

# ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar, on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at 2.00pm.

**Present:** Councillors ALEX KING, BILL DUFF, JULIE BELL, BRIAN BOYD, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN, LYNNE DEVINE, BEN LAWRIE, SHEILA HANDS, IAN MCLAREN, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM and BETH WHITESIDE.

Councillor KING, Convener, in the Chair.

## 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Mark Salmond and Mark McDonald with Councillors Craig Fotheringham and Sheila Hands substituting respectively.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 September 2017 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

*At this stage of the meeting, the Convener intimated that Colin Grieve, Local Senior Officer was due to retire from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. In Colin's absence, the Convener on behalf of the Committee, followed by his predecessor Councillor Boyd, expressed appreciation to Colin for his contributions to this Committee.*

## 4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 August 2017, there was submitted Report No 391/17 by Colin Grieve, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, containing performance information relating to the second quarter (July to September) of 2017/18 on the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in support of members scrutiny of local service delivery.

Attached as Appendix 1 to the Report was the detailed breakdown and analysis of all data collected during the reporting period along with the performance summary and scorecard for the period 1 July to 30 September 2017. Appendix 2 to the Report provided an overview of the 6 month performance against all performance indicators for the Angus area.

Roy Dunsire, Group Manager provided an overview and highlighted a number of key performance results.

Following discussion, where questions were answered by Roy Dunsire, the Committee also heard from the Convener who commended the organisation and delivery by the road safety partnership of the hard hitting road safety event Safe Drive Stay Alive and recommended the event to new elected members.

The Committee agreed to note the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service against the priorities, performance indicators and targets detailed within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus 2014-17.

**5. ANGUS LOCAL POLICING AREA PERFORMANCE RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2017**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 August 2017, there was submitted Report No 392/17 by Chief Superintendent Paul Anderson, which updated the Committee on the performance results for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2017.

Attached as Appendix A to the Report were the performance indicators that had been subdivided into the following priorities within the Report which were the local policing priorities as identified in the 3 years Local Policing Plan:-

- Putting Victims at the heart of what we do
- Tackling Crime and Anti Social Behaviour
- Protecting Vulnerable People
- Maintaining Public Safety

Also attached as an Appendix to the Report was the Performance Summary Report advising that 8,504 phone calls had been received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2017.

Superintendent Graeme Murdoch advised that following the recent inspection of local policing in Tayside Division by the HM inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), the report had now been published and was available on the HMICS website at [www.hmics.scot](http://www.hmics.scot) . He indicated that the report highlighted many areas of progress and that a number of recommendations had been made which would promote ongoing improvement in the Tayside Division of Police Scotland

Chief Inspector David McIntosh highlighted a number of key areas and provided a detailed overview of the Report.

Following discussion, where a number of questions were answered by Chief Inspector David McIntosh, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

*At this point the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland representatives left the meeting.*

**6. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE**

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 September 2017, there was submitted Report No 393/17 by the Acting Service Manager – Governance and Consultancy, providing the Audit Manager's update of the main findings of the Internal Audit Report issued since the date of the last meeting.

The Report provided an update on the progress of the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan and progress with implementing internal audit recommendations.

Following discussion, Councillor Bell expressed concerns in relation to the lack of progress being made with the 11 outstanding internal audit recommendations, and having heard the response from the Head of Corporate Finance, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update on progress with the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan; and
- (ii) to note management's progress in implementing internal audit recommendations.

## **7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2017 – UPDATED ACTION PLAN**

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 June 2017, there was submitted Report No 394/17 by the Acting Service Manager – Governance and Consultancy presenting an update on the Annual Governance Statement action plan for review and comment.

The Report indicated that the Annual Governance Statement which was included in the Council's 2016/17 Annual Accounts, contained a number of developments to be taken forward during 2017/18 to strengthen the Council's corporate governance.

The Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2017/18 update was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report. A further update would be reported to this Committee in June 2018 as part of the Annual Corporate Governance review.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the updated Report.

## **8. CORPORATE COUNTER-FRAUD MID YEAR REVIEW**

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 June 2017, there was submitted Report No 395/17 by the Acting Service Manager – Governance and Consultancy, providing a summary of the work undertaken by the Corporate Fraud Team (CFT) during the 6 month period to 30 September 2017.

The Report indicated that the Council had a zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption and the existence of a professional Corporate Fraud Team (CFT) within the Chief Executive's Unit demonstrated the Council's commitment to its objectives.

In accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption, the CFT had continued to carry out data matching exercises to identify fraud and error.

