

**Midlothian Council Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17****Report by: Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive****1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 provided by Audit Scotland.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Audit Scotland works with a number of local government inspectorates in what is known as a Local Area Network (LAN) of local audit and inspection representatives. The LANs undertake a shared risk assessment process for all 32 local authorities, drawing on a range of evidence in order to identify targeted, risk-based scrutiny requirements for each council.
- 2.2 The shared risk assessment process results in each council receiving a Local Scrutiny Plan which identifies the risk areas that the LAN has identified as requiring scrutiny or where scrutiny is planned as part of a national programme. Plans for each council are available on the Audit Scotland website.

**3. Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17**

- 3.1 The Local Scrutiny Plan focuses on key risks previously identified by the LAN and also identifies potential new risks.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 does not propose any additional scrutiny beyond the range of nationally driven scrutiny activity during 2016/17 (as shown in Appendix 1), however the following are areas of note and those requiring further monitoring during 2016/17 for Midlothian Council:

The LAN noted:

- It will continue to monitor the outcomes of the Council's Transformation Programme and improvements to Performance Reporting via the work of the council's external auditor, Grant Thornton.
- The integration of the Council and their Community Planning Partners plans into the Single Midlothian Plan with a focus on prevention, accessibility and co-production and capacity building and targeting key geographical areas.
- The progress of the Integrated Joint Board and the anticipated production of the final plan by April 2016.
- The need for rigour and transparency around the Delivering Excellence framework and the financial sustainability and savings required from the repositioning of services and a focus on priorities.
- The scope to strengthen the impact of performance reporting and further development and reporting of self-evaluation using the Midlothian Excellence Framework as well as the need for a higher profile and better strategic focus for Risk management.
- Progress towards improving health and social work outcomes with services to children and young people noted as performing above the Scottish

average in some areas though also noting areas for improvements across all services.

- Progress in relation to the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act.
- No scrutiny risks in relation to Education whilst also noting its very clear vision and strong leadership and direction and a steady improvement in a number of key measures of attainment over recent years.
- That Midlothian's performance across a number of areas fall within the bottom quartile for social landlords and whilst recognising that plans are in place to improve future performance the Scottish Housing Regulator will continue to engage with the council during 2016/17.

3.3 In addition to the areas noted above and those detailed in Appendix 1, routine, scheduled audit and inspection work will be carried out through the annual audit process and the ongoing inspection of school and care establishments by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate respectively.

#### **4. Next Steps**

4.1 The Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 will inform the ongoing performance and scrutiny activity undertaken by the Council.

#### **5. Report Implications**

##### **5.1 Resource**

There are no additional resource implications.

##### **5.2 Risk**

The Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 provides the Council with the LANs assessment of areas of risk and potential areas for further scrutiny.

##### **5.3 Single Midlothian Plan**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ **Community safety**
- ☐ **Adult health, care and housing**
- ☐ **Getting it right for every Midlothian child**
- ☐ **Improving opportunities in Midlothian**
- ☐ **Sustainable growth**
- ☒ **Business transformation and Best Value**
- ☐ **None of the above**

##### **5.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan**

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:-

- Early years and reducing child poverty
- Economic Growth and Business Support
- Positive destinations for young people

Clear reference is made in the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 to the Council's priorities, approaches to deliver them and the focus on key geographies within Midlothian.

## **5.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

The report directly impacts Midlothian's ability to monitor and evaluate performance and outcomes by ensuring a strong focus on scrutiny activities and reporting.

## **5.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

This report does not directly relate to adopting a preventative approach but reference to the intention to adopt a preventative approach is noted in the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17.

## **5.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

This report does not directly relate to involving communities however reference to co-production and capacity building is noted in the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17.

## **5.8 Ensuring Equalities**

This report does not directly impact people or propose any change to policy or practice however any subsequent actions identified as part of ongoing scrutiny will be subject to and EQIA as appropriate.

## **5.10 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The recommendations in this report contribute to a sustainable approach to the continuous improvement of Council services.

## **5.11 IT Issues**

There are no IT issues arising from this report at this time.

## **6. Recommendations**

Council is asked to:

- a) Note the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17

## **Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Plan 2016/17**

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## **Background Papers:**

Audit Scotland Report, March 2016

Midlothian Council, Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 -  
[http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2016/lsp\\_160331\\_midlothian.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2016/lsp_160331_midlothian.pdf)

