

**To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board**

**On: 29 May 2018**

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**Report by: Director of Finance and Resources**

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**Heading: Local Scrutiny Plan for Renfrewshire Council (2018/2019)**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 This paper provides the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board with an overview of the key points in the Local Scrutiny Plan for 2018/19 for Renfrewshire Council. The Local Scrutiny Plan is attached as Appendix 1 to this covering report.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board:
- Notes that no scrutiny risks have been identified for 2018/19 which require specific scrutiny by the Local Area Network; and
  - Notes the planned external scrutiny activity for 2018/19, set out in Appendix 1 of the Local Scrutiny Plan.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Local Scrutiny Plan, which was previously the Assurance and Improvement Plan, has been published annually by the Council's Local Area Network since June 2010. Local Area Networks have met annually to carry out a shared risk assessment process to identify risks. "Risks" in this context refer to risks that will trigger scrutiny work and not inherent risk, for example as in the risk of harm to an individual. The

aim of the shared risk assessment is to focus external scrutiny activity where it is most needed.

- 3.2 The Local Area Network consists of representatives from all the main scrutiny bodies that engage with the Council: Audit Scotland; the Care Inspectorate; Education Scotland; and the Scottish Housing Regulator. The network meets annually to carry out a shared risk assessment and decide whether the Council requires external scrutiny in any specific areas for the year ahead. The risk assessment also determines scrutiny risks in relation to the Integration Joint Board.

#### **4. Key messages**

- 4.1 Following the most recent shared risk assessment, the Local Area Network have not identified any additional risk areas where specific scrutiny is required, other than that which is nationally directed or part of an ongoing work programme by scrutiny bodies. Audit and inspection work will also continue to take place at a specific service level, such as ongoing inspection of schools and care establishments.
- 4.2 The report in particular commends the “increasingly strong strategic leadership in Children’s Services in Renfrewshire” with “appropriate governance in place to ensure that educational provision is well-organised and well-led”. Whilst it is not noted in the report, it is anticipated that Children’s Services will be inspected as an Attainment Challenge Authority.
- 4.3 The Local Area Network however has agreed that several areas should continue to be subject to oversight and monitoring, most specifically relating to the financial sustainability of the Council through the local financial audit work.
- 4.4 The Local Scrutiny Plan contains a table on Page 6 of the Audit Scotland report, which highlights the national level scrutiny activity which may impact on the Council, including a new programme of inspection for children services and national review of arms-length organisations undertaken by Audit Scotland, amongst others.
- 4.5 Members of the board will be aware that Audit Scotland were appointed in 2017 for a period of 5 years as the Council’s external auditors. The team undertake both financial and best value audit activities, following the implementation of new national arrangements in 2017, which also

saw the publication of a Best Value Assurance Report for Renfrewshire Council.

- 4.6 The Local Scrutiny Plan notes that in terms of best value activity in 2018/19, the focus will be on following up the recommendations of the Best Value Assurance Report for Renfrewshire Council, particularly in relation to leadership, governance and scrutiny. The report also notes that ongoing best value activity will be reported through the Annual Audit Report.
- 4.7 A report on progress made by the Council in terms of implementing the local Best Value Improvement Plan, was reported to the Leadership Board in April 2018.

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### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report, as it has been prepared for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** – Shared Risk Assessment is a proportionate and risk-based approach to assessing Scottish Councils.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none.

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### List of Background Papers

(a) n/a

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**Author:** Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning, 0141 618 7184

# Renfrewshire Council

## Local Scrutiny Plan

2018/19



April 2018

# 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 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 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

4. The 2018/19 shared risk assessment process has not identified, from its assessment for 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 is currently projecting a breakeven position in 2017/18 but continue to face significant financial challenges going forward. To achieve a breakeven position requires £20 million of savings, the majority of which are sought through the debt smoothing strategy. Financial pressures are expected to continue in the medium term. The council has an agreed balanced budget position for 2018/19 which includes approximately £15 million of temporary spending but is estimating a residual budget gap of £9 - £10 million in 2019/20. Meeting these savings targets is expected to require changes to the way the council delivers services. To support the achievement of financial balance the council must ensure that the financial control environment is strong and that financial information is reliable and up to date. The local audit team will report on the council's progress in managing the savings plans as part of the annual audit.
6. The following areas, while not identifying any scrutiny risk, summarise the ongoing work with the link inspector at Scottish Housing Regulator, Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively.
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. SHR has assessed that no additional

scrutiny is required in Renfrewshire Council during 2018/19, beyond statutory and ongoing work.