The pro-active initiative which commenced in 2016/17, matching the Council Tax Student Exemptions and Discounts to student lists provided by universities and colleges was now complete. The initiative had resulted in the removal of exemptions and discounts totalling £39,313.

In addition to data matching initiatives, the CFT examined any allegations of fraud received; identified benefit overpayments which were recoverable; and worked in collaboration with colleagues throughout the Council. Section 4 of the Report summarised the results of the Corporate Fraud Team activity in the 6 month period to 30 September 2017 and the recoverable savings.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

## **9. SCRUTINY PANEL REVIEWS**

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 7 September 2017, there was submitted Report No 396/17 by the Acting Service Manager – Governance and Consultancy providing an update on the proposals for 2017/18 Scrutiny Panel reviews.

The Report indicated that Report No 278/17 to Angus Council in September 2017 set out proposals in relation to the next phase of the Council's Change Programme and included an overview of the change projects currently included in the Change Programme Delivery Framework.

Scrutiny reviews undertaken in previous years had required considerable input from Council Officers in supporting the review process. In view of the extensive change programme and the impact this would inevitably have on staff resources, it was proposed that no scrutiny reviews be undertaken in the current year.

The Committee agreed, for the reasons outlined in Section 3 of the Report, that no Scrutiny Panel Reviews would be undertaken during 2017/18.

## **10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017**

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 November 2016, there was submitted Report No 356/17 by the Head of Corporate Finance appending a copy of the Angus Council's Annual Report on Treasury Management activities in 2016/17.

The Report indicated that the Council was required through regulations issued under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 to produce an Annual Treasury Report reviewing treasury management activities and prudential and treasury indicators following the end of each financial year. The Report detailed the Council's treasury position as at 31 March 2017, which showed a total external debt of £158.739 million which after deduction of investments of £46.845 million left a total net external debt of £111,894,000. In addition to its net external debt, the Council also administered a number of other funds including Charitable and Common Good Funds and maintained a number of internal revenue balances including Renewal and Repair Funds.

Despite the continued turbulence in the money market during the 2016/17 financial year, the Council had performed relatively well, having taken the opportunity of securing long term investment interest rates from suitable counterparties at times when their interest rates on offer were relatively high. In summary, as a result of sound treasury management activity, the Council had been able to meet all its financial obligations and cash flow requirements throughout the financial year without encountering any liquidity problems.

The Committee agreed to note the 2016/17 Treasury Management Annual Report and associated Appendix.

## **11. PETITION – ABOLISH CAR PARKING CHARGES FOR RESIDENTS RESIDING AROUND BRIDGE STREET, ARBROATH AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

There was submitted Report No 397/17 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, advising members of a petition received in connection with the abolition of car parking charges for residents residing around Bridge Street, Arbroath and surrounding areas who demanded the right to be given parking permits as residents.

The Report indicated that a petition of 89 valid names had been submitted by residents of Arbroath to abolish car parking charges for resident residing around Bridge Street, Arbroath and the surrounding areas. The petition also detailed the purpose of the petition as being "to allow parking for residents in and around the Bridge Street area. Elderly also reside around this area and are having to walk a distance to park their car".

There were no parking charges in Bridge Street which was a one way street just off Keptie Street. There was time limited on street parking for 8 or 9 cars restricted to 30 minutes.

The petition had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on 24 August 2017 and in accordance with Standing Orders it was presented to this Committee for its further consideration.

The Report also indicated that no residential parking permits were available but in terms of Report No 349/17 considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 10 October 2017 recommendation 1.1 (iii) asked members:-

"to consider the potential to introduce resident parking permits and if minded to proceed to establish a member officer group to determine the details of such a scheme". An amendment to delete recommendation 1.1 (iii) was defeated but no member officer group was set up.

The Committee agreed, in terms of Standing Order 14, to determine that appropriate action had already been taken and that no further action was necessary.

## **12. COMPLAINTS STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2017**

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 August 2017, there was submitted Report No 398/17 by the Chief Executive, highlighting the complaint statistics for the first 6 months of 2017/18 and to update members on the action being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the complaints handling procedure and to learn from complaints.

The Report indicated that since 1 April 2013, the Council had been operating the new Complaints Handling Procedure for local authorities as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. During the second quarter of 2017, a total of 57 complaints were recorded as closed off. The analysis of key indicators for the second quarter of 2017 were outlined in Section 4 of the Report. Complaints received during 1 July to 30 September 2017 were detailed in the Appendices to the Report.

