

Angus Council Local Scrutiny Plan 2015/16



March 2015

Angus Council

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Introduction

1. This local scrutiny plan sets out the planned scrutiny activity in Angus Council during 2015/16. 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 2015/16, which is available on the Audit Scotland website.

Scrutiny risks

3. Through the shared risk assessment process, the LAN concluded that Best Value work should be undertaken in 2015/16. This was initially proposed in last year's Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP), to assess the management restructuring and its impact on the delivery of council priorities and service performance. The outcome of the previous Best Value audit was reported in May 2010 when it was felt that the council had good quality services and a commitment to improvement but it was not able to demonstrate improvement or that it was clear where improvement was needed. The report also noted that the council lacked the capacity to deliver its improvement plans. While there has been progress since the management restructuring, the council continues to face significant challenges in transforming services to produce the necessary savings needed to balance budgets in the longer term. The LAN therefore considered it appropriate to retain Best Value activity in the scrutiny plan.
4. The previous AIP issued in May 2014 highlighted that the local audit team would undertake a review of progress being made against transformation plans and workforce reduction activities being considered by the council to deliver the savings required in the longer term. These activities are included within the local audit plan for the audit of the 2014/15 financial year.

5. The Annual Report on the 2013/14 Audit highlighted that Transforming Angus (TA) is the council's major change programme which, amongst its wider corporate objectives, aims to provide more flexible working, better business processes and modern channels of communication with customers. The council experienced recruitment difficulties in filling some senior manager posts and in particular, a manager to lead on TA. In order to increase capacity and provide more opportunity for support and challenge in the change programme, the council appointed Ernst & Young as a strategic partner. These developments should enable the pace of the TA programme to be increased.
6. The use of IT in supporting service improvement was reviewed as part of the local audit. As a result, a comprehensive action plan was agreed with management and progress will be assessed as part of the current year's local audit. This review highlighted that the council had adopted a programme management framework to support TA which should give a higher profile and focus to IT issues which need to be resolved if programme priorities are to be delivered.
7. The LAN continues to monitor the council's financial position and the challenges to service delivery in the future from increased demand and reducing resources. The past two years has involved significant organisational restructure which has resulted in staff and service changes, however future plans will be more demanding. The 2015/16 revenue budget is approximately £240m while budget proposals for the next three years require an approximate ten per cent reduction in staffing levels to fill the £23m funding gap. Work is underway to develop workforce plans by Spring 2015 and these will be reviewed as part of the local audit.
8. The Scottish Housing Regulator engaged with the council during 2014/15. It issued a performance inquiry to seek assurance in relation to empty property management, lets to homeless people, tenancy sustainment and its compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standards. The review of the council's performance provided assurance that it has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and has appropriate action plans in place to develop its housing services.
9. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland carried out a joint inspection of Services to Older People in 2014. The inspection considered the quality of partnership working and the move towards health and social care integration. The inspection found that the quality of work in assessing and providing services to Angus is good and that the management of change and move towards health and care integration was slower than anticipated at the time of the inspection. The findings of the inspection were published in March 2015.

Planned scrutiny activity

10. As shown in Appendix 1, the council will be subject to a range of risk-based and nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2015/16. For some of their scrutiny activity in 2015/16, 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.
11. 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. Audit Scotland will carry out a programme of [performance audits](#) during 2015/16 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.

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Appendix 1: Scrutiny plan

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland	Best Value activity to assess the impact of the council's leadership and change programme and provide independent assurance to the Accounts Commission on progress being made in delivering improvement since the council's last best value audit in 2010.	Winter 2015/16
	Audit Scotland has three planned performance audits covering local government during 2015/16. It will be working jointly with the Care Inspectorate looking at social care and jointly with both the Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) on a Health and Social care integration position statement. It will also carry out a follow-up audit on roads maintenance. Any engagement with councils is still to be determined. Publication of these reports is scheduled for between October 2015 and February 2016.	To be confirmed during 2015/16
Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland	The Care Inspectorate and HMICS will be undertaking a joint thematic review of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in Scotland during 2015. The purpose of the review will be to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the MAPPA in Scotland, in terms of keeping people safe and reducing the potential risk of serious harm by registered sex offenders in our communities. It will cover all 32 local authorities and involve local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Boards and the Scottish Prison Service. The joint review will cover the Angus Council area during June 2015	June 2015
Education Scotland	Education Scotland will be working in partnership with councils to carry out Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) of educational psychology services across all councils over a two-year period beginning in 2015/16. Education Scotland will notify councils of its VSE plans each academic term.	Date to be determined
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)	HMICS will be inspecting local policing across Scotland over the next three years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between Police Scotland and councils. Two local Policing Divisions are programmed to be inspected in addition to Edinburgh Division in 2015/16. The Divisions will be identified approximately three months prior to inspection, the first being no earlier than October.	Date over the next three years to be determined.

Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)	HMFSI will be inspecting local fire and rescue services across Scotland over the next five years. These inspections will examine, amongst other things, local scrutiny and engagement between the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and councils. As part of its programme, HMFSI will inspect four local fire and rescue services during 2015/16. Angus is not included in the programme this year.	Date over the next five years to be determined
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has a planned programme of thematic inquiries into housing services which will be carried out largely in the first quarter of 2015-16, with publication of inquiry reports in the first and second quarters of the year. The thematic inquiries will cover a range of housing services including: Gypsy/Travellers; factoring services; gas safety; complaints handling; customer service standards; repairs; rent consultation; equalities; and openness and accessibility. Some of the thematic inquiries will not involve any on-site work at all and no local authority will be selected for on-site work in more than one thematic. The SHR will contact individual landlords with details about their potential inclusion.</p> <p>During the first and second quarters of the year, the SHR will review the Charter data submitted by social landlords in May 2015 and identify topics for a further programme of thematic inquiries to be taken forward in the second and third quarters of the year.</p>	To be determined.