <p>The findings of a performance audit of Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) will be published in Spring 2018.</p>	Dates to be confirmed
Care Inspectorate	<p>From April 2017, the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland have a joint duty under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 to assess and report on the effectiveness of integration authorities' strategic plans. During 2018/19 the Care Inspectorate intends to visit three partnerships to report on their progress.</p> <p>From April 2018, Scottish ministers have asked the Care Inspectorate to lead another programme of joint inspections of service 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 us to provide assurance about how community planning partners are protecting and meet 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 intends to carry out five joint inspections in 2018/19.</p>	<p>Dates and locations to be determined</p> <p>Dates and locations to be determined</p>
Education Scotland	Community Learning and Development strategic level inspection.	April – June 2018

<p>Scottish Housing Regulator</p>	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator 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.</p>	<p>2018/19</p>
-----------------------------------	---	----------------

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

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 