The Report also highlighted compliments that had been received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2017.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the key performance indicators on complaints closed between 1 July 2017 and 30 September 2017; and
- (ii) to note the learning from complaints identified by the Directorates.

## **13. COMPLAINTS RAISED WITH THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN 1 APRIL 2017 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2017**

With reference to Article 19 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 June 2017, there was submitted Report No 399/17 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services providing information about complaints made to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) in respect of Angus Council during the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

The Council had adopted the SPSO national complaints handling procedure in December 2012 and the purpose behind a national procedure was to enable Councils to compare the number and type of complaints with other local authorities but also to enable Councils to learn from complaints and to use them to drive improvement within Council services.

During the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017, a total of 3 letters of complaint were received by the SPSO in relation to Angus Council. All three complaints were not pursued although the SPSO made enquiries regarding one complaint. Details of these complaints were outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the findings of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman; and
- (ii) that the actions taken in respect of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recommendations were appropriate.

## **14. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN 1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 MARCH 2017**

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 November 2016, there was submitted Report No 400/17 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advising members that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman had presented his Annual Report for the period 2016/17 which enabled Angus Council to compare itself against the sector totals for specific areas of complaint.

The Report indicated that the annual Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Report had been issued on 4 October 2017 and contained information relating to the operation of the standardised model Complaints Handling Procedure. The Report also provided statistical information in relation to the performance of each Local Authority enabling the Council to

measure its performance against the sector totals of specific areas shown in the Appendix to the Report.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman also provided details of complaints that were determined during the periods 2015/16 and 2016/17. During 2015/16, a total of 24 complaints were determined, a total of 20 complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature or out with jurisdiction; one was not upheld and three were upheld.

During 2016/17, a total of 22 complaints were determined, 21 of these complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature, or outwith the jurisdiction of the SPSO and one was partially upheld.

The Committee agreed to note the statistical information provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and the performance of Angus Council in relation to the sector totals.

#### **15. ANNUAL CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER REPORT 2016 TO 2017**

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 23 August 2016, there was submitted Report No 401/17 by the Head of Service, Children and Young People and designated Chief Social Work Officer, presenting to members, the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2016 to 2017.

The Report indicated that the Chief Social Work Officer had a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Report which provided an overview of social work services in Angus and detailed the arrangements within Angus Council to enable the Chief Social Work Officer to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Section 5(i) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended).

The Report detailed some of the major successes within social work services in 2016/17 and drew on a range of performance information as well as external and internal evaluation and scrutiny activities. The Report highlighted the continuing need for strong political leadership to ensure that the decisions taken in relation to the distribution of limited local resources protected essential services to the most vulnerable in Angus.

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the contents of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2016/17, as appended to the Report.

#### **16. ANGUS INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN 2017 TO 2020**

There was submitted Report No 402/17 by the Strategic Director, People and Chair of Angus Corporate Parenting Board presenting the Angus Integrated Children's Service's Corporate Plan for 2017 to 2020.

The Report indicated that Corporate Parenting was defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as the formal and local partnership between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers. The Plan detailed the arrangements within Angus which would enable the Council to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

As a Corporate Parent the Council was committed and determined to improve life experiences of all looked after children and the plan would ensure that the Council narrowed the gap in outcomes between looked after children and young people and their peers.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Angus Integrated Children's Service's Corporate Parenting Plan for 2017 to 2020.

## **17. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 September 2017, there was submitted Report 403/17 by the Chief Executive, presenting an update on the work being progressed with the Corporate Risk Register.

The Report indicated that the Council's Executive Management Team had reviewed all existing corporate risks at its meeting on 2 October 2017. Each risk was examined to verify its relevance, appropriateness, likelihood and impact. A summary of the work undertaken to date was detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Work still required to be done to conclude the review; some risk definitions needed to be corroborated and associated actions required to be updated accordingly. Attached as Appendix 2 to the Report was the full current Corporate Risk Register.

A Report detailing the further work undertaken would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee on 23 January 2018.

Following discussion, where questions were answered by the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Finance, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the update Report.

## **18. AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT – EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE**

There was submitted Report No 421/17 by the Head of Corporate Finance, presenting for the Committee's interest a short update from the Council's External Auditor which was relevant to the business of the Council and the role of this Committee.

The Report indicated that the terms of reference of the Committee involved consideration of relevant reports published by Audit Scotland. Attached as an Appendix to the Report was the External Audit Progress Update.

Rachel Browne, Audit Scotland provided an update and overview of the Report.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the External Audit Progress Update as at November 2017.