8. **Education and Children's Services:** Education Scotland has not undertaken any strategic scrutiny at Renfrewshire Council since 2016. The LAN's findings are therefore based on national performance data and link inspector contact.
9. There is increasingly strong strategic leadership in Children's Services in 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 positive in recent years. Outcomes for children and young people in many areas are above the national averages and Virtual Comparator. The approach taken to quality improvement within education is new and working well.
10. Overall there are no particular concerns with Renfrewshire's Council's educational provision and therefore there will be no additional scrutiny in 2018/19 beyond the general inspection programme. Renfrewshire Council is a Scottish Attainment Challenge authority. Schools in Renfrewshire have Pupil Equity Funding plans in place and these are being progressed. Education Scotland will continue to liaise with establishments as appropriate.
11. **Social Care Services:** - The Care Inspectorate carries out its ongoing programme of inspections of regulated services in the Renfrewshire Partnership area.

## Scrutiny activity

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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 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 Renfrewshire BVAR report was published in August 2017. Future Best Value audit work will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.
15. Audit Scotland also plans to undertake performance audit work in a range of areas covering local government during 2018/19. These include Health and social care integration, and Children and young people's mental health services. Any engagement with individual councils is still to be determined. In addition, Audit Scotland will publish the findings of a performance

audit relating to Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs). Details of future audit work are available on the Audit Scotland [website](#).

16. 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. 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.
17. 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.
18. They have asked partners to provide assurance about how community planning partners are protecting and meet the needs of children and young people who have experienced, or 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.
19. The Care Inspectorate intends to carry out five joint inspections in 2018/19. It was agreed with ministers that, for the duration of this programme of inspections, the 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 Renfrewshire Council is selected as one of the five joint inspections in 2018/19.
20. The Care Inspectorate will carry out a thematic review of self-directed support during 2018/19. The aim is to build on the key findings of Audit Scotland's progress report, published in 2017, particularly to explore the ability and confidence of front line staff to implement self-direction support legislation by offering choice and control and making decisions with people about their support.
21. Inspections will be conducted in up to six areas across the country with the aim of identifying factors which support effective implementation of the legislation and barriers which require to be overcome. The Care Inspectorate will provide feedback on each area and publish an overview report which will be disseminated more widely, with the expectation that all areas will then use these findings to evaluate their own practice and make improvements where necessary. The Care Inspectorate will inform the council if Renfrewshire Council is selected as one of the six council areas for inspection in 2018/19.
22. As noted in the 2016/17 Local Scrutiny Plan, The Care Inspectorate, along with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, carried out a joint strategic inspection of adults' services in the Renfrewshire Council area in the third quarter of 2017/18. A key focus of the inspection included reviewing progress made by the partnership in its approach to strategic planning and commissioning. On site activity was completed in January 2018 and the expected publication



date for the local report is late Spring 2018. A national report will be published by the Care Inspectorate in Autumn 2018.

23. Education Scotland's inspection of the council's Community Learning and Development service was recently completed and will be reported to the council soon.

March 2018

**Appendix: Scrutiny activity**

Scrutiny body	Scrutiny activity	Date
Audit Scotland (as external auditor)	Best Value (BV) audit work planned in this year will focus on the follow up of the recommendations made in the 2016/17 BVAR. The audit team will also review leadership, governance and scrutiny arrangements within the council.	Ongoing in 2018.
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland plans to undertake performance audit work on Health and social care integration progress update, 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 (CI)	Joint inspections (with scrutiny partners Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland) of service for children and young people.	CI to inform council if selected for inspection in 2018/19.
	Thematic review of self-directed support.	CI to inform council if selected for inspection in 2018/19.
Education Scotland	No specific scrutiny work planned.	N/A
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.	Q2 2018/19.

# 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](http://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](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk) 

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk) 