

# Scottish Borders Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan 2018/19



April 2018

# Scottish Borders 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 Scottish Borders Council ("the council") during the financial year 2018/19.
2. The scrutiny risks and responses are based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a 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 Scottish Borders Integration Joint Board (IJB).
3. Expected scrutiny activity across all councils in Scotland informs the National Scrutiny Plan for 2018/19, which will be available in April 2018 on the Audit Scotland website, [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk).

### Scrutiny risks

4. **Education:** There is strong strategic leadership in Education and Children's Services and the council has appropriate governance in place to ensure that educational provision is well organised and led. Scrutiny outcomes, including inspections, have been positive overall in recent years but with a few individual establishments subject to continuing engagement. Outcomes for children and young people are often above the national average and generally improving, although there is evidence of decline in a few measures. Raising attainment in numeracy at all stages and raising attainment for those living in areas of most deprivation remain key priorities for the council. There are increasing strengths in the approach taken to quality improvement within education.
5. Overall there are no particular concerns with the council's educational provision and therefore there will be no additional scrutiny in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme.
6. The council has three schools in receipt of funding from the Schools Programme of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. All schools in Scottish Borders Council have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place and these are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate.
7. **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. With respect to the council's

homelessness service, the SHR identified risks relating to the satisfaction with and the number of refusals of temporary accommodation. It also identified risks regarding the council ensuring that the requirements and standards described in the Scottish Social Housing Charter are met for its gypsy/travellers' site.

8. The SHR will monitor the council's progress in addressing the service weaknesses identified in this plan. It will review the council's quarterly performance management reports and meet council officials as necessary.
9. 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.
10. **Social care:** Overall, inspection information indicates that quality of registered services for adults, children and young people is variable. No specific additional scrutiny work is required beyond the ongoing inspection and support activity that the Care Inspectorate provides to the council.
11. A joint inspection of health and social work services for older people's services was carried out by the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland from October 2016 until February 2017. The joint inspection identified a number of important weaknesses and made 13 recommendations for improvement. Delivery of key processes, strategic planning and plans to improve services, leadership and direction were all evaluated as weak. The IJB has developed an improvement plan to address the recommendations. The Care Inspectorate will monitor improvement and review progress.

## Best Value

12. The Accounts Commission agreed the overall framework for a new approach to auditing Best Value in June 2016. Best Value will be assessed over our 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 current proposed BVAR programme includes publication of a report for Scottish Borders Council in 2019, the scope and timing of the work to be carried out as part of our 2018/19 audit. The BVAR programme could change if the risk profiles of councils change. If this is the case we will update the council. In the meantime, Best Value audit work planned in this year will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in performance and outcomes. This will be reported in Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Report in September 2018.

## Scrutiny activity

13. 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.
14. 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 1: Scrutiny activity**

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
<p>Audit Scotland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best Value audit work will focus on the council's arrangements for demonstrating Best Value in performance and outcomes. This will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.</li> <li><b>Best Value Assurance Report is scheduled to be published in 2019.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing as part of 2017/18 annual audit and will be reported in September 2018</b></p> <p><b>Dates to be discussed with the council</b></p>
	<p>Audit Scotland is due to publish the following performance audit reports in 2018/19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arm's length and external organisations (ALEOs) - Spring 2018.</li> <li>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service: an update – Spring 2018.</li> <li>Managing the implementation of the Scotland Acts – Spring 2018.</li> <li>Children's mental health services - Autumn 2018.</li> <li>Integration of health and social care - Autumn 2018.</li> <li>City deals - Winter 2018/19.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dates and locations of 2018/19 fieldwork to be determined</b></p>
<p>Care Inspectorate</p>	<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 they intend to visit three partnerships to report on their progress.</p>	<p><b>Dates and locations to be determined</b></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.</p>	<p><b>Dates and locations to be determined</b></p>


	<p>They have asked the Care Inspectorate 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. The Scottish ministers have also asked for assurances about 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.</p> <p>The Care Inspectorate are currently undertaking preparatory work for a thematic review of self-directed support which will be carried out during 2018/19. Throughout the year, they will conduct an inspection in up to six areas across the country.</p>	<p><b>Dates and locations to be determined</b></p>
<p>Scottish Housing Regulator</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p><b>Dates and locations to be determined</b></p>
<p>Education Scotland</p>	<p>No specific additional scrutiny work is required beyond the ongoing inspection and support activity that Education Scotland provides to the council.</p>	<p><b>N/A</b></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](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

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