

Aberdeen City Council

Local Area Network

2019-20 summary

### **Local Area Network ('LAN') scrutiny process**

The Accounts Commission, supported by Audit Scotland, chairs the Strategic Scrutiny Group ('SSG'). The SSG is made up of scrutiny bodies from across the public sector to make their work on local government more co-ordinated, better targeted and more proportionate to identified risks.

The arrangements for coordinating scrutiny at a local level include a LAN for each council. LANs are led by each council's appointed auditor, being KPMG LLP in respect of Aberdeen City Council ('the Council'). LANs bring together relevant scrutiny bodies, typically Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator, to share information and intelligence on an ongoing basis and to carry out a Shared Risk Assessment ('SRA'). The purpose of the SRA is to inform discussions between the LAN and its council and to inform the National Scrutiny Plan for local government, which is published on Audit Scotland's website.

During 2018, the SSG reviewed the effectiveness of national scrutiny coordination and the SRA process. As a result, a number of changes are being made, the most notable being no requirement for LANs to produce local scrutiny plans ('LSPs'). The new approach looks to embed a discussion about risks and responses between scrutiny bodies across the year, rather than a specific one-off approach.

A LSP has therefore not been prepared for the Council. Instead, the planned scrutiny activity, if relevant, of the key LAN partners is set out in this document.

### **Summary of scrutiny activity for 2019-20**

*KPMG LLP*

The 2018-19 audit process will be fully concluded by 30 September 2019 following certification of various grants, although the annual audit report on the annual accounts is presented in June 2019. An audit strategy document in respect of the 2019-20 financial year will be presented to the February 2020 Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

For 2019-20 no scrutiny activity is planned in addition to the audit, which is performed in accordance with Audit Scotland's Code of Audit Practice. The wider scope areas of the audit are expected to continue to focus on the progress of the Council's transformation programme and delivery of required savings to achieve a balanced budget. A Best Value Assurance Report ('BVAR') is scheduled for the 2020-21 financial year, being year five of the audit appointment. In 2019-20 one Best Value area, Equal Opportunities, will have specific focus in the annual audit, as part of the five year coverage of Best Value areas in advance of the BVAR.

### *Scottish Housing Regulator ('SHR')*

An engagement plan has been published by SHR in respect of each registered social landlord, including Aberdeen City Council. For 2019-20 SHR is engaging with the Council about its site for gypsy/travellers. SHR will review the action plan prepared by the Council, which sets out its plans to achieve full compliance by 30 June 2019.

Each registered social landlord must submit an Annual Return on the charter. On receipt of the return, SHR will review service quality performance for improvement with a particular focus on the following areas:

- tenants who feel the landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and decisions;
- tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in landlord's decision-making;
- complaints management;
- average days to re-let properties; and
- factored owners' satisfaction with the factoring service.

There is no planned scrutiny over and above the areas set out above.

### *Education Scotland*

Engagement activity is to be confirmed.

### *Care Inspectorate*

A review of health and social work services for older people was published at the end of 2018 and no further follow up activity is planned. Following inspection activities earlier in the year, the joint inspection of services to children and young people report is due to be published in September 2019.

The Care Inspectorate is leading on scrutiny and assurance activities in respect of community justice partnerships and criminal justice social work. Proposed activities for 2019-20 have yet to be confirmed. Inspections of regulated services take place across the year on both a scheduled and unannounced basis.

### *Audit Scotland*

Performance audit work is ongoing and the following audits due for publication in 2019-20 are of relevance to Aberdeen City Council:

- Revenue financing of assets
- Scotland's Region and Growth Deals
- Early learning and childcare: follow-up audit

The following performance audits due to be published in 2020-21 will also be of relevance to Aberdeen City Council. The extent to which they will involve the Council in fieldwork visits has still to be determined:

- Affordable housing
- Educational outcomes

- Digital progress in local government
- Supporting economic growth: the role of local authorities
- Social care sustainability
- Outcomes for children with additional support needs
- Skills investment and planning and investment
- Waste management

This report sets out the planned scrutiny and monitoring. As with any local authority, there may be additional activities during the year to respond to emerging risks, including the use of legislative powers to inspect or an agreed response to correspondence received by Audit Scotland.

20 June 2019