
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

12 November 2019

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: National Scrutiny Plan 2019/2020

Purpose: To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the National Scrutiny Plan, a summary of planned local government strategic scrutiny activity.

Recommendation: It is proposed that the Committee notes the National Scrutiny Plan and in particular the scrutiny work which is scheduled for North Ayrshire Council.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The National Scrutiny Plan (NSP) is issued by Audit Scotland on behalf of the main public sector scrutiny bodies and outlines forthcoming planned scrutiny activity.
- 1.2 The NSP identifies 3 areas of planned scrutiny activity for North Ayrshire Council during 2019/2020; these are a Best Value audit (Audit Scotland/Deloitte), a review of career information, advice and guidance services (Education Scotland) and a review of services for people who are homeless (Scottish Housing Regulator).

2. Background

- 2.1 The National Scrutiny Plan (NSP) is issued by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Strategic Scrutiny Group for local government, which comprises the main public sector scrutiny bodies, including the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.
- 2.2 This NSP summarises all planned and announced strategic scrutiny activity from September 2019 in each Council and will be updated every six months to ensure it is up-to-date and comprehensive. The full NSP can be viewed at:

https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2019/sp_190917_scrutiny_plan.pdf

Developing Scrutiny Programmes

- 2.3 Each scrutiny body adopts a similar approach to developing their programmes of work – this involves taking account of national priorities, risks, data and intelligence. These are currently identified as:
- an increasingly challenging financial outlook
 - the impact of the UK's departure from the EU
 - the ability to ensure there are the skills and capacity required to manage and deliver services
 - the ability to demonstrate the impact from public sector reform
 - failure to capitalise on the opportunities offered by new technologies.
- 2.4 The NSP identifies 3 areas of planned scrutiny activity for North Ayrshire Council during 2019/2020; these are a Best Value audit (Audit Scotland/Deloitte), a review of career information, advice and guidance services (Education Scotland) and a review of services for people who are homeless (Scottish Housing Regulator).
- 2.5 The Best Value audit will take place between January and April 2020, with a report to the Accounts Commission scheduled for June 2020. Each Council receives a Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) at least once in a five-year period that presents an overall picture of the Council, drawn from a range of audit activity and the work of other scrutiny bodies. The last Best Value audit of North Ayrshire Council took place in 2011.
- 2.6 HM Inspectors of Education will evaluate and report on the quality of careers information, advice and guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland across five Council areas, including North Ayrshire. These inspections will conclude a commitment to review these services across all Councils during a five-year period. The review is scheduled during January to March 2020.
- 2.7 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) carries out regular engagement with Councils to gain assurance that they are complying with statutory and regulatory requirements and serving the interests of tenants and service users. Engagement with North Ayrshire Council during 2019/20 will cover services for people who are homeless.
- 2.8 The NSP also details the National Performance Audits which are planned for 2019/2020. Each of these will be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee when published, along with local context for North Ayrshire.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the National Scrutiny Plan and in particular the scrutiny work which is scheduled for North Ayrshire Council.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 Effective external scrutiny helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 No consultation has been required in the preparation of this report.

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For further information please contact **Paul Doak, Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud)**, on **01294-324561**.

Background Papers

None.